4 ~ THE JOSEPH TRAJECTORY

The Joseph Theme in Biblical and Extrabiblical Material

The Joseph-Jesus relationship is a matter of "like father like son." This idiom does not often point to a reality, but in Mediterranean culture, at least, it is a common ideal. In this regard, we have in the Gospel of John (5:17) a Jesus saying, undoubtedly not authentic, that he is at work as his father is at work. In the Johannine context this saying refers to deeds of healing and compassion, and a relationship between Jesus and God as his Father. The context also involves the outrage of the Pharisees that Jesus could dare to see himself as child of God. F.C. Grant[1] valued this Johannine phrase as a probable indication that the son Jesus stood in the shoes of his father Joseph. Jesus was a carpenter, like his father, but typical to Johannine style, the author of the Fourth Gospel draws an analogy between the physical son-father relationship and the spiritual relationship between Jesus and his heavenly Father. Other examples of similar analogies are John's comparisons of physical birth with spiritual birth (Jn 3:6), natural water and bread with water and bread that bring eternal life about (Jn 4:13; 6:27), worshipping God either in Jerusalem or on the Gerizim Mountain in Samaria with worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:21), resuscitation from sleep with the resurrection from death (Jn 11:12).

Thus, according to the interpretation in the Fourth Gospel, it is quite possible to understand the relationship between Jesus and Joseph in this manner. However, It is doubtful that the relationship between Jesus and his heavenly Father could be analogous to the "working" of father and son (Jn 5:17) in the sense of their mutual craftsmanship. Nowhere in the Gospel of John do we find an indication that the Johannine school knows or makes use of the Markan tradition (6:3) that Jesus himself was a carpenter. We know that this tradition was changed by Matthew (13:55) to be read as "the carpenter's son." Luke simply ignores Mark's notation of Jesus (or Joseph) being a carpenter in the particular passage. Luke proffers only the question: "Isn't this Joseph's son?" (Lk 4:22).

Apocryphal gospels, like the second-century Proto-James and documents, and fragments thereof, for example The Life of Joseph the Carpenter and Pseudo-Matthew,[2] took over the Matthean hunch that Joseph was a carpenter but without elaborating on this mien as such. These documents were written (maybe translated into the Greco-Egyptian language Coptic and Latin respectively) during the period from the end of the fourth century to the six century. They only mention:

- Joseph's righteousness;
- his old age;
- the death of his wife while his youngest son James was still a child;
- the names of other siblings (taken over from evidence in the New Testament itself);
- that Joseph was of old age (eighty-nine years) when he took Mary as wife, though he never slept with her, and that he lived to the age of one hundred and eleven.

The title of the fifth-century document The Life of Joseph the Carpenter bears witness to the notation. In the first century, we find only in the Gospel of Matthew evidence that Joseph the carpenter adopted Jesus as his son. However, the alluded analogy between father and son in this text does not concern craftsmanship or even Jesus' relationship with Joseph. What we actually find is a similarity between two Josephs: Joseph the widower who took the pregnant Mary into his house and Joseph the First Testament patriarch. The equivalent to the parallel of the two Josephs is the parallel between the character of Mary and that of the First Testament Eve (Gen 4:1)[3] and Hannah (1 Sam 1:11). The Mary-Hannah parallel is found in Proto-James and in the above-mentioned dependent apocryphal documents.

Also in the Coptic Arabic version of The Life of Joseph the Carpenter[4] (chapter 7), the correspondence between father and son pertain to geographical issues. Characteristic of Mediterranean mores, the residential cite of a family/clan is located at the burial place of the founder of the group. The tomb, in turn, is the place where a future leader is expected to be born. This leader will continue the work of the forefather. In The Life of Joseph the Carpenter, the tradition is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem as it is the case in the New Testament gospels where this tradition is also taken up (Mt 2:6; Lk 2:4; Jn 6:41; 7:27, 41). In all of these instances the relationship between Jesus of Nazareth and Joseph, whose ancestors were claimed to be from Bethlehem, is in focus.

This particular tradition, explicit in Matthew and implicit in Luke and John, originated in the prophetic witness (Micah 5:2) against the supposedly mighty Judean royalty in favor of an allegedly inferior ruler whose roots were in Bethlehem.[5] The Bethlehem referred to in Micah lies six miles southwest from Jerusalem: "But you, Bethlehem, in the

land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel" (Micah 5:2, in Mt 2:6). The prophetic voice in Micah (chapters 2-5) was raised against the lack of righteousness among the elite in Jerusalem.

Bethlehem[6] (i.e. Ephrat–see Gen 48:7) was the burial place of Rachel, wife of Jacob, and mother of Joseph and Benjamin. According to the source behind Genesis 50:1-12, Jacob[7] was buried in a cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre while Joseph's burial place, according to Joshua 24:32, is to be found at Shechem.[8] Part of the fabric of Israel's political history is the connection between *Rachel's tomb* (which lays on the road to Bethlehem–Bethlehem was in ancient times located where a church, later became known as the church of the nativity, was erected in the fourth century C.E.) and *Joseph's tomb* (at the foot of the Gerisim and the Ebal mountains in Samaria). Because of this link, Bethlehem was an ideal place to symbolize the unity of the northern tribes (with Samaria as capital since the time of king Omri) and the southern tribes. According to 1 Samuel 16, David was born there to an Ephratite family (see also Ruth, chapters 1-4). After been chosen as leader of the united Israelite tribes, David, however, did not decide on either Schechem (at that time the main cultic center of the northern tribes) or Bethlehem as his capital. He probably learned from Saul's experience who "had greatly diminished his own effectiveness by locating the capital in the territory of the tribe to which he belonged."[9] Jerusalem, instead, was chosen because of its neutrality.

During the time of Micah, Bethlehem was an insignificant village, but still remembered as the town of David that once symbolized the unification of the tribes of Judah (Jerusalem) and Joseph (Samaria). According to prophets such as Micah (see also

inter *al*. Ezek 37:15-25 and Zech 10:16), the messiah who came from the roots of David (i.e., Bethlehem), would restore this unity again.[10] In the Matthew's and Luke's gospels, the story of the birth of Jesus the messianic child is imbued with both the "Davidic" and "Josephic" spirit. When the prophet Jeremiah spoke of an unified Israel that the messiah would bring about from the ruins of both North and South, he refers to its devastated past by mentioning Rachel who is weeping about her lost descendants (Jer 31:15). Matthew (2:17-18) quotes this phrase within the context of the good tidings that the child Jesus outlived the onslaught of Herod the Great so that he could inauguarate this "new" kingdom.

However, the story of Herod the Great's infanticide emphasizes also an opposition from the Jerusalem royalty against the descendents of Joseph that goes way back in the history of the people of the "holy land." Round about the middle of the eight-century B.C.E., the dominant belief in Israel was that Israel was God's covenanted people and that the cultic shrine at Bethel was the visible guarantee that Israel would continue to exist as kingdom (see, inter alia, Amos 7:10-13).[11] Among the evidence in the Pentateuch traditions, Deuteronomy 33:13-17, Genesis 37:1-11and Genesis 49:26[12] witness to the belief that Joseph was the legitimate successor of his father Jacob and not Judah. According to this tradition, the cultic site to which God's people were attached was Bethel, also called Luz (Gen 28:19; 35:6). At Bethel, heaven and earth met as God entered into a covenant with Jacob and Jacob's children. Here, on the road between Bethel and Bethlehem (Ephrath), Rachel died and was buried (Gen 35:19).

At the time of the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem, earnest attempts were made to disfavor and even to destroy the Bethel tradition (see, e.g., Hos 4:15 where the

expression Beth Aven serves as a cacophony for Bethel; Hos 10:5; Am 5:5; 8:14). The prophet Hosea (1:4-5), for example, announced that the vengeance of God would be wreaked against the Northern Kingdom Israel because of the "massacre" of Judeans in the Valley of Jezreel by Jehu, the king of the Northern Kingdom (see 2 Ki 9:1-10:28). According to Hosea, the termination of the covenant entered into at Bethel would be the punishment of God.

Jehu's treachery, an act of familial betrayal, is symbolized in the book of Hosea (1:2-9) by the prophet's marriage to a prostitute and the conception of his children from this adulterous union. *Lo-Ammi*, the name of the third sibling, is specifically an indication of the annulment of the covenant. This name means "for you are not my people, and I am not with you" (Hos 1:8). The separation between God and the Northern Kingdom is sealed by the prophet's divorce. Yet his reconciliation with his adulterous wife (Hos 3:1-5) symbolizes that God would keep the covenanted promises, though in an unconventional way (see Hos 2:21-23).

During the "second Jerusalem temple period," a final onset was made on the Bethel tradition. The destruction of Samaria (capital of the Northern Kingdom since the reign of Omri–1 Ki 16:23) by the Assyrians (2 Ki 17:7-23) gave birth to this onslaught. In the reestablished Judean kingdom, after the Babylonian exile, the conviction was nurtured that the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom were replaced by outsiders (2 Ki 17:24-26). The northerners came to be labeled "Kutim," that is "the Samaritans." According to this conviction, the revival of the northern Israelite cult was a failed endeavor by the king of Assyria who let one of the priests (who had been exiled from

Samaria) come to live in Bethel and teach the Samaritans how to worship [God] (2 Ki 17:25-28).[13]

For the Judeans, Jerusalem became the uncontested "City of David." What both David and Solomon intended to be an act of peacemaking became an ideological instrument par excellence both during the first period and, specifically, the second period to marginalize and silence opposition. David's choice of Jerusalem, a "neutral location,"[14] as the site of the official cult, was a conciliatory venture to bring the north and the south into one royal household (2 Sam 5:1-11).

After Solomon, unity failed and Jerusalem functioned as the cultic center for the Southern Kingdom only. Jeroboam, ruler of the Northern Kingdom, was immediately advised to choose "Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim," then Peniel, and finally Bethel as cultic sites (1 Ki 12:25-33–a passage colored by a "southern" bias). These sites were chosen mainly for two reasons. The ancient traditions concerning Abram (Gen 12:6-8) and Jacob (Gen 28:10-27; 32:30-31), and the traditions concerning the settlement of the descendants of Joseph. According to the traditions of the northern tribes, Joseph was the legitimate successor to lead the house of Abraham and Jacob to the center of the land.

The bias of the editorial reinterpretation of the Bethel tradition by Judean priests, as if the northern tribes were inherently defiled by pagan syncretism, should not be overlooked by a naive reading of the above-mentioned references in the First Testament. The domination of the Jerusalem cult should also be judged in the light of prophetic protests. The prophets brought the Judeans' attempt to ensconce God's sovereignty within the boundaries of Jerusalem as "City of David" to light. They challenged the royal

household in Jerusalem and its priestly retainers not to be instrumental to the ostracism of their opponents[15] According to the prophet Jeremiah (23:1-6; 33:14-26), a newborn Davidic king would reign righteously over both Israel and Judea in the period after the Babylonian exile (see also Hos 3:5). This prophetic voice seems to be ambivalent.

Similar apparently conflicting announcements occur in the book of Micah (chapters 2-5). It simultaneously supports the continuance of the Davidic dynasty and criticizes the exploitation of the peasants by the elite. Ezekiel prophesized in the same vein, using the metaphor of two tribal wood sticks:

> The word of the Lord came to me: "Child of Humanity, take a stick of wood and write on it, 'B*elonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him*.' Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, '*Ephraims's stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him*.' Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. When your countrymen ask you, "Won't you tell us what you mean by this"? say to them, "*This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am going to make the stick of Joseph–which is in Ephraim's hand–and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it into Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand*." Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your

> fathers lived. They and their children and their children will live their forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever.…'"
>
> (Ezek 37:15-25; NIV–my emendation and emphasis).

In the period subsequent to the exile, the priestly elite continued with the process of ostracizing. This can be seen, for example, in the command the priests authorized as the "law of God," that the "men of Judah and Benjamin" must divorce their "foreign spouses" and abandon the children born of such allegedly illegitimate marriages (Ezra 10; Neh 13:23-28). In turn, the metaphorical story of the prophet Jonah undermines the tendency to marginalize outsiders. On the other hand, 1 and 2 Chronicles try to restore the role of the monarchy and its priestly retainers. But, according to Ezekiel (11:14-21; 33:23-26), the Israelites who were not exiled represent the people to whom God's promise made to Abraham applies. However, one reads in the version of 2 Chronicles (36:17-20) that nobody among God's people was spared by Nebuchadnezzar and, subsequently, no "true believer" could possibly be found in Jerusalem or Judea–"the land enjoyed its sabbath rests" until God made the king of Persia return God's people to reestablish the cult in Jerusalem (2 Chron 36:21-23). Supported by birth records in the books Ezra and Nehemiah, the returning exiles were designated as the "true" and "pure" inheritors of the land. Against this claim, one reads in 2 Kings 25:12, deliberately changed by priestly writers (2 Chron 36:17-20), that peasants ("some of the poorest people of the land") were left behind in Judea by the commander of Nebuchadnezzar's imperial guard "to work the vineyards and fields." Against this background an post-exilic prophet describes the truth and righteousness of God by specifying both Jerusalem's atrocities and God's sustenance for the needy as follows:

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

"My servants will eat,
but you will go hungry;
my servants will drink,
but you will go thirsty;
my servants will rejoice,
but you will be put to shame.
My servants will sing
out of the joy of their hearts,
but you will cry out
from anguish of heart
and wail in brokenness of spirit.…
Whoever invokes a blessing in the land
will do so by the God of truth;
(s)he who takes an oath in the land
will swear by the God of truth.
For the past troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from my eyes.
Behold, I will create
new heavens and a new earth
The former things will not be remembered….
For I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.
I will rejoice over Jerusalem to be delight
and take delight in my people;
The sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.
Never again will there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old (wo)man who does not live out her/his years….

