

3

Judean Ethnicity in First Century CE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters, several characteristics pertaining to Judean ethnic identity have been identified. This chapter will be devoted to investigate this matter in further detail in order to give our model the necessary and relevant content. It is not our aim here to do an intensive historical overview of Judeanism around the turn of the era, but more to identify in broader detail what would have been *typical* of first century Judean identity, even if it was not necessarily applicable to *all* Judeans. Our methodology is primarily based on three approaches. First, if some or other Judean practice or view is repeated in various texts across different periods, we can be reasonably confident that it formed part of the common stock of knowledge and practice. Second, the archaeological findings of our period will be brought into view. Third, some things of course might also be simply taken for granted and not explicitly explained, and this is where we will turn to the research of various scholars. These approaches outlined here are not mutually exclusive and so will often be integrated.

3.2 THE “SACRED CANOPY”

Before we proceed to investigate the more tangible aspects of Judean ethnicity, a few words will be used to describe the sacred canopy in further detail. A lot has been said about it already when we investigated Dunn’s “four pillars”, so our treatment below must be seen as complimentary.

Faith in the God of Israel is axiomatic – it is hardly necessary to belabour this point.¹ Equally taken for granted is the notion of divine election. Israel is God’s special and chosen people.² God says that when Israel is restored that “everyone will know that I am the God of Israel and the father of all the children of Jacob and king upon Mount Zion forever and ever” (Jub 1:28). Israel is the “portion and inheritance of God” (PsSol 14:5). In the Psalms of Solomon the following moving passage is found:

And now, you are God and we are the people whom you have loved; look and be compassionate, O God of Israel, for we are yours, and do not take away your mercy from us, lest they set upon us. For you chose the descendants of Abraham above all the nations, and you put your name upon us, Lord, and it will not cease forever. You made a covenant with our ancestors concerning us, and we hope in you when we turn our souls toward you. May the mercy of the Lord be upon the house of Israel forevermore (PsSol 9:8-11).

The above is but one of many passages that illustrate how Judean religion was intimately connected with the cultural features of *shared “historical” memories and myths of common ancestry*. With the notion of divine election came a sense of privilege as well: “I will give a light to the world and illumine their dwelling places and establish my covenant with the sons of men and glorify my people above all nations. For them I will bring out the eternal statutes that are for those in the light but for the ungodly a punishment” (Ps-Philo 11:1). The Judeans are a “sacred race of pious men” (SibOr 3:573). This was due to the covenant and the gift of Torah (otherwise described as the covenants, statutes, ordinances, judgements and commandments), something else simply taken for granted by the various texts.³ The law is the

¹ E.g. the worship of one God is a major theme in 2 Enoch (e.g. 2 En 9:1; 10:6; 33:8; 34:1; 36:1; 47:3; 66:4-5). Some admonishments to avoid idolatry (e.g. Ps-Philo 29:3; 34; 36:3-4; 38; 39:6; LivPro 3:2; 21:8; 22:2) illustrates that the temptation existed nevertheless.

² Cf TMos 4:2; Jub 1:17, 21; 12:24; 15:30, 32; 16:17-18; Ps-Philo 19:8; 20:4; 23:12; 24:1; 30:2; 32:1; 35:2; 39:7; 49:2-3; 3 Mac 2:6, 17; 4 Ezra 5:23-27; 6:56-59.

“foundation of understanding that God had prepared from the creation of the world” (Ps-Philo 32:7). Collectively, Yahweh, divine election, the covenant and the requirements of the law were of the primary elements that gave *the overwhelming majority* of Judeans their collective identity and recognition of similarities as well as a consciousness of difference vis-à-vis other peoples, related to the we/they opposition. Schmidt (2001:23) writes that a collective consciousness, which would be common to all Judeans, “implies a minimal consensus”, and at the very least, the sacred canopy we suggest constitutes such a minimal consensus. Josephus boasts, and not without justification, that “Unity and identity of religious belief, perfect uniformity in habits and customs, produce a very beautiful concord in human character”. It is particularly the law that

above all we owe our admirable harmony ... Among us alone will be heard no contradictory statements about God ... among us alone will be seen no difference in the conduct of our lives. With us all act alike, all profess the same doctrine about God (Apion 2.179-81).

Here we can see again how every aspect of Judean life was subsumed under the sacred canopy: the institutional order is naturally seen as integrated into an all-embracing sacred and cosmic frame of reference. And for people like Josephus, to be a Judean is not to confess a personal faith. “It is first of all a declaration of ... solidarity with a community” (Schmidt 2001:20). Part of the sacred canopy would be Israel’s hope for future restoration, but this will be discussed in further detail later on.

As already stated above, part and parcel of the sacred canopy are the cultural features of *shared “historical” memories* (including ethno-symbolism) and *myths of common ancestry*. Smith (1994:712) explains that the

³ In the Apocrypha the law, statutes, etc. appears approximately 260 times: Tob (17); Jdt (3); AddEsth (4); WisSol (13); Sir (57); 1 Bar (10); PrAzar (2); PrMan (1); Sus (4); 1 Mac (42); 2 Mac (36); 2 Ezra (30); 4 Ezra (41). It is equally numerous in the pseudepigrapha, appearing in various contexts; e.g. 1 En 5:4; 99:2; 108:1-2; 2 En 2:2[J]; 7:3; 31:1; 34:1; 65:5; 71:25; SibOr 3:256-57, 275-76; 573-80; ApZeph 3:4; TReu 3:9; 6:8; TLevi 9:6; 13:1-3; 14:4; 16:2; 19:1-2; TJud 16:3; 18:3; 23:5; 26:1; Tlss 5:1; 6:1; TZeb 10:2; TDan 5:1; 6:9-10; 7:3; TNaph 2:6; 3:2; TGad 3:1; 4:7; TAsh 6:3; 7:5; TJos 11:1; 18:1; TBenj 3:1; 10:3, 5, 11; TMos 9:4, 6; LetAris 15, 45; Jub 1:9-10, 14, 24; 2:31; 20:7; 21:5, 23; 23:16, 19; 24:11; Vita 34:1; 49:2; Ps-Philo 9:8; 11:1-5, 7, 12:2; 13:3, 10; 16:5; 19:1, 6, 9; 21:7, 9-10; 22:5-6; 23:2, 10; 24:3; 28:2; 29:4; 30:1-2, 5; 35:3; 39:6; LivPro 2:18; 3:16; 17:1; 3 Mac 1:3; 3:4; 7:10-12; 4 Mac 1:17; 2:6, 8-10, 23; 4:19, 24; 5:16ff.; PsSol 4:8; 14:2.

close links between organized religion and ethnicity can be seen in the overlap between their respective myths of origin and creation, in the role of sectarian communities, and above all in the personnel and channels of communication in each case. In fact, priests and scribes, their sacred scriptures, rituals and liturgies have often emerged as the primary guardians and conduits of ethnic distinctiveness.

One can see the same is true of first century Judeanism and the important role that the priesthood and scribes played in the preservation of the Judean way of life. Various scribal groups also creatively retold the history of Israel in various works where the past is held up as an inspiration or corrective reminder for present behaviour and attitude. Particularly relevant here is the close relationship between the covenant and the law given to the ancestors, combined with those memories that celebrate the events leading up to and the founding of Israel. In the literature of our period, frequent mention is made of the law of the fathers (3 Mac 1:23), or the “covenant with/of our fathers” (Ps-Philo 9:4; 19:2; 23:11; 30:7; 1 Mac 2:20, 50; 4:10; 4 Bar 6:21) which was mediated through Moses (TMos 1:14), a “genius” according to one text (LetAris 312). God will have mercy on Israel because of the fathers (Ps-Philo 35:3; 2 Mac 8:15). To renounce the law is to abandon ancestral beliefs (3 Mac 1:3; 4 Mac 16:16), or the customs of the fathers (2 Mac 11:25; 4 Mac 18:5). The link to the ancestors and the past was as axiomatic as the faith in Yahweh and his divine election of Israel.⁴ Eleazar exclaims: “I will not violate the solemn oaths of my ancestors to keep the Law, not even if you gouge out my eyes and burn my entrails” (4 Mac 5:29; cf 9:1-2, 29). Israel is also admonished: “O offspring of the seed of Abraham, children of Israel, obey this Law and be altogether true to your religion” (4 Mac 18:1). Daniel supposedly said: “Far be it from me to leave the heritage of my fathers and cleave to the inheritances of the uncircumcised” (LivPro 4:16). Other texts may be quoted:

Woe to you who reject the foundations and the eternal inheritance of your forefathers! (1 En 99:14).

Happy – who preserves the foundations of his most ancient fathers, made firm from the beginning. Cursed – he who breaks down the institutions of his ancestors and fathers (2 En 52:9-10 [J]).

⁴ In the Apocrypha, the (fore)fathers are mentioned approximately 84 times: Tob (6); Jdt (6); AddEsth (1); WisSol (7); Sir (4); 1 Bar (9); PrAzar (3); Bel (1); 1 Mac (17); 2 Mac (10); 2 Ezra

The most popular figures referred to are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.⁵ Similarly frequent mention is made of the “God of my/our/their fathers”,⁶ or the God of Abraham (AddEsth 14:18) or even “Jacob’s God” (PsSol 15:1). Abraham is referred to as “our/your father” or Israelites are identified as “children of Abraham” (TLevi 8:15; Jub 36:6; 4 Mac 9:21; 18:23).⁷ Otherwise Judeans are the “seed of Jacob” (4 Ezra 8:16; Jub 19:23) or “descendants of Jacob” (4 Ezra 9:30).⁸

The above is sufficient to conclude that the memories of the past, and the symbolic and biological link with the ancestors were an important part of the Judean sacred canopy. Your identity as a Judean in the present had everything to do with the relationship that the God of Israel had with your ancestors. Being an upstanding Judean would also require you to honour the memory of your ancestors through your faith and obedience, and your participation in the Judean way of life. With this being explained, from now on this chapter is dedicated to elucidate the Habitus/Israel, while giving some relevant historical background as well.

3.3 WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Three names were used in the past for the region (and people) under discussion; Palestine, Judea and Israel. *Palaistine* is the Greek name that literally designated the land of the Philistines. The designation also referred to the place where the Phoenicians lived, but also the coastal strip stretching down to Egypt and the hinterland located south of Syria (Schmidt 2001:28-29, 31). This term, however, does not appear in the Septuagint, other Judean literature or the New Testament, and is only rarely found in rabbinical literature. As such, it did not form part of Judean self-understanding and was used by Gentiles to refer to the Judean

(11); PrMan (1); 4 Ezra (7). See also TLevi 10:1; 15:4; TMos 9:4; Ps-Philo 32:13; 3 Mac 6:3, 28, 32; 4 Mac 13:17; PsSol 17:4; 18:3.

⁵ Tob 4:12; Jdt 8:26; Sir 44:22; 1 Bar 2:34; 2 Mac 1:2; PrMan 1:1, 7; 4 Ezra 1:39; 6:8-9; ApZeph 9:4; TLevi 15:4; 18:6, 14; TJud 25:1; TDan 7:2; TAsh 7:7; TBenj 10:4, 6; TMos 3:9; Jub 1:7; 4 Bar 4:10; 6:21; 4 Mac 7:19; 13:17; 16:25; EzekTrag 104-105; and the object of special attention in Jubilees.

⁶ 2 En 71:30; TMos 9:6; Jub 36:6; Tob 8:5; Jdt 7:28; 10:8; WisSol 9:1; PrAzar 1:3, 29; 2 Ezra 1:50; 4:62; 8:25; 9:8; PrMan 1:1; Ps-Philo 27:7; 4 Mac 12:17.

⁷ Abraham is also mentioned in TLevi 9:12; TJos 6:8; Ps-Philo 18:5; 4 Mac 6:17, 23; 14:20; 15:28; 17:6; AdEsth 14:18; Sir 44:19; 1 Mac 2:52; 12:21; 4 Ezra 3:13; 7:36; 3 Mac 6:3.

community. The term will be used here, however, as a matter of convenience when referring to the entire region where Judean influence was present.

“Judea” and “Israel” merits further discussion, as these terms were used by the Judeans themselves. As argued in the introductory chapter, we agree with the suggestion that the people of first-century Judea, and all those connected with its cultural and religious identity should be properly called Judeans. The religion or culture they adhered to was Judeanism (in opposition to Hellenism). Josephus remarks that those who returned from Babylon were called “Judeans” (Ἰουδαῖοι), literally “those of the tribe of Judah”, and the country itself took its name from the tribe that first settled there (Ant 11.173). Indeed, the region was given the name *Yehudah*, which was translated Ἰουδαία in the Septuagint (Schmidt 2001:29). So “Judean” was an ethnic, religious and geographic reference. Yet Israel/Israelite continued to be used alongside Judea/Judean, whether referring to the geographical region or to the people itself. According to Dunn, Israel was used as the preferred self-designation, as opposed to “Jew(s)”, or rather “Judean(s)”, which was used by others to distinguish them from other ethnic and religious groups. So “Israel(ite)”, denotes self-understanding and is used by the insider or participant (with reference to its internal history, election, and as heirs of the promise made to the patriarchs), whereas “Judean” denotes an outsider or spectator view, which was nevertheless used by Judeans themselves (Dunn 2003:263-64; 1991:145). Schmidt (2001:30) explains that when the rebels of the first and second Judean revolt inscribed “Israel” and not “Judea” on their coins, they “did more than declare the independence of their territory; they asserted themselves as heirs of the ancestral and sacred land”. “Israel” is rich with symbolism as it “designates the land where the people maintain privileged relations with their God” (Schmidt 2001:31). Therefore Judean, as opposed to Israel, does not capture the essence of Judean identity. In Judean literature it is therefore hardly surprising that “Israel” occurs more frequently than Judea/Judean(s) – this is especially true in the pseudepigrapha.⁹

⁸ Jacob is also mentioned in TJud 25:5; TJob 1:5; Jub 1:28; 19:23; 22:10ff; 23:23; Ps-Philo 18:6; Sir 23:12; 24:8, 23; 36:11; 45:5, 17; 46:14; 47:22; 48:10; 49:10; 1 Bar 3:36; 4:2; 1 Mac 1:28; 3:7, 45; 5:2; 4 Ezra 3:16, 19; 9:30; 12:46; 3 Mac 6:3; PsSol 7:10; 15:1.

⁹ “Israel” appears approximately 235 times in the Apocrypha: Tob (3), Jdt (47), AddEsth (6), Sir (18), 1 Bar (18), PrAzar (2), Sus (3), 1 Mac (56), 2 Mac (4), 2 Ezra (58), 4 Ezra (17). “Israelites” appears about 10 times in the Apocrypha: Jdt 6:14; 1 Bar 3:4; 1 Mac 1:43, 53, 58 plus 5 other texts. “Israel” is the overwhelmingly favourite designation in the pseudepigrapha. Here follows a representative list: TReu 1:10; 6:8; TSim 6:5; TLevi 4:4; 7:3; 8:16; TJud 22:1-2; Tlss 5:8; TZeb 9:5; TDan 1:9; 5:4, 13; 6:2, 6-7; 7:3; TNaph 7:1; 8:1-3; TJos 1:2; TBenj 10:11; TMos 3:7; 10:8; Jub 1:28; 15:28; 30:5ff; 49:14, 22; 50:5; Ps-Philo 9:4; 27:13; 32:8; 34:5; 35:3;

The implications for our model are clear as everything converges on the *habitus*, embodied by the people “Israel”. It is by no means an exaggeration to understand the people “Israel” (which also refers to the land) as constituting a collective of habitual dispositions.

3.4 JUDEANISM ENCOUNTERS HELLENISM

In 587 BCE many citizens of the kingdom of Judah were exiled to Babylonia. The Persians conquered Babylonia in 539 BCE, and the Judeans were permitted by Cyrus the Great to return to their homeland. At least two waves of Babylonian Judeans returned to Judea in the 530's and 520's. Alexander the Great in turn conquered Persia, introducing the Hellenistic Age, “bringing with it completely new customs and a substantially different view of the universe” (Soggin 1993:301). After the unexpected death of Alexander in 323 BCE, his empire was fought over and divided by his generals, known as the Diadochi (“successors”). After years of wars, in around 301 BCE, Judea became part of the kingdom of Egypt (Ptolemies). In 200 BCE Judea was in turn conquered by the kings of Syria (Seleucids). But after Alexander's death “all the cultures of the East began to contribute to the new creation we call Hellenism. Hellenistic culture was not merely a debased version of the culture of classical Athens. Its substrate was Greek and its language of expression was Greek, but it absorbed ideas and practices from all the cultures with which it came into contact, thereby assuming many and diverse forms” (Cohen 1987:36). In non-Judean regions of Palestine, the penetration of Hellenistic culture is most evident in religion. Sometimes Hellenistic elements were fused with indigenous cults and at other times Greek cults totally took over. The worship of Apollo was common in Philistine cities (Raphia, Gaza, Ashkelon), probably promoted by Seleucid influence. Apollo was considered as the divine ancestors of the Seleucids as Dionysus was believed to be the divine ancestor of the Ptolemies (Schürer et al 1979:29, 35).

39:9; LivPro 3:12; 22:2; 3 Mac 2:6, 17; 4 Mac 17:22; PsSol 7:8ff.; 9:1ff; 10:5 et al. “Judea” appears approximately 81 times in the Apocrypha: Tob (1), Jdt (9), AddEsth (1), 1 Mac (46), 2 Mac (9), 2 Ezra (15). “Judeans” is used about 119 times: AddEsth (3), Sus (1), 1 Mac (41), 2 Mac (62), 2 Ezra (12); the singular “Judean” about 6 times: AddEsth 11:3; Bel 1:28; 2 Mac 6:6; 9:17; 3:11, 27. In other texts “Judea” (SibOr 5:329), “Judeans” (HistRech 9:2; 3 Mac

3.4.1 Resistance to and Influence of Hellenistic Culture

How were the Judeans affected by Hellenism? It is said that Moses

surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter, being thus kept pure in body and soul, preserved from false beliefs, and worshipping the only God omnipotent over all creation ... So, to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law (LetAris 139-42).

So the symbolic universe of Judeanism is represented here quite idealistically as something quite impervious to foreign influence. According to Cohen (1987:37), however, all forms of Judeanism – of both the Diaspora and in the land of Israel – were Hellenised; there was no “pure” Judeanism. “To Hellenize or not to Hellenize” was not a question the [Judeans] of antiquity had to answer. They were given no choice. The questions that confronted them were ‘how?’ and ‘how far?’ ... How far could [Judeanism] go in absorbing foreign ways and ideas before it was untrue to itself and lost its identity?” (Cohen 1987:45). How Judeanism answered these questions is the subject matter we will focus on next.

3.4.2 The Maccabean Revolt

When Palestine was under the control of the Ptolmies of Egypt, Judean religion and customs was allowed to continue pretty much without interference. During 202-198 BCE, the Seleucid, Antiochus III, took control of Palestine supported by the high priest Simon II, a Zadokite. It is probably this Simon who is eulogised by Ben Sira (50:1-11) and the text also indicates that the high priest enjoyed autonomy and presented the sacrifices to God on behalf of the people, and conferred God’s blessing on the people in return (Sir 50:18-21). Ben Sira 50:24 (Hebrew version) wishes for Simon the son of Onias to be blessed and that his offspring may continue to rule as priests. Ben Sira “regarded [Judean] life as it existed under the reign of Simon as the virtually complete embodiment of the nation’s highest aspirations” (Baumgarten 1997:27). Those who wanted to emphasise the separation between Israel and the nations also

2:28; 3:3; 4:21; 5:3, 6, 20, 31, 35 et al; 4 Mac 5:7) and “Judean” (3 Mac 1:3; 3:2, 6) only appear on a handful of occasions.

achieved much when Antiochus III (ca 200 BCE) issued a decree on request of the priest. The decree, cited by Josephus (Ant 12.145-146), states that foreigners are not allowed to enter the enclosure of the Temple,¹⁰ neither Judeans, except those who purify themselves before hand. These demands are nowhere explicitly mentioned in the Tanak. In Gentile temples, all those who purified themselves were allowed to enter, be they natives or foreigners. In Jerusalem, however, foreigners were permanently banned (Baumgarten 1997:82). The Hellenising priests – descendants of Simon II – believed that regulations individually catering for Judeans and Gentiles were a source of disaster (1 Mac 1:11). “Perhaps these regulations were especially vulnerable to criticism, because crucial aspects of these rules were not found in the Bible. They could thus easily be represented as innovations, subject to reform” (Baumgarten 1997:83).

A “reform” was attempted which took on various dimensions. Just before 175 BCE there was a split in the Judean aristocracy, that is, between the Zadokite high priest Onias III and his brother Jason. The latter was in favour of Hellenisation, or more succinctly, the adoption of Greek education, athletics and dress. The attempt was further made to transform Jerusalem into a Greek polis, or at least, for the citizens to be called “Antiochenes”. Jason, the “ungodly wretch, and no high priest” (2 Mac 4:13) was appointed and had support from Antiochus IV Epiphanes (“God revealed”) who came to power in Syria in 175. 1 Maccabees describes that there were “wicked men” in Israel who wanted to make a covenant with the ἔθνη, and who was granted permission by the king to observe Gentile ordinances (1 Mac 1:11-13). Having obtained permission, they returned to Jerusalem where they built a gymnasium at the foot of the temple. According to 2 Maccabees 4:9 Jason also asked for a training centre to be built. In this manner a process was initiated whereby the Hellenistic spirit could be instilled in young Judean men. It is claimed that Antiochus further encouraged young Judean men to reject the ancestral law: “Share in the Greek style, change your mode of living, and enjoy your youth” (4 Mac 8:8).

Particularly in the gymnasium the “curious” feature of Judean ethnic identity became all too visible – the circumcision of the male foreskin, since exercises were conducted in the nude. Some Judeans underwent an epispasm by which the foreskin was restored, and so was said to have forsaken the “holy covenant” (1 Mac 1:15). No wonder the gymnasium was regarded as one of the most important abominations of

¹⁰ In the Tanak a sacrifice may be offered by a Gentile (Lv 22:25; cf 1 Ki 8:41-43).

Hellenism (1 Mac 1:14-15; 2 Mac 4:9-17). Jubilees 3:31 also says Adam and Eve covered their genitals, unlike the Gentiles. According to Cohen (1987:52; cf Schmidt 2001:34), there are passages in the Tanak that speak of the importance of circumcision (Jr 9:24-25; Gn 17, 34, Ex 4:24-26; 12:43-49; Jos 5:2-11) but the Bible “as a whole generally ignores it and nowhere regards it as the essential mark of [Judean] identity or as the sine qua non for membership in the [Judean polity]. It attained this status only in Maccabean times”. But circumcision was a primary requirement for covenant membership for males, or to put it differently, for Judean ethnic identity. Gn 17:10-14 makes this quite clear, where God speaks to Abraham in the following terms:

This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you ... Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant. (NIV)

To remove your circumcision was from a traditional Judean perspective wholly unthinkable (cf TLevi 6:3-6; TMos 8:1-3; Theodotus in Eusebius, PrEv 9.22.4-9; Sir 44:20).¹¹ Even the angels are created as circumcised (Jub 15:27) and so are able to participate with Israel in its rites, feasts, and Sabbath days (Jub 2:18). Also Moses was born “in the covenant of God and the covenant of the flesh” (Ps-Philo 9:13), that is, he was born circumcised (cf b.Sot 12a; ExR 1:24). In post-Biblical Hebrew “covenant” had become a technical term for circumcision (Harrington 1985:316, n. o). The importance of circumcision is emphasised in Jubilees 15:25-32, and the failure to perform the rite, presumably the procedure of epispasm as well, is regarded as an “eternal error” (Jub 15:33-34). It should not come as a surprise that circumcision (along with food laws) became a major issue when Gentiles were incorporated into the Messianist community (Ac 15:1-29; Gl 2:1-10).

The influence of Hellenism, however, had impact in other areas as well. New fashions included the wearing of a Greek hat, according to 2 Mac 4:12, the extreme height of Hellenism. The hat in question is the *petasos*, the Greek broad-rimmed hat

¹¹ Cf m.Ned 3:11, where circumcision virtually realises a state of human ontological perfection: “Great is circumcision, for, despite all the commandments which Abraham our father carried out, he was called complete and whole only when he had circumcised himself as it is said, *Walk before me and be perfect*” (Gn 17:1). The same passage regards the

associated with Hermes. So the objection was mainly aimed at a Gentile religious symbol (Rubens 1973:16). One can contrast the Essenes who wore plain clothes and ate plain food (Baumgarten 1997:101). Overall, Hellenism presented a new problem for devout Judeans.

Hellenism presented itself as an alternative world-view, in the face of which it was necessary to make choices: either to remain a [Judean] or to embrace the new way of living and thinking, thus imperilling the faith. The Hellenists among the [Judeans] thought they could do both, while remaining within the bounds of good faith; according to the orthodox they had in fact chosen Hellenism and denied [Judeanism].

(Soggin 1993:317)

One can say that Hellenism presented an alternative symbolic universe. The presence of a gymnasium in Jerusalem and the Hellenising priests initiated a process whereby Judean ethnic-religious identity came under siege. But things under Antiochus IV became worse. After a failed campaign in Egypt, he besieged Jerusalem and occupied the Temple. The following year, in 167 he apparently issued decrees which aimed at the compulsory Hellenisation of Judea (1 Mac 1:29; 2 Mac 5:24). According to Jagersma (1986:52) these measures should rather be attributed to those Judeans in Jerusalem in favour of Hellenisation and the changes were aimed at giving Judean worship a more Hellenistic form. Under the high priest Menelaus, the Temple itself was transformed into a sanctuary dedicated to Zeus Olympius, instead of the “Lord of heaven”, the usual designation for God. A second altar, or perhaps a stone on the existing altar was set up, the “abomination of desolation” (βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως; Hebrew *siqqus mesomem*) (1 Mac 1:54; Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; cf TMos 5:3-4). This happened on 15 December 167 BCE and apparently on 25 December sacrifices were offered to Sol Invictus, the unconquered sun (Soggin 1993:322). This new form of temple cult was extended throughout Judea. Judeans were instructed to build altars (and sacred shrines for idols?) and to sacrifice pigs and unclean animals (1 Mac 1:47, 54; 2 Mac 6:4-9, 21; 7:1). If one takes 1 and 2 Maccabees at face value, many forms of Judean worship were also banned. Antiochus IV banned sacrifices (1 Mac 1:45; cf Jub 32:4-22); profaned the Sabbath and festival days (1 Mac 1:46; cf Jub 23:19; 6:37); prohibited circumcision (1

foreskin as “disgusting”, and also states that was it not for circumcision (which also points to the covenant), God would not have created the world (Jr 33:25) (Neusner 1988:412).