(Isaiah 65:13-256 –*NIV*)

This positive attitude towards the poor is also to be found in literature that refers to the period prior to the Davidic dynasty and the establishment of the Temple in Jerusalem. At the consummation of the period of the judges, Hannah's hymnal prayer (1 Sam 2:1-10) also attested to both God's ubiquitous sovereignty and God's act of humbling patrons and exalting clients. The background of Hannah's prayer is her "unusual" presence as a woman in the shrine at Siloh (after she gave birth to the prophet Samuel who was miraculously conceived) and the references in the texts to the exploitative behavior of priests (Eli's sons) (1 Sam 1:21-28; 2:12-17).

The history of Eli, the chief priest of the shrine at Siloh, ties in with our interest in the interrelatedness between Joseph the patriarch and the gospel traditions in the New Testament about Jesus, son of Joseph, son of Eli (Lk 3:23). According to John's gospel, the Pharisees belittled Jesus because Joseph's family was known to them (Jn 6:42). Their accusation was that Jesus was not a "child of Abraham" as they are "children of Abraham." He, and not they, was therefore "illegitimate" (Jn 8:42), a "sinner" (Jn 9:16), a "Samaritan" (Jn 8:48).

The traditional Pharisaic version sees the origin of the Samaritans "in the events related in 2 Kings 17."[16] According to this view, the Samaritans were "a mixture of pagans and inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom that had not been deported." The Samaritans themselves, up to our times,[17] furiously denied this denunciation that had already became wide-spread during the first century C.E., as can specifically be seen in the work Antiquities by Flavius Josephus.[18] By this time, the opposition of the Judeans (and particularly of the Jerusalemites) to the Samaritans is "clear and unequivocal."[19] R. Pummer puts it as follows:

> ...[the] modern critical view...recognizes that antagonism between north and south in Israel existed for many centuries, but it also realizes that there was no sudden break that brought the separation of Jews and Samaritans....If one wants to name a definite date when the two communities began to exist as separate entities, it would be the end of the 2nd cent. BCE when John Hyrcanus[20] [captured Shechem[21] and] destroyed the Temple on Mt. Gerizim and the Samaritans in all probability, like other groups [e.g. the Pharisees and the Essenes], began to adapt certain passages in the Pentateuch to their particular theology.[22]

This development could explain the striking similarities between Samaritan beliefs and those of the Sadducees, the party that came forth from Hyrcanus' Maccabean family. The "close relationship in theology and practice of the Samaritans with the later Sadducees, who were the party of the hierarchy, can best be explained by the supposition of the maintenance of intercourse between the priests of Jerusalem and of the Shechemites."[23] Correspondence in this regard (such as attesting to the five books of Moses as the only authoritative scriptures and denouncing the belief in resurrection) could be ascribed to the power of the stronger party to enforce conformation. However, conformation with "orthodoxy" does not necessarily make people sociologically acceptable, specifically by "puritans" trapped within an ideology that is based on a "social" and "ethnic" purity line! It can be seen in the fact that the only two references to Shechem that appear in First Testament pseudepigraphical writings reveal a hostile attitude. This antagonism of the Judeans against the Samaritans is recorded in Josephus, the New Testament, and Talmudic literature.

Today, research has established the scholarly opinion that the "Samaritans are associated not with Samaria but with Shechem."[24] A more appropriate geographical designation used by Josephus for the people who generally came to be known as Samaritans, is therefore "Shechemites."[25] In the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (50:25-26), the contempt for the Samaritans is clear: "With two races in my soul vexed; and the third is no nation: with the dwellers of Seir and Philistia, and with the foolish race that sojourns in Shechem." Likewise, in the Testament of Levi (chapter 7): "From this day will Shechem be called the City of Fools."[26] In Rabbinical literature, a separate treatise is taken up in the Mishnah Tractate Masseket Kutim ("Tractate on the Samaritans").[27]

Not everything in the Talmud concerning the Samaritans is negative. A saying of the "very conservative" Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel (circa 165)[28] which is frequently quoted in the Mishnah, is his remark that "(e)very command the Samaritans keep, they are more scrupulous in observing than Israel." Therefore, "a Samaritan is like a full Jew." But then, applied to sabbatical limits (Gemara 57a), among others, one picks up the antagonism in Masseket Kutim 16 (see also Nidda vii,4): "This is the rule: Whatever they are suspected in, they are not to be believed in."[29]

Specifically, the designation "Kutim" for the Samaritans is intended to be very negative. This label goes way back to the first century and beyond. Josephus (BJ 1, 63) reported that John Hyrcanus crushed the "Kuthean sect." He referred to the "Judean colored" report in 2 Kings 17:24 that the king of Assyria brought people from, among other pagan places, Babylon and Cuthah to dwell in Samaria , displacing the people of Israel. In the First Testament, including 1 Maccabees, Cuthah refers to people somewhere in the western Mediterranean, probably either the Greeks or the Romans. In

the Dead Sea Scrolls, Cutnah sometimes refers to the people of Assyria, and sometimes either to the Egyptians or the Chaldeans, calling them the end-time enemies.[30] According to Talmudic mentality, the world was divided in line with these categorizations: Judeans, Samaritans, and Gentiles.[31]

This particular division is also evident in Acts 1:8. Samaritans were considered to be "Mamzerim," that is, people of uncertain parentage[32] or illegitimate. In the Talmudic Tractate Kiddushin 75a (cf. Mass Kut 27) they were treated as "bastards."[33] A mishnah qualifies the status of the Samaritans with respect to marriage arrangements of the Jerusalem cult in like terms: "They are the people of uncertain condition (i.e., with whom one may not marry): those of unknown parentage, foundlings, and Samaritans." The Gemara (Nidda 74b) also classes the "sect" amongst those peoples (the Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, Edomites, and Nethinim [eunuchs, i.e. descendents of the ancient-slaves]) whom priests are forbidden to marry. If the regulation of Deuteronomy 23:3-5 was followed, the Samaritans could not hope to marry Judeans until the tenth generation (which is practically indefinite). This application is actually made in Kiddushin 75a.

The Johannine report (4:1-26) of Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman at "Jacob's well" is all but an innocent tale. The well is situated on the plot of the land "Jacob had given to his son Joseph." The land is near the Samaritan town Sychar. From this well "our father Jacob "drank," as did "his sons." Here again we have an indication of the dualistic Johannine mentality: the *"physical" Joseph* and his ancestors drank the "physical" water from the well; and then there is the "*spiritual" son of Joseph, Jesus*, who gave the water of eternal life.

The fact that this story in John pertains to a Samaritan woman is particularly striking. It is possible that the words "Judeans do not associate with Samaritans" (Jn 4:9) could be a euphemism for intermarriage. Of the "principal points in which Judaism condemned the Samaritans, there is none more important and significant than its attitude towards women."[34] It capitalizes specifically on sexual matters. For example, Nidda (iv, i) imbues a spirit that could throw light on Jesus' healing, probably authentic, of the suffering woman who had been bleeding for twelve years (cf. Mk 5:25-29; Lk 8:43-48; Mt 9:20-24): "The Samaritan women are menstruous from the cradle."

The notation of Sychar in the above-mentioned Johannine story is understood by Eusebius and Jerome to be the site of the ancient Shechem.[35] In the light of archaeological evidence,[36] there can be no "serious doubt" that there were contacts with the Shechemites over several periods: in patriarchal times (see Gen 34), the period of settlement (see Josh 24), the first attempt to establish kingship in Israel (see Jdg 8:30-9:57), and the circumstances surrounding the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon (see 1 Ki 12).

The ancient Shechem is today called Tell Balatah. The present-day Samaritan community in Nablus likes to identify their residential town Nablus near the Gerizim Mountain with old Shechem.[37] Nablus is the modern name of the city Neapolis ("New City") which the emperor Vespasian founded, but which the Roman writer Pliny (His nat v. 14) assigned to a place originally called Mabartha. The ancient mosaic map of Madaba (in modern Jordan) also distinguishes between Neapolis and Shechem.

Sychar (Jn 4:5) itself has now come to be identified with Ain Askar which lies 1250 meters northeast of Jacob's Well. However, the ruins of Nablus extend a distance

east of the modern town. It could be that (because of text corruption in the Gospel of John) Shechem (i.e., Nablus) accidentally became Sychar.[38] In John's gospel, as in the case of Luke-Acts, we have the allusion to the Judean division of the world in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee/Gentiles. A clear-cut distinction between Jerusalem and Sychar (Shechem) is made in the story line of the first five chapters of the gospel. Over against both the Judeans in Jerusalem (Jn 2:12-25; esp. 23ff.) and the Galileans in Cana (Jn 2:1-11) and Capernaum (Jn 4:43-45) who put their trust in Jesus because of their *physical* experiences of his heroic deeds to humankind that uphold finiteness, the Samaritans of Sychar (Jn 4:1-42) believed in him as the savior of the world by virtue of the *spiritual* water he gave them to drink so that they could receive infinite life. The story line concludes with a another scene in Jerusalem, at the pool of Bethesda, where the Judeans severely opposed Jesus, who proclaimed that he is God's son (Jn 5:1-47).

According to a relatively correct interpretation of available textual evidence in the First Testament, Priest Hasanein Wasef Kahen of the Samaritan Community in Nablus explained in 1966 that the establishment of the Judean cult in Jerusalem was the result of a wrong political evaluation. "King Daoud who is the descendent of Yahuda tribe moved the capital to Jerusalem instead of Nablus."[39] According to this tradition, David thought that building the capital of a united kingdom in a neutral place (and not at "the political and religious capital of the kingdom Nablus") could contribute to "supervising successfully all parts of the kingdom." After that, Solomon constructed the temple in Jerusalem. This was built "by human hands" (see the tradition used in Stephen's speech in Acts 7:48-49), while God's tent, the tabernacle, was still "erected...on a big rock that can be seen in Gerizim Mountain until now."[40]

In agreement with the Samaritan Book of Joshua in Arabic (chapter 43)[41] (retold slightly differently by representatives of the present-day Samaritan community in Nablus)[42] the Samaritans consider themselves as "original Israelites whom the Jews split off in a schism under Eli who moved the ark of the covenant from Shechem to Shiloh."[43] They claim to be descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph born in Egypt. The mother of Ephraim and Manasseh is Asenath, the Gentile daughter of the Egyptian Potiphera (Gen 41:45, 50), priest at Heliopolis (On). Manasseh and Ephraim are the children God gave to Joseph and they were, according to Genesis 48:1-21, legitimized by the head of the covenanted family, Jacob (Israel), in terms of a Near Eastern judicial practice of adoption (see esp. Gen 48:12).

Against the claim that Jerusalem is the "City of David," the Johannine school knew the ancient northern tradition that the nascence of the messiah, son of David, should rather be sought at Rachel's tomb at Ephrat (Bethlehem) where Rachel (Jacob's wife and mother of Joseph) died during Jacob's journey from Bethel.

Like father like son, like Joseph the patriarch, victim of slander, being rejected by his own people, sold for forty pieces of gold but exalted over all the Egyptians at the age of thirty (Gen 41:46), Joseph's son, Jesus of Nazareth, was hated by the Judeans and belittled as demon-possessed, a sinner, a Samaritan, an illegitimate person. But like father like son, like Joseph the patriarch who became an example of compassion and one who forgave and loved his brothers (Gen 50:17), Jesus, in Johannine terms, loved the cosmos (i.e., the Judeans) despite its hate.

Very few things that Joseph actively did are mentioned in the gospel tradition in the New Testament. The only things we read about are the references to his

righteousness, his Davidic ancestry, his dream and the angel's conversation with him, and his "holy marriage" with Mary (who stands in the line of the "impure" women Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife Bathsheba). Matthew depicts Joseph in legendary fashion as someone who took his family, Mary and the child Jesus, to Egypt. With a fulfillment formula, Matthew (Mt 2:15) quotes the prophet Hosea (11:1) that God called back his child from Egypt to settle in Galilee. Galilee is referred to in Isaiah 9:1; 1 Maccabees 5:15; and Matthew 4:15 as "Galilee where the heathens live." (Remember Hosea's connection with the Joseph tradition in terms of his marriage to an impure woman so that God's sovereignty to act outside the conventional cultic structures could be proclaimed.) Matthew (2:18) also narrates an attempt by Herod the Great to kill the "newborn king." Herod was the "king of the Judeans" who was ironically from a "bastard" background. Matthew reports this attempt in terms of another fulfillment quotation, taken from the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 31:15): "Rachel weeping for her children...because they are no more." (Remember the context within which the prophet argues. While holding onto the importance of the Davidic household, he nevertheless expects a totally new beginning in order to make an end to the atrocities of the royalties and their priestly retainers.)

The Gospel of Luke does not share this material peculiar to Matthew, but clearly has knowledge of the tradition that Bethlehem is the location of the Joseph family. He also knows that the origin of the savior of all people (Judeans, Samaritans, and Galileans alike), according to the prophets, is not to be sought in Jerusalem but in Bethlehem. When Luke, in the speech of the "Hellenist outsider" Stephen in Acts (7:55-56), draws an analogy between Stephen and Jesus by retelling the story of the patriarchs, research shows that Luke is dependant not on the Judean (Masoretic) but on the Samaritan

Pentateuch.[44] In this speech (Acts 7:1-53), as well as the record about the "Samaritan mission" headed by Philip (Acts 8:1-4), the controversy between the two tribes Judah and Joseph is to be read "between the lines."

Whatever the origin of the Stephen-Philip group could be, they clearly did not share the majority view of the Judeans with regard to the Samaritans. According to this view, the Samaritans were descendants of foreigners who settled in the North after the fall of Samaria and that the "true" *Ten Tribes* were still in exile in some far distant land. The Samaritan mission implies an acceptance of the Samaritans as part of God's people (as the Samaritans themselves have always maintained). Perhaps the Stephen-Philip group had in mind the great prophetic hopes (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah) for a reunion of North and South. Now that the new age had dawned, the time for such a reunion had come.[45]

Matthew's notation (also in other gospel traditions) of forgiving one's brother is one of the central characteristics of the portrayal of Jesus. The motive of compassion and forgiveness of sin by Joseph the patriarch is also the most outstanding theme in the intertestamental pseudepigraph The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[46] The gospel tradition in the New Testament shares and makes in striking ways use of this tradition in its depiction of Jesus. See, for example, H.W. Hollander[47] (my emphasis):

> ...it is the patriarch Joseph above all who plays a pre-eminent role in the ethics of the Testaments. Not only in his farewell-discourse is Joseph put forward as a good example for his sons, but his brothers too refer to him on their deathbeds, exhorting their sons to be like Joseph. He was one who kept himself free from adultery, who never stopped loving his brothers, who was full of mercy, compassion and forgivingness, who humiliated himself. He was a righteous man tried by God and rewarded and exalted afterwards.

In the Testament of Benjamin (4:2) one reads:[48] "The good person has not a dark eye. For (s)he shows mercy to all people, even though they are sinners" and, in Testament of Benjamin (4:4d)[49]: "...on the poor person (s)he has mercy; with the weak (s)he feels sympathy." In the Testament of Zebulon (6:5; 7:3f),[50] the same attitude towards the poor and feeling of sympathy towards the weak is described as virtues of the patriarch Zebulon, imitating the attitude and feeling of Joseph. In the Testament of Gad (4:1-2), in a passage where Gad instructs his children, a very remarkable phrase appears that the gospel tradition in the New Testament attributes to Jesus: Gad reveals that "lawlessness" against the Lord amounts to disobedience to the words of God's "commandments concerning the love of one's neighbour, and its sins against God."[51] These instructions clearly go together with the confession of one's own sin and repentance and an ongoing forgiveness of the sin of others (see T. Gad 6:3-4, 7).

Here we have a clear resemblance of the Matthean Jesus' words in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:12) and in the essence of the Ten Commandments (Mt 22:37-40). These words in the Testament of Gad refer to Gad's memory that Joseph wronged him several times. He also reminds himself of his bitter hatred towards Joseph so that he "very often...wanted to kill him" (T. Gad 2:1), and his (and Judah's) own covetousness by selling Joseph for "thirty pieces of gold" (cf. T. Gad 2:3-4).

In light of these quotations, powerful parallels exist between the Jesus of faith, recorded in the gospel tradition, and Joseph the patriarch as depicted in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. For example, the references to Jesus' death on behalf of others. This deliberate resemblance, seen from another angle, should not surprise us. In the

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, next generations are instructed to imitate "our father Joseph." It is therefore noteworthy, also with regard to the first-century Josephus, that the "biblical Joseph's relationship with his brothers emerges as that part of the story which is most similar to Josephus' own life"[52] (compare Jos JA ii, 16 with Jos Vit 314, 306, 333, 389, 353).

In her work on *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Literature*, Maren Niehoff finds: "For one reason or another, Joseph seems to represent for each narrator a certain Idealtyp."[53] The same is true with regard to Matthew's Joseph and the Joseph depicted in the romance "Joseph and Asenath." Whereas the writing "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in its present form, is dated in the second or third century C.E. but actually going back to probably the second century B.C.E., the romance "Joseph and Asenath" is dated between 100 B.C.E. and 115 C.E.[54]

The latter is a Hellenistic-Semitic romance that focuses on God's intervention in the life of Joseph the patriarch (parallel to the Joseph in the gospel tradition) to take Asenath, an "impure" woman, though a virgin, into his house. It is a story of a "holy marriage." Most striking is the reference (in the shorter constructed version of Marc Philonenko)[55] where Sophia is replaced by the figure Metanoia (referring to Asenath): "And Metanoia is a virgin, very beautiful and pure and chaste and gentle; and God Most High loves her, and all his angels do her reverence" (JosAs [Ph] 15:7-8).[56] A longer constructed version (that of Christoph Burchard)[57] reads as follows: "(What a) foolish and bold (woman) I (am), because I have spoken with frankness and said that a man came into my chamber from heaven; and I did not know that (a) god came to me." (JosAs 17:9 [B])[58]

One has to keep in mind that Asenath's virginity is not mentioned in the Genesis account (Gen 41:45, 50).[59] However, both the nature of Joseph's marriage to Asenath and her virginity were already among the first-century C.E. widespread literary topics. For example, Josephus (JA ii, 9), parallel to Joseph and Asenath, refers to their "most distinguished marriage" and Asenath's virginity.[60] This reference alone rules out the possibility that the author of Joseph and Asenath took this topic over from the evidence in the New Testament. What is in all probability the case, is that both the tradition in the gospel material in the New Testament and documents like Joseph and Asenath share a common idealization of Joseph's holy marriage. It is furthermore remarkable to notice that "rabbinic Midrash is...concerned with Asenath's alien origin and (that) this disturbing fact is accounted for in numerous ways."[61]

There are New Testament scholars who regard both the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and Joseph and Asenath as totally or to a great extent dependent on the New Testament. This opinion is not really convincing.[62] Arguments, however, will take us on a road that does not fit the purpose of the present study. My concern is to focus on the references to the correspondence between father and son, between Joseph and Jesus. Actually, in this regard, it is highly problematic to refer to Joseph as the father of Jesus at all. These references do not occur in writings originating in the period before the beginning of the separation of the Pharasaic synagogue and the church after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and the termination of the earliest Jesus movement in Jerusalem.

No known father played a role in the life of the historical Jesus. Such a conclusion has far-reaching consequences for historical Jesus research. It seems that

Joseph did not die early in Jesus' life. Joseph, actually, entered the scene rather belatedly, at a time when Jesus was already crucified. For Greek-speaking Israelites, Joseph was an ethical paradigm. For Pharisees, he was the symbolic adversary of Judah. For them, he was the forefather of people who either came from the pagan world or mixed with them. In other words, the Joseph-people were regarded by the Judeans as bastards because they were a mixture of the children of God and Gentiles, people who should be treated as if they had no parentage.

Who claimed first that the fatherless Jesus was the son of Joseph? Was it the Pharisees who regarded such a charge as a denotation of illegitimacy? Or was it the Greek-speaking Christians among the Israelites who regarded such a claim as a denotation of the intervention of God who turns slander into exaltation? We do not know. What is important, though, is that these two different perspectives relate to the way one looks at Jesus! The eye is the lamp of the body (Mt 6:22): if you look with an evil eye like his "physical" brothers and sisters, then he is insane (Mk 3:21), filled with an evil spirit (Mk 3:30); with a good eye like his "spiritual" brothers and sisters, he is the child of God, filled with the Spirit of God (Mk 1:9-11), the savior who casts away the evil spirit!

The Ordering of Unorganized Parallels into Trajectories

This chapter started with a reference to the tomb of Rachel which is on the road from Bethel to Bethlehem. With regard to the role of tombs in the world of Jesus, the late

Joachim Jeremias (the German scholar and student of Bultmann who had a significant impact on historical Jesus research during his short lifetime) wrote a remarkable book.[63] In the Mediterranean culture, as can also be experienced in Africa and elsewhere, tombs of special patriarchs, matriarchs, martyrs, or prophets are of crucial cultic and political importance. The tombs of Rachel and Joseph, we have seen, has been a special place of veneration up to this day. However, one of the Jesus sayings, which can probably be regarded as authentic, urges potential followers of his cause to "leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Sayings Gospel Q 9:59). The context of this saying in both the gospels of Matthew (8:21) and Luke (9:59) is the veneration of the dead, which is used as an excuse not to follow Jesus on his journey of subverting conventional wisdom. More or less the same sort of saying can be found in the Gospel of Thomas (GThom 42): "keep on walking."

Luke interpreted this Jesus saying (which he found in Q) within an apocalyptic frame of reference and against the breach between Jerusalem and Samaria (cf. Lk 9:51-53). Luke (9:54) referred to the hostile attitude of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem (transparent in the reaction of the two disciple brothers James and John) towards the Samaritans. Samaria is compared with Sodom and Gemorrah (cf. Gen 19:24). The two brothers, as spokesmen of the Twelve, requested fire down from heaven to destroy Samaria. Jesus reportedly reprimanded them. In Genesis, it is reported that the family of Lot was advised not to look back but to keep on walking (Gen 19:17). Lot's wife did not and became petrified (Gen 19:26). According to Luke's apocalyptic message, nothing can warrant such behavior. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is qualified for God's kingdom" (Lk 9:62).

Therefore, those who would like to participate in Jesus' itinerary should take note of what the Samaritan woman in John's gospel did. She responded positively to a similar Jesus saying by which Jesus showed his indifference to the cult, whether "sinners" venerated their forefathers on the Gerizim Mountain or in Jerusalem (Jn 4:19-24). Participating in Jesus' cause is to become a passerby, to keep on walking, to stay on track, to leave the "fathers" behind! Yet in order to join Jesus' journey, one has to know the direction of the trajectory.

All of these "parallels" and "analogies" between biblical characters, events, and even religions could easily create an impression of an environment where a monolithic unity seems to prevail. But that is certainly not the case. One should therefore act with caution to not be caught in the net of "parallelomania"[64] that amounts to thinking in terms of a disorganized mass of material. One needs to think along the lines of a particular development of the data. The result of not following a trajectory is to walk in circles. Rather, one needs to keep on moving in a linear way, starting at a point, passing another on the way, always heading towards the next. It is to think about biblical material in specific contexts that relate to developing stages.

The "background" or "environment" of the biblical world should not therefore "be mastered by reducing it to a mass of disorganized parallels to the New Testament; it must be reconceptualized in terms of *movements, trajectories*...." These words (my emphasis) are quoted from a book written by James M. Robinson (emeritus professor at Claremont) and Helmut Koester (emeritus professor at Harvard) entitled *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. In the introduction of this work, Robinson writes:[65]

> We now have, as a result of two centuries of critical historiography, its limitations notwithstanding, a history of early Christianity which makes indisputable the theological change from Jesus to Paul, from Paul to Mark or Ignatius, from Ignatius to Irenaeus or Origen, and then to Augustine or Athanasius. This is not simply a case of random variety, of pluralism. A more penetrating analysis reveals individual items to be exponents of intelligible movements.…Such sequences of development have come to the surface in the course of the critical historical research of the past generations. Yet the implications of their discovery have been obscured by the context in which they [the above-mentioned individual items] arose and continue to be used. These stages were generally found in the process of seeking a fixed date for a document, or at least enough chronological accuracy to rule out apostolic authorship; or as part of an argument to establish that one document attests to the existence and circulation of another.

Applying these ideas, many aspects of the interrelatedness between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith could be described and explained in a more adequate way. Establishing a sequence of movement, attested to different documents, can do this. Although these writings originated in divergent contexts, many of them are interrelated in some way or another. However, it is a hermeneutical danger, as James Robinson[66] also realizes, that the term *trajectory* "may suggest too much determinative control at the point of departure." But it does not need to be so. Robinson notes: "At one stage of a movement a document may function in a specific way, have a certain meaning or influence on the movement; at a subsequent stage on the trajectory that document, unaltered, may function or cut in a different way, may mean in effect something different, may influence the movement differently."

How does it work out in practice? Take the belief of Christians regarding the virginal conception of Jesus as an example. The *locus classicus* of this dogma is

Matthew 1:23 where the word "virgin" (parqe/noj) occurs. Actually, what Matthew is doing here is quoting from the book Isaiah (7:14) in the First Testament. The prophet Isaiah lived in the eight century B.C.E, and he referred to a very particular wartime situation where ancient Syrians were involved in the history of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel. The Hebrew word that the prophet used did not intend to mean "virgin" at all. Sometime since the third century B.C.E. in Egypt, the authors of a specific Greek version of the First Testament (the Septuagint, abbreviated as LXX) translated this word as virgin. Matthew's quotation comes from this Greek translation. But it is also possible that Matthew probably did not have the virginity of Mary in mind at all when he quoted Isaiah 7:14. What Matthew 1:23 (see also Mt 28:20) probably had in mind is the concept "Emmanuel" (i.e., "God-with-us"), a motive found in Isaiah 7:14 (which is an allusion to the motive of the "child of the king," mentioned in Isaiah 8:8 as "God with us").

Here, again, one has to beware of anachronistic exegesis. An illustration of this would be to interpret the term "Holy Spirit" not only in, for example Psalm 51:11(13), but also in Matthew 1:18 (e)k pneu/matoj a(gi/ou) and in Matthew 1:20 (e)k pneu/matoj e)stin a9gi/ou) from the perspective of the Christian dogma of the Trinity. Such an interpretation can be found in the edict of 1555 by Pope Paul IV against the anti-Trinitarians and the Socinians. These people taught that "...our Lord (is) not the true God..., not in all respects of the same being as the Father and the Holy Spirit, or that he was, according to the flesh, not received from the Holy Spirit in the lap of the most holy and always virginal Mary (*aut eundem secundum carnem non esse conceptum in*

utero beatissimae semperque Viginitas Mariae de Spiritu Sancto), but like the other people from the seed of Joseph (*sed sicut ceteros homines ex semine Joseph*)."

It is worth pointing out that Pope Paul IV, by rejecting the anti-Trinitarians, he in fact defended Roman Catholic Mariology. The interwoven dogmas of the "immaculate conception" and the "always virginal Mary" are part and parcel of this doctrine. It is built upon an early belief that Joseph withheld himself from sexual intercourse with Mary. This belief originated in apocryphal documents dating back to the second century C.E. Protestants used this tenet in the Belgic Confession (Article 18 and 19) as support of the belief in Jesus' "two natures": his humanity and his divinity. However, a "jumping conclusion" should not be made. To point out that both of these tenets regarding Joseph's role (or rather lack of role) and Mary's virginity are post-New Testament developments, does not necessarily mean a rejection of the dogmas of either Jesus' divinity or the Triune-God.