Mac 1:47; cf Jub 15:24-29); and burnt books (1 Mac 1:56; cf Jub 45:16). It is said that many Judeans conformed to these measures be it through pressure or threats, while some chose martyrdom instead (1 Mac 1:57-64; 2 Mac 6:18-19; 7:1ff.; Ant 12.253ff.). According to Jagersma (1986:52-53) the pro-Hasmonean 1 Maccabees would have exaggerated the persecution to bolster the Maccabean claim to the high priesthood so we must assume that the persecution was a limited one.

Whatever the scale of forced Hellenisation and the persecution that ensued, the decrees, whether they came from Antiochus or Judean Hellenists, took direct aim at those practices that separated Judeans from Gentiles (1 Mac 1:44-50). The revolt that inevitably followed was spearheaded by the Hasmonean family, beginning with the priest Mattathias, who was neither a Zadokite nor an aristocrat. The “Hasmonean” family is called after an ancestor, Hashmon, but also the Maccabees, due to a nickname, “the hammerer” (Ant 12.365ff.) that was given to Judas, the third son of Mattathias (Sanders 1992:17). In Modein Mattathias was requested to make a pagan sacrifice (to sacrifice a pig to Zeus Olympius?), but refused, choosing to “walk in the covenant of our fathers” thereby not abandoning the law and ordinances (1 Mac 2:20-21). A Judean who attempted to make a pagan sacrifice at Modein enraged Mattathias and was killed by the latter on the altar. Subsequently Mattathias called upon those who were “zealous for the law”, and who “maintain the covenant” (1 Mac 2:27) to join forces with him, and so many went to the wilderness. Many were later killed, as they refused to fight on the Sabbath (1 Mac 2:34-38), a decision that was later reversed (v. 41). Mattathias was soon joined by Hasideans, those who were willing to offer themselves for the sake of the law (1 Mac 2:42). The word “Hasidean” reflects the Hebrew *hasidim*, “pious”, referring to a “group of people who wished to resist Hellenization and who were willing to fight and die” (Sanders 1992:18). Collectively their activity was principally aimed at fellow Judeans, killing “sinners” and “lawless men” (1 Mac 2:44). They also destroyed pagan altars and forcefully circumcised Judean children (1 Mac 2:45-46). Mattathias died in 166, but the call to “be zealous for the law” and to “give your lives for the covenant of your fathers” (1 Mac 2:50) was continued through his sons (Judas, Jonathan and Simon). All in all, we have to do here with Maccabean propaganda, but it must have resonated strongly with popular opinion.

The Hasmonean campaign was eventually successful. Jerusalem was captured (except for the Acra) and on 25 Chislev (around 15 December) 164 BCE the temple was cleansed and rededicated by Judas, an event still celebrated as the feast of

Hanukkah, “dedication” (1 Mac 4:59) (Soggin 1993:325). Judas also erected a wall around Mount Zion to keep the Gentiles out (1 Mac 4:60-61) – so Gentiles were not even allowed access to the Court of Gentiles that existed at the time. The Judeans eventually received religious freedom from Antiochus V (164-162 BCE) though attempts at reform probably continued in Jerusalem. In 160 the high priest, Alcimus, began to tear down the wall of the inner court of the Sanctuary. According to 1 Maccabees Alcimus was prevented from finishing his intentions by divine intervention (1 Mac 9:54-56). Thus he, like the other Hellenists, might have endeavoured to remove the barrier between Judeans and Gentiles (Baumgarten 1997:83; Schmidt 2001:105).

It is evident that the Maccabean revolt led to several questions being asked about Hellenisation, the law, the high priesthood and military control (Sanders 1992:20-21). Nevertheless, under the leadership of Judas Maccabees, the Judeans had military success against the Seleucids and the internal strife in Syria allowed the Maccabees in time to extend their powers. Judas’ brother and successor, Jonathan, was appointed high priest by Alexander Balas in 152 who contended for the Syrian throne (1 Mac 10:18-20). In response, Demetrius I offered Jonathan exemption from taxes (1 Mac 10:26-33). Jonathan received more favours from Demetrius II but was killed in 143 BCE. His brother, Simon, obtained complete independence for the Judeans, and was appointed as high priest by Demetrius II (1 Mac 10:31-31). He was the one that occupied the fortress Acra (141 BCE), and so the last stronghold of the Hellenisers and their Syrian supporters were captured (1 Mac 13:51). Sanders (1992:22) explains:

The fall of the Acra terminated any lingering hopes that the Hellenizers had. [Judean] distinctiveness would be maintained, circumcision would be kept, and the Mosaic law would be enforced. Simon and his successors acted very much like other Hellenistic kings ... but there would be no further effort to break down the barriers between [Judeanism] and the rest of the Graeco-Roman world.

We can see from the above that zeal for the law was equivalent to remaining faithful to the covenant of the forefathers; it was remaining faithful to the symbolic universe of covenantal nomism. The Maccabean uprising was a form of cultural restoration and renewal in addition to the dimension of territorial resistance. Persistent interstate

warfare promotes ethnic unity for agrarian folk cultures (cf Smith 1994:710-11), but this can be said for inter-cultural warfare as well.

3.4.3 Be Careful What You Eat

The persecution of Judean customs and religion brought one aspect of Judean identity into focus – the Judean attitude towards food. The laws on clean and unclean foods do not hold such a central place in the Torah (Lv 11:1-23; Dt 14:3-21). Even Jacob's sons ate Gentile food with Gentiles (Gn 43:32). From the time of the Maccabees, however, food laws took on increasing importance in Judean folklore and Judean self-understanding (Dunn 1990:193). The Judeans were supposedly forced to eat pork (1 Mac 1:47-48; 2 Mac 6:18-21; 7:1), but some preferred to die in order not to profane the covenant (1 Mac 1:62-63). Food not defiled by Gentiles and permissible to eat was according to 2 Maccabees 5:27 very limited. Alternatively, on a practical level the "loyalists had to take extreme steps, from armed revolt to restricting the sources of their food in order to avoid defilement" (Baumgarten 1997:84). So 2 Maccabees 5:27 explains that Judah and his companions escaped to the wilderness and ate wild food so that they might not share in the defilement (cf 1 Mac 1:62-63; Dn 1:8). Sometime around 160 BCE, 1 Enoch 91:9 used as its slogan: "all that which is (common) with the heathen shall be sundered." Jubilees (who maybe quotes 1 En 91-108 in 4:18), in the wake of the Maccabean revolt encourages Judeans: "... keep the commandments of Abraham, your father. Separate yourself from the gentiles, and do not eat with them ... Because their deeds are defiled, and all their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable" (Jub 22:16). Here is a classic example of the maintenance of your symbolic universe through nihilation.

The Maccabean martyrs were further remembered for their fidelity to the covenant. Similarly the heroes of popular stories such as Daniel, Tobit, Judith, Esther and Joseph all showed their faithfulness to God, that is, they maintained their Judean identity by refusing to eat "the food of Gentiles" (Dn 1:8-16; 10:3; Tob 1:10-13; Jdt 10:5; 12:1-20; AddEsth 14:17; JosAsen 7:1; 8:5), and no Judean abiding by the Torah eats at a Gentile table (Jub 22:16; cf Ac 11:3; Gl 2:12). These people were heroes because they are faithful Judeans, examples to emulate. The resulting pre-occupation with food has direct bearing on the constructionist approach of ethnicity theory. As a result of the Maccabean crisis, Judean ethnicity was in part (re)constructed around an intensified effort to observe food and purity laws more strictly. But overall, this is representative of a primordialist approach to ethnicity as

existing practices were intensified to sharpen that consciousness of difference vis-à-vis the nations.

This aspect of universe maintenance continued unabated. Josephus speaks of priests who were imprisoned in Rome, who survived only on figs and nuts (Life 3.14). The eating habits of Judeans were also well known among Gentile authors. For example, Tacitus writes scathingly of Judeans and their supposed hatred of the rest of the world: “they eat separately, they sleep separately ...” (Hist 5.5). Sextus Empiricus (second century CE) commented that Judeans would rather die than eat pork (Sanders 1992:239). According to Philo, when his delegation was in conversation with Emperor Caligula, they were interrupted with the abrupt and irrelevant question: “Why do you refuse to eat pork?” (Embassy 361).

The separation between Judeans and Gentiles was made stronger based on the belief that Gentiles were unclean since they did not observe the purity laws. Although Judean purity laws were not really applicable to Gentiles they were treated as impure and any contact could lead to defilement (Ac 10:28) (cf Sanders 1992:72-76). Their houses and possessions were potential targets of ritual uncleanness, hence were regarded as impure (Schürer et al 1979:83). A number of Gentile objects could not be used by Judeans since Judeans laws were not observed during its production. Much of the most ordinary foods coming from Gentiles were forbidden to Judeans, but they were allowed to make a profit from buying and selling things such as milk, bread and oil (Schürer et al 1979:83-84).

3.4.4 Judeanism versus Hellenism

“Judeanism” (Ἰουδαϊσμός) as a term appears for the first time in the literature of this period in reaction to the influence of Hellenism. It speaks of those who fought bravely for Judeanism (2 Mac 2:21) and that their supporters continued in Judeanism (2 Mac 8:1). One Razis, “a lover of his countrymen”, was accused of Judeanism and risked his life for it (2 Mac 14:38). Lastly, 4 Maccabees 4:26 speaks of Antiochus’ attempt to force Judeans to eat forbidden food and so renounce Judeanism. 2 Maccabees 4:13 speaks of an ἀκμή τις Ἑλληνισμοῦ (“a climax of attempts at Hellenisation”) during the time of Jason. Here Ἑλληνισμός is for the first time used in a cultural sense as the equivalent of ἀλλοφυλισμός, or “foreignness” (2 Mac 4:13; 6:24) (Hengel 1989:22). Lieu (2002:305) also points out that 2 Maccabees subverts

the usual Greek/barbarian antithesis by saying that the fight for Ἰουδαϊσμός is against the “*barbaric hordes*” (2 Mac 2:21). “Foreignness” was also identifiable to the Greeks as akin to the barbarian. Similar language is found in 1 Maccabees (ἄλλόφυλος; ἄλλογενής; ἄλλότριος). But the point is that battle lines were being drawn between Judeanism and Hellenism. Judeanism is that system that is opposed to anything foreign, and that in any way detracts from being Judean. If we may adapt Dunn’s explanation:

[Judeanism] is the summary term for that system embodying national and religious identity which was the rallying point for the violent rejection by the Maccabees of the Syrian attempt to assimilate them by the abolition of their distinctive practices [particularly circumcision and food laws; cf 1 Mac 1:60-63; 4 Mac 4:26]. From the beginning, therefore [Judeanism] has a *strongly nationalistic overtone* and denotes a powerful integration of religious and national identity which marked [Judeanism] out in its *distinctiveness* from other nations and religions.

(Dunn 2003:261; emphasis original).

If we may paraphrase Dunn’s explanation, Judeanism is a summary term for that system that embodied Judean ethnicity. It requires “zeal for the law” (1 Mac 2:26, 27, 50, 58; 2 Mac 4:2; cf Gl 1:13-14). In other words, it requires zeal for being Judean. According to ethnicity theory, this is what you call primordialism.

3.4.5 The Judean Sects

After the Maccabean Revolt, Judeanism experienced the rise of various sects. Cohen defines that a “sect asserts that *it alone embodies the ideals of the larger group*. In [Judean] terms this means that a sect sees itself as the true Israel ... *it alone understands God’s will*” (Cohen 1987:126, 127; emphasis original). Baumgarten has a different but complimentary approach to sectarianism. He “would define a sect as a *voluntary association of protest, which utilizes boundary marking mechanisms – the social means of differentiating between insiders and outsiders – to distinguish between its own members and those otherwise normally regarded as belonging to the same national or religious entity*. Ancient [Judean] sects, accordingly, *differentiated between [Judeans] who were members of their sect and*

those not” (Baumgarten 1997:7; emphasis original). But why did Judean sects come to flourish in this period?

In the pre-Maccabean period no Judean faithful ever organised themselves into a socially significant movement to separate themselves from other Judeans. Josephus mentions Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes for the first time in a comment that concerns the reign of Jonathan. During this period there were a few rapid changes in Judean life: 1) the encounter with Hellenism; 2) the persecutions of Antiochus IV; 3) the cooperation of at least a few traditional leaders with those persecutions; 4) the successful revolt against Antiochus IV; 5) the rise of a new dynasty of high priests, that was soon followed by the acquisition of political independence. The last four events on the list took place over a time span of around twenty-five years (Baumgarten 1997:26).

For Cohen, sectarianism is a culmination of the democratisation of Judeanism. It wanted to bridge gap between humanity and God “through constant practice of the commandments of the Torah and total immersion in the contemplation of God and his works. Sectarian piety supplants or supplements the temple cult through prayer, scriptural study, and purifications, and rejects or dilutes the power of the priesthood” (Cohen 1987:172). Baumgarten has another approach and will be the one that we will follow here. Although there were antecedents and forerunners to Judean sects, such as is illustrated in 1 Enoch and Jubilees who focus on social action in response to Hellenism, Baumgarten proposes that “the decisive moment, which brought about the full fledged phenomenon [of sectarianism], came with the victory of the Hasmonean dynasty and their claim for the restoration of traditional rule. The successful revolt of the Maccabees, their assumption of the high priesthood, and the eventual achievement of independence, all raised hopes for a reimposition of boundaries between [Judeans] and [non-Judeans], restrictions which had suffered so much damage in the preceding decades, in particular” (Baumgarten 1997:86). Maccabean propaganda claimed that these expectations of separation were met. It explains that Judas had fortified Mount Zion with high walls and strong towers in order to keep the Gentiles out (1 Mac 4:60). Simon worked to achieve similar ends. He established peace and in his time there were no Gentiles to make the Judeans afraid (1 Mac 4:60). The decree that affirmed Simon’s rule stated that he had “put the Gentiles out of the country”, and he expelled the men from the citadel of Jerusalem who used to defile the areas of the temple and so undermined its purity (1 Mac 14:36). Indeed, Simon built the walls of Jerusalem higher (1 Mac 14:37) and so

continued Judas' program of keeping Gentiles out. Indeed, "zealous hatred of gentiles" pervades 1 Maccabees as a whole (Baumgarten 1997:86), since they are void of true spirituality as they gave up their own religions to follow those decreed by the king (1 Mac 1:41-43; 2:19).

Yet, the Maccabees were inconsistent in their policy towards the surrounding culture. To a degree they opposed practices associated with Gentile culture, but "the needs of government playing the international game of politics, required paying the price of adapting to the surrounding culture" (Baumgarten 1997:87). This tension is very obvious in the fact that Jonathan accepted the high priesthood from Alexander Balas as expressed in the same decree that affirmed his rule. This decree was further "formulated in Greek style, and was based on the political ideology and practice of Greek democracy" (Baumgarten 1997:88). Jonathan's appointment as high priest by the Seleucid Alexander Balas, was the first accommodation of many to foreign culture that was to cause the flourishing of Judean sects. The Seleucids similarly appointed his brother Simon as high priest. It is also claimed by 1 Maccabees that the Judeans and their priests decided that Simon should be their "high priest for ever" (1 Mac 14:41-43), meaning that he and his descendants would be high priests, unless a prophet would arise and declare otherwise. So the rights of the family of Zadok, in charge of the Temple for centuries, have been revoked (Sanders 1992:22). Jonathan and Simon's acceptance of this post from Gentile rulers was wholly illegitimate. This led to Onias IV, a Zadokite priest, establishing a temple in Leontopolis in Egypt. The importance of the Zadokite priests in the Dead Sea sect lends support that the "Teacher of Righteousness" was a member of that family; perhaps the Sadducees also claimed the authority of the Zadokite priesthood (Sanders 1992:23-25).

Just after Simon came to power, he built a mausoleum in Hellenistic style in honour of his fathers and brothers (Hengel 1989:31). Aristobulus I even adopted the nickname φιλέλλην, "lover of Greeks" (Ant 13.318). Thus the Maccabean success in various ways undermined the borders that they were supposed to have maintained. There were many expectations when the Maccabees came to power, but their actions provoked disappointment. Baumgarten proposes that it was "in response to this sense of disillusionment, *of a mixture of blessing and curses*, that sectarianism became fully mature. With the old national perimeter facing a new sort of danger ... sects flourished which established new voluntary boundaries of their own against other [Judeans]" (Baumgarten 1997:88; emphasis original). The Damascus

Document (CD) gives expression to this and explains the rulers will pay the price for their sins and the Gentile kings they imitated will also be the source of their destruction (CD 8.3-21b). The walls erected by the Maccabees were found wanting, merely “daubed with plaster” (CD 8 alluding to Ezk 13:10). A real fortress was to be found in the Qumran community (1QH 6.25-27). Now those excluded are not only Gentiles, but also Judeans whose defiling presence must be avoided. The Essenes/Qumran Covenanters had sectarian “brothers” that were more important than “natural” brothers (War 2.120, 122, 127, 134; Philo, Omnis Probus 79; Hyp 11.2; 1QH 9.35-36; 1QS 6.10, 22; CD 6.20; 7.1-2). The new kinship patterns simply superseded or supplanted natural ties (Baumgarten 1997:61-62, 90-91).

Another aspect of history is important to the understanding of the flourishing of Judean sects. In the pre-Maccabean period, Judeanism was constantly at the mercy of imperial power. Dissident Judeans who disagreed on points of *halacha*, particularly how the Temple was run, had very few options to bring about reform. This state of affairs changed, however, after independence was achieved. Now dissident voices will attempt to realise their agendas, while millenarian hopes providing further impetus (Baumgarten 1997:191-192).

The Judean sects emphasised various things in their polemics. For average Judeans the Temple was the main centre of loyalty and the most important focus of identity. As a result, the Temple would have been a perfect subject for sects to squabble over. For example, it could involve the detailed points of law concerning proper Temple ritual (Baumgarten 1997:68-69). According to Cohen (1987:127-134) in Judeanism the principle objects of sectarian polemics were three: law (marriage, Sabbath and festivals, Temple and purity), (inadequacy of priests in the) Temple, and (the correct interpretation of) scripture.

The boundary marking of ancient Judean sects concentrated on issues such as dress, marriage, commerce and worship, with basically all groups having regulations on food. But as Baumgarten (1997:7-8) explains, ordinary Judeans “employed boundary marking mechanisms in realms of life such as food, marriage, and worship to distinguish between themselves and [non-Judeans] ... Ordinary [Judeans], in sum, observed purity regulations more or less strictly” (cf 1 Mac 1:44-50). In the Second Temple period, the burgeoning use of ritual baths and stone vessels found all over Palestine is further evidence of concern to maintain a life of purity (Sanders 1992:222-229). Priests were born into their status and kept themselves apart from

other Judeans to keep their sacred status – they did this with the full consent of society. In other respects Judeans were equal and the levitical rules of defilement did not endorse any form of social stratification. Sectarians, however, *chose* their way of life. Secondly, “they turned the means of marking separation normally applied against [non-Judeans] against those otherwise regarded as fellow [Judeans]” as a means of protest against them/Judean society and as “a result of these actions all [Judeans] were no longer on the same footing: *sectarian [Judeans] treated other [Judeans] as outsiders of a new sort*” (Baumgarten 1997:9; emphasis original). Distinctions between sectarians and others also came about in the usage of personal names. Based on names of the earliest Pharisees and Qumran members, which are mostly Semitic, Baumgarten suggests “that those involved in sectarian activities were taken from among those less rapidly acculturated in the changing world after the conquests of Alexander” (Baumgarten 1997:46). This stands in contrast with the double names, Hebrew and Greek, of the Maccabean rulers from the time of John Hyrcanus, which is further evidence of their accommodation to influence of the outside world.

The approach to sects is helped with social scientific theory. Baumgarten follows Wilson’s (1973:18-26) distinctions between “reformist” and “introversionist” sects. One can classify Sadducees and Pharisees as reformists, the Qumran Covenanters as introversionist. Reformists have hopes of reforming the larger society and has not renounced it totally, still thinking of themselves as part of the whole. Introversionists, on the other hand, have renounced society as a whole and turned in on their own movement completely and regards those outside as irredeemable (Baumgarten 1997:13). How much of the population did the sectarians represent? It is suggested that the total known membership of sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes/Qumran Covenanters, and the Messianists) do not reach twelve thousand. The Judean population of the time has been estimated to be at least five hundred thousand people, some estimates going as high as two million (Baumgarten 1997:43-44).

Important for our purposes here, Baumgarten explains the sectarians “were more extreme in their devotion to what they believed to be the proper way to be [Judean] than other members of their contemporary society” (Baumgarten 1997:200). But as we have seen, most Judeans were not attached to any particular sect, and certainly they were also interested in living a life according to which they believed was the proper way to be Judean. According to Cohen, the average Judean

observed the Sabbath and the holidays, heard the scriptural lessons in synagogue on Sabbath, abstained from forbidden foods, purified themselves before entering the temple precincts, circumcised their sons on the eighth day, and adhered to the 'ethical norms' of folk piety. Whatever they may have thought of the priests and the temple, they went on pilgrimage to the temple a few times per year and probably relied on priesthood to propitiate the deity through a constant and well-maintained sacrificial cult. If the 'average' [Judean] of antiquity was anything like the 'average' citizen of every other time and place, he or she was more concerned about rainfall and harvests than about theology and religion. For this 'average' [Judean] the primary benefit of the democratisation of religion [e.g. the development of the synagogue and regular Torah study] was that it provided an additional means for serving God and thereby ensuring divine blessing.

(Cohen 1987:172-173)

Generally we can agree, but the Judeans were not necessarily like average citizens of every other time and place, and had particular reason to be interested in their ancestral religion in particular. What is at issue here is the question of the threat to their identity posed by Hellenism or anything foreign. The encroachment of foreigners on the land with their religion and customs would have given strong impetus in this regard. The memory of the Maccabean revolt would have been strong. The Hasmonean rulers themselves were suspect as far as keeping foreign influences out. Herod the Great, and the various Roman prefects and procurators often showed themselves to be insensitive towards Judean religious-cultural sensibilities. These factors will be investigated in further detail below. And what Cohen here fails to appreciate it would seem is that "rainfall and harvests", or the economic and social viability of the *family on its land* had everything to do with theology and religion (see further below). As Horsley (1995:34) points out "religion was inseparable from the political-economic dimensions of life".

Since Judeanism was a wholly integrated system of thought, it provided an interest dynamic between the sectarians, the priesthood, and the rest of the population. Collectively, however, the sectarians and priesthood formed a small minority of the population. The sectarians in particular might have been more devoted to what they thought it meant to be Judean, but this kind concern did not exclusively characterise them. For the vast majority of Judeans, being true to your identity meant living on

and working the ancestral land, while being concerned with how the traditional way of life was threatened with the “foreigner being in the house”.

3.4.6 Palestine Under Herod the Great

It was during rule of the last Hasmonean king-priests that Herod the Great manoeuvred to become king over the Judeans (ruled 37-4 BCE). It is also here, where the impact of Hellenism was felt. Herod, who simply loved to build, gave the Judeans something to be really proud of by constructing the magnificent Temple complex. Josephus boasted that the temple was renowned and world famous, and was a feast for the eyes (War 5.222). Herod was in a way sensitive to Judean religious requirements for the predominant floral motif used in decorating the Temple was the vine with clusters of grapes, symbolic for blessing, happiness and productivity (Shanks 1990:13). Otherwise the Temple also boasted other floral and geometrical motifs (Ritmeyer & Ritmeyer 1990:44-47). But overall, the Temple complex drew heavily on Greeks and Roman design principles. The Temple was located on a large terrace or esplanade. A temple located on a large terrace was a typical feature of late Republican and early Imperial Roman architecture. A further Roman feature was the colonnades that surrounded the esplanade that were integrated into a triple-aisled basilica (or “Royal Stoa”) along the southern end. There are also the Corinthian capitals of the columns, and the geometrical principles used in the design, all which came from the Roman architecture of the period (Jacobson 2002).

Unfortunately, the Temple in Jerusalem was not the only temple that Herod built. He also built temples dedicated to Caesar Augustus – known as Augusteums – in Caesarea, Sebaste in Samaria, while archaeologists have claimed to found the third at Omrit in far northern Galilee (Overman et al 2003; cf Jacobson 2002:22). Josephus notes that Herod built none of these temples in Judean territory (Ant 15.328-30, 363-64; War 1.403-407). From the Herodian period Gentile games were also occurring in Palestine. In Jerusalem itself, Herod built a theatre, amphitheatre (Ant 15.268-76) and a hippodrome, and similarly to Caesarea, introduced games held in honour of Caesar every four years (Ben-Dov 1990:24). Some people were not happy about the theatre as it was decorated with human busts (Ant 15.277-9). Greek music was performed at festivals in Jerusalem under Herod, as well as games of amusement and chance, such as the throwing of dice – the latter was by rabbinic tradition condemned (Schürer et al 1979:60).

Other cities were also part of Herod's ambitious building plans. Especially Caesarea saw a dramatic transformation, as it was transformed from a small fishing village originally known as Strato's Tower, to the largest port in the Mediterranean basin (Ben-Dov 1990:24). The city was inaugurated in 13/12 BCE. Here Herod built a large palace, a system of aqueducts, and an amphitheatre.¹² The temple dedicated to Rome and Augustus that faced the harbour contained a colossal statue of the emperor (cf Bull 1990; Schürer et al 1979:46). Other Hellenistic building projects occurred in Jericho, Ptolemeis, Damascus, Tiberias and Tarichaea (Magdala). Jericho supposedly possessed a theatre, an amphitheatre and a hippodrome (Ant 17.161; 17.178; 17.194; War 1.659, 666). Herod built a gymnasium in Ptolemeis, and both a gymnasium and theatre in Damascus (War 1.422). Mention is made of a stadium in Tiberias (War 2.618; 3.539; Life 92; 331) and Tarichaea (Magdala) apparently had a hippodrome (War 2.599; Life 132; 138). Josephus himself described the theatre and amphitheatre as things alien to Judean custom (Ant 15.268). It should come as little surprise that the opponents of Herod the Great called him a "half-Judean" because he was a descendent of the Idumeans, who were in the time of the Maccabees forcibly converted to Judeanism (Cohen 1987:54), but this was more a statement of cultural opposition.

Even Herod's descendents continued to some degree in the spirit of their father. Antipas' newly built Tiberias was named after the emperor, and he introduced pictures of animals in the palace (Life 12.65). Apparently Antipas built the largest synagogue in Palestine in Tiberias (the prayer house?) (t.Sukk 4:6). He also allowed the city to mint its own coins, and have a Greek constitution with a *boule* under the leadership of an *archon* (Hengel 1989:39). Philip (4 BCE-34 CE) renamed Bethsaida as Julias, most probably after the wife of Augustus,¹³ and his new capital was called Caesarea (Philippi). He was the first Judean ruler to mint coins bearing an image of himself, while the reverse depicted a temple which he maybe built in Julias and dedicated to Augustus (Brenner 2003:49; Jacobson 2002:20-21). Agrippa I, who for a period ruled over all of Palestine (41-44 CE),¹⁴ combined a Judean piety with a liberal attitude where he allowed for the worship of himself outside Judean territory.

¹² The hippodrome found by archaeologists has been dated to the second century (Bull 1990:114).

¹³ Josephus (Ant 18.28) says that Philip renamed the city after Augustus' daughter, Julia. She was banished in 2 BCE and died in 14 CE. Augustus' wife died in 29 CE so Philip most likely renamed the city after her a year later (Chancey 2002:106).

He further sponsored festivals in honour of Caesar as well as theatrical and gladiatorial entertainment (Ant 19.330-37, 343-52; Ac 12:21-23). The coins minted outside of Judean territory bore his image or that of the emperor. He also put up statues of his daughters in Caesarea (Ant 19.357)

The political situation under Herod and his successors therefore facilitated the advance of Roman-Hellenistic influence in Palestine. Naturally this represented more the interests and political inclinations of the ruling elite.

3.4.7 Language

3.4.7.1 Aramaic

It is the basic scholarly convention that the principal language of Judeans in Palestine was Aramaic, at one time being the *lingua franca* of the Persian empire. Traces of it can be found in transliterated words of the New Testament¹⁵ and Josephus, and sayings of early Tannaitic figures in the Mishnah. Additional archaeological findings have confirmed this conclusion. Aramaic is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, ossuary inscriptions, and contracts and archival documents and letters found at Murabba'at, Masada and Nahal Hever (Schürer et al 1979:20-25). Scripture readings from the Torah, which was in Hebrew, was followed by a translation into Aramaic. This translation was done by a person known as the *meturgeman*, the “translator”. In time these translations were written down and are known as *targumim* (singular, *targum*) (Fitzmyer 1992).

3.4.7.2 Hebrew

Hebrew, the language of the Torah, might have been the tongue of creation (Jub 12:26), but the common use of Hebrew does not seem to have been widespread in

¹⁴ Agrippa received from the Emperor Claudius both Judea and Samaria, in addition to Galilee he had already received from Caligula. Thus all of Palestine was under a Herodian ruler as it had been under Herod the Great (War 2.215; Ant 19.274).

¹⁵ For example when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter he spoke: *Talitha kum*, 'Get up my child', where the noun (literally meaning 'little lamb') is attested only in the Palestinian Targum. The word *mamona* (money), used in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:24) also mostly appears in the Targums. Then there is another Targumic parallel when Jesus healed the deaf man near the Decapolis, and said in Aramaic: *Ephphetha*, 'Be opened' (Mk 7:34). Lastly, there were Jesus' last words on the cross: *Eloi Eloi lama sabachtani*, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mk 15:34-35) (Vermes 1973).

our period (Fitzmyer 1992). At the same time, however, it seems that biblical Hebrew enjoyed resurgence in literary works (e.g. Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Jubilees, Testament of Naphtali) and the Essenes seem to have tried to resurrect the “sacred language” since most of the material at Qumran was written in Hebrew (Fitzmyer 1992). The first coin to be minted by a Judean government in Jerusalem, issued by John Hyrcanus I, had a legend in paleo-Hebrew script (along with Greek). Later revolutionary Judean authorities, be it at the time of the Great Revolt (66-70 CE) or the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-135 CE), issued their own coins exclusively using paleo-Hebrew script (Brenner 2003:48, 50-51; Schürer et al 1979:26-27) thereby making a strong political statement (Porter 1994:137-38). In Gamla, during the revolt of 66-70 CE, coins were minted using both paleo-Hebrew and square Aramaic script (Syon 1992). Mishnaic Hebrew is said to have been used by Judeans as a secondary language in addition to Aramaic, and was occasionally used at Qumran and more frequently by those associated with Simeon Bar Kokhba during the 132-135 CE war. Mishnaic Hebrew eventually became the official language of the Galilean academies in the second half of the second century CE (Schürer et al 1979:27-28).

3.4.7.3 Greek

It was once supposed that knowledge of Greek of the people would have been incomplete – a rough familiarity was widespread, even in Galilee, while the more educated classes used it without difficulty (Schürer et al 1979:75, 77). Hengel (1989:7-8) points out, however, “that in the time of Jesus Greek had already been established as a language for more than three hundred years ... Judaea, Samaria and Galilee were bilingual (or better, trilingual) areas. While Aramaic was the vernacular of ordinary people, and Hebrew the sacred language of religious worship and of scribal discussion, Greek had largely become established as the linguistic medium for trade, commerce and administration”. The epigraphic and literary evidence does suggest that the use of Greek was relatively widespread in Palestine, including Galilee. The evidence consists of coins, papyri and literary texts, and inscriptions, especially funerary inscriptions in the case of the latter (Porter 1994:137-47).

Already in the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE), bilingual coins were issued, using both Greek and paleo-Hebrew script (Brenner 2003:48). Bilingual coins were also issued by the last Hasmonean king, Mattathias Antigonus (40-37 BCE). Herod

the Great only used Greek in his inscriptions on Judean coins and weights, as did his sons and the Roman prefects/procurators (Hengel 1989:8; Porter 1994:137).

The influence of Greek can also be seen in the loanwords that appear in Judean texts. This is applicable to the musical instruments (lyre, harp and pipes) in Daniel (3:5, 10, 15) and the drachmae in Ezra 2:69 and Nehemiah 7:69-71. Greek loan words are attested in the Copper Scroll (3Q15) and the papyri of Murabba'at and Nahal Hever. There is also a notable amount of Greek non-biblical texts (e.g. Ezekiel the Tragedian), and additional sections to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three Children, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon) and Esther were composed in Greek. 1 Esdras and 2 Maccabees are thought to have been written in Greek in Palestine. The translations of 1 Maccabees, Esther, 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah), Lamentations, Qoheleth, Judith and Tobit, Chronicles and the Song of Songs may have been done in Palestine, and one can also mention the Greek Minor Prophets Scroll found at Nahal Hever. Jubilees, although written in Hebrew, demonstrates extensive knowledge of Greek geographical literature. One can add to the above the Palestinian and/or Judean authors who composed in Greek. These include Justus of Tiberius, Josephus, Eupolemus and Jason of Cyrene (2 Mac), 3 and 4 Maccabees, while others may be added if their origins were in Palestine (Porter 1994:140-42; Lieu 2002:297).

Hengel (1989:25-26) points out it is inappropriate to distinguish between "Judean-Hellenistic" literature of the Diaspora and "genuine Judean" literature of Palestine. There were connections in both directions and a constant interchange. Porter (1994:142) suggests: "That Greek was used not only in the Diaspora but also in Palestine, even for composition by [Judeans] of distinctly [Judean] literature including much religious literature, indicates that Greek was an important and widely used language by a sizable portion of the Palestinian [Judean] population."

Galilee itself was surrounded by Hellenised territories. The Gospels take for granted that Jesus could speak to the centurion in Capernaum, Pilate, and the Syro-Phoenician woman (Ἑλληνίς; Mk 7:26) (Hengel 1989:17; cf Porter 1994:148-53). Many Judeans were also given Greek names: some High Priests (Jason and Menelaus in Maccabean period; Boethus and Theophilus in Herodian era); Hasmonean and Herodian rulers (Alexander, Aristobulus, Antigonus, Herod, Archelaus, Philip, Antipas and Agrippa); also followers of Jesus (Andrew and Philip) and in the circle of rabbinic masters (see Hengel 1989:9; Schürer et al 1979:73).

The papyri found in the Judean Desert are also instructive that dates to the period between the two revolts. These documents include letters, marriage contracts, legal documents and literary texts (Fitzmyer 1992). One of these letters is addressed to a Judas at Masada, one of the last survivors of the first revolt. There are also two letters found that date to the time of the second revolt (132-135 CE). Probably from Bar-Kokhba himself, or written by one of his associates, these letters were surprisingly written in Greek and it is even stated that the “impulse/desire” was not found to write Ἑβραϊστὶ (Porter 1994:138).

Inscriptions are also often bilingual or only in Greek, but we will focus on evidence dating to no later than the first century. The ossuaries in Jerusalem and its environs testify to Greek being used on around 40 percent of them (van der Horst 1992; Hengel 1989:10). In a first-century tomb near Jericho, a Judean family nicknamed the Goliaths used Greek in more than half of the epitaphs. In Beth-Shearim/Scythopolis (south of Galilee), most of the epitaphs were inscribed in Greek. Porter (1994:147) says that the earliest evidence (first and second century CE) are *all* in Greek, but most of the inscriptions, however, date to the late second-century CE and thereafter (van der Horst 1992; Chancey & Meyers 2000:33). Nevertheless, the use of Greek in burial sites is significant as funerary inscriptions are the best evidence for the everyday language of the people. “At the most private and final moments when a loved one was finally laid to rest, in the majority of instances, [Judeans] chose Greek as the language in which to memorialize their deceased ... [Greek] took precedence over the [Judean] sacred language, even at a moment of highly personal and religious significance” (Porter 1994:147). Porter is here commenting on the overall evidence for funerary inscriptions available across several centuries, yet there is enough evidence to suggest that even in the first century at least some Judeans spoke Greek as their everyday language. Other evidence for Greek includes the Theodotus Inscription of Jerusalem, referring to three generations of synagogue-rulers. The warning to Gentiles not to enter the inner courts of the Temple was in Greek, although this was mainly aimed at outsiders. There is also an inscription in Jerusalem honouring a man named Paris who sponsored a stone pavement on or around the temple – presumably, many residents of Jerusalem were able to read it (Porter 1994:144-45).

Evidence in the New Testament also suggest that many Judeans who lived in Judea had Greek as a mother-tongue. Greek-speaking Judean communities had their own assemblies in Jerusalem. Acts 6:9 speaks of συναγωγῆς τῆς λεγομένης Λιβερτίνων καὶ

Κυρηναίων καὶ Ἀλεξανδρέων καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Κιλικίας καὶ Ἀσίας. In Acts 6:1, Luke distinguishes between the Ἑλληνισταί and Ἑβραῖοι, and so distinguishes between the Greek and Aramaic speaking communities of the early Messianists. All of the “Seven” men appointed to serve the Hellenist community had, not surprisingly, Greek names (Ac 6:5). Greek speaking Judeans also made pilgrimages to the Holy city and real Greeks (or proselytes?) as well (Jn 12:20ff). The festival games which Herod held in Jerusalem would also have brought in Greek-speaking foreign spectators (Ant 15.267ff.). But the use of Greek was not reserved for Jerusalem alone. Hengel (1989:14) explains

a substantial [Judean] population lived in the Hellenized cities of the coastal plain from Gaza to Dor or Ptolemais-Acco: in Caesarea they made up almost half the population, and in Jamnia certainly and Ashdod probably they outnumbered the Hellenized Gentile population ... That Greek was the principal language in these cities is again confirmed by [Judean] epitaphs and synagogue inscriptions.

3.4.8 Religious Influence

It becomes obvious that Hellenism influenced the people of Palestine in various ways, be it through architecture, governmental forms, or the use of the Greek language. The adoption of Gentile forms of religion, however, was in general strongly resisted, yet Judeanism in its religion did not remain immune to Hellenistic influence. The Tanak was translated into Greek starting ca. 250 BCE, and Judean religious leaders in Palestine itself were probably well exposed to Greek philosophy and culture (Glasson 1961:5-6).¹⁶ The four metals of Daniel 2 (gold, silver, bronze and iron), representing ages of world history, are exactly the same as the metals in Hesiod's *Work and Days* (eighth century BCE), which also represent successive ages of world history. Therefore a measure of Greek influence in Daniel is evident, although the symbolism using four metals may originally have been Persian (Hengel 1989:46).

Quite striking is the Greek influence on the Judean notions of the afterlife. Judeanism began to share with Hellenism an increasing awareness in this period in the importance of the individual, and that individual choice brings about a better hope for

life after death (Hengel 1989:48-50). This value of the individual developed into the glorification of the martyr, where “dying for” the Torah and the people – already an established feature in Greek tradition – saw its appearance in Judeanism for the first time in the Maccabean period (e.g. 1 Mac 2:50; 6:44; 2 Mac 6-7) (Hengel 1989:50). Elements of Greek teaching about Hades are likewise well attested in Judean apocalyptic writings of the period, such as visions of the beyond (e.g. 1 Enoch), post-mortem discrimination with rewards and punishment in the afterlife, and divisions in Hades or the yonder world for the “good” (or initiated) and the “bad”.

Glasson (1961:8) makes mention that in Greek antiquity, outstanding figures were often said to have visited the realm of the dead. In Homer’s *Odyssey* (book 11), it speaks of the hero going into the underworld to meet the shades. Also in Virgil’s *Aeneid* (book 6), Aeneas does the same. This kind of Greek tradition was so familiar that it had a special name attached to it, *Nekuia*. The word *nekuia* (from νέκυς, dead body) originally meant a magical rite through which the dead were called up and questioned about the future. It eventually became a familiar title for the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* and was applied to all similar accounts of visits to the realm of the dead. This tradition according to Glasson seemed to be the inspiration for the author of Ethiopic Enoch to write about the famous Biblical figure doing the same and disclosing divine secrets. Genesis 5:24 indicated Enoch was specially adapted for this purpose. 1 Enoch 1-36 can thus be described as a *Jewish Nekuia*.

Some Judean writings also understood that the righteous dead immediately entered the presence of God after death. Hellenistic philosophical ideas and language were freely borrowed as evidenced by 4 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon. They sound Greek in the way they speak of the righteous as not dying but only seeming to die (WisSol 3:1-4; 4 Mac 7:18-19; 16:25; cf. Jub 23:31). Yet, in these writings the Greek notion of life after death was qualified by Judean elements. In 4 Maccabees, the martyrs become immortal at death, but this was given to them by God and is not explained as an inherent quality of the soul. The Wisdom of Solomon also speaks of the future of the righteous within the context of a cosmic and collective eschatology (WisSol 3:7-8), a notion quite alien to Greek thinking (Bauckham 1998).

¹⁶ Glasson also points to a saying of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel: “There were a thousand young men in my father’s house, 500 of them studied the Law, while the other 500 studied Greek wisdom.” The father in question was Gamaliel II who became Nasi in 80 CE.

3.4.9 Summary

As can be seen from the above, Judeans did undergo a measure of Hellenisation, but as Hengel (1989:54) points out, what is meant by “Hellenistic” should be defined more precisely; for example, does it refer to oriental syncretism, or does “it refer to technology, art, economics, politics, rhetoric and literature, philosophy or religion?” What was impossible was a Judean pagan cult, the denial of monotheism, the failure to observe the Torah and the desecration of the Temple (Hengel 1989:54).

The Maccabean revolt drew the battle lines between “Judeanism” and “Hellenism”. Any forms of Gentile worship were banned. Particularly from the Maccabean period, the Judean approach to food was characterised by a strict avoidance of anything Gentile. Sectarian movements began to flourish, however, as the Hasmonean rulers made various accommodations to foreign influences. Under the Herodian rulers, Roman-Hellenistic influence was present through architecture, theatres, gymnasiums and hippodromes, and Gentile games and festivals. Various cities were renamed after the emperors and their wives. Tiberias had a Greek constitution with a *boule* under the leadership of an *archon*. The most profound form of Hellenisation was the Judean adoption of the Greek language. Various Judean texts were produced in Greek, while the translation of the Hebrew scriptures and apocryphal texts made the Judean world-view available in another language. The Judean understanding of the afterlife was also influenced by Greek thought, although it was qualified by Judean elements. But generally, if one wants to speak of *Hellenistic* Judeanism, it should be properly qualified to avoid misrepresentation.

3.5 RELIGION AND COVENANTAL PRAXIS

Sanders (1992:48) suggests that there were three focal points of religion: the Temple, the synagogue, and the home. Below we will trace some historical developments relevant to our period, and give an overview of prevalent covenantal praxis that gave Judeans their unique identity in each sphere.

The Judeans were certainly a unique people. Greco-Roman civilisation was quite successful in removing the identity and memories of the people that came within its orbit. The same cannot be said for Judeans. They remembered where they came from, and covenantal nomism ensured they acted accordingly (cf Hengel 1989:19). Their distinctive identity was maintained through covenantal praxis relevant to the

Temple, to the synagogue (or assembly), and lastly, to the home. Smith (1994:716) also explains that in

pre-modern eras, a distinctive religion or vision of a world religion appears to be the most potent source of ethnic persistence; but it is the social rather than the doctrinal aspects of a religion – its community-forming propensities such as rites, ceremonies, liturgy, script-and-language, sacred texts and clergy, and the value systems they transmit – that are crucial for ethnic survival in the long term.

Indeed, religion and covenantal praxis combined to make Judeanism a tenacious social entity with distinct values and which fostered a strong consciousness of difference in relation to outsiders. As a result it is required that the cultural features of *religion* and *covenantal praxis* (or *customs*) be treated together. In similar vein it should be noted that the Pentateuch does not make a distinction between ritual and ethics. It is the wisdom literature (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) that places more emphasis on ethics and universal virtues (Sanders 1992:50; Cohen 1987:76). We will first have a look at how the Temple, its symbolism and its rites, helped to foster a Judean consciousness.

3.5.1 The Temple – A Focal Point of Judean Identity

In Leontopolis in Egypt there was the unique phenomenon of a Judean Temple built outside Jerusalem.¹⁷ About 165 BCE, Onias IV, son of Onias III, built upon an earlier shrine on the pattern of the Temple in Jerusalem but on a smaller and less grand scale. Evidently there was sufficient number of priests to establish formal Judean Temple worship, which was continuously in operation until the Romans destroyed it in 73 CE (Schürer et al 1986:145-146; cf War 7.420-36; Ant 13.62-73). Besides the reality of a Judean temple in Leontopolis, during our period, Judeanism understood that there should be only one Temple and one place of sacrifice (Apion 2.193). This was in contrast to the Greeks and Romans who had countless temples and sacrifices could also be made where no temples were present (Sanders 1992:49). The Egyptian Judeans, like other members of the Diaspora, therefore maintained contact with Jerusalem and went there on pilgrimage and paid their tithes and taxes due to

¹⁷ There was also a temple built on the island of Elephantine in Egypt that was destroyed around 410 BCE (Schmidt 2001:122-23).

the Temple.¹⁸ Josephus states that Judeans from Mesopotamia made “dedicatory offerings” to the Temple in addition to the half-shekel (two drachmas) Temple tax (Ant 18.312; cf Ex 30:13; Neh 10:32). Philo describes Jerusalem as the “mother-city” of the Judeans and went there on pilgrimage at least once (see Flaccus 7.46; Embassy 36.281; Providence 2.64), and writes of the zeal that Judeans had for the Temple (Embassy 210-2). The Letter of Aristeas (ca 170 BCE), written in Alexandria, also gives evidence for devotion to the Temple in Jerusalem. Acts 2:5-11 mentions that Judeans from various parts of the world were in Jerusalem. What occurred in Jerusalem, affected Judeans in all parts of the ancient world.

The Temple required the services of priests. Josephus testifies that in the Diaspora priests took care in assuring the purity of the priestly line (Apion 1.32) while Philo suggests that priests held onto their leading positions in the Diaspora (Hyp 7.12f). Overall, Judeanism had a large hereditary priesthood that was supported by the populace. For the Greeks and Romans priests were often taken from the elite – the priesthood was not a profession or a caste (Sanders 1992:49). So besides criticisms against the Temple and the priesthood (e g PsSol 8; 1 QpHab 12.8; CD 4.17-5.11; 6.15-16), support for them both was very strong, and generally people made the required gifts and offerings.¹⁹

The Temple evidently had lots of wealth, sometimes being the target of looting by Romans (Evans 1992:235-41; Sanders 1992:52, 83-85), or even a source of finance for Herod the Great and his ambitious building plans (Schmidt 2001:37-38). The Temple also enjoyed Gentile patronage. Ptolemy III, Antiochus III Sidetes, and Herod’s patron, Marcus Agrippa, and the governor of Syria, Vitellius, and Gaius Caesar, the grandson of Augustus, brought their sacrifices or forms of Gentile piety. At times Gentiles also made votive offerings. It is said that at the siege of Jerusalem John of Gischala melted sacred vessels that were given by Augustus and his wife Julia, and other emperors (Schürer et al 1979:310-312). Josephus explains that when the Temple was being destroyed, the Romans found enormous amounts of money and other valuables in the treasury chambers. The priests handed over to the victors various lampstands, tables, bowls and platters of solid gold, and other treasures and sacred ornaments (War 6.282, 387-91). The wealth of the Temple has even led Feldman (2001) to suggest that the Colosseum in Rome was funded by the

¹⁸ Cf Philo, SpecLaws 1. 133, 141-4, 153; 1.77f.; Embassy 156; Josephus, Ant 14.245.

¹⁹ Although Philo does acknowledge that there were some priests who were poor (SpecLaws 1.154).

booty taken by the Romans from the Jerusalem Temple. The first three tiers of the Colosseum were built during the reign of Vespasian (69-79 CE).

3.5.1.1 The High Priesthood

The high priest was the principle mediator between God and the people. The present day realities, however, also necessitated that he play a mediating role between the people and the Roman authorities. According to Josephus (Ant 14.29-60), Judeans petitioned Pompey not to appoint a king over them, since it was customary for them to be ruled by the priests. This was in response to the Hasmoneans who while being the high priests as well, acted much like Hellenistic kings, ruling with absolute power. As Sanders (1992:37) suggests, these Judeans preferred things to be how it was in the Persian and Ptolemaic periods: “a distant monarch, no close supervision of daily life, and local government by the high priest and his council ... the state would again become a theocracy ...”. A similar request was made after Herod’s death where Judeans requested Augustus not to give power to Herod’s descendents, and that while the country will fall under Syria, local government will be decided upon by the Judeans themselves (War 2.80, 91). The Judeans wanted to get rid of the high priest appointed by Herod in favour of someone “more lawful and pure” (Ant 17.207-8; War 2.7). No doubt, the people were annoyed with Herod’s appointment and constant change of high priests who did not have the appropriate pedigree. This also illustrates that at this time, it was more important for the Judeans to live according to the law and for an appropriate high priest to assume responsibilities. Without an acceptable high priest, the Judean symbolic universe will be dysfunctional.

Even after the death of Herod it must have been annoying that the later Herodian rulers, Agrippa I, Herod of Chalcis, and Agrippa II were entrusted with the authority over the Temple, the Temple vessels and high-priestly robes, and/or appointment of the high priests (Ant 19.274-75, 297, 313-14; 20.15-16, 179, 203, 213). In the period from 6 to 65 CE, 18 high priests were appointed and dismissed. During the period of Agrippa II in 50-65 CE alone, 6 high priests from different families filled the high priestly office (Schmidt 2001:36).

3.5.1.2 Jerusalem, the Holy

Living according to the law meant that the sanctity of the priesthood, the Temple, and Jerusalem itself had to be protected. “The more vigorous and persistent the pressure of paganism on Palestine, the more energetic was the resistance offered by [Judeanism]” (Schürer et al 1979:81). Two points in particular came into emphasis: idolatry, and the levitical laws of purity. To avoid any association with idolatry, the Mosaic prohibition of idols was stressed (Ex 20:4f.; Dt 4:16ff.; 27:15). The following incidents are used as illustration.

In the last year of Herod’s reign (5 BCE), he erected over the great gate of the Temple a golden eagle. Knowing that Herod’s death was near, two men, Judas and Matthaias, who had the reputation of being learned and unrivalled in the interpretation of Judean laws, encouraged young men to take the eagle down. On hearing about this, Herod had the protestors and their teachers arrested, tried and burned alive. Herod also held the high priest as partially responsible for the incident, and so had him deposed from office (War 1.651-5; Ant 17.149-67). The eagle, besides being an impure animal, also reminded Judeans of Roman domination. Putting up an eagle over the gate of the Temple is a bit like hoisting the American flag over an entrance to the mosque in Mecca. Here idolatry and politics intermingled.

Judeans experienced more insults to their holy city and the Temple. After the death of Herod in 4 BCE, the Roman financial administrator Sabinus plundered the treasury (War 2.45ff.; Ant 17.261ff.). When Pontius Pilate became prefect in 26 CE, he ordered that Roman troops enter Jerusalem with standards which had the bust of Caesar on them. A number of Judeans followed Pilate back to Caesarea and sat outside his residence for five days and nights as a means of peaceful protest. Pilate had them summoned and surrounded by troops. On drawing their swords the Judeans responded by falling to the ground and extending their necks, choosing rather to die than to transgress the law. Pilate capitulated and had the standards removed from Jerusalem (War 2.169-74; Ant 18.55-9). Yet Pilate took money from the Temple treasury as well to finance the construction of an aqueduct, but this time he brutally suppressed any protests (War 2.175ff.; Ant 18.60ff.).

It was not that Judeans had complete paranoia over images.²⁰ The theatre that Herod built had human busts. Some objected but it was not torn down (Ant 15.277-9). The Judeans further did not mind the use of floral motifs, particularly the vine, for the decoration of the Temple complex, for besides being symbolic for blessing, happiness and productivity (Shanks 1990:13), the Judeans would also have recognised a deeper significance. They themselves as a people were identified as the vineyard planted by God (Jr 2:21; cf Ps 80:9-12; Ezk 17:5-8). The front of the Sanctuary was adorned with golden vines, from which were hung grape clusters the height of a man (War 5.210). Herod also minted coins with images of wreaths, palm branches, anchors and cornucopias on them, as did the Hasmoneans. During the revolt, the rebels minted coins, depicting vines, vessels and lulavs (Sanders 1992:243). Strangely enough, according to the Mishnah, the Temple demanded the Tyrian shekels as currency, whose silver content was high and consistent, even though they had the head of the god Melqart engraved on them (m.Ber 8:7). Coins with an image of the emperor also circulated freely (e.g. Mk 12:13-17), but these did not lead to riots. According to Josephus the curtain in front of the doors of the sanctuary had the stars depicted on them (War 5.214).