The roots of Mariology come from the second-century church father Ignatius (Ephesians 18:2; Smyrneans 1:1; Trallians 9:1) who was the first Christian to interpret Matthew 1:23 explicitly as a reference to Mary's virginity in relation to Jesus' divinity. But it was specifically because of the elaboration on both themes regarding Joseph and Mary in the post-New Testament document Proto-James (and writings dependent on it, such as The Life of Joseph the Carpenter and Pseudo-Matthew) that Mariology firmly took root.

How can one keep anachronisms out of our understanding of Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' adoption as "son of Joseph" on the basis of the intervention of the Holy Spirit? We could take note of texts contemporary to Matthew that emphasize a

particular tradition with regard to "Joseph, the son of Jacob." We have already seen that the pseudepigraphic document Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (containing material that probably goes back to the second century B.C.E.) witnesses to this tradition concerning the First Testament figure Joseph, the son of Jacob. According to this tradition, Joseph was not merely the innocent victim of the spiteful and jealous "evil eye," manifesting in the envy of his brothers. He, in fact, successfully conquered the evil spirits.[67]

Against this background, rabbis of the Jamnia Academy[68] were of the opinion that the protection that Joseph enjoyed against the evil spirits also applied to his offspring. These rabbis (belonging to the Pharisaic school) are generally viewed as opponents of the Jesus movement. Against this opposition, among others, Matthew defended the notion that Jesus is "child of God." In the Talmud (b. Bava Mezia 84a; cf. Berakot 20a), there is a tradition with respect to one of the leaders of the Jamnia Academy. According to this tradition, the leader sees himself as being of the "seed of Joseph." Therefore, the "evil eye" has no power over him.[69] Within the symbolic world of Israel, the Holy Spirit was the power that overcame evil. Similar evidence occurs a number of times in the Gospel of Matthew (e.g. Mt 12:28). Wordplay emphasizes the opposites: 'son(s) of God" versus "son(s) of evil." According to Matthew, the disciples, as "children of God," just like Jesus, as the adopted "son of Joseph" and "child of God," were also supposed to have power over "evil" and the "children of evil" (e.g. Mt 10:20; 24-26).[70]

Subsequently, it is of significance to take note of the research done by a distinguished scholar of Mediterranean culture, J. Duncan M. Derrett.[71] In the context of his discussion on the "evil eye" in the Mediterranean social world, he remarks as follows

with regard to the view Israelites had of births in general: "The Hebrews viewed childbirth as symbolic of destiny in a most intimate way. No conception took place without the co-operation of the (H)oly (S)pirit."[72] If the use of the word "virgin" in Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 7:14 was indeed intentional, then Matthew most probably had the divine conceptions such as those in the haggadic Moses paschal document (b. Baba Batra 120a) and in the Midrash Rabbah (Ex Rab 1:19) about Jochebed, the mother of Moses, in mind.[73] According to this tradition, God restored Jochebed's "virginity." This happened before she, without the involvement of her husband Amram, gave birth to Moses.

But it is also a fact that the mythological idea of a divine son who was conceived by some deity or other was taken over by Hellenist Egyptians within the Israelitic tradition and applied to the "holy people"[74] of the First Testament. This mythological idea was not only known to the Greek tradition (e.g., the birth story of Asclepios, son of a mortal mother Coronis, but conceived by the god Apollo, son of Zeus). It was also a general notion within the context of the Babylonian, and particularly, the Egyptian "royal legend." Since this idea was well known in Hellenistic Egypt, it is not surprising that the legend of the virgin birth already appeared early on in Hellenistic Christianity. Within the Greco-Israelite tradition, it is not unusual to be confronted by the mythological notion of "divine beings" like angels impregnating "mortal women."[75] In the Wisdom of Solomon (8:16-18), an erotic love affair between the preexistent Sophia ("Wisdom") and the "wise person" is mentioned: "(Always when) I come home I shall sleep with her,[76] for intercourse with her[77] has no bitterness and the marital communion with her no hurt, but joy and merriment."[78]

As far as the Lukan birth narrative is concerned, research has convinced me that placing it against the background of the divine son myths in contemporary Greco-Roman literature provides the clearest explanation. This research is particularly supported by the work of Rudolf Bultmann, Walter Schmithals, and John Dominic Crossan.[79] The fact that the legend relating to the virgin conception was unknown to Paul does not necessarily prove that this was not a common idea in non-Pauline Christian circles, even before Paul's time.[80] Virgin conception was a common notion in non-Christian circles.[81] Examples are the conceptions of Perseus and Romulus in Greco-Roman mythology, as well as of the pharaohs, Alexander, and Augustus, in legendary material emanating from, on the one hand, Egyptian and Greco-Roman history, and, on the other hand, from famous philosophers and religious thinkers such as Plato and Apollonius of Tyana.[82]

In this regard one cannot but agree with Raymond Brown.[83] He points out that it is inconceivable that converts from heathendom to Christianity would have been unaware of these parallels from Egypt, Greece, Anatolia,, and Latium. Sketches and portrayals of figures of divine birth and/or virgin conception, for instance Hercules, Perseus, Horus (the Isis cult), and Priapus, were found in houses in the cities Herculaneum and Pompeii, and surrounding villages. This area was damaged by an earthquake in 62 C.E., and buried in lava in 79 C.E. as a result of the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius. These portrayals provide a clear indication that miraculous birth stories were common and well known.[84]

The notion of the divine birth of Jesus does not appear in the New Testament except in Matthew 1 and Luke 1. This is remarkable in the light of its common occurrence in the contemporary world. The words in Galatians 4:4, "when the fullness of

the time came, God sent forth his Son, *born of a woman* (geno/menon e)k gunaiko/j)," offer absolutely no indication that Paul knows of the tradition relating to the virginal conception of Jesus.[85] Nonetheless, in my opinion, we cannot suppose that Paul is silent about *how* Jesus was conceived.[86] According to Paul, Jesus was at birth the preexisting child of God and therefore of a completely different order than that of people. At birth, however, he became equal to people in all respects. This is true of the nature of human birth, the nature of human history, and the human condition.[87] Paul does not think of the birth of Jesus in terms of any other than those of a natural birth.[88] Paul's expression, "born of a woman," also appears elsewhere, for example in Job 14:14 and Matthew 11:11. Here it pertains to natural birth. In other words, according to Paul, it is not Jesus' birth that determines his *being the son of God*: he was this already before being born of a woman. Paul (as in John's gospel) emphasizes the anomaly, the paradox, that the "eternal child of God" experienced a brief life and remarkable suffering because he was born of a woman. This view of what "being the child of God" entails, cannot be reconciled with that offered by the concept of a divine birth.[89]

It is clear that Matthew's and Luke's narratives of the birth of Jesus represent an unusual position in the New Testament. Bultmann's[90] conclusion is therefore correct when he notes that the particular understanding of "being the child of God" that underlies the narrative of the virgin birth is overshadowed (*überflügelt*) by the understanding of "being the child of God" to which Paul and John bear witness. Both, each in a specific way, work with "adoption as child of God." In chapter 7 I shall elaborate a little bit more on the background against which writers like Paul reasoned.

A Chain of Seven Links

It is clear that parallels exist between Matthew's understanding of Jesus as "son of Joseph," "son of Abraham," and "child of God," and conceptions in the Greco-Israelite and rabbinical world, including texts like Wisdom of Solomon and Joseph and Asenath. These parallels do not necessarily imply a direct source dependence; rather, they indicate common thinking.[91] However, the background material of the notion of Mary's virginity does not constitute a "mass of disorganized" parallels. A clear trajectory can be discerned.

In Matthew's gospel, the Joseph trajectory begins with a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. The book Isaiah appears within the Hebrew Scriptures, but the quotation comes from the Greek translation that originated in a Hellenistic environment. Matthew's quotation focuses on the expectation of an ideal king as well as on the motive of a Moses-like deliverance. This focus should be understood in the light of the Bethlehem-Jerusalem controversy. We have seen the extent to which this controversy relates to the Joseph-Judah conflict.

Luke has something different to say concerning the notion of Mary's virginity. The Lukan birth story is told within the context of Greek myths about deities and the emperor cult of the Romans. John does not elaborate at all on the aspect of virginity. However, the Joseph figure plays a remarkable role in John's gospel. His understanding of Joseph within the context of the Jerusalem-Bethlehem controversy is in some sense similar to Matthew's. Both of these gospels originated against the background of the

antagonism of the Pharisaic Academy in Jamnia towards the Jesus movement during the period after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

Paul and Mark wrote a good few years earlier than Matthew, Luke, and, John. Both Paul and Mark do not know anything about either Joseph or Mary's virginity. Even Mary, according to Mark, does not regard Jesus as someone of high esteem. Likewise, a complete silence falls, with regard to both Joseph and Mary, in the rest of the New Testament.

During the second century, a steady development in a totally new direction is discernable. It starts with Ignatius' emphasis on Jesus' divinity over Gnostic belief that *God's becoming event* in "flesh" was unthinkable. In Proto-James, the Joseph figure serves to support the new upcoming belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary. Other documents and theologians took up this line. During the Middle Ages, exactly the same Joseph motive, which occurred in the previous stage, was used to support the dogma of the Trinity. The Reformers obviously disliked Mariology. Nevertheless, from the sixteenth century onwards, they implemented the role of Joseph to defend the tenets of Jesus' "two natures" (*true God* and *true human*) and the dogma of the Triune God (see the Belgic Confession, Articles 18 and 19).

One can explain this development, from its beginning to the end, with the image of a chain consisting of seven links. However, the silence with regard to Joseph in the documents closest to the historical Jesus presents a missing link in the center. The thrust of each of the first three rings is in some way or another transparent in the themes of the overlays in the gospel tradition. These overlays fill the emptiness in the center.

The First Link ~ The Wisdom Tradition

The first link contains the Joseph saga in the First Testament. This story is well known. It is about acceptance despite rejection. It is a story of tension within Jacob's family. Jacob's other name is Israel. The twelve sons in the family do not have the same mother. Rachel, Israel's beloved wife, is the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. All the sons, however, have the right to be called children of their ancestor Abraham. The records in the First Testament about the twelve sons are not fully in concordance with one another. One particular tradition would like to put Joseph on a pedestal. According to this bias, Joseph was not his brothers' equal because he did not work with them in the fields. His father had prevented him from doing manual labor with his brothers by giving him a special multicolored robe. Such a robe is not worn for labor. In the same vein, this tradition records that the first-birth right was taken away from both the oldest, Rueben, and the second in line, Judah, because both of them shamed their father by their sexual misbehavior. Later in the story, Joseph reportedly stood steadfast against any temptation.

The father's favoritism is clearly seen when Joseph gossiped to his father about his brothers and received no reprimand. The direction of the story develops from slander into rejection as Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and abandoned. Outside of the Promised Land, he continued to play his role as the beloved son of his father. The pharaoh of Egypt exalted him "because of his father's God" (Gen 41:38-39; 50:17-18). His exaltation was the result of God's intervention in his life. He married, from the perspective of his brothers, an impure woman. However, this became a "holy marriage"

because the children, born of this union, strictly speaking also impure, were legitimized by Israel when he adopted them into the circle of God's covenanted people.

Mediterraneans are accustomed to judicial retribution: an eye for an eye. Joseph, meeting his brothers again, responded with an act of forgiveness and compassion. This is the first link.

The Second Link ~ The Prophetic Tradition

Joseph's children, born in Egypt, became the forefathers of the people living in the Holy Land in the region north of Jebus. They had their own places of political power and cultic worship. Since the Israelites entered Canaan, there was tension between the two tribal groups, the Makarites/Shechemites (Joseph's children) and the Judeans. After Joshua's return from Egypt the tension mounted. The restoration of Judah began when David, from the tribe of Judah, became the leader of all of Israel. David and Solomon were the peacemakers. To this end they chose Jebus/Salem, since then called Jerusalem, as a neutral location for political power and cultic worship. However, in the long run, it was of no avail.

Two empires came into being. Prophets tried to unify the two groups. Ezekiel, for example, would have liked to transform the "pair of sticks" (Ezek 37:15-28) into one. However, the northerners continued to pray to God on the mount Gerizim, close to Shechem, Joseph's burial place (see Josh 24:32). In Judea, Jerusalem was the symbolic center of the power of the Davidic family, the economy of the land, and the Jahwistic religion. The Judeans tried to silence their opponents by creating the myth of the lost ten

tribes. The Judean priests legitimized this bias by canonizing their version of the books of Moses. The northerners, however, had their own version of the books of Moses, the Samaritan Pentateuch. For the puritan Judeans the name "Samaritan" was equivalent to being a bastard, a person with no right to enter the temple in Jerusalem because he or she were not the "true" child of Abraham. Here, the second link ends.

The Third Link ~ The Judean Tradition

One should probably not take the Judeans' restoration of the defamation of the house of David too seriously. Like the forefather, Judah, David himself had his own story with women despite efforts made by the priestly Judean writers of the Chronicles to erase this story from the royal annals in the books of the kings. Much less sensational than the sexual morality of kings were the atrocities of the elite exploiting the peasants. Small wonder the prophetic voice (of Micah) was looking to a new king in Jerusalem, who was expected to come from the grass roots of Bethlehem. In the same vein, another prophet (Hos 11:1) predicted that a "God's son" would come from Egypt. This failure to restore defamation, is the third link. At this stage, the air was pregnant with the peasants' expectations of a popular king. For the "northerners," the "son of Joseph" would be this king. For the prophets the "son of David," the messiah of the united Israel, could encompass both expectations

The Missing Link ~ The Jesus Tradition

But when he came, nobody recognized him. He did not see himself in the role of a king. He was one of them. No biological father played a role in his life. History does not reveal a figure like Joseph at this point in time. His family thought he was insane. His wisdom subverted conventional culture. His heart and deeds were filled with compassion and anger because of the pain against which the prophets had already protested. The powers that were killed him as a nobody. There was no family tomb in which his body could be laid. This link is about the story of the fatherless Jesus.