A serious crisis faced the Judeans when the emperor Gaius (Caligula) decided to erect a statue of himself in the Temple. At the time when the Alexandrian embassy was in Rome to see Caligula, trouble brewed for Palestinian Judeans due to events in Jamnia, a city that was mainly inhabited by Judeans. The Gentile inhabitants set up a crude altar to the emperor and to annoy the Judeans, who then immediately destroyed it. The procurator of the city, Herennius Capito, reported this incident to the emperor. He responded by ordering that a statue of himself be set up in the Temple in Jerusalem (Embassy 30.203). The governor of Syria, Publius Petronius, was also commanded to proceed to Palestine with half of his army to make sure that the emperor's wishes are fulfilled. Petronius did so reluctantly. The statue was being prepared in Sidon, and news of what was about to occur spread across Palestine. Masses of people ("tens of thousands"; Ant 18.261-72; 18.305-9) came to see Petronius in Ptolemais sometime between Passover and Pentecost in 40 CE, and later in Tiberias towards the end of that same year, pleading with him to stop the desecration of the Temple. Petronius eventually withdrew his troops back to Antioch and entreated the emperor to stop his plans. In the meanwhile, Agrippa I went to

²⁰ Although an interesting story in the Mishnah relates that Gamaliel II visited the bath of Aphrodite at Acco (Ptolemais) based on the premise that the image of the god was there to decorate the bath – a view that did not have widespread appeal (m.AZ 3:4).

Rome to see the emperor knowing as yet nothing of the emperor's plans. After the shock of finding out – Agrippa we are told fainted and only recovered the evening of the next day – Agrippa endeavoured to persuade Caligula to change his mind. Caligula it seems listened and a letter was sent to Petronius instructing that nothing must be changed in the Temple, but ordered that there should be no interference if an altar or temple to the emperor was to be erected outside Jerusalem (Schürer et al 1973:396).

Caligula later regretted his decision, and ordered a new statue to be made at Rome. It was to be put ashore on the coast of Palestine while on his journey to Alexandria, and secretly sent to Jerusalem (Embassy 42.331-7). It was fortunate from a Judean perspective that Caligula was murdered soon thereafter (Ant 18.307) – in January 41 CE – and so the Judeans of Palestine was spared, for the moment, from a major confrontation with Rome. It was eventually the procurator, Florus, who contributed to the outbreak of the Great Revolt when he took money from the Temple treasury.

The Judeans would have been particularly sensitive the religious claims made on behalf of the emperor. Herod built his temples dedicated to the emperor cult. Both he and his descendants named cities after the emperors and their wives. The residents of Palestine “were thus living in a landscape with constant reminders of the emperor's power and glory, if not divinity ... The Roman impact on Galilee and Judea was cultural-religious as well as political-economic, and it focused on the lordship of Caesar in a way that conflicted in a particular poignant way with traditional Israelite loyalties” (Horsley 1995:122).

Many Judeans, accepting the reality of Roman dominance, were prepared to accept the status quo as long as there was no outside interference with their religion and customs. Generally any overt incursion of the emperor cult into Jerusalem invited strong opposition. Those who protested against the Roman standards in Jerusalem and Gaius' plans to erect a statue in the Temple illustrated, however, that they did not threaten war, “but were prepared to die passively rather than have the holiness of the city and the sanctuary defiled” (Sanders 1992:41). “Zeal for God's law and his worship was one of the principal motives of the actions of many [Judeans], and belief in an afterlife encouraged people to follow the law even if it meant death” (Sanders 1992:42-43). Josephus in *Against Apion* (2.234, 271) places emphasis on the Judean willingness to remain faithful to the law, something that is not found in other nations. The Torah was a guide to life, eternally valid and meaningful. Josephus

remarked that Judeans were willing to die for their Torah (Apion 1.44-45; 2.232-34, 271-77; Ant 15.248), but what Greeks were prepared to die for classical Greek literature? Philo expressed similar sentiments (Hyp 6.9; Embassy 192). The Gentile author Dio Cassius, also commented on the passion which Judeans had for their religion; in fact, he said it was well known (History of Rome 37.17.4).

3.5.1.3 The Temple and Ritual Purity

The notions of the sacred and the profane, of the pure and impure, were important elements of the Judean symbolic universe. It was especially the role of the priests to distinguish (*badal*) between the two (Lv 10:10) and which had to be taught to the people (Ezk 44:23). Impurity could be acquired through transgressing the law, but essentially had to do with the changes of status. So before we continue, what exactly did ritual purity entail? According to the Judean symbolic universe, there was a certain order to Creation; everything had its proper place.

What is at one and the same time intact and in its place is pure, *tahor*. Conversely, what is impure, *tame*, presupposes mixture and disorder. Hence the attention given to extreme situations, to the margins, to beginnings and ends, to the frontiers of otherness in all its forms ... Thus the margins of the body are dangerous. The skin diseases, bodily secretions, the emissions of sperm and blood, excrement, by blurring the frontiers between the interior and the exterior, threaten physical integrity.

(Schmidt 2001:91)

The purity laws are found mainly in Lv 12 (childbirth), Lv 13-14 ("leprosy"), Lv 15 (bodily emissions), Nm 19 (death), and Lv 11; Dt 14 (food). A more detailed discussion is reserved for later, but for example, after childbirth a woman was impure for either forty days (after the birth of a son) or eighty days (after the birth of a daughter). She was not allowed to enter the Temple or touch holy things. After menstruation, women were impure for a week – anybody touching a menstruant, her bed or chair was impure for a day, the same length required for purification after contact with semen. Unnatural discharge of blood (for women) and semen (for men) was considered as leading to a high degree of impurity (Sanders 1992:71-72). Death was the most severe form of "change of status". One contracted corpse impurity through physical contact, or just by being in the same room. In our period you could

even contract it by “overshadowing” the corpse (by walking over a grave) or by being “overshadowed” by one. Here purification required seven days. Especially the priesthood and the Temple had to be protected from contracting corpse impurity. Even the high priest was not allowed to contract corpse impurity when his father or mother died (Lv 21:1-11).

In order to remedy impurity, ritual immersion and sacrificial rituals were put in place to bring about a change from one status to another. As such, they were a means by which the Judean community was restored to its integrity and where everything could be established in its right place in conformity with the order of Creation (Schmidt 2001:93-94; cf Schürer et al 1979:476-77).

The notion of pure and impure, however, also extended to other aspects of Judean life (Schmidt 2001:94). For example, clothing could not be made of hybrid fabrics, woven from wool and linen, in order to prevent the mixing of animal with vegetable (Lv 19:19; Dt 22:11). Similarly the farmer must preserve the perfect order of the Creation by not mating two different species of his livestock (Lv 19:19), by not yoking together the ox and the donkey (Dt 22:10), by not sowing different seeds together on his agricultural land (Lv 19:19; Dt 22:9). The production and consumption of food also played an important part, but this will be discussed later.

The entire system of purity naturally focussed on, and was analogous to the rules for the Temple. According to Leviticus and Numbers, anyone who enters the “camp”, or God’s abode, must be pure. It was mainly the Temple that organised the natural and supernatural world, from which the perfect order of Creation could be regulated in every day life. The Temple would therefore play a primary role in the identity and thinking of Judeans.

The symbolic and classificatory system that is proper to [the Temple], which is internalized by each group according to the place it occupies in the social hierarchy and the bonds that unite it to the Sanctuary, is shared by the whole community. This sharing and this internalizing lay the foundation for [Judean] solidarity.

(Schmidt 2001:95-96)

Since the entire purity system focussed on the Temple, a description of the centre of the Judean symbolic universe is in order (cf Sanders 1992:54-69; Ritmeyer & Ritmeyer 1990). Preparation to enter the Temple complex already began outside. To the south opposite the main entrances was a ritual bathhouse for ritual purification, where many *miqva'ot* cut into the bedrock have been found. After immersion, Judeans could enter the Temple complex. The outer wall had several gates, but most visitors would have approached the Temple from the south, gaining entry through the triple gate, also known as the “Beautiful Gate” (Ac 3:2). The double gate located alongside was for exiting the Temple complex – collectively these two gates were known as the Huldah Gates, so named after the prophetess (2 Ki 22:14; 2 Chr 34:22). Once through the gate, a tunnel leads you upwards and exits on the plaza or esplanade above. Now you are standing in the Court of Gentiles, which made up most of the area enclosed by the walls. To the south was the Royal Stoa that ran along the southern edge of the Temple complex. Anybody – subject to purification – was allowed entry into the Court of Gentiles, except for menstruating women. To the north was the Temple area proper. The Court of Gentiles was separated from the area reserved exclusively for Judeans by a chest-high balustrade (1.5 m or three cubits), or *soreg*. Next to the gates, notices in Greek and Latin were placed warning Gentiles not to go further. Here the Roman authorities respected Judean wishes and even allowed the death sentence to be applied to Roman citizens (Ant 15.417; Philo, Embassy 212; cf Ac 21:27-31). The notice read:

No foreigner may enter within the railing and enclosure that surround the Temple. Anyone apprehended shall have himself to blame for his consequent death!

(see Millard 2003:41; Sanders 1992:61)

Enacted around 10 BCE (Schmidt 2001:108), this is quite different from the edict of Antiochus III, the oldest attestation of the ban (dated to 200 BCE), where guilty foreigners had to pay a fine of three thousand drachmas of silver to the priests (Ant 12.145-46). Since the “foreigner is in the house”, Schmidt (2001:109) explains that on the political level, “the strengthening of the *soreg* seems to be a withdrawal and focusing within the Sanctuary of the distinctions between [Judeans] and foreigners that otherwise, in the territories and on its frontiers, are blurred”. For Josephus, these warnings were about the laws of purification (Ant 15.417; War 5.194). But what Judeans could not achieve politically and territorially, was symbolised by the

soreg of the Temple, which became a representation of what the ideal Judean symbolic universe required. Judeans are in. Gentiles are out. As such, the strengthening of the *soreg* also “indicates the strengthening and extension of the purity laws to the daily life of all Israel ritually separated from foreigners” (Schmidt 2001:110). Although purity laws were mainly aimed at regulating access to the Temple, it is difficult to agree with Sanders (1992:71) that it affected daily life relatively little. In our period, purity requirements broadened in its scope and application and it came to prominence in our period. The system of the sacred and the profane, of the pure and impure, was no longer applicable just to direct relations with the Temple, the pilgrimages and sacrificial meals, but was extended to concern every aspect of daily life away from the Temple (Schmidt 2001:231). Philo states: “The Judean nation is to the whole inhabited world what the priest is to the State” (SpecLaws 2.163). Especially the pious and the sectarians placed emphasis on maintaining a high degree of purity.

From the Court of Gentiles, one would eventually have to pass through the Court of Women, the Court of Israelites, coming to those areas reserved for the priests alone, namely, the Court of Priests and the Temple building proper: *Ulam, Hekal, Debir*. Josephus counts seven degrees of purity from the Court of Gentiles to the Holy of Holies (War 1.26). The Temple area surrounded by the inner wall was orientated from east to west, and entered from the eastern side. Having passed through the balustrade, you would have gone up a flight of fourteen steps, crossed a terrace and gone up another five steps and came to the inner wall which had ten gates. From east to west was the Court of Women, the Court of Israelites, the Court of Priests, and the sanctuary building itself. The Court of Women was open for all Judeans, subject to ritual purity of course, and according to the Mishnah it provided a gallery so that the women could see into the Court of Priests. Judean men could proceed westwards, ascend fifteen more steps, going through the Nicanor Gate in a wall that separated the Court of Women from the Court of Israelites. Here they could see the priests doing their sacred tasks, but they were separated from the Court of Priests by a low stone parapet, about half a metre high (a cubit). In the Court of Priests were the altar, the shambles (where the animals were butchered), and the laver (for priests to wash their hands and feet). This area was exclusively reserved for the priests – not even the Levites could enter this area. Then came the sanctuary itself, where twelve steps led to the Temple entrance. Inside the front chamber was a lampstand, a table for the showbread and an altar for burning incense. The Holy of Holies

located beyond it, and separated by a curtain, was empty and was entered by the High Priest only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

As can be seen from the above, as one progressed from the Court of Gentiles to the Court of Priests, the courts became more and more exclusive, all related to the required degrees of purity (War 5.227; Apion 2.102-104). Purity was so important that strict measures were put into place to uphold its requirements. Only priests were allowed to build the inner area of the Temple complex. Herod had 1 000 priests trained as masons and carpenters (Ant 15.390). This is clear change from Ezr 3:10, where ordinary builders lay the foundation for the second Temple. The Temple was a special place for the presence of God, and anyone who approached it had to do it with the necessary sanctity. Anything impure could not approach God's special dwelling place. The Temple complex was as a result heavily guarded. Philo explains that Levites were placed as guards at the entrances to the Temple complex, and at the entrances of the Temple itself to see that the requirements of purity were met. Guards also patrolled the Court of Israelites and the area around the Sanctuary day and night (SpecLaws 1.156). Josephus explains that during the tenure of Coponius (AD 6-9) the watch was intensified after some Samaritans scattered human bones in the Temple (Ant 18.30).

It is not just that the "ideas of holiness and separation, which allowed only what was most pure to come near, informed the entire arrangement of the temple and its rites" (Sanders 1992:70), but also the "Temple and the symbolic system of which it is the architectural expression at the same time separate, integrate and organize into a hierarchy" (Schmidt 2001:246). The Judean Temple both shapes, and is shaped by Judean notions of purity. For our present purposes, however, in the first century CE the whole of Judean society was graded according to the purity system as symbolised by the Temple architecture. First was the division of priests, Levites and Israelites, legitimate descendents of the twelve tribes and who preserved their genealogies through strict marriage regulations. On the other end of the spectrum are people tainted with defilements, such as the illegitimates, foundlings or eunuchs, who were prohibited to marry into a legitimate family. In between these extremes were a category consisting of proselytes, the illegitimate children of priests and freed slaves (Schmidt 2001:32-33).

Gentiles were initially not classified according to the purity system. The Tanak allows for Gentiles to bring their sacrifices as did the Israelites (Nm 15:14-16). This situation

changed however by the late third or early second century BCE. Here Gentiles (along with impure Israelites) were not allowed to enter the Temple enclosure (cf the proclamation of Antiochus III in Ant 12.145-46). The same situation prevailed in Herod's temple – Gentiles were not to go beyond the balustrades that surrounded the Temple enclosure. So although the Judean purity laws did not initially apply to Gentiles, in our period Gentiles were treated as impure (they were excluded from the Temple proper) and contact was avoided as far as possible because they were tainted by idolatry. They were allowed access to the Court of Gentiles as compared with Judean "lepers" who were expelled from the city, and Judean menstruants who were forbidden to enter any part of the Temple complex (implied in War 5.226). Roman troops were allowed to keep guard on the roofs of the Temple porticoes.

The schools of Shammai and Hillel apparently debated the issue of Gentile impurity. The School of Shammai (prevailing over the school of Hillel) decided on 18 measures with regards to the impurity of foreigners, and amongst others, placed a ban on Gentile bread, wine, cheese, oil, their daughters, and their sperm and urine (Schmidt 2001:240). The Shammaites placed Gentiles on the level of Judean semen impurity, while the Hillelites believed that the Gentiles permanently had corpse impurity – an uncircumcised male was the equivalent of being a corpse (m.Pes 8.8)! Generally, there seems to have been no general consensus at the time on the issue of Gentile impurity (cf Sanders 1992:72-76), although according to Schmidt (2001:241), the Sages considered the impurity of the foreigner as equivalent to that of a person with discharge.

3.5.1.4 The Sacrifices

According to Sanders (1992:43), animal sacrifice was the simplest and most fundamental aspect of any ancient religion. Sanders gives an overview of the entire Temple operation but here we are indebted to his work on sacrifices (Sanders 1992:103-45). It may come as a shock to us moderns far removed from slaughtering animals that the priests in the Temple were expert butchers, from slitting the animals throat, to taking off the hide and removing the inward parts, to cutting the carcass into its designated parts. Generally sacrifices could consist of meal flour, wine, birds (doves or pigeons) and quadrupeds (sheep, goats and cattle). Every day the priests on duty would perform community sacrifices such as the *Tamid*, sacrificing a male lamb in the morning and evening along with flour, oil and wine (Ex 29:40; cf Ps-Philo 13:2-3). These were burnt sacrifices, where the entire animal was burnt on the altar.

Such sacrifices increased in number on the Sabbath and to mark the new moon, as well as the major festivals and the Day of Atonement. Apart from these community sacrifices there were individual sacrifices brought by ordinary Judeans themselves. It is on these individual sacrifices we will focus. Most Judeans of Palestine would probably have sacrificed only once or a few times per year. A lot of preparation would have gone into making a sacrifice and so the whole process would have been sacred. Worshippers had to be in a state of purity – seven days of purification would be required in the case of corpse impurity. The right victim had to be selected, the majestic Temple complex had to be approached, and you had to make your way to the altar. All of this would have been profoundly meaningful. Importantly, the act of sacrifice was also the last moment whereby guilt and some forms of impurity were removed. Here follows a brief overview of the main sacrifices which Judeans would have brought to the Temple.

Individual burnt offering. Lv 1:4 states that the individual burnt offering was for atonement. A quadruped was used (Ant 3.226). In our period, however, these offerings were thought to be gifts to God (Ant 3.243, 251; 6.121; 7.389; 11.137; 15.419) or to honour God (SpecLaws 1.195-7). It was all for God including the hide, but the hide went to the priest (Lv 7:8). The man who offered the burnt sacrifice had to kill the animal (Lv 1:5; Ant 3.226f.).

Sin offerings and guilt offerings. These are closely related, and in both cases the priest would receive the meat and the hide of quadrupeds. The meat was to be eaten in the Temple, on the same day, sharing it with other priests on duty (Ant 3.231; 4.75; Lv 6:29; 7:6f.). The term “sin offering” is a bit misleading, and in certain cases might be understood as a “purification offering”, such as that offered by a woman after childbirth. She committed no sin, but through her ritual status she deviated from the norm (= the Hebrew conception of sin) and so through her sacrifice was restored to “normality”. In other words, her “citizenship” to the Judean symbolic universe was restored. Other “sin offerings” were divided into sacrifices for transgressions committed in ignorance (Lv 4:27-35) and for those committed being fully aware that it is a sin (Lv 6:2-7; SpecLaws 1.226, 235). The latter are the Biblical guilt offerings. Sin offerings made use of a lamb and a kid, and for those who could not afford it two birds could be used. If birds cannot be afforded Lv 5:7, 11 allow their substitution with grain, some of which would go to the priest who presumably turned it into bread. Birds were required for the purification of a man or woman who had an abnormal “discharge” (Lv 15:14, 29). Here one bird was entirely burnt, while the

other was used as a sin offering. The priest would wring the neck, sprinkle some blood on the side of the altar, and after it was drained, would cook the bird and eat it (Lv 5:8f.). The guilt offering required a ram (Lv 6:6). Here the offender was also expected to repay what he has taken wrongly, add a fifth to its value, and only then go to the Temple for the remission of his sin (Lv 6; SpecLaws 1.234-8). A male worshipper was required to put his hand on the victim and tell the priest (or “confess”) what the sacrifice was for (Lv 5:1-5; Nm 5:7). The male worshipper also killed the animal (Lv 4:29, 33; cf Ant 3.230). A woman would tell the priest or more probably a Levite what the sacrifice was for, who would in turn carry it to the altar area, but it is not clear whether the woman also laid her hand on the animal’s head and “confessed” as the men did.

The shared sacrifice (or “peace/welfare offering”). The shared sacrifice, or “communion sacrifice” (Schmidt 2001:212) had to be a quadruped (Ant 3.228; cf Lv 3:1-16). It was hared between the altar, the priest and the person who brought the offering, who in turn shared it with family and friends. The fat was burned on the altar, while the blood was sprinkled and poured on or around the altar. The right thigh and the breast went to the priest, which was “waved” by the devotee before the altar. The priest would take his portion home to eat it with his family (Lv 7:30-32; Nm 18:11). The devotee would take his portion, neatly butchered by the priest, and carry it out of the Temple to enjoy red meat with his friends and family. There were also sub-divisions of the shared offering: the thank offering that had to be eaten the same day (Lv 7:12); the votive offering in order to fulfil a vow; and the freewill offering. The latter two could be eaten over two days (Lv 7:16f.; 22:21-3). The sacrifices had to be accompanied by cakes and wafers, with some leavened and some not (Lv 7:12f.). One cake went to the priest while the offerer took the rest to be enjoyed with the meat. Both the priest and the offerer along with his family and guests had to eat the shared offering in purity (Lv 7:19-21).

3.5.1.5 The Annual Festivals

Sanders (1992:127-28) speculates that if about half of the Palestinian Judean population attended the Passover festival – which was the most popular (Ant 17.214) – and when combined with pilgrims from the Diaspora, around 300 000 to 500 000 people would have been present. Other estimates place the number of pilgrims at around 80 000 to 100 000, to which must be added the Jerusalem population of about 150 000 to 200 000 people (Ben-Dov 1990:23). We cannot be sure about the

numbers, but it is plausible that tens-of-thousands of Judeans would have participated in the major festivals, and they would have been enthusiastic in doing so (cf Ps-Philo 13:4-7). It was to solve this logistical nightmare that contributed to Herod rebuilding the Temple area, and the esplanade covered the size of 12 soccer fields, stands included (Ben-Dov 1990:24).

People travelled to Jerusalem in groups. Large caravans came from Babylonia, bringing with them the Temple tax as well (Ant 17.313). Other caravans and ships brought pilgrims from Syria, Asia Minor and North Africa (SpecLaws 1.69). Galileans and Idumeans made the pilgrimage journey in groups as well (War 2.232). As Sanders (1992:128) explains, the Judeans festivals were like Christmas, “a blend of piety, good cheer, hearty eating, making music, chatting with friends, drinking and dancing. While the festive atmosphere started on the road, the true feast came in Jerusalem”. The pilgrims would also have had their “second tithe” money (see below) to spend. According to Deuteronomy 14:26:

Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice. (NIV)

Some of the pilgrims would have found accommodation in Jerusalem itself, while many brought their own tents and stayed outside the city (Ant 17.217). The Tanak requires that all males attend each of the major festivals (Ex 23:17; 34:23; Dt 16:16). Naturally, this would only be possible for those that lived in or close to Jerusalem. Whatever males did go on pilgrimage, no doubt brought their wives and children as well. Both Josephus (Ant 4.203-204) and Philo (SpecLaws 1.70) testify to the sense of community that was engendered by these pilgrimages. This sense of community and sharing would have been taken back to their respective homes, be it in Palestine or the Diaspora. Here follows a brief discussion of the three major festivals (cf Sanders 1992:132-41), all of which would have contributed to fostering a strong Judean ethnic identity. As Sanders (1992:144) points out correctly, “group identity and devotion to God went together”.

Passover (Hebrew, *Pesah*). Also known as the feast of Unleavened Bread (*Massot*), it recalled the exodus from Egypt. Originally there were two festivals, Passover and Unleavened Bread, that with time merged into one forming an eight day festival (cf Lv 23:4-8; Dt 16:1-8). On the 14th of Nisan the Passover lamb was sacrificed, while on

the fifteenth (beginning at sundown) the feast of Unleavened Bread began lasting seven days (Ant 3.248f.; SpecLaws 2.149f.; 155). One lamb was seen as adequate for ten people (War 6.423) so presumably one of the ten would have made the sacrifice in the Temple. The worshipper, however, would have been required to be in a state of ritual purity. Whoever entered the Temple complex was required to stay outside the Temple for seven days in the case of corpse impurity. He had to be sprinkled with ashes on the third and seventh day, ritually immerse himself in the immersion pools located towards the south of the complex, and only then could he enter to sacrifice the Passover lamb (SpecLaws 1.261).

The sacrifices were made between the ninth and eleventh hours of the day (around four to six o'clock in the afternoon) (War 6.423) accompanied by the full compliment of priests and Levites numbering thousands. According to the Tosefta (t.Sukk 3:2) the Levites sang the Hallel (Pss 113-18), which centred on praise and thanksgiving for personal and national deliverance. The man who brought the sacrifice slaughtered the animal and the priest caught the blood, which was passed on for the blood to be thrown against the base of the altar (m.Pes 5:5-6). The priest then took the lamb and hung it on a hook on one of the walls and flayed it – or alternatively, staves were supported on the shoulders whereupon the lamb could be hung and flayed. This means the process – of slaughtering around 30 000 lambs if around 300 000 pilgrims were present! – could take place throughout the large Temple complex, or the priests stayed inside the balustrade where pilgrims and animals continuously flowed by (see Sanders 1992:133-37, who does not see the description of the Mishnah as likely, where the worshippers come in three different groups). In whatever way it happened, it is worth to comment that it must have required exceptional organisation and experience on the part of the priests. The priest involved removed the main fatty portions and returned the lamb and its hide to the offerer, while the fat was burned on the altar (m.Pes 5:9). He returned to his fellow pilgrims with the whole lamb, which was roasted on a skewer after nightfall (Ex 12:8f; cf m.Pes 7:1f.). The roasted lamb was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Ex 12:8). One also had to be properly attired. The loins had to be girded, with sandals on the feet and staff in hand to remember that the Israelites fled from Egypt in haste (Ex 12:11). The children also had to be instructed on the meaning of the Passover festival – God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites when he killed the Egyptians (Ex 12:26-27).

Not surprisingly, as the feast had to do with national liberation, it was often accompanied by Judean riots. It was the usual practice of the Roman prefect or procurator, stationed in Caesarea, to come to Jerusalem with additional troops to maintain order. Guards were posted on the roofs of the porticoes that surrounded the entire complex. There was one incident in 4 CE when Archelaus was ethnarch of Judea. While he was standing in the Temple court, some Judeans made use of the opportunity to protest against the execution of the two Pharisees who encouraged their students to take down the eagle that stood above the entrance to the Temple. Archelaus sent in troops to arrest them but the crowd threw them with stones killing a few in the process. When further troops were sent in, 3 000 Judeans were supposedly killed, the rest fled and the sacrifices were cancelled (War 2.10-13). During the time of the procurator Cumanus (48-52 CE), as per usual, Roman troops were on guard on the roofs of the porticoes. Josephus describes that one of them “stooped in an indecent attitude, so as to turn his backside to the Judeans, and made a noise in keeping with his posture”. The consequences of this insensitive behaviour are predictable. The riot that ensued saw the death of thousands (War 2.224-227; Ant 20.112).

The Feast of Weeks (Hebrew *Shavu'ot* or *'Atseret*, “concluding feast”). Also called “Pentecost” or the “Day of First Fruits”, it celebrated an agricultural festival. Occurring fifty days after Passover, it was identified mainly by the offering of new wheat. Two loaves of bread were made from the first wheat of the harvest, and offered as “first fruits” (Lv 23:15-21; cf Nm 28:26-31). This inaugurated the period where Judeans brought their offerings of first fruits to the Temple. Here God’s ownership of the land was declared, as well as his grace that allowed the land to bring forth food. In addition, it was a time to remember and give thanks for God’s deeds on behalf of Israel: the election, the covenant and the exodus (cf Dt 26:1-15).