The Fifth Link ~ The Gospel Tradition

The people, who were attracted by Jesus' message about God's all-inclusive presence, looked with new eyes at Jesus after his death. They began to adore him in terms of the expectations the prophets had of God's messiah who would inaugurate a dispensation of righteousness. They used names taken from Israel's scriptures and the surrounding world to express their adoration. Simultaneously, those who saw it as their task to maintain the conventional wisdom with regard to their images of God and culture opposed this movement by labeling its "founder" and its messengers. This can clearly be seen in the earliest Christian documents available, the authentic letters of Paul. The opposition was specifically directed against his notion that *God's becoming event in Jesus* meant that God's presence was available also to the people outside the boundaries of Israel.

Chronologically, the Gospel of Mark presents the second available Christian text. In this document, Jesus is called the "prince of the demons." As in Paul's letters, one can trace in Mark a tradition that went back to the earliest Christian movement in Jerusalem. It is clear that, from the very beginning, the community of Christian believers was diverse with regard to their understanding of what the core of Jesus' message really was. Although both Paul and Mark used the traditions transmitted from the Jesus movement in Jerusalem, they changed some essential aspects.

What was common to this early phase is that no one knew about Jesus' miraculous conception, or that Joseph was his father. The silence with regard to Joseph represents the missing fourth link in the Joseph trajectory. The gospel tradition in the later documents (Matthew, Luke, and John) have "overlays" that fill up the empty center in the tradition that originated in Jerusalem and was adapted by Mark. One of the aspects in the tradition of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem that does not go back to the historical Jesus, is the idea of "The Twelve." In Jerusalem, the first Jesus followers seemingly regarded the Jesus movement as the inauguration of the united Israel. The idea of "The Twelve" fulfilled the role of focussing on Israel as God's unified people. The death of Jesus, understood in terms of dying, being buried, and resurrected, is also part of this early tradition. This formula was taken over by both Paul and Mark. To them it accentuates the empty tomb tradition (which probably did not originate within the circle of the earliest Jesus movement in Jerusalem but rather in a Greco-Roman environment). The empty tomb tradition was seemingly understood as an indication of God's acceptance of Jesus as God's child.

A similar motive, also known in Roman Palestine of the time, is found in the stories of Hercules' "deification" (in Greek: *apotheosis*), as can be seen in the satires and tragedies of Seneca in the fifties of the Common Era. These correspondences are yet another indication of the extent to which Hellenization had taken place in the earliest Jerusalem faction. Jesus' death, however, was understood as if the Hebrew Scriptures foretold its vicarious intention. The same happened with regard to the resurrection tradition.

This earliest tradition knows neither about Joseph's link to Jesus nor the mission of the Christian movement among Samaritans. In this tradition, there is also no knowledge of the virginal conception of Jesus. Matthew and Luke, using Mark as source, filled the gap against the background of a particular process and mind-set. The process was that of the separation between the synagogue and the church that started after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The mind-set was that of apocalypticism which both Matthew and Luke took over from Mark and a later version of the Sayings Gospel Q. All three of these synoptic documents present an understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the light of an apocalyptic mind-set.

The apocalyptic expectation was that this world would be transformed into the final Kingdom of God. The vicarious death of a martyr was an important dynamic in this expectation because the martyr died on behalf of others to procure a better future for them beyond death. According to a specific prophetic tradition, the new age would dawn when the messiah was revealed in Jerusalem as the child of humanity so that the nations came to Jerusalem to join the unified Israel. In Mark and Matthew, this cosmic event happened when, in accordance to Amos 8:9, the sun went down at noon (see Mk 15:33;

Mt 27:45) and Jesus, in accordance to Daniel 7:13-14, been revealed as the messianic child of humanity igniting the "discipling" of all the nations (see Mt 28:18-20; Mk 15:39; Mt 27:54).

In Mark and Luke, the focus was moved from Jerusalem to the Gentiles. Luke, in particular, geographically divided the world into concentric circles: Judea, Samaria, and Rome, symbolizing the greater world. The Joseph tradition, as we have seen, is very much intertwined with Samaria. Jesus, son of Joseph, was seen as the precursor coming from Bethlehem, entering Jerusalem as Israel's messiah after he had journeyed from Galilee through Samaria to Jerusalem. For Matthew, the journey into the pagan world was not at issue anymore. The focus was on the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" so that the temple in Jerusalem could become the house of prayer for all nations, including the impure and the outcasts.

The social location of Luke's audience differed from that of Matthew's. Matthew is either a Syrian or Galilean gospel in which there is a tendency to both conform to and separate from the (Pharisaic) synagogue. The Pharisees remained the advocates of the ideology even after its destruction. An aversion to the Samaritans formed part of this ideology. The defamation of Jesus on account of his illegitimate background seems to be part of this aversion. Matthew apologized by explaining that Jesus' birth was the result of an intervention by God. However, he conformed to the synagogical view by explicitly denying that Jesus nor his followers ever went to the region of the Samaritans (Mt 10:5). Matthew represented the Judean emphasis of only one Israel as if the "northern stick" did not exist at all.

For Matthew, the *son of David* was the messianic *child of humanity* who was expected to inaugurate the utopia for the lost sheep of Israel. Paradoxically, Matthew departed from synagogical policy by emphasizing the ingathering of the social outcasts into the symbolic temple (which did not concretely exist anymore) and, therefore, into God's kingdom. For Matthew, as for Mark, the Jesus-kerygma became the message of an apocalyptic death, although he did not mention Jesus' death as for the benefit of others. The only hint of such an idea in Matthew's gospel (Mt 26:26-29) is the eucharistic formula that he (cf. also Paul in 1 Cor 11:23-26) took over from Mark's version (Mk 14:22-25) of the convictions of the Jesus faction in Jerusalem.

Luke also knew of the illegitimacy charge. His audience was probably located in Ephesus in Asia Minor. The influence of the conflict between the synagogue in Jamnia and the Christian communities reached far beyond the boundaries of Roman Palestine. This was the case in Asia Minor where the emperor granted judicial rights over Israelites to the synagogue.

The defamation on account of Jesus' illegitimate background seemingly originated in the synagogue probably because of his fatherlessness. The Jamnia Academy did not see Jesus' illegitimacy as the outcome of rape. We have seen that second-century rabbinical Judaism saw it this way on account of a satirical reading of the traditions of Jesus' birth found in Matthew and Luke. They created the Ben (son of) Panthera tradition as a satirical wordplay on *parthenos* (`parqeno/j`), the Greek word for virgin. Panthera was the name they gave the Roman soldier who allegedly raped Mary.

Luke represented the prophetic tradition of the reunification of the North and the South. This can be seen in his tripartite mission to the Judeans, Samaritans, and the Gentiles (Acts 1:8). T5he Samaritans were, according to Luke, a necessary link backward to the "mission" to the outcasts in Judea, and forward to the Gentile mission. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke (10:30-35) depicted Jesus as both the Samaritan and the impure Israelite lying in the ditch. Jesus was also Lazarus who became one of the "dogs" (cf. Lk 16:21). The label "dog" was conferred on Gentiles (cf. Mk 7:28). In the Israelite tradition, the name Lazarus was linked to Abraham's family, and it meant "God helps." In another story of Luke (15:11-32), Jesus was portrayed as a defiant sibling who moved from the land of his fathers into an impure country where he became one of the outcasts. Paradoxically, the outcasts, the Samaritans, rejected Jesus but he did not reject them, although Luke tells us that the disciples James and John (projecting the Jerusalem faction) expected him to do so (cf. Lk 9:51-55).

Luke's apology for the slander concerning the scandalous birth memoir differs from that of Matthew's. Luke combined the Jerusalem faction's claim of Jesus' messianic origin with the tradition of the "newborn baby." This combination was placed within the common context of Greco-Roman deification (*apotheosis*) and emperor-cult motives. For the Jerusalem faction, Jesus was "messiah" in an adoptionistic sense:[84] as "son of David" he was the messiah who, as "messiah" became the "child of God." Analyzing this tradition historically, especially in light of how it was used in New Testament writings, one can infer that the post-Easter followers of Jesus in Jerusalem did not understand this "adoptionistic" motive as correlating with divine conception. The same is true for Paul and Mark.

For Luke, Jesus was:

- Israel's messiah (Lk 1:11; 2:26; 4:18; Acts 4:26-27), filled with the Spirit of God (Lk 4:1; Acts 2:33);
- savior and *kyrios* (Ku/rioj) of the world (Lk 1:11; Acts 2:34, 36; 4:12);
- virginally conceived (Lk 1:34-35a)–like Perseus and Asclepios;
- the son, so people thought, of Joseph, who was the son of Eli (Lk 3:23), the son...of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob (Lk 3:33-34), the son...of Seth, the son of Adam, the child of God (Lk 3:38);
- adopted as God's child (Lk 3:21), because of his divine origins (Lk 1:35)–similar to the emperor of the time, the deified Augustus; and
- ascended to heaven (Lk 24:51; Acts 1:9) like Hercules, the godlike hero who had a human mother impregnated by Zeus and was adopted as Zeus' son because of an empty tomb (pyre) tradition.

Luke's way of thinking must also be understood against, among others, the background of the defamatory assertions concerning Jesus' origins by the "opponents" attached to the Jamnia Academy.

Just as with the virginal conception, I do not trace the empty tomb tradition back to the Jesus faction in Jerusalem, but to common Greek thinking that manifests in the

stories of the deification of Hercules. In this respect, Luke shares the opinion of Paul, who apparently got his idea of the empty tomb (cf. 1 Cor 15:4) from the common thinking in the Greco-Roman world. This idea partly lies behind the Christ hymn in Philippians 2:6-11.

Luke also knew the resurrection appearances because of his acquaintance with the Pauline tradition. This can be seen, among others, in the correspondence between Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 15:6 to the five hundred who experienced the risen Christ at the same time and in Luke's version in Acts 2:1-13 of the "pentecostal" experience of a multitude of believers. Paul, in turn, took over the core of the appearance tradition, as it falls out in the traditional formula in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, from the Jerusalem faction:[92]

Christ:

died, for our sins, according to the Scriptures

was buried,

was raised, on the third day, according to the Scriptures

appeared to ***Cephas*** (i.e., Peter), then to the ***Twelve***

to ***James***, then to ***all the apostles***.

The Jerusalem faction seemingly understood the notion of "The Twelve" as exchangeable for "all of Israel," represented by "all of the apostles." In Paul's version of the traditional formula it is clear that he differed from this juxtaposition.[93] Apart from himself, he named Junia, Andronicus, Cephas, and probably James, and Silvanus as apostles. For Paul the concept "apostles" is an expansion of "The Twelve" in

Jerusalem.[94] Luke added a reference to Jesus' ascension to the resurrection motive by making use of stories such as that of Hercules. He did this because it apparently fits in with the notion of divine conception.

Luke, like Matthew, knew that a man called Joseph was not Jesus' biological father (cf. Lk 3:23). We have seen that the earliest tradition does not reveal any knowledge of Jesus' parentage except the suggestion of his fatherlessness. I also proffered a solution to the question as to where the perception that Jesus was the (adopted) grandson of either Jacob (Mt 1:16) or Eli (Lk 3:23), the father of Joseph, could have originated. Evidence directs us to the pharisaic tradition from the Jamnia Academy. In the next chapter I will demonstrate to what extent the Jerusalem ideology debarred someone from the privilege of being counted among the children of Abraham if he did not know who his father was.

For the puritans in the Judean tradition, it did not take much to label a "son of Joseph" for his alleged illegitimate background and his association with prostitutes and other outcasts. Seen from the Christian perspective, the Joseph legend was also used in the apology found in the gospel tradition. This apology concerned both Jesus' subversion of the Judean ideology and the defamation it evoked. The post-Easter Jesus movement filled the gap caused by Jesus' "fatherlessness" in its own way. Christians exalted Jesus as the risen Christ and Lord. This exaltation was substantiated by placing him in succession to the forefather Joseph, the First Testament patriarch. According to the Joseph saga in the First Testament, God exalted Joseph despite slander.

Furthermore, early witnesses, like both Paul and Mark, knew the tradition that the historical Jesus called upon God as his Father. By calling God his Father, Jesus claimed

to be a "child of Abraham" regardless of the defamation concerning his fatherlessness. In the same vein, the Q tradition (Lk 3:8//Mt 3:9) contains a statement by John the Baptist that critically rejects the selfconfident assumption of the Israelites that they have "Abraham as father." This statement was made within the context of Jesus' baptism. According to John the Baptist, "God can produce children of Abraham from desert stones." In Matthew (3:7), this statement was directed at the Pharisees and Sadducees. In this respect, both Jesus and John the Baptist represented the critical voice of the prophets against the royal hierarchy, and both were also killed as a result. As we have seen, Jesus did not agree with John the Baptist's view that God would, only at the end of time, catastrophically intervene in a apocalyptic way, in order to create the ideal condition of righteousness. According to Jesus, God was already fully present here and now, and would not be fully present only at the end of time.

This discussion touches on Dominic Crossan's[95] understanding of God's presence against John the Baptist's apocalyptic view. John the Baptist was of the opinion that God would soon intervene as an avenger: God was like a forester who separates the good trees from the bad with his axe, like a farmer who separates the wheat from the chaff with his fork. In this view, there were only two paths, the good and the evil, and there was little time for people to decide which path to take.

The Baptizer, like the prophets of old, announced that God would intervene to rectify an iniquitous state of affairs so that people who were oppressed might be saved. John, like a Moses or Joshua,[96] set out to the desert across the river Jordan to lead people back to the promised land with God's help. But, unlike other apocalyptic prophets, John did not physically collect his followers *en masse* to lead them into the Promised Land

across the river Jordan. According to Crossan, John's strategy was different. John was not a political activist such as those "rebel leaders" to whom, among others, Josephus referred. His baptism was a symbolic act of entering into the Promised Land.