In 4 BCE the Feast of Weeks saw a fight between Romans and Judeans. Sabinus, the procurator of Syria attempted to take for Rome (and himself) some of Herod’s treasure after his death. Thousands of Judeans began an attack on Sabinus’ troops and many lost their lives on both sides (Ant 17.221-268; War 2.42-44). Even here, the smallest of pilgrimage festivals, there was opportunity for riots where many Judeans were present.

The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles (Hebrew, *Sukkot*). It is an autumn festival that began five days after the Day of Atonement, being second to Passover with regards

to the number of pilgrims. It is prescribed that for seven days Israelites will live in booths (Lv 23:42). One more festival day (where work was forbidden) was added, making it in effect an eight day festival (Lv 23:33-36). The booths or tabernacles were made of “branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees” (Neh 8:15). The residents of Jerusalem probably built them on the roofs of their houses, while pilgrims built them outside the city walls. Also an agricultural festival, it marked the conclusion of the harvest season. It was “a showy and happy occasion with something of a carnival spirit. Worshippers carried *lulavs*, made of branches from palm, willow and myrtle trees, to which a citron (a citrus fruit) was attached ... There was flute playing and dancing by night” (Sanders 1992:139; cf Lv 23:40; Ant 3.245; m.Sukk 5:4). The Hallel was apparently sung on each of the eight days and during the singing the worshippers shook their *lulavs* (m.Sukk 3:9; 4:8). A plethora of community sacrifices were made (Nm 29:12-34; Ant 3.246), while study of scripture was probably an important element during the festival (Dt 31:10f.; Neh 8:17f.). Leviticus also connects this festival to the exodus (Lv 23:42f.).

Some famous events are connected with the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles. While the Hasmonean Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE) was serving at the altar, the on-lookers threw citrons at him. They accused him of being a descendent of captives, thus implying he was illegitimate and not eligible to serve as a priest. Once the troops were called in some 6 000 Judeans were killed according to Josephus (Ant 13.372f.). It was also during this festival that a Jesus son of Ananias proclaimed a message of doom over the Temple and the Judean people. Even after being punished and scourged before the procurator, he continued lamenting for seven years and five months, being most vocal at the festivals. He was eventually killed by a Roman missile during the Great Revolt (War 6.300-309).

3.5.1.6 Tithes, Offerings and the Temple Tax

The Tanak, particularly the Torah, has no uniform prescription on tithing and offerings. What was tithed and how much developed over time, and here again we are indebted to Sanders (1992:146-57) and will follow his reconstruction of the tithing and offering system that was in place in the first century. All these contributions existed to support the priests and Levites who were not allowed to “inherit the land” (Nm 18:20-31; Dt 18:1-2), although evidently there were those who did own land but refrained from working it themselves. But the onus was on ordinary Israelites to support their priests and Levites who were to serve in the Temple (TLevi 9:4; Jub

14:25; 32:10-15). There were strict biblical requirements for the priests and their families when they ate the tithes and offerings. They had to be in a state of ritual purity (Lv 22:4-7; Nm 18:13), while ordinary Israelites were also expected to handle and eat second tithe in purity (Dt 26:13-14).

The tithe, literally means “one-tenth”. In our period the requirements of Deuteronomy 14; Leviticus 27 and Numbers 18 (cf Neh 10:37-39) were combined to form what Sanders calls the fourteen tithe system in a seven year cycle. Every seventh year, the sabbatical year, no tithes were offered as the land was given an opportunity to rest. In the other years there were at least two tithes, the tenth of all agricultural produce – not animals – that went to the Levites (who then gave a tenth of what they received to the priests), and the so-called “second tithe”, money that had to be spent in Jerusalem especially during pilgrimage festivals. Every third and sixth year there was a third tithe, which was given to benefit the poor. Josephus understands that Moses required the two tithes per year and the third tithe every third and sixth year (Ant 4.69, 205, 240), illustrating that the fourteen tithe system was used. Priests and Levites collected the tithes themselves (Neh 10:37f.; Life 63), so farmers every year expected that the religious clergy would come to ask for the tithes. This also implies that there were sufficient storage facilities for grain (and wine and oil), which in turn could be distributed amongst the recipients.²¹ Based on the debate of the Pharisees, not all people were necessarily enthusiastic about giving the Levites their portion, although the ordinary people were inclined to give the priests the one tenth of the first tithe as required.

First fruits. This category involves food (first produce and firstlings), money (redemption of non-edible firstlings) and fleece. In the case of *firstlings*, the requirements of Exodus 13 and Numbers 18 prevailed, where all male firstlings of animals belonged to God, that is, it went to the priests. All the firstlings of impure animals (donkeys, horses, camels etc.) were redeemed for one and a half shekels, while a first born son was redeemed by the father for five shekels (Ant 4.71; cf Nm 18:15f.). The *first fruits of produce* required the first of everything that the land produced (Ant 4.70). First fruits involved both primary and secondary produce: “both raw food (grain, grapes, olives and the like) and the first things made from it (cakes, wine, and oil); both the first-born lamb and the first of the year’s wool” (Sanders 1992:152). In our period the distinction of Leviticus 23 was followed, where the

offering of the first fruits of the harvest occurred on the second day of Unleavened Bread (where a sheaf of barley was waved before the altar), and where the first cakes or loaves were offered at the Feast of Weeks around fifty days later (Ant 3.251-52). Since the Feast of Weeks was not that popular, it probably worked out that most people offered their first fruits at the feast of Booths. Those who brought their first fruits had a required avowal to say that concerns God's gift of the land and the exodus (Dt. 26:1-11).

Sanders also discusses the *heave offering*, or *terumah*. Neither Josephus nor Philo mentions it, and in Numbers 15:20 and 18:11 the noun *terumah* is used to refer to the primary offerings, the shared sacrifice and first fruits. The LXX usually translated the heave offering as "first fruits", nevertheless, *terumah* may be a separate offering in Neh 10:37, 39, and this is the way that the rabbi's understood it (m.Ter 4:3).

The *Temple tax*. This contribution did not go towards the priests, but was used to pay the Temple costs, especially the community sacrifices. According to Ex 30:13-16, every Israelite male twenty years old and above was required to pay a half shekel in support of the tabernacle, a tax that was required to be given only once in a lifetime. Neh 10:32 requires an annual tax of one third shekel. Eventually it was understood that that the Tanak requires an annual tax of one half shekel (= two drachmas), payable by each adult Judean male. The preferred currency was the Tyrian half-shekel. The money was stored in the treasury located in the vaulted rooms beneath the esplanade (cf Ant 19.294; Mk 12:41; Jn 8:12, 20). The Mishnah also speaks of thirteen trumpet-shaped collection boxes in the Court of Women (m.Sheq 6:5-6). On them was written (in Aramaic) their purpose. For example, "New Shekel", was for the Temple tax of that year; "Old Shekel" for the tax not paid for the previous year. Others were for burnt offerings and freewill offerings and so on. As Stegemann & Stegemann (1999:122) point out, this is perhaps the place where the story of the poor widow took place (Mk 12:41-44; cf Lk 21:1ff.). After the Temple was destroyed, the *didrachma* or half-shekel was changed into a Roman tax, the humiliating *fiscus Judaicus*, but the tax base was broadened to include women and children as well. All Judean men and women between the ages of three and sixty-two were taxed. To add insult to injury, the money was paid to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome (War 7.218; Dio Cassius 66.7). This tax was eventually abolished under Nerva (96-98 CE).

²¹ Beneath the esplanade, there were three stories of vaults that provided a lot of space for

Now did all of these tithes and taxes impose a serious economic burden on the people? This is the view of Horsley (1987:232-56) and Borg (1984:84-85). The tithes and taxes when combined with the Roman tribute added up to over 40 per cent of production (Horsley) or 35 per cent (Borg). This double taxation led to an increased cycle of indebtedness, and eventually, loss of land, which led to increased poverty, unemployment and finally, banditry.

Sanders (1992:157-69) seriously questions such an understanding. He argues that the system in place under the Romans was nothing new, as the Judeans had supported the Temple staff and paid foreign tribute (or Hasmonean taxes) for centuries. The numbers of the unemployed are exaggerated by scholars, and Josephus' use of "brigand" and "bandit" is apologetic, demonstrating that only these Judeans were rebellious. In addition, the use of these two terms does not prove that the rebels were landless and unemployed. The situation for the farmers were no doubt difficult, but they evidently had enough to attend the festivals and were able to survive the sabbatical years. Sanders estimates that the average total tribute would have been less than 28 percent (cf Fiensy 1991:103, who estimates the total tribute at 25 percent). For Sanders (1992:168-69) the "social and economic situation was not very remarkable ... What was *peculiar* to the situation was not taxation and a hard-pressed peasantry, but the [Judean] combination of theology and patriotism" (emphasis original).

Sanders, however, is here guilty of oversimplification. Although we do not know exactly what the ratio between freeholders and tenant farmers was, and what the burden of taxation involved, there is enough evidence that at least *some* peasant farmers were indebted, or even had lost their land. For example, at the beginning of the Great Revolt, the debt records in Jerusalem were burned (War 2.427). The Gospels take for granted the reality of debt and the existence of tenant farmers (e.g. Mk 12:1-12; Mt 18:23-35) (cf Fiensy 1991; Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:100, 110-25, 134; Horsley 1995:216). The issue of land will be discussed in further detail below, but for the average Judean peasant farmer, indebtedness, poverty and loss of land was just as important as the desecration of Jerusalem or the Temple (if not more so?) and thus had everything to do with theology and patriotism as well.

storage (Ben-Dov 1990:28-29).

3.5.2 The Synagogue

In Hebrew, the term for synagogue is *beth kneset*, “house of assembly”. Generally there is no certainty about the history of the synagogue, yet it is regarded as an important element in Judean life and worship in the first century. Some question marks have been raised, however, as to its prevalence as a building. We will first review the textual and archaeological evidence before we make our own conclusions.

3.5.2.1 The Synagogue: A Building or Assembly of People?

Let us first review the textual evidence. The Gospels speak of a συναγωγή in Nazareth (Mt 13:54; Mk 5:2; Lk 4:16) and Capernaum (Mk 1:21; Lk 7:5; Jn 6:59). The amounts in larger cities were apparently greater, such as Jerusalem (Ac 6:9; 24:12), Alexandria (Philo, Embassy 132) and Rome (Embassy 155-8). Most often Acts makes use of συναγωγή for assemblies in the Diaspora, while it describes that Paul found Judean synagogues everywhere on his travels in Asia Minor and Greece (Ac 13:14; 14:1; 16:13, 16; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 7, 19, 26; 19:8), Cyprus (Ac 13:5) and Damascus (Ac 9:20). Josephus mentions a synagogue in Caesarea (War 2.285-290), on the Phoenician coast (War 2.185-90) and a magnificent synagogue in Antioch (War 7.44-5) suggesting that there was more than one.

A related term is προσευχή or “prayer-house”. Προσευχή appears in Josephus (Life 277, 280, 290-303; in Tiberias) and Philo (Embassy 132, 155f.; in Alexandria and Rome), 3 Maccabees 7:20 and in the New Testament (Ac 16:13, 16). Philo also speaks of people attending “schools”²² on the Sabbath (SpecLaws 2.62f.) where Judeans received instruction in the law.

Alternatively, these two Greek terms are used for Judean assemblies of people and/or places of meeting in the Diaspora and in Palestine. The earliest evidence comes from Egypt, where documents and inscriptions dating from around the middle

²² According to later tradition, Jesus ben Gamla, probably a high priest who flourished in 63-65 CE, ordered that school teachers be appointed in every province and town, and that children ages six or seven be brought to them (b.BB 21a). Both Josephus (Apion 1.60; 2.178; 2.204) and Philo (Embassy 115, 210) say that children were educated in the matters of the law, or even taught to read (cf Evans 2001:17). Other texts say that fathers must teach their children to read to know the Law of God (TLevi 13:2; Ps-Philo 22:5-6). Schürer (1979:418) argues there can be no doubt “that in the circles of traditional [Judeanism] a boy was familiarized with the demands of the Torah from earliest childhood.” This duty was primarily

of the third century BCE and onwards make mention of προσευχαί, although συναγωγή in the Diaspora initially did not have this meaning. It signified the congregation (of people) and not the building. It is supposed that it was in Palestine where συναγωγή, was first used for a “meeting house” – although it is also claimed that there is no realistic distinction between these two Greek terms (Schürer et al 1979:425, 439-447). It is thought that in view of the importance of Sabbath meetings, “it must be assumed that at least one synagogue stood in every town of Palestine, even in the smaller places” (Schürer et al 1979:445), a view similarly held by Sanders (1992:198).

Horsley (1995:222-27; 1996:131-53) has rejected the usual scholarly construct of synagogues in Palestine and argues that συναγωγή or the Hebrew *kneset* refers more to the assembly of people than a structure. In the Diaspora προσευχή denotes a building wherein the congregation meets. Josephus does use the term συναγωγή to refer to buildings in Dora, Caesarea and Antioch, but these cannot be used to argue for the existence of “synagogue” buildings in Judean or Galilean villages. These structures clearly also have a socio-political dimension as a centre for the local community in addition to its religious dimension, as does the prayer-house in Tiberias. The brunt of Horsley’s argument seems to be that there is no justification for the standard reading of συναγωγή in the New Testament as a religious *building*. The places of meeting were according to him the local village or town square. “It is increasingly clear from critical examinations of archaeological findings ... that we cannot identify *buildings* to which the term *synagogue* could have referred”, to which Horsley adds: “What were claimed as ‘synagogue’ buildings in the towns of Magdala and Gamla turned out to be private houses ...” (Horsley 1995:224, emphasis original). Horsley also questions that the rooms at Masada and Herodium can be identified as synagogues.

One can agree that the synagogue (be they buildings or merely assemblies of people) did not purely perform a religious function. A political meeting was even held in the great προσευχή of Tiberias (Life 280). Shanks (2001:52-53) states that before 70 CE “a synagogue was more like a community center. It was a place where groups of [Judeans] assembled for social functions and political matters, where they kept their money, where they collected and dispensed charity, where they judged disputes

that of parents but “it seems that already by the time of Jesus the community also provided for the instruction of the young by establishing schools.”

– and especially, where they studied the sacred texts. Probably not where they prayed, however”. Otherwise the New Testament makes mention of punishment being administered in the συναγωγή (Mt 10:17; 23:34; Mk 13:9; cf Ac 22:19; 26:11). Besides punishment, members could also be excommunicated from the assemblies. Supposedly “this punishment was nothing less than vital to post-exilic [Judeanism]. In continuous contact with a Gentile environment, the [Judean] communities could only preserve themselves by constantly and carefully eliminating alien elements” (Schürer et al 1979:431). These kind of expulsions are testified to in the time of the New Testament (Lk 6:22; Jn 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Clearly then, the first Messianists were seen as undermining the Judean symbolic universe.

In addition, Horsley’s argument above is to a degree ignoring the available evidence. There is of course the Theodotus Inscription found near the Temple Mount, which refers to a synagogue that could have been built as early as 100 BCE (Shanks 2001:51). The inscription itself dates to the first century CE²³ and reads in part: “Theodotus son of Vettenus ... *rebuilt this synagogue* for the reading of the Law and the teaching of the commandments ...”. Clearly some or other *building* is referred to, and strangely enough, its use is described primarily in religious terms. Other archaeological evidence for Palestine is meagre, but it does exist. Synagogue buildings have been found identified at Masada and Herodium, the two desert fortresses that were built by Herod the Great, and at Gamla in the Golan Heights. The Masada structure was probably converted to a synagogue by the Sicarii during the First Revolt. None of our sources identify these structures or rooms as “houses”. In addition there is a synagogue at Capernaum (cf Lk 7:5) and Chorazin (Shanks & Strange 1990), and a house-synagogue in Caesarea (Bull 1990:115). Archaeologists have also suggested that they have found synagogue buildings at Jericho and at Migdal (or Magdala), both dating to the first-century BCE. The structure at Jericho boasts a *mikveh* and an *otzar* (reserve), while at least four *miqva’ot* have been located around the structure at Migdal. Whether the structure at Migdal was in fact a synagogue is disputed, however. It is suggested that the structure rather served as a springhouse where the city’s residents came to draw water (Shanks 2001).

According to Cohen (1987:114) “the synagogue is an amalgamation of a prayer-house, which apparently originated in the diaspora in early Hellenistic times; a study house or school, which apparently originated in Israel also in early Hellenistic times;

²³ Cf Porter (1994:145) where the inscription is dated to the first century, before 70 CE.

and a meeting-house, which served the different needs of diaspora and Palestinian [Judeans]. By the first century these diverse elements had not yet united to form a single type". But another process is also likely. The various buildings/assemblies already had various functions, and only much later did they develop to have a more religious purpose. In summary the evidence is meagre, but there is evidence for synagogue buildings, while we will take note of Horsley's objection in that συναγωγή in some cases, particularly in small villages and towns, rather refers to an assembly of people. Beyond the family, the assemblies/synagogues would have formed the most important social and cultural form of the local community, and so would have promoted a strong group identity of being Judean.

3.5.2.2 Teaching the Law and the Prophets

In post-exilic Judeanism the custom of Sabbath readings in the assembly took shape. These Sabbath meetings were not religious worship in the narrow sense, but also contained instruction in the Torah. By the first century CE obedience to the Torah was an essential part of Judeanism (cf Apion 2.276-7; 1.43). Besides instruction in the Torah, Luke 4:17 gives evidence of the *haftarah*, or reading of the prophets. Both Josephus (Apion 2.175-78) and Philo (Creation 128) testify that there were regular Sabbath services in the assemblies and it was an important means of maintaining the ancestral religion. The law and the prophets were read and elaborated upon every Sabbath wherever Judeans lived in the Diaspora, the normal liturgical language most probably being Greek (Schürer et al 1979:424; 1986:142). The reading from the Torah and the prophets is also in evidence in the New Testament (Lk 4:17; Ac 13:15). In Palestine a reading from the scriptures was sometimes accompanied by a translation, or *targum*, an ongoing rendering into Aramaic (cf Schürer et al 1979:452-453).

Part of the proceedings was a spiritual sermon, which in Philo appears as almost the most important aspect of the gathering (SpecLaws 2.62; Moses 2.216; Eusebius, PrEv 8.7.12-13). Here Bible passages were expounded and given practical application. This teaching function of the assemblies is corroborated by the New Testament (Mt 4:23; Mk 1:21; 6:2; Lk 4:15, 4:20 ff; 6:6; 13:10; Jn 6:59; 18:20; Ac 15:21 et al), where it was the primary activity of Jesus and Paul. Josephus (Apion 2.175) also makes reference to the teaching function of the assemblies. Prayer is mentioned in Matthew 6:5. Study of scripture in the assemblies was therefore common to Judeans, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora (Cohen 1987:113).

According to Cohen, with the development of the synagogue it meant the Temple was not the only place where people could communicate with God. The development of prayer and Torah study was an alternative means for reaching God. The emergence of scribes and sages meant that the priesthood no longer had the monopoly on religious truth. This means that during the Second Temple period Judeanism was “democratised”. It was far more concerned with the piety and fate of the individual than the pre-exilic Israelite religion was (Cohen 1987:75). Sanders (Sanders 1992:181) has a different approach. There were approximately 18 000 to 20 000 priests and Levites, as opposed to 6 000 Pharisees. There were thousands of priests and Levites that probably lived in Jerusalem, while the rest lived in other cities of Judea and Galilee. Since the priests and Levites were only on duty one week in every twenty-four (as they were divided into twenty-four “courses”), plus during the pilgrimage festivals, they were free most of the time to conduct their own affairs. Thus it is likely that they served in their towns and villages as teachers and magistrates. So in most parts of Palestine they would have assumed their traditional leading roles, which included teaching of the law and serving as judges. In these tasks they were assisted by the Levites (Neh 8:7-9; 1 Chr 23:2-6; 2 Chr 17:7-9; 19:8-11). “Priests and Levites were often scribes, a title that covers a range of activities: copying texts, drawing up legal documents and serving as experts on the law ... The post-exilic biblical evidence uniformly points to the fact that the priests (and Levites, at least a few of them) were ‘scribes’ in the sense of studying, teaching and enforcing the law” (Sanders 1992:170-71). Deuteronomy places the responsibility of the law into the hands of the priests (Dt 17:18; 31:9), and Ben Sira regarded the priests as the nation’s teachers (Sir 45:17). Josephus regarded the priests as the nation’s rulers and judges (Ant 4.304; 14.41; Apion 2.165) – the system was a “theocracy” (Apion 2.184-7).²⁴

Sanders’ (1992:173) basic argument is that the priests maintained their traditional roles but they no longer had a monopoly over them. Nevertheless, Sanders seriously questions that the Pharisees, with scribal leaders, took over the responsibility as legal experts, teachers and magistrates. Inscriptional evidence supports the textual evidence that priests maintained their traditional roles. There is a first-century Greek inscription in Jerusalem that refers to a Theodotus, a third-generation priest and

²⁴ Cf Horsley (1995:232), who speaking of Galilee, suggests that local governance of village and town were provided by local assemblies (and courts) “operating more or less democratically” with the local ἀρχισυνάγωγος and ὑπηρέτης managing the affairs. Horsley does not identify these officials as priests.

archisynagogue (“ruler of the synagogue”)²⁵ who built a synagogue “for the reading of the law and for the teaching of the commandments”. Here three generations of priests were rulers of the synagogue (Sanders 1992:176). Philo informs us that Sabbath instruction was led by a priest or elder (Hyp 7.12f.). Overall Sanders concludes

that it is unreasonable to suppose that the small number of Pharisees, most of whom probably worked from dawn to dusk six days a week, also served their communities as lawyers and scribes, while the large number of priests and Levites, who were on duty in the temple only a few weeks a year, who could not farm, and who were educated in the law, did nothing. It is much more likely that ordinary priests and many of the Levites put their learning to good use and served as scribes and legal experts ... Priests and Levites were the employees of the nation for the purposes of maintaining the worship of God in the temple, and teaching and judging the people.

(Sanders 1992:181-82)

The understanding of the Pharisees may be a bit questionable so far as their work hours is concerned, but we can agree with Sanders (1992:201) that the priests were likely to be involved in community study and teaching in the synagogue (cf Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:140). If this was the case, which is very likely, the Temple and its symbolic meaning and ability to shape identity would also extend to outlying Judean communities. The priests and the Temple were not that sidelined as Cohen suggests. Similarly Schmidt (2001:263) argues that already before 70 CE

the synagogal institution is a bearer of the thinking of the Temple. Far from being a sign of a decline of the Temple, it is one of the principal vehicles of the extension to the whole of [Judean] society of the ritual prescriptions expressing the categories of the sacred and the profane, of the pure and the impure, as well as the mode of classification proper to the thinking of the Temple. As such, the synagogal institution appears as a manifestation of the extension – in the strongest sense of the term – of the Sanctuary.

Indeed, the synagogue or assembly would have been a perfect tool for the maintenance of the Judean symbolic universe. The Temple and its “thinking” was

²⁵ Mark 5:22, 35-38; and Acts 13:15; 18:8, 17 and others also refers to an ἀρχισυνάγωγος – is it likely that they were priests as well? It is a distinct possibility.

the focal point, but it was complimented by instruction in the Torah, correction, and even excommunication. Here we must be reminded of the social function of religion, and its ability to shape communities. Communal solidarity would have been engendered and of course, a shared ethnic identity.

3.5.3 The Household

Everyday life for the Judean was regulated by requirements of the Torah. They shaped mutual relationships, the rhythm of every day life, the Sabbath and feasts, and work. “In particular, the consciousness of [Judean] identity was reinforced through the religious structuring of time, daily prayers, the study of the Torah, and, not least of all, purity and food regulations, as well as endogamous marriage strategies” (Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:142). Matters pertaining to kinship will not be discussed here, as for now we will concentrate on the issue of religion and covenantal praxis at home, the primary place of worship or the place used most frequently (Sanders 1992:197; cf Sanders 2002:121). Horsley (1995:129) points out that

Religious formation and expression operated at more than one level, that of family and local village community being at least as important as that of the Jerusalem Temple for the vast majority of people, who lived in outlying towns and villages.

We must therefore always bear in mind the close association that exists between the family and the local community, but the home would be the primary area of early socialisation and where “habitual dispositions” will be formed. So for the average Judean child of the first century, what would he/she be socialised into?

3.5.3.1 The Shema, Dress and Prayers

The saying of the *Shema*, the biblical passage in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, was fundamental to Judean life and worship. It began with the confession: “Hear [*shema*], O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (vv. 4-5). The *Shema* encouraged Israelites to place the commandments of God upon their heart, hand, forehead and on the doorpost and the gate. The commandments should also be taught to children and be remembered before sleep and on waking up (Dt 6:6-9).

The commandments to be remembered was especially the Ten Commandments of Deuteronomy 5, but all the commandments are referred to. The mishnaic rabbi's simply took it for granted that Judeans recited the *Shema* (along with daily prayers) twice a day, at morning and at evening (m.Ber 1:1-3).

The importance of the *Shema* is highlighted by other Judean customs. Some of the instructions contained therein were taken literally by the second century BCE and gave rise to the custom of wearing *tefillin* (phylacteries) and fixing *mezuzot* to doorposts (Cohen 1987:74). The *tefillin* are prayer straps that every male Judean had to put on at morning prayer (except the Sabbath and holy days), their use based on Exodus 13:9, 16 and Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18. There was a hand *tefillah* and an arm *tefillah*. The latter was a small cup-shaped hollow case made of parchment, which contained a small parchment scroll with Bible passages written upon them (Ex 13:1-10; 11-16; Dt 6:4-9; 11:13-21) that was fastened to the left upper arm with a strap. The hand *tefillah* worked on the same principle, but the case was divided into four compartments that contained the biblical passages written on four scrolls. It was attached by a strap to the middle of the forehead just beneath the hairline. The *mezuzah* is an oblong box that was fixed to the right-hand doorpost of the house and every room. It contained a small scroll of parchment on which was written in twenty-two lines Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. It was meant to turn the thoughts towards thanksgiving to God and was also believed to keep evil spirits at bay.