People in the baptism scene, referred to by Luke (3:7) as a "multitude," were, in the view of the Pharisees and Sadducees, not deemed "children of Abraham." Therefore, they were labeled "sinners." According to Mark (1:5), they came to John from all over Judea and, specifically, from Jerusalem in order to be baptized in the river Jordan. By doing this, they *acknowledged*[97] that they belonged to the category of "sinners" (Mk 1:5).[98] The italicized word "acknowledge" in Mark 1:5 (e)comologe/w) has normally been translated with "confess." Confessing, however, presupposes the recognition that one has acted wrongly. The Greek word does not necessarily have this meaning. It can mean:[99] "to express openly one's allegiance to a proposition or person."

Who could be the people in the baptism scene who would openly declare that they belonged to the group labeled "sinners?" In this context, "sinners" means "outsiders."[100] But "outsiders" to what or whom? According to the Judean cult of Jerusalem (see again Isaiah 65:13ff.) , they were "outsiders" to the house of Israel, the family of Abraham, the "Israel of God" of whom God was the "Father."

As said, one needs not doubt the historicity of Jesus' baptism. However, It is not so obvious that Jesus himself initially understood his baptism as "apocalyptic penance."[101] The later tradition, explicitly to be found in Mark (10:39; see also Mt 3:15), understood both Jesus' baptism and death in the light of the apocalyptic mind-set. A martyr acting and dying for the forgiveness of sins forms the center of this mind-set. We have already seen that "acknowledgement" does not necessarily presuppose "confession

of guilt." Perhaps in the beginning, Jesus did share the apocalyptic expectations of John the Baptist–who knows? The little information we have, however, indicates that Jesus' motive to go to John "from Nazareth [in Galilee]" (Mk 1:9; cf. also Mt 3:13) to be baptized was the same as that of those who came "from Jerusalem [in Judea]" (Mk 1:5). But we should not lose sight of the fact that Mark interpreted the baptism of Jesus from the perspective of a post-Easter debate on who were "insiders" and who were "outsiders."[102]

In additional editorial material,[103] according to Luke, John the Baptist expected people like publicans and soldiers who came to be baptized to follow a particular ethical lifestyle. This lifestyle was to be different from that of those labeled by the Sayings Gospel Q (3:7) as "snakes, viperous brood." According to the Q tradition (Lk 3:8-9//Mt 3:7-10), such people were called upon to produce fruit in keeping with conversion. It was not the "outsiders" (in Q's view) who came to be baptized. This is because they, the leaders of the (Judean) family of Abraham, centered in Jerusalem, considered themselves justified before God. According to this particular tradition in a later version of the Sayings Gospel Q, it would have been useless for them to desire baptism. They would not have succeeded in fleeing the coming apocalyptic catastrophe.

In other Q traditions,[104] the expression "snakes, viperous brood" was credited to Jesus. To John the Baptist (Q 3:8), these "viperous brood" were the people who boasted that they had "Abraham as father." However, according to this Q tradition, God was able to produce children of Abraham from stones! Matthew (3:7) specified quite clearly that these people were the Pharisees and Sadducees. Also, when Matthew (23:33) incorporated the words of Jesus ("snakes, viperous brood") into the Sayings Gospel Q

(11:39-52), he had Jesus refer specifically to those who sat on the "chair of Moses." A similar conviction is found in John's gospel (8:31-59).[105]

Multiple, independent evidence therefore confirms the historicity of the baptism of "sinners" by John the Baptist and his criticism of the Judean cult of Jerusalem. For various reasons we have already discussed, Jesus, like the other people baptized by John the Baptist, was probably not considered to belong to the "people of the covenant." John the Baptist's message that God could produce "children of Abraham" and that their "sin" could be forgiven by God independent of the cult, must undoubtedly have touched the hearts of the "outsiders." How else are we to understand Josephus' biased denial that John's baptism implied forgiveness of sin (Jos Ant 18.5.2)?[106] According to Josephus, he attracted so many people that Herod [Antipas] feared him and had him killed.[107]

In another passage in John' gospel the Judean temple authorities labeled Jesus as a "sinner" and a "Samaritan" (Jn 8:46). This defamation should be understood against the background of a dispute with the authorities about who truly were the "children of Abraham" (in other words, the "children of God"). The debate was related to the tradition that Jesus was the "son of Joseph." It is therefore understandable that the early church wanted to defend the "sinlessness" of Jesus.[108] "Sinlessness" is, according to the Johannine tradition, implicitly the fruit of the life of "God's children." In the first letter of John (3:9), the author(s) makes use of a ring composition[109] to express this view:

A Whosoever is BORN OF GOD
  B does not commit SIN
    C for his seed remains in him
  B^1 and he cannot SIN
A^1 because he is BORN OF GOD.

In the Gospel of John (1:18), Jesus was the preexistent "only begotten child of God."[110] Jesus also had the authority to grant to all who believed in him the right to be called "children of God" (Jn 1:12). They were "not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn 1:13). According to the Johannine tradition, "children of God" live a "righteous life" and do not "continue sinning" (1 Jn 29-3:1). God's "children" are free from the bondage of sin (Jn 8:31-36).

This last reference is to that passage in the Johannine tradition related to the dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning whether the concept "children of Abraham" ("children of God") presupposes a physical relationship. In John's story, this controversy pertains to what is told in previous passages. It relates to:

- the story of the ***Samaritans*** who believed in him (Jn 4:39-42);
- the desertion of many ***disciple****s* (Jn 6:60-66);
- the distrust of ***Jesus' brothers*** within the context (Jn 7:1-9) of the hatred of the *cosmos* (i.e., the Judeans who regarded Jerusalem as the "center" of the world);
- the schism (Jn 7:40-44) among the ***people*** (notice, not among the Judeans–cf. Jn 7:40!) whether it was possible that a Galilean (a "northerner") could be the *messiah* since, according to the Judean tradition, Scriptures said that the "seed of David" was allocated to Bethlehem;
- the ***Judean elite***, too, who could not take it seriously that a *prophet* could come from Galilee (Jn 7:45-52);
- those ***Judeans*** (initially attracted to Jesus) who, in the end, regarded Jesus as a person with an illegitimate background–there is no way that he could have been a son of

With regard to this labeling of Jesus as a Samaritan and a sinner, Rudolf Bultmann[111] correctly recognized "traditional material" in these passages (Jn 7:1-13). For him it attested to the compassion of the historical Jesus towards the outcasts. John, however, interpreted this tradition within a specific context and from a particular perspective. The Fourth Gospel shares the "Semitic-Hellenistic" wisdom speculation. God's wisdom (son) came from above. Salvation is grounded in the mission of the savior from above to beneath, becoming human in all aspects from birth to death.

John's community, such as those of Luke and Matthew, consisted of Israelites and Hellenists. Against the synagogical charge that Christians were deviant and impure, similar to their "founder" Jesus, John claimed that his community of Christians was part of the *one* assembly of God (cf. Jn 10:16). Jesus, who came from above and went up again (his death and resurrection), was God's victorious deliverance of his people's incarceration.

The claim of unity in the Johannine community should be seen against the defamation of the Judean synagogue that the Christian community was of illegitimate offspring, that is that they were descendants of the Joseph tribe. According to the synagogue, Jesus was therefore a Samaritan. John knew that there had been Judeans who followed Jesus, but to him they did not really continue the cause of Jesus. John created the Nicodemus legend to illustrate that some of the Judeans were not prepared to accept the scandalous message that Joseph's son came from the world of God. Others closer to

Jesus, like Peter, had difficulty accepting the death of Jesus as God's victory over the flesh. John, therefore, created another legendary figure, the *beloved disciple*, to portray his understanding of the ideal way to follow Jesus. Against this background, we read that a disciple, like Thomas, did not believe in Jesus' death and resurrection as the starting point for the mission of the Christian community. Against such skepticism, both Mary Magdalene and the beloved disciple showed that Christians are sent just as Jesus was sent. The objective of this mission was to show compassion to the weak. The Samaritan passages in John's gospel underline this message.

The Sixth Link ~ The Dogmatic Tradition

Whereas the fifth link in the Joseph trajectory consists of the gospel tradition that fills the absence of a Joseph figure in the life of Jesus, the material in the sixth link coincides mainly with the development of post-New Testament Mariology. This tenet concerns the figure of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, "one of the most powerful imaginary constructs known in the history of civilizations."[112] During this phase we find Joseph as "passively" active. Christians used the Joseph legend to support the upcoming belief in Mary's immaculate conception and perpetual virginity.

According to this dogma, Mary conceived without sexual intercourse. No sperm or male seed entered her womb. This doctrine used the Gospel of John to support its argument. The author(s) of the Gospel of John (1:13) referred to God's children as people who were not born of natural descent. They had the right to be called "children of God." This right was not comparable to being physically born as someone's child. To be

"born from above" (Jn 3:5-7) eliminated human decision or a husband's desire. "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (Jn 3:6). Both Mariology and the (sixteenth century) Belgic Confession (Articles 18 and 19), however, did not comprehend the thrust of this dualistic Johannine mentality. Furthermore, the Joseph legend provides the material for later doctrinal development. Roman Catholicism's Mariology, and Orthodox Protestantism's focus on Jesus' divinity have been supported by the use of the Joseph legend. This relates to the belief that Joseph did not have intercourse with Mary.

We have seen that the roots of this tenet came from the second-century church father Ignatius. He understood Matthew 1:23 as a reference to Mary's virginity in relation to Jesus' divinity: "For our God Jesus the Messiah was conceived by Mary according to the plan of God: on the one hand of the seat of David [cf. Rom 1:3], on the other hand of the (H)oly (S)pirit [cf. Matt 1:18, 20]."[113] These two themes (Mariology and Jesus' divinity) specifically form the plot of the story about Mary in the second-century document Proto-James. In later centuries, writings such as The Life of Joseph the Carpenter and Pseudo-Matthew elaborated extensively on these themes.

The Seventh Link ~ The Patristic Tradition

The seventh link is the last in the Joseph trajectory. The discussion of this trajectory makes it clear that there is an enormous distance between the empty center and the traditions in the gospels and post-New Testament documents.[114] J.P. Meier, in his *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volume One: The Roots of the Problem*

and the Person,[115] admits that "...the total silence about Joseph is significant." However, he does not think that this gap is an "unbridgeable gulf."[116]

According to Meier, there is "converging evidence of the notable silences found in the Four Gospels and Acts, all of which have references to the mother and brothers (and sometimes the sisters)." For him the traditional solution, already known in the patristic period, remains the most likely.[117] According to some church fathers (e.g., Epiphanius, Panarion 3.78.10), Joseph was already dead when Jesus began acting in public. The first hint of this idea can be found in Proto-James. Here Joseph is portrayed as a very old man when he took Mary into his home. According to the church father Epiphanius (Panarion 3.78.10–written circa 377 C.E.), Joseph died shortly after the family visited the temple in Jerusalem with the twelve-year-old Jesus (as recorded by Luke 2:41-52).[118]

I cannot see how Meier could seriously consider the patristic evidence as historically authentic. This evidence uncritically links Joseph's death with the episode of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. It is almost impossible to argue for the authenticity of this scene. Meier[119] quite correctly realizes that "there is a completely neutral stance [of Joseph as father] toward Jesus' ministry." However, it is less likely that this "neutral stance" could be explained as being "of no symbolic use to the evangelists." A male figure in the Mediterranean world, such as Jesus in light of Mark 6:3, without an explicit connection to his father was someone without identity. Even today, when crosses the border of Israel, or an Arabic country like Jordan, one has to provide the name of one's father on the application form for a visa or entrance permit.

Meier[120] is right when he argues that when Jesus mentioned a sister belonging to the household of God, he had his earthly relatives in mind. However, I find it difficult to see that the silence about his earthly father would imply that his father was already dead. One would rather expect that, if Jesus used his earthly family as an analogy for God's heavenly family, the role of the father would be important. Given the importance of the father in Mediterranean culture, the cancellation of the role of an earthly father is inexplicable.

In my view, the other possible explanation to which Meier also refers fits in better with the converging evidence in the relevant material closest to the historical Jesus. The father could have abandoned the family. It seems that the reason he would have done this had to do with the conception of Jesus. Historically seen, we know nothing at all of the circumstances of Jesus' conception. Furthermore, there is no historical reason (including New Testament evidence–cf. Lk 2:7)[121] why Jesus should be seen as the firstborn. The suggested father's abandonment could have had certain consequences that would have conformed to the information which, in all probability, we can discern historically:

- Jesus' tension with his family;
- Jesus' defense of the fatherless;
- Jesus' judgment of the abandonment of women (and children) by an act of divorce;
- Jesus' calling upon God as his Father;
- Jesus' criticism of the Jerusalemites;
- the absence of a family tomb as his last resting place.

Nonetheless, for other patristic fathers, Joseph the "woodworker" was still "deadly alive." According to an expert among a previous generation of patristic scholars, A.W. Argyle,[122] one does not find references to Joseph, the First Testament patriarch, in the prophets. However, as I have shown, the prophetic voice with regard to the conflict between the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom is very much embedded in the Joseph saga (e.g., Ps 77:16; 78:67; 80:2; 81:6; (105:17); Ezek 37:16, 19; 47:13; 48:38; Amos 5:6, 15; Ob 1:16; Zech 10:6) . For example, in Amos 6:1, 6 we read: "Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria....You drink wine by the bowfull...but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph"[NIV] (see also Ezek 37:15-17). We have also seen that Joseph was more directly mentioned from the second century B.C.E. onwards.[123]

A similar pattern with regard to Joseph being simultaneously "dead" and "alive," can be found in both Judaism and Christianity. In Judaism, Joseph became an ethical paradigm for repentance.[124] Seeing Joseph as an ethical example also finds its way into Christian thinking. The First Testament saga of Joseph, the patriarch, provides an abundance of material for elaboration: he was "a righteous man afflicted and sold by his brethren, steadfast in resisting temptation, unjustly accused, arrested, the benefactor of others, tender hearted, forgiving his brethren who had wronged him."[125] The patristic fathers made use of this ethical paradigm in two ways: (1) as prefiguring the incarnation, passion, and exaltation of Jesus;[126] (2) as providing a model for Christian character and conduct.[127]

The seventh link of the Joseph trajectory is therefore open-ended. In Christendom, some think Joseph died early in Jesus' life. Others think he lives as an

ethical symbol. And, to me, it seems that Joseph is a legend. Therefore, the search for Jesus as child of God cannot avoid the issue of his fatherlessness. Within Christendom, the Joseph tradition clearly developed as a trajectory. This line of thought was impelled by the anti-Christian calumny against Mary and the associated evolution of the idea of the "pure" (sinless) birth of Jesus. This idea led to the conviction that Mary remained a virgin after Jesus' birth, and even that she was herself the fruit of a "divine birth." However, there is no trace of a father who fulfilled a role in Jesus' life in historical Jesus material. For Jesus, God filled this emptiness.

END NOTES

1. Grant, F.C. 1956, "The Economic Background of the New Testament," pp. 96-114.
2. Among the many publications available I have had make use of Hennecke. E. (edited by Schneemelcher, W.) [1959] 1973, *New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1: Gospels and Related Writings*, pp. 404-417; Manns, F. 1977, *Essais sur le Judeo-Christianisme*, pp. 80-114; Robinson, F. 1896, 'Coptic Apocryphal Gospels: Translations Together with the Texts of Some of Them'; Schaberg, J. 1993, 'The Infancy of Mary of Nazareth (Proto-James and Pseudo-Matthew)'; Sellew, P. 1997, 'Heroic Biography and the Literary Intent of the Protevangelium Jacobi'.
3. Concerning the parallel of the two Josephs, see Manns, F. 1977, *Essais sur le Judeo-Christianisme*, pp. 82, 87; concerning the parallel of Mary and Eve, see Thompson, T.L. 1999, *The Bible in History: How Writers Create a Past*, pp. 328-329: "In the story's opening [Gen 2 and 3], all our characters bear cue-names. There is Adam 'the human' of the garden story (Gen. 2:7) and Eve, his wife, whose name is interpreted: 'the mother of all living' (Gen. 3:20). Adam has sex with his wife, who bears a child whom she names 'Cain' (Gen. 4:1). Adam's involvement, as far as the story is concerned, is not terribly important. It provides only the occasion of Eve's pregnancy; human fertility is not his to give but God's. When she gives birth Eve tells the audience: 'I have made a man with Yahweh!' Eve creates her children with God! Eve, the great mother of all, makes men. Her child 'Cain,' whose name puns with Eve's word *qaniti* ('to make'), has the name of 'creature'. Human life is born of god and woman. The child who is born is the creature, divine and human: he is us."
4. Manns, F. 1977, *Essais sur le Judeo-Christianisme*, p. 87.
5. There were two villages in ancient Israel with the name "Bethlehem." Apart from the one in Judah, the other one was situated in Sebulon, seven miles northwest from Nazareth (see Jdg 12:8, 10).
6. Bethlehem (Bit-Lahmi) in Judah is first mentioned in the Amarna letters (circa 14th century B.C.E.) (see Murphy-O'Connor, J. [1980] 1998, *The Holy Land*, pp. 198-199).
7. In Stephen's speech (Acts 7:15-16), Luke, relying on the Samaritan Pentateuch and not the Greek translation (LXX) of the Masoretic text (see Coggins, R.J. 1975, *Samaritans and Jews*, p. 122) says both Jacob and Joseph were buried at Shechem in the land that *Abraham* bought from the sons of Hamor.

8. "And Joseph' bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that *Jacob* bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants" (Joshua 24:32). From a Palestinian's perspective, Joseph's tomb is described in a tour guide (PACE & PACL 1999, *Pace Tour Guide of the West Bank & Gaza Strip ("Palestine": Historical & Archaeological Guide*, p. 167) as follows: " Just north of Jacob's well, right at the foot of Tell Balata [mount Ebal], is the traditional site of Joseph's tomb. This rather simple white-domed building is believed to be Joseph's grave. His remains, according to the Old Testament, were carried from Egypt and buried here [Joshua 24:32]. Others believe that the remains were buried in Hebron [see the Judean tradition as reported in Gen 50:12-13; cf. Murphy-O'Connor, J. 1998, *The Holy Land*, pp. 273-277; esp. pp.276-277]. The place was occupied by Israeli settlers who started a religious school in it at the beginning of the 1980s. Although Nablus [present-day Shechem] was transferred to the Palestinian Authority late in 1995, the site remained in the hands of the settlers. It is heavily guarded by the Israeli army and closed to visitors."
9. Murphy-O'Connor, J. 1998, *The Holy Land*, p. 199.
10. Micah mentions the link between Rachel's tomb and the North of the land by alluding to Genesis 35:19-20 where Rachel's tomb is noticed in juxtaposition to Migdal Edar, in the vicinity of Schechem. The Hebrew for this location is also found in Micah 4:8, translated in the *New International Version* as "watchtower of the flock."
11. For the interrelatedness between the prophetic traditions in the First Testament and the Joseph trajectory I am specifically indebted to the research of my colleague at the University of Pretoria, Andries Breytenbach (see Breytenbach, A.P.B. 1997, "Die Herfsfees en die Koningsrite by Bet-El as interteks van Amos 7:10-8:14 en Hosea 9:1-9," pp. 513-528; Breytenbach, A.P.B. 1997, "Meesternarratiewe, Kontranarratiewe en Kanonisering: 'n Perspektief op Sommige Profetiese Geskrifte," pp. 1161-1186; Breytenbach, A.P.B. 1998, "'Seun van Josef' uit 'n Noord-Israelitiese Perspektief," pp. 415-426. For a treatise on the Pentateuch traditions regarding the two settlements in the land of Canaan that explains both the occupations of the center of the land (by the tribes Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin) and the plain of Esdraelon in the north (by the house of Makir, the adopted (grand) son of Joseph born in Egypt), see Michaud, R. 1976, *L'Histoire de Joseph, le Makirite (Genese 37-50)*, pp. 77-135. Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of Heliopolis (On) in Egypt (cf. Gen

12. Genesis 49:26 ("Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers" – *NIV*) stands in clear opposition to Genesis 49:10 ("The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet…." – *NIV*)
13. "The following section, v. 29-33, is evidently drawn from another tradition, for it contains a different story concerning the origin of the priests among the new colonists" (Montgomery, J.A. [1907] 1968, *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect. Their History, Theology and Literature*, p. 449).
14. Breytenbach, A.P.B. 1997, "Meesternarratiewe, Kontranarratiewe en Kanonisering: 'n Perspektief op Sommige Profetiese Geskrifte," p. 1171.
15. For evidence of ostracism see 2 Ki 10:1-17 and for examples of the prophetic voice, see Jer 11:18-12:6; 18:18-23; 36:5, 19, 26; 37:11-38:13; cf. Breytenbach, A.P.B. 1997, "Meesternarratiewe, Kontranarratiewe en Kanonisering," p. 1172. However, the same bias against the Jerusalem royalty is to be found among the people from the north (see, e.g., the revenge of Athaliah who tried to destroy the whole royal family in Jerusalem – 2 Ki 11:1-21).
16. Pummer, R. 1987, *The Samaritans*, p. 3.
17. See the booklets of Amram Ishak, Samaritan Priest and President of the Higher Community of the Samaritan Religion, *The History and Religion of the Samaritans* (sine anno); and Hasanein Wasf Kahen, Priest of the Samaritan Community, *Samaritan History, Identity, Religion and Subdivisions, Literature and Social Status* (1966).
18. See especially Rita Egger 1986, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner: Eine terminologische Untersuchung zur Identitätsklärung der Samaritaner*.
19. Coggins, R.J. 1975, *Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered*, p. 53 (see Josephus, Ant 11.96-97; Jn 4:9).
20. Josephus (AJ 13.9.1; BJ 1.22.6). These expansionist activities shouldn' t be seen as driven by orthodox zeal. For further military operations by Hyrcanus' sons, Antigonus and Aristobulus, not long before 107 B.C.E. and that of the Hasmonean Alexander Jannaeus in 88 B.C.E., see Josephus (AJ 13.10.1-3; BJ 1.2.7) and Josephus (AJ 13.14.1-2; BJ 1.4.4) respectively. Cf. Montgomery, J.A. [1907] 1968, *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect*, pp. 79-81.
21. Montgomery, J.A. [1907] 1968, *The Samaritans*, p. 79. According to Montgomery, this happen in the year 128 B.C.E.. Josephus relates that John Hyrcanus crushed the "Kuthean

22. Pummer, R. 1987, *The Samaritans*, p. 3.
23. Montgomery, J.A. [1907] 1968, *The Samaritans*, p. 72.
24. Coggins, R.J. 1975, *Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered*, p. 9. Cf. also Wright, G.E. [1962] 1992, "The Samaritans at Shechem," pp. 263-273.
25. Montgomery, J.A. [1907] 1968, *The Samaritans*, p. 70.
26. Citations in Montgomery, J.A. 1968, *The Samaritans*, pp. 154-155 (my emphasis).
27. Montgomery, J.A. 1968, *The Samaritans*, pp. 165-166: "It is now generally recognized that its [the Talmud] basis, the Mishnah, was completed by the end of the IId Century A.C., while the commentary thereon, the Gemara, was not finally redacted, at least in the case of the Babylonian Talmud, until the VIth Century."
28. In this regard one has to be reminded that the Talmuds of Babylon and Jerusalem and their additional clusters of Toseftas originated over a long period of time. But it is also acknowledged that some traditions go back to the period of formative Judaism during the time of the New Testament. R. Simon b. Gamaliel was the father of Juda ha-Nasi, who was responsible for editing the Mishnah. Cf. Montgomery, J.A. 1968, *The Samaritans*, pp. 169-170; also note 8, p. 170.
29. Montgomery, J.A. 1968, *The Samaritans*, p. 170.
30. For textual references, see Egger, R. 1986, *Josephus Flavius und die Samaritaner*, pp. 179-192.
31. Montgomery, J.A. 1968, *The Samaritans*, p. 178.

32. Montgomery, p. 181.
33. Montgomery, pp. 180-181.
34. Montgomery, p. 179.
35. Montgomery, pp. 19-21.
36. Coggins, R.J. 1975, *Samaritans and Jews*, pp. 104-105; Wright, G.E. [1962] 1992, "The Samaritans at Shechem," pp. 263-273.
37. Kahen H.W. 1966, *Samaritan History*, p. 8; Ishak, A., *The History and Religion of the Samaritans* (sine anno), p. 23.
38. Montgomery, J.A. 1968, *The Samaritans*, p. 21.
39. Kahen H.W. 1966, *Samaritan History*, p. 8.
40. Kahen, p. 5.
41. Coggins, R.J. 1975, *Samaritans and Jews*, pp. 122.
42. Kahen, p. 5-8; Ishak, A., *The History and Religion of the Samaritans* (sine anno), pp. 8-16.
43. Pummer, R. 1987, *The Samaritans*, p. 3. The intention of the beginning of Jesus' birth record in Luke (2:23b), totally different from the ending of the genealogy found in Matthew (1:16), requires more research in the light of the common tradition of the parallel between Joseph the First-Testament patriarch and Jesus that Luke transmitted. Luke's way of articulation this parallel is very striking: " And Jesus was about thirty years old [cf. Gen 41:46 with regard to Joseph] when he began [his ministry as Israel's messiah] against the background [the Greek participle `wn@` is seen as circumstantial] of his sonship, so it was thought (`w9j e0nomi/zeto`): son of Joseph, son of Eli…" (Lk 2:23b). Could it be that Luke thought of the messiah as someone who would "revive" an era before Israel's division began (in accordance to the Samaritan sources) in the time of Eli?
44. See esp. Scobie, C.H.H. 1973, "The Origins and Development of Samaritan Christianity," pp. 393-396.
45. Scobie, pp. 399-400.
46. Cf. Hollander, H.W. 1981, *Joseph as an Ethical Model in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*; Sklar, H.W. 1996, "The Fighter of Horizons: The Story of Joseph as a Model for Social and Spiritual Reconciliation"; Zerbe, G.M. 1993, *Non-Retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts*; Argyle, A.W. 1951-2, "The Influence of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs upon the New Testament," pp. 256-258.
47. Hollander, p. 65.
48. Hollander, pp. 69-70.