According to Sanders (1992:123) Judeans would have dressed as other people did in the Greek-speaking world. Yet they could be distinguished by them wearing *tefillin* as discussed above, and also by tassels (Schürer et al 1979:479-481). The tassels (*tsitsit*) were attached to the hem of garments (on the four corners) and were made of blue or white wool, and is mentioned in Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12.²⁶ This is to be worn by every Israelite and it had the purpose of when looking upon them, to remember the commandments and to do them. The hem of a garment in ancient society was indicative of a person's rank and authority. In addition, wool dyed blue was very expensive. The presence of a blue cord (*petil tekelet*) in the tassel gave the wearer a mark of nobility. But within a Judean context, it had special religious significance. Normally there was a general prohibition against cloth mixing linen and wool (Dt 22:11; cf Lv 19:19), but TargPsJon on Deuteronomy 22:12 shows this combination was required in priestly garments (cf Ex 28:6; 39:29). Thus ordinary

²⁶ Cf Ps-Philo 16:1; Mt 9:20; 14:36; 23:5; Mk 6:56; Lk 8:44 and LXX and TargNm 15:38.

Israelites could not wear a combination of linen and wool as it was reserved for the priests and the sanctuary (Ex 26:1). But by combining linen and wool in the tassel, the ordinary Israelite was to a degree wearing a priestly garment. Israel as a whole is a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6), so the tassel was not only a reminder of the commandments, but by observing the commandments, they also strive for a life of holiness (Milgrom 1983).

The Pharisees were accused of making their phylacteries broad and their fringes long (Mt 23:4). “Pharisees wore the same clothes as everyone else, with only the minor statement of special identity expressed through *broad* phylacteries and *long* fringes” (Baumgarten 1997:102, emphasis original). The Letter of Aristeas testifies to these Judean customs and the importance of the *Shema*. Accordingly God commanded the following:

... in our clothes he has given us a distinguishing mark as a reminder, and similarly on our gates and doors he has commanded us to set up the “Words,” so as to be a reminder of God. He also strictly commands that the sign shall be worn on our hands, clearly indicating that it is our duty to fulfil every activity with justice ... He also commands that “on going to bed and rising” men should meditate on the ordinances of God ... (LetAris 158-60).

Accompanying the saying of the *Shema*, *daily prayers* were also offered. Josephus states that Moses required thanksgiving prayers when waking up and going to sleep (Ant 4.212). It is said of Judeans: “... at dawn they lift up holy arms toward heaven, from their beds, always sanctifying their flesh with water” (SibOr 3:591-94). Washing of hands during prayers is mentioned in the Letter of Aristeas 305-6. Some offered evening prayers during the time of the last sacrifice in the temple (e.g. Jdt 9:1). The pseudepigrapha depict the Biblical heroes as praying often (see Sanders 1992:202). There were also thanksgiving prayers (*Berakhoth*) before and after meals (Dt 8:10). It is also argued that the *Shemoneh Esreh*, the prayer required from every Israelite three times a day, though more recent, is fundamentally still very old, the foundation of the prayer preceding 70-100 CE (Schürer et al 1979:455-463). Prayer was also at times accompanied by the practice of fasting²⁷ (cf Schürer et al 1979:481-484, 455).

The *Shema* further requires that the commandments of God be taught to children. Together with theoretical instruction went training in religious practice. “For although

²⁷ Cf TLevi 9:4; Jub 14:25; 32:10-15; Mt 6:5; 9:14; 15:7-8; Mk 2:18; 7:6; 12:40; Lk 5:33; 20:47.

children were not obliged to fulfil the Torah, they were nevertheless habituated to it from the earliest years” (Schürer et al 1979:420). Rabbinical writings explain that parents were obliged to make their children keep the Sabbath rest. Children were gradually accustomed to keep fasts, such as on the Day of Atonement. They were further required to recite the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* and grace at table. Young boys were to go to the Temple at festivals and were also required to observe the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles. As soon as the first signs of manhood appeared, he had to keep the whole law (the expression *bar-mizwah* is attested in the Talmud; b.BM 96a). Later it was standardised and the young Judean reached legal majority at the age of thirteen (Schürer et al 1979:421).

3.5.3.2 Sabbath Observance

Josephus (War 4.580-83) informs us that a priest stood on one of the Temple Mount towers to blow a trumpet in order to announce the start and the end of the Sabbath. An inscription has been discovered on what may have been the corner stone of the south-western tower that has led archaeologists to conclude that this tower was the place where the Sabbath period was begun and ended by the trumpeting priest (Ben-Dov 1990:29-30; Ritmeyer & Ritmeyer 1990:40-43). This was Jerusalem at the Sabbath period. Celebrated by all Judeans wherever they were, the Sabbath was to be kept as a day of rest (Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15). The Maccabean crisis ensured its growing status for Judean self-understanding (1 Mac 1:43; Jub 2:17-33; 50:6-13; Ps-Philo 11:8). It was one of the most recognisable and unusual customs of Judeanism, sometimes even imitated by Gentiles, who like Judeans, marked the day by abstaining from doing work and having lamps burning (Apion 2.282). According to Jubilees in particular, divine election went hand in hand with the requirement to keep the Sabbath (Jub 2:19;), a right that was granted to no other nation (Jub 2:31). Transgressors must die (Jub 50:7-8, 12-13).

In the Pentateuch there is a short ban on work on the Sabbath that enters almost into no detail (Ex 16:23-30; 20:8-11; Lv 23:3; Nm 15:32-6; Dt 5:12-15). The later rabbi's felt obliged to be more exact and specified thirty-nine activities that were not allowed on the Sabbath (m.Shab 7:2; cf Jub 50). In the Pentateuch, for example, ploughing and reaping is forbidden (Ex 34:21), but evidently by the time of Jesus, even the gathering of a few ears of corn was regarded as reaping (Mt 12:1-2; Mk 2:23-24; Lk 6:1-2; cf Philo, Moses 2.4.22). The boiling and baking food was also forbidden (Ex 16:23) so the hot meals had to be prepared before the Sabbath and be kept warm. It

was also not permissible to light a fire (Ex 35:3). The rabbinic prohibition of carrying anything from one domain to another was inspired by Jeremiah 17:21-23, although the idea could be stretched to mean a lot of things (cf Jub 2:29-30; 50:8).

Other rulings included the restriction on how far one may journey on the Sabbath (Ex 16:29; cf Ac 1:12). Even the Romans did not recruit Judean soldiers because of the incompatibility between the Sabbath and Roman military requirements (Ant 14.226). There was a basic rule that the saving of life took priority over Sabbath rulings. This was already in place from the time of the Maccabean revolt when a group of Hasideans were attacked by Gentiles, but rather chose to die than to fight on the Sabbath (1 Mac 2:34-8; Ant 12.6.2.274). As a consequence, it was decided that the sword could be taken in defence on the Sabbath (1 Mac 2:39-42), but this ruling was only followed in extreme cases (Schürer et al 1979:474).

3.5.3.3 The Day of Atonement

We treat this special day on the Judean calendar here since for most Judeans it was a day spent in and around the home. The Day of Atonement (Hebrew, *Yom Kippur*) is the only fast prescribed by the Tanak. It was not a time for pilgrimage, but a communal day of worship, in thought and spirit being connected to what took place in the Temple. It was a day for the atonement of sin, and the sacrifices made by the High Priest in Jerusalem was made for all (Lv 16). The goat “for Azazel” was brought in, whereupon the high priest laid his hand and confessed the sins of Israel as a whole. An appointed person then took this “scape-goat”, which carried the sins of Israel, out of the city and into the wilderness (Lv 16:15-22).

3.5.3.4 The Purity of Food

As we investigated already, the issue of food became an important factor in Judean life from the Maccabean revolt onwards. In comparison with the holy food (*teruma*) of the priests and their families, the food of lay Israelites were made from *hullin* (or profane) products, which nevertheless, had to conform to the rules of the *kashrut*, that is, the prohibition of unclean animals (land and marine hybrids, wild animals, vultures or predators), the prohibition of blood, the ritual slaughter of clean animals, and separation of milk and meat (Schmidt 2001:217).

Regulations were already in place to distinguish food that was allowed for consumption from “impure” food that was disallowed (Lv 11:1-23; Dt 14:3-21). Judeans were allowed to eat only a few animals, while the fatty parts and blood was forbidden. It was a strict requirement that the blood be drained (from the meat of clean animals) in accordance with the requirements of the Torah (Lv 3:17; 7:26-27; 17:10-14; Dt 12:16, 23-24; 15:23; Jub 6:7-10; 21:6, 17-18; SibOr 2:96). Quadrupeds that could be eaten were those that chew the cud and have cloven hoofs (Lv 11:3-7; Dt 14:6-8). This includes cattle, sheep and goats, as well as wild goats and deer. Pork was forbidden, a well known Judean characteristic in the ancient world. Fish with fins and scales could be eaten (Lv 11:9), as well as several birds, but birds of prey were prohibited (Lv 11:13-17). Insects and “swarming things” (serpents, lizards, weasels etc) were likewise forbidden, but locusts, crickets and grasshoppers, who have their legs above their feet were allowed (Lv 11:20-45). It is also probable that by our period it was prohibited to cook or serve red meat (and fowl) together with milk and cheese (Sanders 1992:217). These regulations naturally had profound implications for social life. Josephus says that food is the starting point of the law and connects directly to social relations (Apion 2.173-74).

Processed food is imprinted with the social order. Drawing on the work of anthropologists, Baumgarten (1997:92) explains: “A person or group expresses crucial aspects of their identity and of their relationship to other components of society through the regulations which govern their behavior in accepting processed food from others. Commensality is the other side of the same coin ... Those with whom one eats are friends of a special sort, and those with whom one refuses to eat marked as foes”. Unclean food, or the food of Gentiles must be avoided, because it was not slaughtered properly or offered to idols (JosAsen 7:1; 8:5; 3 Mac 3:4, 7; 4 Mac 1:34; SibOr 2:96). The production and consumption of food was another way in which the Judeans maintained their symbolic universe. It determined who was in and who was out.

Regulations concerning food were therefore primary boundary markers in Judeanism, even more so in the sects. 2 Maccabees 5:27 speaks of food *defiled by Gentiles*. But when the new Maccabean leadership “disappointed and did not sufficiently reinstate the old borders, under the new purity distinctions of the sects – treating insufficiently observant [Judeans] as outsiders of a new sort – wild food was the only alternative to food *defiled by other [Judeans]* when food prepared under the auspices of the sect was unavailable” (Baumgarten 1997:92, emphasis original).

One can also add that according to Josephus, Bannus only ate things that grew in the wild. Even his clothing – that trees provided – showed concern for purity (*Life* 11). John the Baptist ate locusts and honey. His clothing was a garment of camel's hair with a girdle made of leather (Mt 3:4). John refused to eat bread and drink wine – two foods that were central to the Judean diet – hence people thought he was possessed (Lk 7:33). So the diet of Bannus and John the Baptist “is a critical indication of a high degree of tension between themselves and the rest of [Judean] society of their day” (Baumgarten 1997:93). The Pharisees' restrictions on food were less stringent than those of Bannus, John the Baptist and the Qumran Covenanters/Essenes. Yet they maintained boundaries around themselves through their food regulations – in the hierarchy of purity, they placed themselves above normal Judean society (Baumgarten 1997:97).

Hand in hand with type of food you ate was the issue of how you stored, prepared or served it. Generally, regulations governed the use of eating utensils (cf Mt 15:2; 23:25-6; Mk 7:2-5; Lk 11:38-39), and the type of water to be used, all elaborated upon in the twelve tractates of Seder Tohoroth in the Mishnah (Schürer et al 1979:476-477). Jars, cooking pots, jugs, plates, bowls and cups had to satisfy the laws of purity. Stone vessels were widely used, as it was believed to be impervious to contracting impurity (cf m.Kel 10:1; m.Par 3:2). Pottery vessels, on the other hand, had to be destroyed after it came into contact with an impure substance or object (Avigad 1990). Metal and glass vessels could be repurified, however, which brings us to the matter of ritual immersion.

3.5.3.5 Ritual Immersion

Ritual immersion (and washings) developed to be quite a distinctive trait of first-century Judeanism, particularly so among sectarians. The Sadducees carried on with the Biblical tradition. The Essenes transferred to their community the requirements of the Jerusalem Temple. It is argued that the Pharisees “centred the laws of purity on the table, with the idea of eating their everyday meals in the same state of purity as that required of the priests in the Temple” (Schürer et al 1979:475 n. 63; cf Neusner 1973), a position with which Sanders (1992:380-451) disagrees.

Mark 7:3-4 relates directly to Pharisaic eating practices (Baumgarten 1997:97). Mark 7:3 (cf Mt 15:1-20) says:

The Pharisees and all the Judeans do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.

This requirement in the time of Jesus is said to be only really applicable to the *haberim* or Associates,²⁸ and Schmidt (2001:235) suggests that this rite was not simply to achieve purity as an ideal, but marked a passage to enter a space or time of a greater or lesser holiness. Thus the *hullin* food is not necessarily seen as “holy”, but the time in which it is consumed is, separated from profane space and time. Otherwise Mark 7:4 continues:

When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash (or *immerse*, βαπτίζονται; other mss read “purify”). And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.

Here to wash/immerse themselves when they come from the marketplace involves a purification of the whole body, not just the hands as in v. 3. Immersion is also mentioned in Luke 11:38. A Pharisee invites Jesus to eat with him. He is surprised that Jesus did not first *immerse* (ἐβαπτίσθη) himself before the meal (the text has got nothing to do with the *washing of hands*: ὁ δὲ Φαρισαῖος ἰδὼν ἐθαύμασεν ὅτι οὐ πρῶτον ἐβαπτίσθη πρὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου). This presupposes that the Pharisee thought Jesus belonged to the same group, or at least was willing to conform to Pharisaic purity standards. Baumgarten states that it is fair to conclude that such “immersion was deemed necessary because Pharisees believed that they had contracted impurity while in the market, from ‘bumping into’ people of indeterminate status, [Judeans] and/or [non-Judeans]. Eating could only take place after the elimination of this impurity, and in the company of others who were also pure (lest an impure person present reintroduce the impurity which had just been removed by immersion, which would then start the cycle going again, and prevent the Pharisee from eating)” (Baumgarten 1997:99).

If the above is correct, Pharisees could only eat with other Pharisees, or with those who maintained their standards, even if only temporarily (Baumgarten 1997:100). Cohen (1987:130) similarly explains that “the laws of purity prevent normal social intercourse between those who observe them and those who do not. Those who

²⁸ Cf Schmidt (2001:232-34), who explains that the “Associates are mainly lay persons organized in associations in which they commit themselves to respect scrupulously the purity regulations and the tithes as they have been decreed, already before the destruction of the Temple, by the Sages of proto-rabbinism.”

observe the laws cannot share the table, utensils, or food of those who do not. They must avoid physical contact ... with those who are impure.” Even so, we need to draw attention to the suggestion of Schmidt (see above) in that the washing of hands before the eating of profane food served a purpose in that the participants entered a sacred space or time period. Although Schmidt does not make this connection himself, the same might have been part of the intention when it came to ritual immersion of persons and their eating utensils before meals. Maybe it was not simply just for the sake of achieving purity for its own sake.

Overall, there was a development in some Judean quarters with regards to the way you eat your food. The old table system, which prevailed during the Hasmonean period, was bipartite; the common meal of the priests was separated from that of the common meal of lay persons.

In the Roman period, with the entry of the foreigner into the house, a new table system is introduced. For the *haberim* and more broadly those who put into practice the new prescriptions of the Sages as regards tithes and ritual purity, the frontier that separates the order of priests from that of the laity tends to get blurred. Set apart from the profane activities, the *time* of the daily meals of the laity is regarded as sacred.

(Schmidt 2001:236-37; emphasis added)

How did all this preoccupation with purity and sacredness affect ordinary Judeans? Maybe Mark 7:3-4 as both interested in personal purity and a sacred time period had wide application, but for now our focus will shift onto the ritual status of the individual alone. According to Cohen for most Judeans of the second temple period “the sanctification of daily life was not implemented to such a radical degree. They felt ... that ‘the camp’ included only the temple and the temple mount. [Judeans] who wished to enter the temple or bring a sacrifice purified themselves²⁹ ... Away from the temple, however, most [Judeans] saw no need to observe the purity laws since they were no longer in the ‘camp’ ...” (Cohen 1987:130). But as already mentioned, in contrast to Israelite religion, one of the hallmarks of Judeanism was the extension of

²⁹ Ritual immersion for participation in the temple cult is already attested for the Maccabean period: “Before you enter the sanctuary, bathe; while you are sacrificing, wash; and again when the sacrifice is concluded, wash” (TLevi 9:11). A similar instruction is given in Jubilees 21:16 (cf LetAris 106). Generally, ordinary Judeans would have required immersion only before entering the Temple or when eating holy food (Passover, the second tithe and the shared sacrifice).

purity laws to the laity away from the Temple (Schmidt 2001:231; cf Schürer et al 1979:475). In the Second Temple period there is evidence of ritual baths or *miqva'ot* (singular *miqveh*), found all over Palestine and not only in priestly contexts. It was one important or essential means to maintain a life of purity (cf Sanders 1992:222-229). Sanders (1992:218-224, 228-29) therefore has a different view. Many people, he argues, regarded purity as a positive good. It could have been that the first part of Numbers 19:20 was seen as a positive commandment: "remove corpse impurity". This is based on Antiquities 3.262 where remaining corpse-impure for longer than seven days required the equivalent of a sin offering. So remaining impure was seen as a transgression. Ritual immersion was also extended to be applicable to women. According to Leviticus, contact with semen only required the passage of time for the purification of women, while it requires both the passing of time and bathing for men. But in our period it was agreed that both men and women had to bathe, or rather, immerse themselves for purification.

Ritual immersion, however, did not only revolve around the issue of avoiding transgression. Stegemann & Stegemann (1999:143) also point to another reason why Judeans ritually immersed themselves. Because of the presence of Gentiles in Palestine and the pagan or semi-pagan governing structures "the urgency of an identity-preserving delineation was not exactly small". Schmidt (2001:239) also points out that due to the proximity of Gentiles after the Hasmonean period it led to a "transformation and reinforcement of that separation [i.e. between Judean and Gentile]. It was spatial; it becomes ritual. Because, established in the house, the foreigner is declared 'impure'." Certainly, ritual immersion and washings would have been a meaningful way of maintaining your own position within the Judean symbolic universe and separating yourself from alien elements. What the *soreg* in the Temple symbolised became concrete in ritual immersion. Schmidt (2001:244) explains it succinctly:

In the old system, the categories structuring the thinking of the Temple had as their first function to determine the sphere of holiness *within* the [Judean] community. While retaining this function, the new system thus modified acquires a new one: that of keeping the foreigners *outside* the community by establishing a hedge between [Judeans] and [non-Judeans]. Being no longer either territorial or political, the necessary separation between [Judeans] and [non-Judeans], that allows the community to protect itself from the danger of

profanation that they impose on it, is henceforth symbolic and ritual (emphasis original).

So what did immersion pools involve? According to Sanders, Leviticus 15:16 requires that a man who had a nocturnal emission to bathe “his whole body”. The question of *where* was answered by the development of Leviticus 11:36: not even dead swarming things can make a spring or fountain or cistern holding water impure. Leviticus 15:13 prescribes that a man with discharge bathe in “living” (= “running”) water. All the above verses, when combined, “led to the view that one should immerse in spring water or in a large pool, large enough for the entire body; if the water was not actually running, it should originally have been running water, and therefore it should have collected in the pool naturally” (Sanders 1992:222). What Sanders says here needs some change. “Living water” refers exclusively to water flowing directly from a natural spring or lake, and the water used in a *miqveh* need not originally have been “living/running” water. Sometimes rainwater was used, which flowed in from a roof or courtyard, although it is not “living/running water”. The water could also in small quantities be replenished by drawn water, since *miqveh* water had the power to purify (Reich 2002:51-52).

On the odd occasion, a *miqveh* was accompanied by pool called an *otzer*. The latter served as a reserve pool wherein “living water” or rainwater was gathered. A pipe connected the two pools, and as needed, the water from the *otzer* could be transferred to the *miqveh*. As already mentioned, ritual immersion required the whole body to be immersed. Immersion was usually performed naked. The pools were cut into bedrock with steps leading down and usually covered with several layers of plaster to prevent water seepage. The water used usually remained in the pool from one rainy season to the next. For this reason *miqva’ot* were usually located in dark basements, thereby preventing the penetration of light and the growth of algae in the water. Some pools had a double entrance and/or a partitioned staircase (where a single staircase was divided into two by a low partition) – one staircase was for going into the pool and the other for coming out (Reich 2002; Eshel 2000; Meyers 2000).

3.5.3.6 Specific Impurities

Other dimensions of the purity system need to be discussed. The Tanak of course informed purity regulations. In what is to follow, we will do an overview of the

“change in status” that affected ordinary life, and how “deviance” from the perfect order of Creation was restored to normality.

Corpse impurity is treated in Numbers 19 and it describes a ritual for purification as well. A red heifer was slaughtered and burned by a priest outside the Temple. The ashes were then mixed with water. Those who had corpse impurity were sprinkled with the mixture on the third day and the seventh, remembering this impurity required seven days of purification. Also on the seventh day those concerned immersed and washed their clothes, and so the impurity was removed. Also the room where the corpse had lain and all the objects within it had to be sprinkled. It is difficult to see how this law applied to those living far from Jerusalem. According to Josephus, a person who remained corpse-impure for more than seven days was required to sacrifice two lambs. One was burned while the other went to the priest (Ant 3.262). The Tanak does not prescribe this requirement. Sanders (1992:218) suggests that for those who lived far away from the Temple it was thought that they transgressed the purity laws “inadvertently”, which required a sin offering (Lv 4:27-35) at the first occasion of visiting Jerusalem.

Childbirth resulted in a long period of impurity that was divided into two stages. The first stage lasted for a week if the child was a boy, and two weeks if a girl. The mother was understood to be impure as if she was menstruating, thus sexual relations were forbidden. It may well be that the mother underwent ritual immersion at the end of the first stage.³⁰ The second stage lasted for thirty-three or sixty-six days, depending on the child’s gender. Here she was not allowed to touch “holy things” (Lv 12:4), that is, food that was destined for the Temple. The impurity ended with the presentation of either a lamb as a burnt offering and a bird (pigeon or dove) as a sin offering, or alternatively, two birds if she could not afford a lamb (Lv 12:1-8).

Menstruation resulted in a seven day state of impurity. After the seven days the menstruant immersed. Anything she touched like her bed or chair would also become impure, which also required washing. As for those who touched her bed or chair, they had to immerse and wash their clothes and were impure until sunset (Lv 15:19-23). According to Sanders (1992:229), the Pharisees were of the opinion that the ordinary people were not that reliable to avoid this secondary (or *midras*)

³⁰ Laws of purification after childbirth are mentioned in Jubilees (Jub 3:8-14), but here is no mention of ritual immersion. Ritual immersion is evidently expected of males who bring offerings to the Temple, however (Jub 21:16).

impurity. Sexual intercourse during menstruation was strictly forbidden, but if it was inadvertent, the man also became impure for seven days (Lv 15:24). Both parties owed a sin offering in this scenario (Lv 4:27-5:13).

Irregular discharges concerned discharges from male and female genitalia (Lv 15:1-15, 25-30). These impurities were equivalent to menstruation in the way that impurity was transferred, but as it was more severe than menstruation, purification also required sacrifices, the passing of seven pure days, and immersion.

A man who had a *nocturnal emission* had to immerse and wash everything that came into contact with the semen. Impurity ended at sunset (Lv 15:16f.). After sexual intercourse, both man and woman were impure. Here purification required immersion, and impurity ended at sunset (Lv 15:18).

Carcasses of animals (including “swarming things”) also resulted in impurity. Impurity ceased at sunset without immersion (Lv 11:29f.). *Dead swarming things* (e.g. rodents, weasels, lizards and crocodiles etc.) rendered moist food, liquids, vessels and ovens impure (Lv 11:32-8).

The main category remaining is *leprosy*. This did not only refer to leprosy as such, but also to any kind of skin condition (Lv 13-14) – impurity was transferred to clothing and houses (Lv 13:47-59; 14:33-53). Purification required the inspection of a priest and sacrifices. To turn our modern conception of purity on its head, if a person was entirely covered in “leprosy”, a priest would pronounce the “leper” *pure* (Lv 13:13)! His “change of status” ended, or his skin no longer suffered an improper mixture (Sanders 1992:220).

Because of semen impurity and menstrual impurity, many adults would have been impure a lot of the time. How individuals observed purity laws must have varied from person to person, but many Judeans, however, probably thought it necessary to be pure (Sanders 1992:228-29). As can be seen from the above, it was not just people that immersed themselves, but objects like clothing, house furniture and eating vessels had to be immersed as well.

3.5.4 Summary

Paul lamented that most of his fellow Judeans had rejected the Messiah, nevertheless, he still admitted that they had zeal for God (Rm 10:2). This was demonstrated through their zeal for the Temple and their devotion to covenantal praxis. One must be wary of romanticising first century Judeanism, but overall, they constituted a unique identity in antiquity. Being grounded in the *habitus* or “Israel”, the combination of religion and covenantal praxis involved the objectification of religious-cultural practices in the recognition and communication of affinity *and* difference vis-à-vis other peoples. This occurred in the three primary domains of the Temple, synagogue, and the home.

We brought attention to the Temple as a focal point of Judean identity. Besides the criticism that was levelled against the Temple and priesthood, support for them as Judean institutions was widespread as is evidenced by the wealth of the Temple. The people persistently chose to be ruled by a high priest, of the appropriate pedigree, to make the Judean nation what it should be – a theocracy. This ideal was undermined through the constant change and appointment of high priests by the Herodians. Connected to this is the particular sensitivities which Judeans had in terms of the holiness of Jerusalem. Particularly the presence of the emperor cult in its various forms in Jerusalem drew strong opposition. The Temple was the focal point of the Judean symbolic universe. It regulated the supernatural and natural world, in terms of the sacred and the profane, the pure and the impure. In other words, it regulated the perfect order of Creation.

It also was an architectural expression of the ideal Judean symbolic universe. Most poignantly expressed by the *soreg*, only the pure, Judeans could proceed to have an encounter with God. The Gentiles and the impure must stay out. The *soreg* also symbolised the ritual separation between Judean and Gentile which could not be achieved territorially. The pure could bring their sacrifices, and the major pilgrimage festivals would have engendered a strong sense of community. Tithes, offerings and the Temple tax were paid by the people and in support of the priesthood. Overall, the Temple and the priesthood as institutions operated pretty well.

The synagogue, whether referring to the assembly of people or to a building, was a primary means whereby the Judean symbolic universe was maintained. It was the

place where the Torah and the prophets was read and expounded. Presided over mostly by priests, it became an extension of the “thinking” of the Temple.

In the household, the primary locus of identity formation, Judeans were socialised into saying the Shema, wearing *tefillin*, tassels on the hem of garments, fixing *mezuzah* on the doorposts, and saying daily prayers. It was where Judeans kept the Sabbath day rest, fasted on the Day of Atonement, and prepared food according to the laws of the *kashrut*. For those who wanted to maintain their position within the privileged Judean symbolic universe, and separate themselves from Gentile contamination, ritual immersion would have been performed regularly. Home was further the place where various forms of impurity – most often semen and menstrual impurity – would have been contracted. Ritual immersion, the passing of time and a visit to the Temple in some instances was the means by which various forms of impurity were removed.

3.6 IN PURSUIT OF THE MILLENNIUM

There can be little doubt that Judeans of the first-century CE were in pursuit of the millennium.³¹ The pursuit of the millennium involved many things, but a primary feature involved corporate Israel’s right to the *land*; for indebted or landless Judean peasants even more so. The importance of the land to Judean ethnic identity can hardly be overemphasised. Brueggemann (2002:3) even contends that land “is a central, if not *the central theme* of biblical faith” (emphasis original). Israel’s history is a recurring cycle, moving from land to landlessness, from landedness to land. The land for which Israel yearns

is always a *place with Yahweh*, a place well filled with memories or life with him and promise from him and vows to him. It is land that provides the central assurance to Israel of its historicity, that it will be and always must be concerned with actual rootage in a place that is a repository for commitment

³¹ Baumgarten speaks specifically of millennial expectations, in that they “are a sub-group of eschatological ones. They set forth the belief in the *imminent* commencing of the eschatological era, leading to ultimate collective salvation” (Baumgarten 1997:154, emphasis original). Duling (1994:132) describes millennialism in a slightly different but complimentary manner: “Millennialism describes a social movement of people whose central belief is that the present oppressive world is in crisis and will soon end, usually by some cataclysmic event, and that this world will be replaced by a new, perfect, blissful, and trouble free world, often believed to be a restoration of some perfect time and place of old; so intense is this hope that those who accept it engage in preparing for the coming new age, or even try to bring it about, especially by some political activity.”

and therefore identity ... It will no longer do to talk about Yahweh and his people but we must speak about Yahweh and his people *and his land*.

(Brueggemann 2002:5; emphasis original)

The myth of divine election is an important feature in legitimating a community's "title-deeds" or land charter (Smith 1994:712). From an Israelite or Judean perspective, this all began with God's promise to Abraham: God will give him the land and he will become a great nation (Gn 12:1-3; 15:7-21; 17:1-8). This promise was fulfilled (in part) with the conquest, but the dream was shattered through the exile. Yet the exile or the situation of landlessness was the setting for hope and a reaffirmation of God's faithfulness to the covenant (Is 43:18-21; Jr 31:17-18; Ezk 37:5-6), and there were the promises of restoration as well.³² The returning exiles came to believe that the land could be kept through the rigorous obedience of God's commandments (Brueggemann 2002:12, 145-50). They confessed the sins of their royal forefathers (Neh 9; Ezr 9). Rigorous obedience to Torah entailed the observance of the Sabbath (Neh 13:15-22), the ending of mixed marriages in the cause of purity (Neh 9:12; 13:23-27; Ezr 10:10-11, 44), and the right of the peasantry to retain their land (Neh 5:5-11). All of these obligations were sworn to by an oath (Neh 10:29-31). Yet Israel persistently remained under the control of foreigners. The relationship to the land was highly frustrated.

Quite relevant to our purposes, Smith distinguishes between two processes in ethnic ideology when it comes to the land:

on the one hand, towards and extension of the *ethnie* in space at the cost of any social depth, and on the other hand, a social "deepening" of ethnic culture at the cost of its tight circumscription in space. The former process leads to what may be termed "lateral" *ethnie*, the latter to "vertical" *ethnie*. These are pure types; in practice, ethnic communities often embody contradictory trends. Yet, at given stages in the history of particular *ethnie*, one or other of these processes may predominate, presenting a close approximation to either the "lateral" or the "vertical" type.

(Smith 1994:713)

³² Jr 30:18-19; 31:2-5; 33:6-11, 25-26; Ezk 36:22-28, 33-36; 37:12, 14; Is 49:8-13.

Now one can say that Judeanism essentially represented the more “vertical” type that laid emphasis on the deepening of ethnic culture. Yet, the “lateral” ideology also comes into play during the period of Hasmonean expansion that will be discussed below. Ezekiel 40-48 has a vision of an Israel with a much enlarged territory, which is echoed by the fragments of Eupolemus, Josephus (Ant 1.134-42, 185; 2.194-95; 4.300), and the Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran (Freyne 2001:293-97). Strangely enough, Ezekiel and Eupolemus endorse the presence of foreigners within the enlarged territory, but the Maccabees forcefully converted Gentiles to Judeanism in (re)conquered territories or forced them to leave. So any “lateral” ideology was still “vertical” at its core. That is, for the Hasmoneans, the deepening of ethnic culture in the (re)conquered territories was of primary importance, even though they spearheaded a “conquering empire” of sorts. Eventually this policy did not succeed in all its aims as Gentiles and Samaritans still lived as culturally distinct groups within the Israelite ancestral land.³³ At the same time, the ideal boundaries of an enlarged Israel as espoused by Ezekiel were never acquired, although Judean territory was greatly increased.

3.6.1 The Hasmonean Expansion

Ben Sirach 36 wishes for the annihilation of Israel’s enemies (Sir 36:1-17) – but this will happen in some unspecified time in the future. The situation changed radically at the forced Hellenisation of Judeans which eventually prompted strong resistance and territorial expansion. As Hellenisation was essentially an urban phenomenon, Jerusalem in particular would have been a likely candidate to succumb to its influence. “Obviously such a transformation called into question every claim and effort of Ezra to make Jerusalem the locus of covenant, and to define [Judean] sensitivities in terms of Torah and covenantal obedience” (Brueggemann 2002:151). The wealthy urban citizens would have benefited, while Hellenisation had little sympathy for the rural peasantry, who clung to the Ezra-shaped notion of Judeanness, “committed to historical particularity and traditional rights of inheritance” (Brueggemann 2002:152). Connected to this is the fact that a more “lateral” ethn

³³ Cf Freyne (2001:292-93), who has his own take of the “vertical” and “lateral” ideologies discussed here. He sees the above two ideologies as present in Ezekiel (Ezk 40-48), but in a way where emphasis is placed on the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the holiness and separateness it entails, even from the other tribal territories, while on the other hand emphasis is also placed on an enlarged territory based on tribal and boundary traditions. “In the fractured circumstances of the Hasmonean and Herodian periods both aspects of Ezekiel’s vision of restoration can be shown to have been operative within different circles” (Freyne 2001:293).

that is more territorially bounded and compact can be associated with the tendency of popular mobilisation against outsiders.

“At these times”, Smith explains, “we find a crusading and missionary quality not confined to aristocratic knights, but embracing the lower classes who may be engaged in battle and in ritual or cultural renewal of the community”. Such groups are ethnically unified from top to bottom, their “verticality’ often presenting problems for the ‘lateral’ *ethnie* that dominate polyethnic states or empires ...” (Smith 1994:714). This description fits the situation of Judea quite well. During the Maccabean revolt (and the Great Revolt of 66-70 CE), it is the peasantry (under religious-political style leadership) that fights for the land and cultural renewal (Brueggemann 2002:153). In this regard 1 Maccabees 2:19-22, 27 sees the battle in terms of fidelity to the covenant, or one can say, of fidelity to Judean ethnic culture. The close connection between land, culture and covenant is evident in Jubilees 15:34, where to perform epispasm is to leave the covenant, making the guilty Judeans like Gentiles, and they are “to be removed and uprooted from the land”. The land theology of Ezra and Nehemia thus continues. 1 Maccabees further explains how Judas reminded the people how God had saved the ancestors at the Red Sea, and urged them to cry out for help and that God would remember his covenant with the forefathers and defeat the enemy (1 Mac 4:8-11).

The Book of Daniel, written during the time of Antiochus’ persecutions, looks forward to imminent redemption, which will occur with the defeat of Antiochus IV and eternal reward for the righteous (Dn 11:40-12:3). The Hasmonians or Hasideans are described as “a little help” during the time of persecution (Dn 11:33-34), but they have no role to play when the Great Prince, Michael, will arise and deliver the faithful (Dn 12:1). A more pro-Hasmonian stance is found in 1 Enoch 90, written around the same time as Daniel 7-12, that is, during the Maccabean revolt. It also looks forward to a glorious future, as the Temple will be rebuilt to its true and grand proportions (1 En 90:28-29). Humans do play a part in bringing this about. The “great horned ram” (= Judas Maccabees) fights on behalf of the cause of good (the sheep) (1 En 90:9-12), and a white cow is born later, as well as a great beast with black horns (1 En 90:37-39). These passages are messianic in a sense but these animals do nothing to redeem the world. Yet 1 Enoch 90 gives testimony that some saw the successes of the Hasmonians as leading to the fulfilment of millenarian hopes (Baumgarten 1997:171).

It is when the Hasmoneans gained control of Judean society that the expansionist or more “lateral” ideology mentioned above came to the fore. At the time of the Maccabean revolt, Judea was no larger than a day’s walk in any direction from Jerusalem. From the time of Jonathan (161-143 BCE) onwards, Judean territory was greatly increased. Fragments of the historian Eupolemus, clearly expresses expansionist ideals. In interpreting Judean history he portrays David as leading a conquering army against the Idumeans, Ammonites, Moabites, the Itureans and the Nabateans, and Phoenicia, who he forced to pay tribute to the Judeans (in Eusebius, PrEv 9.30.3-5). According to Horsley (1995:37) a “principal motive of Hasmonean expansion may have been to establish Judean rule in the rest of Palestine as had the prototypical Judean king David”. Jonathan himself gained control of a part of the coastal plain and a large part of Samaria. Simon (143-134 BCE) seized the Acra in Jerusalem and also extended the borders of Judea in a number of campaigns. For example, access to the coast would be important for economic reasons. Simon set up a Judean garrison at Joppa (1 Mac 12:33-4) and drove out its Gentile inhabitants (1 Mac 13:11). He captured Gazara (Gezer) after a siege and also drove out its inhabitants, replacing them with people who observe the Torah (1 Mac 13:43-8). The territorial expansion was also accompanied by ritual purifications, as was performed in the Temple, where idolatry was removed from the land. The expansion was therefore reinforced with rituals so that the land becomes an extension of the holiness and purity of the Temple in opposition to anything that is Gentile (cf Schmidt 2001:127). But Simon declares that the land they have taken was not foreign property, “but only the inheritance of our fathers” that was taken away by Israel’s enemies (1 Mac 15:33).

The territorial expansion must have been widely popular amongst Judeans, recalling the ancient Exodus and conquest of the land (cf WisSol 12:3, 7; Sir 46:8; 1 Bar 1:20). Frequent mention is made in Judean literature of our period to the land as an inheritance or as promised to the forefathers.³⁴ It is the land of the fathers (1 Mac 10:55, 67), the land that God gave to the descendants of Jacob (TLevi 7:1), or in short, the Promised Land (TMos 1:8; 11:11; Ps-Philo 7:4). In Jubilees 8 it is described that the portion of Shem is in the “middle of the earth” to be a possession for “eternal generations”, and that Mount Zion is in the midst of “the navel of the earth”, indeed, the centre of the Judean symbolic universe. In fact, in Jubilees repeated attention is drawn to the covenant and God’s promise of the land to

Abraham, where he will be established as a great and numerous people (Jub 12:22-24; 13:3, 19-21; 14:18; 15:9-10; 22:27; 24:10; 25:17; 27:11, 22). God even says to Jacob that “I shall give to your seed all of the land under heaven and they will rule in all nations as they have desired” and eventually will inherit the earth forever (Jub 32:19). Israel will also be purified from all sin and defilement (Jub 50:5; cf 1 En 5:7 (and 10:18-19) where it is stated that the elect will inherit the earth).

Afterwards John Hyrcanus (134-104 BCE) invaded the Transjordan and conquered Medeba located on the Via Regis. Hyrcanus then destroyed the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in 128 BCE, an event that would have caused strong resentment between Samaritans and Judeans. The idea was for one people to worship the one God in one Temple. The Samaritans were not impressed. John Hyrcanus attacked again in 108/7 BCE and devastated the city of Samaria and probably Shechem as well (Ant 13.249, 254-56; War 1.61-63). The Samaritans had to wait until 64 BCE to be liberated from the Judeans when Pompey arrived on the scene. After John Hyrcanus' initial campaign in Samaria he turned south and defeated the Idumeans and forced them to undergo circumcision and follow the Judean law (Ant 13.255-8; War 1.63). From then on, Schürer (1979:3, 7) argues, the Idumeans were Judeans (“Jews”), and appeared as such even during the war in 67/68 CE (cf War 4.270-84) but as Horsley (1995:59) points out their conversion could hardly have been substantial. Along with Samaria, Hyrcanus conquered Scythopolis and the Great Plain (Ant 13.275-81; War 1.64-66), so his control reached to the frontier of Galilee. The secular nature of these wars of Hyrcanus are demonstrated by the fact that he used foreign mercenaries, and not a Judean army (Ant 13.249). For many Judeans, however, the expansion of Judean territory would also have had religious significance. The Judean symbolic universe was taking shape on a territorial level.

Hyrcanus was succeeded by Aristobulus I (104-103 BCE). This supporter of Hellenism nevertheless forced the Itureans, located in southern Lebanon/Upper Galilee, to be circumcised and to convert to Judeanism (Ant 13.311; Wars 1.78ff.). The incorporation of Galilee and possibly any northern based Israelites into the body-politic of the Judeans will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE) continued the expansionist policy and undertook a campaign east of the Jordan and captured Gezer and other places. Here Hebrew

³⁴ Cf 1 Mac 2:56; 15:33; 2 Ezra 8:83, 85; Tob 4:12; Sir 44:21; 1 Bar 2:34-35; Ps-Philo 12:4;

and Greek boundary markers were erected around the city to identify the surrounding territory as Judean (Reed 2000:42). Alexander Jannaeus also captured Gaza and a temple of Apollo is mentioned when he destroyed the city (Ant 13.364); this was followed by various Greek cities in the Transjordan, most of which were part of the Decapolis (War 1.103-5; Ant 13.393-98). By the end of his rule, the entire region from Lake Merom to the Dead Sea, and the whole coastal plain except for Ashkelon was under Judean rule. The inhabitants of the Greek cities went over to Judeanism except for the people of Pella. Alexander demanded that the local Gentiles accept Judean customs but after they refused he destroyed the city (Ant 13.395-7). After this campaign Alexander returned to Jerusalem where he was given a hero's welcome by many people because of his successes. The extent of the Hasmonean kingdom was now virtually the same as that of Solomon centuries earlier (Horsley 1995:38; cf Jagersma 1986:84; Schmidt 2001:27). Certainly the Hasmonean expansion would have been informed by popular expectations.

One can see that although the Hasmonean rulers followed a "lateral" land ideology, their overall approach was "vertical", that is, they focussed on the deepening of ethnic culture in the (re)conquered territories.

Millenarian hopes are also encountered at the end of the second letter that is attached to 2 Maccabees (2 Mac 2:18). The exiles will be gathered in because God has purified Jerusalem/the Temple. The gathering of exiles was a strong motif for events during the final redemption (e.g. Is 66:19-20; Sir 36:11; Tob 14:5). Based on the successes of the recent past, the author had reason to believe that salvation for the Judeans lied in the immediate future, although 4Q471^a attacks its rivals – the Judean leadership – who think that salvation is under way (Baumgarten 1997:172). The idea of redemption might have been sponsored by the Hasmonean house itself. Based on a tradition in the Talmud (b.Kid 66a) and Josephus (Ant 13.288-298), King Hyrcanus won a battle in the desert in Kohalit, where after a celebration was held. Sages were invited and they enjoyed mallows (a desert food, cf Job 30:4) served on golden tablets. The exiles from Babylon who rebuilt the Temple also ate mallows. This time of salvation is surpassed, however, since Hyrcanus and the sages are eating mallows in a period of triumph – this salvation will be even greater (Baumgarten 1997:173).

14:2; 15:4; 19:10; 20:5; 21:9; 23:1, 5; PsSol 9:1; Sir 46:1, 9.

In the Qumran community (4QMMT), it was believed that the end of days has arrived since some of the *blessings and curses*, spoken of in Deuteronomy 4:40 and 30:1 (C20-22), were believed to have come about (Baumgarten 1997:174-175). Although, this intense eschatological fervour subsided with time (cf 1QpHab 7.5-14) since it was later believed that the end time has been delayed. Nevertheless, those who remained faithful to the community will be vindicated (Baumgarten 1997:178-179). Millenarian hopes may at times lead to anarchy, but at times also to live according to strict moral/religious principles. This is most evident at Qumran (4QMMT), where an expectation of imminent salvation required a scrupulous observance of the law (C32-34). As a result, millenarian hopes also contributed towards the formation of Judean religious sects. Members will also endeavour that others adopt their understanding of the law, and “messianism and sectarianism marched inexorably hand in hand in the Second Temple period” (Baumgarten 1997:185). So the Judean sects who flourished during the Second Temple period “acquired their agendas, formed around these platforms and their leaders, and set out to change themselves and/or the world as a result of their millenarian convictions” (Baumgarten 1997:188).

3.6.2 Millenarian Hopes Under Roman Rule

The character of Palestine changed dramatically under Roman rule. After a prolonged strife between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II the Romans finally decided to stake their claim on Palestine. Besides, it was made easier for them since some Judeans, tired of the civil war, asked the Romans to intervene. Both Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II also attempted at securing support from Pompey, but in the end he decided to take control of Jerusalem. Hyrcanus opened the city gates to the Romans whereas many – the supporters of Aristobulus – were massacred after a long siege of the Temple mount (War 1.124-51). Pompey even entered the Holy of Holies, a serious desecration as even the Judean High priest only entered it once a year (War 1.152). As Tacitus (Hist 5.9) explained, Pompey found nothing in the Holy of Holies, testifying to the imageless worship of the Judeans. When Pompey took over Palestine for the Romans in 63 BCE (although it would take another twenty years to have full control of the area), he also delivered the Hellenistic cities from Judean domination and were incorporated into the province of Syria. Josephus lists these cities as Hippos, Scythopolis, Pella, Samaria, Jamnia, Marisa, Azotus, Arethus, Gaza, Joppa, Dora, and Strato’s Tower (Ant 13.74-76; War 1.155-57). The proconsul Gabinius set out to rebuilt Hellenistic cities around 57-55 BCE some of which were entirely destroyed by the Hasmoneans; these include Raphia, Gaza,

Anthedon, Azotus, Jamnia, Apollonia, Dora, Samaria and Scythopolis (Schürer et al 1979:92). All that eventually remained of the Hasmonean kingdom was Judea, Galilee, Idumea and Perea.

So Israel was back to where it was before the Maccabean revolt in the sense that foreign rule was again a reality. The expansionist ideology of the Hasmoneans came to a halt as well. It was time again where the emphasis shifted to the “vertical” land ideology, or the deepening of ethnic culture, a culture often regarded with contempt as demonstrated by Pompey, and by the insensitivities of the Roman governors that followed. Yet there was hope for God’s deliverance. For example, the Psalms of Solomon were written after the Romans made their unwelcome claim on Judean territory, one of which exclaimed on behalf of Israel:

See, Lord, and raise up for them their king ... Undergird him with the strength to destroy unrighteous rulers, to purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction ... He will gather a holy people ... He will distribute them upon the land according to their tribes; the alien and the foreigner will no longer live near them ... And he will have gentile nations serving him under his yoke ... And he will purge Jerusalem ... (for) nations to come from the ends of the earth to see his glory, to bring as gifts her children who had been driven out (PsSol 16:21-31).

Israel will be cleared of all Gentiles, especially Gentile rulers, the tribes will be restored and the nations who took the Judeans into exile will restore them to their homeland (cf Is 2:2-4). The messiah will rule and the Gentile nations will serve him. This was the hope. But in 40 BCE the Romans made Herod the Great of Idumean stock the client king over the Judeans. As we saw his whole policy was strongly orientated towards Rome and the Emperor. Even here there were messianic hopes present, this time among Pharisaic circles. Josephus relates that the Pharisees gave outrageous guarantees to members of Herod’s court, in that the messianic king would grant them special favours (Ant 17.41-44).

The concern for the land and ethnic culture can also be seen in the non-violent resistance of Judeans to Roman interference already reviewed above. Judeans objected to Pilate bringing in Roman standards into Jerusalem and his plunder of the temple treasury. Caligula attempted to have a statue of himself erected in the temple. Only his assassination prevented Judea and surrounds to be plunged into

war. Yet, the first century saw other forms of unrest and protests as well. Banditry, royal pretenders, sign prophets and insurrectionary groups were characteristic traits of Judeanism leading up to and during the Great Revolt (66-70 CE). Before we have a look at these groups, however, we first need to understand the plight of the Judean peasant farmer.

3.6.3 The Peasant Farmer

In our period, Palestine was an agrarian society that mostly consisted of peasant farmers.³⁵ The economy as a whole rested primarily on agriculture (Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:104). The peasant farmers themselves, however, worked their land for subsistence, not for profit, and they normally worked their land as a family unit. Thus three things were important for the peasant farmer: God, the family, and the land. As we already saw above, they were expected to give various tithes and the firstfruits of the land, and any other surplus went to the elite (Fiensy 1991:vi-vii). “Tribute, tithes, taxes, rents, interest in debts – all involved certain claims on the produce of the land ... These claims were the major factor determining the lives of villagers in ancient Galilee or Judea” (Horsley 1995:207). In the Tanak there are various attitudes to the land,³⁶ but peasant farmers as part of the “Little Tradition” (the

³⁵ In T12P the following instruction is given: “Bend your back in farming, perform the tasks of the soil in every kind of agriculture, offering gifts gratefully to the Lord” (T1ss 5:3).

³⁶ Habel (1995) has identified six land ideologies in the Tanak, although there is a degree of overlap between them. Habel (1995:134-35) has conveniently put the ideologies in summary form: (1) Land as a source of Wealth: A Royal Ideology; “In the royal ideology, land is a source of centralized wealth and glory for the monarch and the empire, the monarch being the earthly representative of YHWH located in heaven; the people are the monarch’s labor force in the land.” (2) Land as Conditional Grant: A Theocratic Ideology; “In the theocratic ideology of the book of Deuteronomy, Canaan is a land grant, an unearned gift from YHWH, its owner and custodian; the people of Israel have conditional entitlement to the land by treaty.” (3) Land as Family Lots: An Ancestral Household Ideology; “In the ancestral household ideology of the book of Joshua, land is a cluster of promised entitlements in Canaan allotted by YHWH to ancestral households who are to undertake the conquest and settlement of their allotments.” (4) Land as YHWH’s Personal *nahalāh*: A Prophetic Ideology; “In the prophetic ideology of the book of Jeremiah, land is YHWH’s own pure and precious *nahalāh*; the land suffers great anguish when defiled by the people who YHWH has chosen to plant in the land; the landowner, YHWH, suffers with the land.” (5) Land as Sabbath Bound: An Agrarian Ideology; “In the agrarian ideology of the book of Leviticus 25-27, land is YHWH’s personal sanctuary and garden, worked by Israelite families as tenant farmers on their traditional properties, and bound by the principles of a sabbath economy.” (6) Land as Host Country: An Immigrant Ideology; “In the immigrant ideology of the Abraham narratives, land is a host country where immigrant ancestors find God at sacred sites, discern promises of future land, and establish peaceful relations with the indigenous peoples of the land.” From the viewpoint of the peasant farmer, ideologies (3) and (5) are particularly relevant here. Of course, Brueggemann’s understanding of the land issue in Ezra and Nehemiah (see above) may be added as a seventh, perhaps “A Covenanting for the Land” ideology. It has close associations with ideologies (2), (4) and (5), however.

low or folk culture) would have existed by the belief that the land belonged to God (Lv 25:23) and “was given in trust to Israel as inalienable family farm plots. Land is not capital to be exploited but the God-given means to subsist” (Fiensy 1991:3). So the land is Israel’s inheritance and the promised gift of Yahweh. Yahweh is the landlord and the Israelites his tenants. Possession of the land brought about responsibilities as well. Apart from the tithes, the poor (Lv 19:9-10; 23:22; Dt 24:19-21) and the passers by (Dt 23:25-26) also had to benefit from the land. In honour of the Sabbath the land must lie fallow every seventh year, debts must be forgiven and all Israelite slaves must be released (Lv 25:2-7; Ex 21:2-6; 23:10-11; Dt 15:1-18). The law of Jubilee (Lv 25:10-17, 28, 30, 40) required that all land be returned to its original owners every fifty years. Of course, the Jubilee legislation would have ensured that the farm plot remained in the hand of its original owners and that the land was evenly distributed. There is little evidence that the Sabbath and Jubilee laws were enacted in our period. We do find evidence, however, for the exploitation of the peasantry by the urban elite. Taxation also seems to have been burdensome, although we do not know exactly what the level of taxation was. This resulted in landless people, indebtedness, tenant farmers, day labourers (although not all were landless) and banditry.

As already noted, we do not know how many peasants had lost their land, but to a degree more and more land became concentrated in the hands of a rich few. Large estates were owned by the Herodians, their officials and the Judean aristocracy, including some priestly families. Josephus himself owned land near Jerusalem (Life 422). The lands of Judean aristocracy were sometimes enlarged by stealing the plots of small freeholders (Fiensy 1991:21-60; Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:110-11). Sometimes the land was gained by the aristocracy in Jerusalem and Galilee by foreclosure on a farm when a debt could not be repaid, or alternatively, threats and violence could be used to force the small farmer to sell or abandon his land (Fiensy 1991:78-79). At least some Judean peasant farmers were affected (cf Horsley 1987; Fiensy 1991:4-15; Oakman 1986; Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:110-25). A problem was also the shortage of agriculturally usable land per capita of the population. This means that more and more people worked for subsistence from less and less land (Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:112). Not helping were the severe famines and drought in Palestine, in 29 BCE and one during the reign of Claudius (41-54 CE). The farmer also had to contend with locusts, other pests, destructive winds, earthquakes, the plunder of troops and bandits, all of which had economic impact (Fiensy 1991:98).

Josephus also informs us that during the 50's and the 60's, the ruling priests engaged in theft, violence and bribery, amongst others, taking the tithes from the threshing floors intended for the ordinary priests (Ant 20.180-81, 206-7). The high priestly families had a notorious reputation (b.Pes 57a). Certainly from the perspective of the indebted or landless peasant Judean farmer, his right to the land was undermined by corrupt high priests and their elite associates who cooperated with Roman rule.