49. The Greek in Testament Benjamin 4:4d contains references to mercy shown to the poor (pe/nhj) and sympathy to the helpless (a)sqenh/j).
50. Hollander, pp. 73.
51. Sklar, H.W. 1996, "The Fighter of Horizons: The Story of Joseph as a Model for Social and Spiritual Reconciliation," p. 51.
52. Niehoff, M. 1992, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature*, p. 101.
53. Niehoff, p. 52.
54. Cf. Chesnutt, R.D. 1996, "From Text to Context: The Social Matrix of Joseph and Aseneth," p. 286.
55. Pilonenko, M. 1968, *Joseph et Aseneth: Introduction, texte critique en notes.*
56. Standartinger, A. 1996, "From Fictional Text to Socio-Historical Context: Some Considerations from a Textcritical Perspective on Joseph and Aseneth," p. 309.
57. Burchard, C. 1965, *Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth: Überlieferung-Ortbestimmung*.
58. Standartinger, A. 1995, *Das Frauenbild im Judentum der hellenistischen Zeit: Ein Beitrag anhand von "Joseph & Aseneth,"* p. 311.
59. It is possible (as Knud Jeppesen 1994, "Then Began Men to Call upon the Name of Yahweh: An Idea," pp. 158-163; esp. pp. 162-163, suggests with regard to other issues, including sexual matters) that reports in Genesis and Exodus react against tendencies in extrabiblical pseudepigrapha that depict God humanlike. Jeppesen refers among others to Jubilee (and the Septuagint), a text contemporary to Joseph and Asenath.
60. Cf. Niehoff, M. 1992, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature*, p. 106. Niehoff, p. 107, refers also to Philo's knowledge of the "marriage as a social distinction."
61. See Aptovitzer, V. 1924, "Asenath, the Wife of Joseph," pp. 239-306; Niehoff, M. 1992, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature*, p. 107.
62. With regard to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, see esp. De Jonge, M.J. 1975, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Study of their Text, Composition and Origin*, pp. 96-110; and with regard to Joseph and Asenath, see Price, R.M. 1997, "Implied Reader Response and the Evolution of Genres: Transitional Stages Between the Ancient Novels and Apocryphal Acts." Over against De Jonge, Hollander, p. 10, would argue that the Testaments "are certainly not a Christian composition." However, it does not mean that I deny any Christian interpolation at all. The reference in the Testament of Joseph to the "lamb of God," born from a virgin who takes away the "sin of the world" is in all probability such an interpolation. These arguments concern set of complicated issues with

63. Jeremias, J. 1985, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt (Mt. 23, 29; Lk 11,47): Eine Untersuchung zur Volksreligion der Zeit Jesu*. For the information with regard to this particular topic, I am especially indebted to some extent to the unpublished article of Cathleen Corley, "Gender and Class in the Teaching of Jesus: A Profile." See also the independent but similar conclusions reached by another member of the Jesus Seminar in 1996, Philip Sellew, "Death, Body, and the World in the Gospel of Thomas," pp. 530-534. I am responsible for the parallel between the Sayings Gospel Q, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of John.
64. Cf. Sandmel, S. 1962, "Parallelomania," pp. 1-13.
65. Robinson, J.M. 1971, "Introduction: The Dismantling and Reassembling of the Categories of New Testament Scholarship," pp. 10-11.
66. Robinson, J.M. 1971, "Introduction," p. 14.
67. T. Simeon 1-2; T. Dan 1:6; 2:5; T. Gad 1-3; T. Joseph 1:3, 7; T. Benjamin 3-6 (see Elliott, J.H. 1994, "The Evil Eye and the Sermon on the Mount: Contours of a Pervasive Belief in Social Scientific Perspective," pp. 68-89).
68. See, inter alia, Overman, J.A. 1990, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*, pp. 35-71; Stanton, G.N. 1992, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew*, pp. 113-281; Saldarini, A.J. 1994, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 167- 177; Van Aarde, A.G. 1994, *God-with-us: The Dominant Perspective in Matthew's Story, and Other Essays*, pp. xiii-xvii, 248-260.
69. See Elliott, J.H. 1994, "The Evil Eye and the Sermon on the Mount," p. 73 note 26.
70. See Van Aarde, A.G. 1994, *God-with-us*, pp. 69-71.
71. Derrett, J.D.M. 1973, *Jesus's Audience: The Social and Psychological Environment in which He Worked*, p. 123.
72. Derrett, p. 119.
73. Cf. Allison, D.C. 1993, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*, pp. 147-155.
74. "Die Frommen"– Bultmann, R. [1958] 1968, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 133.
75. See 1 Henoch 6-7; Genesis Apocryphon, Qumran (1) [1QapGen] 2; Testament of Solomon [Test Sol] 5:3; Proto-James [Prot Jam] 4:1. Cf., among others, Allison D.C. 1993, *The New Moses*, p. 147 note 14.

76. See Rahlfs, A. (ed.) [1935] 1971, *Septuaginta*, p. 357.
77. The LXX uses the word `sumbi/wsij`.
78. Standartinger, A. 1996, "From Fictional Text to Socio-Historical Context: Some Considera-tions from a Textcritical Perspective on Joseph and Aseneth," 309; translation by Dieter Georgi.
79. Bultmann, R. 1968, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 133; Schmithals, W. 1980, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, pp. 25-28; Crossan, J.D. 1994, "The Infancy and Youth of the Messiah," pp. 72-76.
80. Cf. Bultmann, R. 1968, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 133.
81. See Brown, R.E. 1979, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*, p 522.
82. Traditions about a ruler who was deemed a "god"also need to be mentioned in this regard (see Harris, M.J. 1992, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of* ***Theos*** *in Reference to Jesus*, p. 26). On the Rosetta stone, 196 B.C.E., it is reported of Ptolemy V Epiphanes that he "is a god from a god and a goddess, as Horus is the son of Isis and Osiris" (*Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* 90:10). From Ephesus comes an inscription, dated 48 B.C.E. (see Dittenberger, W. 1960, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, Volume 2, 760.7), which mentions that Julius Caesar "is the manifestation of a god, born from Ares and Aphrodite and (the) general redeemer of human life" . As far as Augustus is concerned, a number of inscriptions are known which refer to him as god. From Egypt comes the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (1453.11), dated 24 B.C.E., which refers to Augustus as "Caesar, a god from god" (see Grenfell. B.P., Hunt, A.S. & Bell ed. 1898-1927, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 17 Volumes) as well as another inscription dated 24 B.C.E. with the same reference, namely "god from god" (*Orientis Graeci Incriptiones Selectae* 655.2). Sometime in the period before the writer Strabo's death in 21 C.E. (Berkowitz, L. & Squitier, K.A. [1977] 1986, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: Canon of Greek Authors and Works*, p. xix), he also refers in his work *Geographica* (4.177 – cf. also Taylor, L.R. [1931] 1981, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, pp. 142-246, 270-283), to Augustus as "the god Caesar" . The New Testament (Acts 12:22) also knows a tradition according to which Herod Agrippa I was called a god – a tradition also known to Josephus (Antiquitates 19.345). Similar traditions exist with regard to the Roman emperors Nero and Domitian (Harris, M.J. 1992, *Jesus as God*, pp. 28 notes 34 and 35). As far as Nero is concerned, Deißmann, A. [1927] 1965, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 345 note 4) refers to the inscription of Gaius Stertinus Xenophon of Kos in which he addresses the emperor as " (to) the good god." Suetonius

83. Brown, R.E. 1979, *The Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 522-523.
84. See Maulucci, F.P. 1996, *The National Archaeological Museum of Naples*, pp. 86-87, 106-107, 115; Bonechi (Casa Editrice) 1995, *Art and History of Pompeii: With the Reconstructions of the City*, pp. 48, 98-100.
85. Cf. Brown, R.E. 1979, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p. 519.
86. Cf. Dibelius, M. 1932, *Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind: Untersuchungen zur Geburt-geschichte Jesu im Lukas-Evangelium*, pp. 29-34; contra Brown, R.E. 1973, *The Virginal Conception & Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 57.
87. Oepke, A. 1973, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*, pp. 132-133. Cf. also Schlier, H. [1949] 1971, *Der Brief an die Galater*, p. 196; Byrne, B. 1979, *"sons of God"– "seed of Abraham,"* p. 181.
88. Dibelius, M. 1932, *Jungfrauensohn und Krippenkind*, p. 34: "Paulus spricht nirgends von der wunderbaren Geburt Jesu und zeigt deutlich die völlig entgegengesetzte Richtung seines Interesses: er legt entscheidenden Wert darauf, daß das Erdensein des Christus begonnen hat wie das eines anderen Menschen, durch eine näturliche Geburt."
89. Pannenberg, W. [1964] 1968, *Jesus – God and Man*, p. 143.
90. Bultmann, R. 1968, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 133.
91. After having commented on the parallels in the tradition concerning the birth of Jesus and the remainder of the Gospel of Matthew, Anthony Saldarini 1994, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 167-177, makes the following observation: "The author of Matthew drew upon this rich and varied tradition when he stressed God the Father of Jesus in the birth narrative (chap.1). At the same time, he brought a variety of titles, roles, and scriptural passages to bear on Jesus in order to establish him firmly within the biblical worlds and further mark him out as a special figure in Israel..." (p. 176).
92. Cf. Gaston, L. 1984, "Paul and Jerusalem," pp. 69.
93. See Murphy-O'Connor, J. 1981, "Tradition and Redaction in 1 Cor. 15:3-7," pp. 582-589; Gaston, L. 1984, "Paul and Jerusalem," pp. 66-67.
94. "Apart from himself, Paul names Apostles Junia, Andronicus, Cephas and probably Barnabas, James, and Silvanus" (Gaston, L. 1984, "Paul and Jerusalem," p 67 note 36).

95. Crossan, J.D. 1996, *Who is Jesus? Answers to your questions about the historical Jesus*, pp. 44-47.
96. Cf. Funk, R.W. 1996, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a new millennium*. p. 188.
97. In Greek: `e)comologe/w`.
98. Mk 1:5 – `e)comologou/menoi ta\j a(marti/aj.`
99. Cf. Louw, J.P. & Nida, E.A. 1988, *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament based on semantic domains, Vol I: Introduction & domains*, pp. 419-420.
100. Cf. Funk, R.W. 1996, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium*.
101. In German: *Bußtaufe* – see Bultmann, R. 1968, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, p. 65; Jeremias, J. 1971, *New Testament Theology, Vol. I: The Proclamation of Jesus*, p. 49; Schmithals, W. 1986, *Das Evangelium nach Markus: Kapitel 1,1-9,1*, p. 65; Schmithals, W. 1994, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums: Eine problemgeschichtliche Darstellung*, p. 99.
102. Cf. Funk, R.W. 1996, *Honest to Jesus*, pp. 194-194.
103. See Kloppenborg, J.S. 1988, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes & Concordance*, pp. 10-11.
104. See Q 6:43-45 and 11:39-52.
105. Cf. Vellanickal, M 1977, *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings*, pp. 286-293.
106. Cf. Whiston, W [1960] 1978, *Josephus Complete Works*, p. 382.
107. Cf. Jeremias, J. 1971, *New Testament Theology*, p. 4; Crossan, J.D. 1994, *The Historical Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, p. 34.
108. See Heb 4:15; GNaz 2; also by implication Mt 3:14-15.
109. Vellanickal, M. 1977, *The Divine Sonship of Christians*, p. 268.
110. According to a certain manuscript, translation and patristic tradition, although another tradition reads the word "God" in place of the word "son." Be that as it may, the "only begotten sonship" of Jesus is further proclaimed in Jn 3:16, 18, and 1 Jn 4:9. Jesus' "sonship" is related, according to the Johannine vision, to the conviction that Jesus is the "one sent by God."
111. Bultmann, R. [1964] 1971, *The Gospel of John*, p. 289.
112. Kristeva, J. 1987, "Stabat Mater," in *Kristeva Reader*; cf. Schaberg, J. 1993, "The Infancy of Mary of Nazareth (Proto-James and Pseudo-Matthew."
113. Ignatius, Ephesians 18:2; see also Smyrneans 1:1 and Trallians 9:1. Notice also in "Ignatius the typical blending of elements from the Johannine tradition (Jesus is God), Matthew

114. Cf. Oberlinner, L. 1975, *Historische Uberlieferung und christologisch Aussage*, pp. 73-78.
115. Meier, J.P.1991, *A Marginal Jew, Vol.1*, p. 317.
116. Meier, p. 353 note 7.
117. Meier, p. 317.
118. Cf. Bertrand, F.-G. & Ponton, G. 1955, "Textes patristique sur saint Joseph," *Cahiers de Josephologie* 3, pp. 141-174; 4 (1956), pp. 325-357; 5 (1957), pp. 125-167, 289-320; 6 (1958), pp. 139-179, 265-321; 7 (1959), pp. 151-172, 275-333; 8 (1960) pp. 171-186, 347-374; 9 (1961), pp. 333-357; 10 (1962), pp. 149-182. See Meier, p. 353 note 6.
119. Meier, p. 317
120. Meier, p. 353 note 5.
121. William Whiston [1960] 1978, *Josephus Complete Works*, p. 415, the translator of Josephus' works, refers in a footnote to Izates, the "only-begotten" son of Helena, the queen of Adiabene, as the "one best-beloved": "Josephus here [Ant. xx.ii.1] uses the word *monogene*, as only-begotten son, for no other than one best-beloved, as does both the Old and the New Testament; I mean where there were one or more sons besides, (Gen. xxii.2; Heb. xi.7.)." In Lk 2:7 the expression `to\n prwto/tokon` is used.
122. Argyle, A.W. 1956, "Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching," pp. 199-202.
123. See Wis 10:13f.; Sir 49:15; 1 Macc 2:53; Jub 39-43; 1 En 89:13; JosAs; Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.
124. See Schimmel, S. 1981, "Joseph and his Brothers: A Paradigm for Repentance," pp. 60-65.
125. Argyle, A.W. 1956, "Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching," p. 199.
126. For Joseph as prototype of Jesus, see e.g. Justin Martyr, Dial. c. Trypho 36; Tertullian, Adv. Marcionem 3.18; Adv. Judeaos 10; Origen, in Genesim, Hom. 15; Cyprian, Liber de bono patientiae [Migne, P.L., 4.col. 652-653; Jerome, Ep. Ad Riparium presbyterum, n. 2 [P.L., 22. col. 908]; Chrysostom, in Gen. 37, Hom. 61[P.G., 54. col. 528; Hom. 84, Mt 26:51-54]; Ambrose, De Joseph Patriarcha, 14 [P.L., 14. col. 646]; Augustine, Ep. Cl., 3. c. 39 [P.L., 33. col. 919]; Quaest. In Heptat., 148 [P.L., 34. col. 588]; Cyril of Alexandria (see

127. For Joseph as an allegory of Christian conduct, see e.g., Athanasius, Apologia ad Constantium Imp., 12 [P.G., 25. col. 609]; Gregory of Nyssa, Contra Fornicarios [P.G., 46. col. 493f.]; St Basil, S5ermo 19 (De Temperantia et Incontinentia [P.G., 32. col. 1348]; Epistles, 2; 46 (Epistolarum Classis, 1); Cyprian, Ad Fortunatum de Martyrio [P.L., 4. col. 693]; Liber de zelo et livore [P.L., 4. col. 666]; Chrysostom, Hom., 44, Gen 41:46-49, n. 7; Bede, in Marci Evangelium Exposito, Lib. 4 [P.L., 92. col. 279].