3.6.4 Banditry, Rebellion and Royal Pretenders

When we look at the above, the socio-economic situation was such that at least some Judeans peasants got involved in banditry and/or insurrectionary activities, whether these be motivated by the Jubilee legislation or not. There were uprisings after Herod's death in 4 BCE. Pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost rebelled (Ant 17.254-55; War 2.42-44). Similarly a Judas, son of Hezekiah the bandit led a revolt in Galilee. He led a mob to Sepphoris where they attacked the royal arsenal and armed themselves. Order was restored in Palestine after the intervention of Varus, the Roman legate in Syria (War 2.39-79; Ant 17.271-98; 17.369f) who in the process burned many villages and crucified thousands of rebels. East of the Jordan a Simon, a former slave of Herod the Great, revolted in Perea. He plundered the royal palace in Jericho and the country villas of the rich, also burning them down. There was also Athronges the shepherd, who attacked Roman troops. What these three figures have in common is that all three were social bandits, and all three had royal pretensions. Simon and Athronges were even addressed by some as "king" (Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:177-78).

Archelaus, the son of Herod, was appointed as "ethnarch" over Judea, Samaria and Idumea after his father's death. He was not that effective as his father and was eventually deposed and exiled. Augustus sent Coponius, the first Roman prefect, to govern Judea directly. In 6 CE, Quirinius, the legate of Syria, initiated a census of the Palestinian population that meant only one thing – a better stronghold on the exaction of taxes. The census was to help assess the population for land and head tax (*tributum soli* and *tributum capitis*). All male members of a household fourteen and older and all female members twelve years old and above had to pay tribute, which probably involved the payment of one denarius per head annually (Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:117). In response, Judas of Galilee and Zaddok the Pharisee spearheaded a rebellion (War 2.117f; Ant 18.1-10), as they and their followers

resisted this further encroachment of Roman rule. The slogan was “no Master but God”, which also adopted by the later Sicarii. But who enjoys paying taxes, even more so to a foreign oppressor?

Banditry itself continued to be a problem, and at times ordinary Judeans were punished as their accomplices or sympathisers (cf Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:175-77). The bandits, however, not only stole from the rich, but also from the poor (War 2.253; 2.581-2; 4.135; Ant 14.159; 17.285; 20.185).

3.6.5 The Sicarii

In the 40's/50's, a new type of rebel appeared, the Sicarii (“dagger men”), who in particular mixed with the crowds in Jerusalem and stabbed to death those who collaborated with Roman rule. According to Josephus, they were descendents of the “fourth philosophy” founded by Judas the Galilean and Zaddok the Pharisee (Ant 18.3-10; War 2.117f.). There was a family connection in that Menachem and Eleazar ben Jair, the leaders of the Sicarii, were related to Judas. Menachem commanded his forces, recruited from rural social bandits (War 2.434), in Jerusalem at the beginning of the revolt (see below).

3.6.6 The Sign Prophets

The first century also saw the appearance of various would-be prophets that led protest movements in opposition to the oppression of Israel. Under the procurator Cuspius Fadus (44-46 CE), a certain Theudas led a crowd to the Jordan (400 according to Acts 5:36), claiming the water will part through his command. Roman troops were sent out killing many while capturing others – the head of the would-be prophet himself was brought to Jerusalem (Ant 20.97-9). Other “exodus-type” prophets also appeared during the procuratorship of Felix (52-59 CE). Prophets lead many into the desert, promising that God will give them signs of deliverance. Again many died at the hands of Roman troops (War 2.258-260; Ant 20.167-68). In the same period, another prophet pretender, the so-called “the Egyptian”, led many (Josephus, 30 000; Acts, 4 000) in an attack on Jerusalem. He marched them up from the wilderness to the Mount of Olives, hoping to force his way into Jerusalem. He also claimed that the walls of Jerusalem would come down at his command. The Roman troops were again pressed into service, killing and capturing many, but the Egyptian escaped (War 2.261-3; Ant 20.169-172; Ac 21:38). Other prophets also

appeared during the Great Revolt, but these will be discussed below. Not to be forgotten is John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth that appeared around the 30's CE. They were prophets of a different kind, however, as they had no overt religio-political agenda as the prophets discussed here.

3.6.7 The Great Revolt

According to Sanders (1992:40), the “events that actually led to the revolt were not connected with prophets and crowds of followers, were unforeseen, and took everyone by surprise”. Yet the revolt was the result of a culmination of events. In Caesarea, Greeks built next to a synagogue, the result of which was that the synagogue was partly blocked off. Tensions between Judeans and Greeks increased and exploded in 66 when Judeans arrived at the synagogue on the Sabbath only to discover that a prankster was sacrificing birds outside the synagogue entrance. Street fighting broke out in the city. At the same time in Jerusalem the procurator, Florus, took seventeen talents from the Temple treasury. This led to protest and Florus was insulted in public. Florus responded by killing many, followed by scourging and crucifixions and so the first revolt got underway (War 2.284-308). These events were a catalyst, however, that brought into relief other social tensions that existed within Palestine. The rural peasantry, no doubt some of which were landless or indebted, combined with bandit leaders and they along with other insurrectionary groups made their way to Jerusalem to vent their anger at the Judean aristocracy. The revolt was a culmination of both religio-political and socio-revolutionary forces comprising both the urban population and the rural peasantry. While some directed their wrath against the Romans for disrespecting the Temple, other Judeans, while wanting to fight the Romans, also had an axe to grind with the Judean aristocracy in Jerusalem. The revolt became in part a class war (Fiensy 1991:14).³⁷

Present were the Sicarii. Their leader, Menachem, apparently entered Jerusalem like a king (War 2.434), and so like Judas, Simon and Athronges had royal pretensions. In 66 CE the Sicarii burned the public archives where the debt records were kept (War 2.427) – no doubt some Judean peasant farmers would have been delighted. Galileans at the outbreak of the war also tried to burn down Sepphoris,

³⁷ Cf Horsley (1995:73): “It is increasingly clear that the hostilities that erupted in the summer of 66 C.E. were primarily between groups of ordinary Judeans and their high-priestly and

where their debt records were kept at the time (Life 38, 375). The Sicarii murdered the high priest Ananias (War 2.423ff.), burned the palace of Agrippa II and that of the High Priest, and chased after other wealthy Judeans in the city sewers of Jerusalem (War 2.426-28). Menachem was eventually killed and his followers were expelled from Jerusalem by other Judeans. Under the leadership of Eleazar, a relative of Menachem, they escaped to Masada (War 2.433-48) which they defended up to the point of committing suicide (War 7.323; cf Netzer 1991). The Sicarii were motivated by religious goals, to hasten or bring about messianic age, to fight for God, the Torah and the holy land and to rid Israel of foreigners (Cohen 1987:166).

During the revolt, the Zealots emerged, who like the Sicarii set their aim at attacking and killing the Judean aristocracy and the chief priests.³⁸ In 67-68 they selected a high priest by lot, a country priest named Phineas who was of a high priestly tribe (War 4.147ff.). The Zealots ended up fighting other Judean revolutionary groups, but also chose to defend Jerusalem to their deaths (War 2.651; 4.160-6.148; 7.268). According to Cohen (1987:165) the Zealots consisted mostly of peasants who fled to Jerusalem as Romans came through the country from Galilee. Horsley (1995:66) identifies them as a coalition of villagers from northwest Judea. Josephus (War 5.443) speaks of them in derogatory language (they are “slaves”, “rabble”, “bastards”), perhaps suggesting (at least from Josephus’ point of view) they were of the lower rural classes (Fiensy 1991:169). Stegemann & Stegemann (1999:180-81) suggests, however, that they were a group of radical priests. The appointment of Phineas does illustrate that the Zealots were interested in Temple purity and this “also places the Zealots in the tradition of the anti-Hellenist battle over the purity of the temple at the time of the Maccabeans” (Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:182).

Bandit leaders also made their way to Jerusalem. John ben Levi from Galilean Gischala (Gush Halav) was a Levite, although according to Josephus, he did not keep the food and purity laws (War 7.264). Probably he became a bandit as a result of the socio-economic decline and he recruited his followers from the peasantry of upper Galilee and refugees from the region of Tyre (War 2.587-89; Life 372). John made his way to Jerusalem after the Romans took control of Galilee by the end of 67.

Herodian rulers and creditors, with the Roman troops called in to suppress the insurrections”. But why then, did the “ordinary Judeans” stay on in Jerusalem to fight the Romans?

³⁸ Horsley (1995:213) suggests that the Herodians, Saul and Costobar, were attacked by the Zealots because they owned land in northwest Judea. They did manage to flee from Jerusalem (War 2.418; Ant 20.214).

On arrival he initially got the support of the Zealots and took over the leadership of the rebellion. There was also a Simon bar Giora, however, the son of a proselyte. He came from Gerasa in the Decapolis and in the Judean border region attacked the houses of the wealthy large landowners and had an intense dislike of the rich (War 2.652; 5.309). He came to Jerusalem in 69 when he and his followers were driven out of Idumea. He attempted (successfully) to gain control of the rebellion and like others, was a royal pretender (War 4.510, 575). He held on to his royal claim until the end but was eventually executed in Rome.

Lastly, prophets also had their part to play during the Great Revolt. Towards the end, there were still those who had hoped that God would intervene on their behalf, as did the others who were led by the self-styled prophets into the wilderness to enact the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan (Sanders 1992:286). Roman troops set fire to the last of the Temple porticoes, burning many ordinary people alive, as they followed a prophet who claimed that God commanded them to go to the Temple, also to receive signs of deliverance. Others according to Josephus also encouraged the people to wait for God's help (War 6.283-7).

Fighting also raged in the rest of the country, particularly in cities of mixed Judean and Gentile population (Jagersma 1986:140). But the Roman military machine lead by Vespasian, and eventually his son Titus, slowly but surely regained control of Palestine – the last city to fall was Jerusalem. But as we can see from the above, the revolt that eventually focussed on the holy city was from a Judean perspective incoherent and undermined by factionalism. Participants mostly came from the lower social stratum of Judean society (cf Stegemann & Stegemann 1999:184-86).

3.6.8 Israel Without a Temple and Its Land

We have little information about the events between the first and second revolts (Soggin 1993:359). We will focus on some texts and also look at the archaeological evidence, however. The Romans obviously knew what great importance the city of Jerusalem had for Judeans. On the so-called "Shekel of Israel", minted by the revolutionary authorities during the revolt, was engraved "Jerusalem the Holy" (Brenner 2003:50). Even in far away Gamla, located in the Golan Heights, coins were minted during the revolt with inscriptions that read: "For the redemption of Jerusalem the Holy" (Syon 1992). Needless to say, the consequences of the war were devastating (cf 4 Ezra 10:21-23). So it is ironic that archaeological evidence

illustrates that Jerusalem, along with the Temple, was practically destroyed. The Romans evidently wanted any future nationalist aspirations of a restored Jerusalem focussed on the Temple suppressed. Many Judeans were crucified outside Jerusalem. In addition, Titus held gladiatorial contests and animal-baiting in the amphitheatre of Caesarea to celebrate his victory wherein hundreds of Judean prisoners were killed (Bull 1990:110). Josephus claims that about 97 000 Judeans were taken as prisoners during the war (War 6.420). Those over the age of seventeen were sent to work in Egypt, while those under seventeen were sold as slaves (War 6.418).

Judea became a Roman imperial province, and a detachment of the Tenth Roman Legion (Legio X Fretensis) was stationed in the city. Judeans were generally forbidden to enter (Geva 1997). Much land was given to Romans or favourites of the emperor. For example, Emmaus became a fortress with 800 war veterans (Jagersma 1986:147). The land, however, still belonged to Yahweh (4 Ezra 9:7-8). Hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem prevailed, even though the symbolic universe of Judeanism was in tatters. For 2 Baruch, the destruction of the Temple meant that the “order of human, social and cosmic relations appear to be definitively disturbed by this sacrilegious defilement ... the function of the Temple is to maintain the order of creation, as the Divinity set it up in the first week of the world” (Schmidt 2001:88). Judeans were again without the land, their mother city, and their Temple; no more sacrifices and offerings; no more pilgrimages. The symbolic centre and heartbeat of Judeanism was no more. The sense of perplexity and frustration that must have existed is captured by various texts in 4 Ezra. 4 Ezra laments to God: “[you] have destroyed your people, and have preserved your enemies ... Are the deeds of Babylon [i e Rome] better than those of Zion? Or has another nation known you besides Israel? Or what tribes have so believed your covenants [cf 5:29] as these tribes of Jacob”. Ezra is perplexed, for the nations “are unmindful of your commandments” (4 Ezra 3:30-33). Later Ezra asks “why Israel has been given over to the gentiles as a reproach; why the people whom you loved has been given to godless tribes, and the Law of our fathers has been made of no effect and the written covenants no longer exist” (4 Ezra 4:23-24). God has chosen Israel as his special people, from all the peoples of the world he loved them and gave them his Law (4 Ezra 5:23-27). Why be destroyed by the Gentiles? “If you really hate your people,” Ezra tells God, “they should be punished at your own hands” (4 Ezra 5:30). The other nations are nothing before God, but

we your people, who you have called your first-born, only begotten, zealous for you, and most dear, have been given into their hands. If the world has indeed been created for us [something confirmed in 7:11], why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? (4 Ezra 6:56-59).

It was also asked: “How can we sing to you, being in a foreign land” (4 Bar 7:35; cf Ps 137:3-4). Besides the above, the typical tenacity of the Judean spirit prevailed as it was informed by its rich ethno-symbolism. Zion remains “the mother of us all” (4 Ezra 10:7). The Messiah will come (4 Ezra 7:28-29; 12:32; 13:32-52; 14:9) so there is hope: “Take courage, O Israel; and do not be sorrowful, O house of Jacob; for the Most High has you in remembrance, and the Mighty One has not forgotten you in the struggle” (4 Ezra 12:46-47). Similarly TMos 3:9 (cf 4:4:5-6) makes the following plea: “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, remember your covenant which you made with them, and the oath which you swore to them by yourself, that their seed would never fail from the land which you have given them”. 1 Bar 2:35 on the other hand has God promising: “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God, and they shall be my people: and I will no more drive my people of Israel out of the land that I have given them.” This land theology, similar to Ezra and Nehemiah, is also encountered in 4 Ezra 14:28-32 (cf 4 Bar 4:7), where it was Israel’s sinfulness that was the reason for Israel’s fate. Even in the Diaspora there was still hope for a restored and glorious Jerusalem in that

the divine and heavenly race of blessed [Judeans], who live around the city of God in the middle of the earth, are raised up even to the dark clouds, having built a great wall round about, as far as Joppa ... No longer will the unclean foot of Greeks revel around your land but they will have a mind in their breasts that conforms to your laws (SibOr 5:249-66).

God’s love for Judea is mentioned in SibOr 5:328-32 and Jerusalem will be restored with the aid of a heavenly saviour figure (SibOr 5:414-27).

The second revolt against Rome (132-135 CE) proved to be inevitable³⁹ and commenced under the leadership of a Simon who was known as Bar-Kokhba (“son of the star”). According to Rabbinic sources he was even hailed as the “star of David” (cf Nm 24:17) and “king Messiah” by Akiba (Jagersma 1986:157). The Bar-Kokhba revolt was probably inspired by Hadrian’s plans to establish a Roman colony,

named Aelia Capitolina, where Jerusalem once stood. This is supported by numismatic evidence. A coin was discovered in a cave in the Judean desert that illustrates the ceremony of the founding of Jerusalem as a Roman colony. The Emperor Hadrian is depicted as ploughing the boundary of the city with an ox and cow. The coin was found in the cave with other coins from Gaza, which commemorated Hadrian's visit in 133/4 CE, which suggest that Aelia Capitolina must have been founded at least by 133/4 CE, a year or so before the end of the revolt (Eshel 1997).

During this revolt, silver *didrachma*, *sela* and *tetradrachma* coins and bronze coins, variously bearing the facade of the Temple and clusters of grapes and leaves were minted, no doubt recalling the decorations and glory of Herod's temple while looking forward to its restoration. It was the institution that symbolised Judean unity and perpetuity. Coins were the best or the only means of propaganda in antiquity (Schmidt 2001:38). One inscription around the grapes read: "First Year of the redemption of Israel" (Patrich 1990:67, 72; Brenner 2003:51). Over 80 per cent of the Bar-Kokhba coins mention Jerusalem, while it also depicts other ceremonial objects related to the Temple, such as amphorae, jugs, lyres, trumpets and harps (Meshorer 1978).

Alas, the revolt failed. Judeans were forbidden to enter the city on pain of death. The Romans apparently built two temples in Jerusalem. Dio Cassius relates that a temple for Jupiter was built on the site of the destroyed Judean temple, although this can not be corroborated. Judean religious practices were also forbidden according to rabbinic sources, but all we know for certain is that circumcision was prohibited, as this prohibition was stopped under Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE) (Jagersma 1986:160).

3.6.9 Summary: The Hope for the Restoration of Israel

Sanders (1992:289-90) states that the "chief hopes were for the re-establishment of the twelve tribes; for the subjugation or conversion of the Gentiles; for a new, purified temple, or renewed and glorious temple; and for purity and righteousness in both worship and morals." Naturally, the hope for the restoration of Israel was inspired by the prophets, and the great divide between the ideal and reality. The reality of the

³⁹ There was also the so-called Quietus War (115-117 CE) wherein Judeans of the Diaspora

day was in conflict with what covenantal nomism promised, and what Judeans thought was theirs by right by virtue of the covenant. Sanders (1992:291-94) does an overview of Judean literature based on the main themes which they contain for the future of Israel which we have decided to summarise in the table format below:

	1. The twelve tribes of Israel will be assembled	2. The Gentiles will be converted, destroyed, or subjugated	3. Jerusalem will be made glorious; the Temple rebuilt, made more glorious or purified	4. Worship will be pure and the people will be righteous
a) Pre-Roman era literature	Sir 36:11; 48:10; 1 Bar 4:37; 5:5; 2 Mac 1:27f.; Jub 1:15; cf 2:18	The Gentiles will be destroyed: Sir 36:1-9; Jub 24:29f.; 1 En 90:19	Tob 13:16-18; 14:5; 1 En 90:28f.; 91:13; Jub 1:17; cf 1:27; 1:29; 25:21	Jub 33:11, 20
b) Palestinian literature of Roman era	PsSol 11:2f.; 17:28-31; cf 17:50; 8:34; 1QM 2:2f.; cf 2:7f.; 3:13; 5:1; 11QTemple 8:14-16; 57:5f.	They will be destroyed: PsSol 17:24, but not all according to PsSol 17:31; 1QM, although CD 14:6 allows for proselytes. They will be punished: TMos 10:7	11QTemple 29:8-10; PsSol 8:12; 17:30	cf War 2.7; 1QSa 2:3-10; 1QM 7:5f.; 11QTemple 45:11-17; PsSol 17:26f.
c) Diaspora literature	Philo, Rewards 164f.	They will be destroyed: SibOr 3:670-2. They will be converted: SibOr 3:616f.; 3:710-20 (after some are destroyed in 3:709); 3:772f.	SibOr 3:657-709; SibOr 5:420-5	SibOr 3:756-81 (incl. the Gentiles)

participated. It started in Cyrene and from there spread to Cyprus, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The hope for the restoration of Israel is the strongest hope of all, especially when seen in combination with the prophetic and insurrectionist movements of the first century. This hope naturally focuses on the land, the *sine qua non* of restoration.⁴⁰ In the Age to Come, the God of Israel will reign supreme, be served by loyal Judeans in purity and obedience, possibly by converted Gentiles as well (Sanders 1992:303). “Millennial hope was to remain an active force, sometimes perhaps even a driving one in the lives of [Judeans] from the Maccabean era down to the Bar Kochba revolt ... Imminent expectations of redemption did not really begin to wane until after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt” (Baumgarten 1997:181-182). Sanders (1992:41) explains the Judean religio-political sentiment as follows:

With regard to foreign rule: many bitterly resented it. The Hasmonean revolt was widely supported, and so was the revolt against Rome ... The general desire for “freedom” cannot be doubted. On the other hand, foreign rule was not judged bad by everyone all the time ... It is probable that many would have been willing to remain obedient had the Romans always respected [Judean] sensibilities and institutions.

The latter part of Sander’s statement, however, is difficult to accept. The Judeans “felt that the rule of aliens in the land of Israel constituted a glaring contrast between ideal and reality. The land was the property of the chosen people. Only Israelites could own territory there” (Schürer et al 1979:84). This was even more acute for those Judean peasant farmers gripped by indebtedness, or tenant farmers who lost all claims on their traditional heritage.

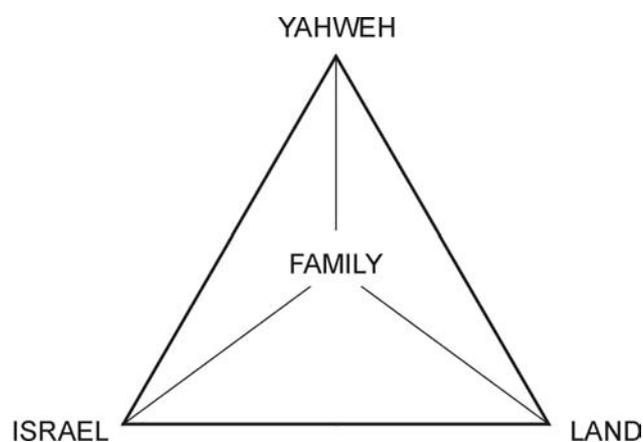
3.7 KINSHIP

This is the last cultural feature that we will investigate in further detail. The importance of the family is already evident in the Mosaic covenant (Ex 20:12-17), where the regulations aimed at the male head of households, protect the continuing viability of the household. With the development of the Deuteronomic legal code, which would have overlaid the earlier traditions, the father of the household lost some of his authority in favour of the centralised authority of the king (Horsley 1995:196-

⁴⁰ More texts can be added to what Sanders lists above: 1) For the restoration of the 12 tribes: TBenj 9:2 (who along with all the nations will gather around the latter Temple); 2 Mac 2:18; 4 Ezra 13:39-48; 2) The Gentiles will be destroyed: 4 Ezra 13:37-38; will receive God’s vengeance: TMos 10:7-8; 3) The temple will be made glorious: TBenj 9:2; Jerusalem will be made new: TDan 5:12.

197). Overall, a three-tiered structure formed a series of nested households (King & Stager 2002).

First, on the ground level was the ancestral or patriarchal family, the *bet 'ab* (or *bet 'av*), “house of the father” (Gn 24:7; Jos 2:12, 18; 6:25). As a social unit, the joint or extended family, not a purely biological family, often contained three generations. The ultimate authority was the father, who had control over his wife (or wives), his sons and their wives, grandsons and their wives, unmarried sons and daughters, slaves, servants, non-kin (*gerim*) who were included in the protective framework, aunts, uncles, widows, orphans and Levites who may have been members of the household. According to King & Stager (2002:44) the *bet 'ab* was “the basic unit of Israelite society” and “was the focus of religious, social and economic spheres of Israelite life and was at the center of Israel’s history, faith and traditions”. Wright argued very much the same, and represents the position of the household within the pattern of relationships between Israel, Yahweh, and the land as follows (Wright 1990:105, adapted):



Not to be missed in this is the family’s close attachment to the land, as the family was the basic unit of Israelite culture and society, the basic unit of Israel’s stewardship of the land which belonged to God, and the basic unit “in the experience and preservation of the covenant relationship with Yahweh” (Sanders 2002:121). Overall, kinship relationships were largely organised around the land and agriculture. If one traced back the ancestry, the household becomes larger. Very large families formed the *mispha* or “clan”.

Second, on the level of the state, the king functioned as the paterfamilias who presided over his “house” (*bayit*). Third, Yahweh was the supreme paterfamilias, and the “children” of Israel were bound to him through the covenant as his kindred (*am*) or kindred-in-law. In our period, some things remained the same while some aspects of the household changed. What was characteristic of the first-century family and kinship arrangements we will focus on next.

3.7.1 The Patriarchal Family

In our period you find the virtual disappearance of the clan or tribe, and the emergence of the nuclear family – consisting of about six people – that constituted the household. Most families lived in small villages or towns, and their agricultural lands would have been located in the surrounding fields (Fiensy 1991:119-46). Oporto on the other hand, has identified four different family types for non-elites in the Roman empire, and states that the situation in Galilee, which we can extend throughout all of Palestine as well, was little different. These were extended families, multiple families, nucleated families and scattered families, all of whom strived for the following ideal characteristics: 1) to be patriarchal, pointing to the dominating role of the paterfamilias; 2) having patrilineal descent, where the bloodline is traced through the sons of the male descendents of a common ancestor; 3) to be patrilocal, where marriage consisted of the woman being transferred from her original home to the home of her husband; 4) and to have productive resources held collectively (Oporto 1992:224-26). In all of the families

the authority of the paterfamilias was the axis which underpinned and gave unity to the family group; in all of them descent was by the male line ... and residence was patrilocal; possessions and honor, although in short supply, were held in common, and although most families were very small and did not have relatives to call on, the bonding to the kinship group and to the extended family were the ideal.

(Oporto 2001:226)

Descent, as it was traced through the male line, also had a religious function, especially for the caste of priests and their wives, but it also regulated the cultic membership for the laity (Phlp 3:5). Kinship thus had a religious dimension in terms of purity. There were regulations on intercourse (Jn 7:53-8:11) and the status of

spouses (Dt 7:1-4; Lk 1:5). Genealogies, whether oral or written, also organised relatives into appropriate relationships based on generation and parentage. Genealogies were an important feature in the various Judean literature⁴¹ and functioned amongst other things, to defend a claim to honour, social status and rights of inheritance (Hanson 1994:183, 187). A very important feature of ancient Mediterranean culture “is that status in the form of ascribed honor derive from one’s family [cf Mt 13:54-57; Mk 6:3; Jn 7:40-44]” (Hanson 1994:185).

Generally, families strived to be self-sufficient. The family was “the basic social unit, of production and consumption, of reproduction and socialization, of personal identity and membership in a wider community. And because, in an agrarian society, families could not survive without land on which they have at least some rights, the two went together. Thus, the purpose of both production and reproduction was to perpetuate the family on its land” (Horsley 1995:195-96). Indeed, it would be difficult for any Israelite family to give identity to its members without possession of and living on their portion of the ancestral land, Israel. As we saw above, Brueggemann regarded the land as a primary, if not the primary category of faith. The land would be important for the production of food and families were involved in “polycropping”, that is, raising various crops such as grain, olives for oil and grapes for wine. Most Judean men would have been occupied with agriculture. They would have “sheared the sheep and carded the wool, as well as ploughing and harvesting” while “much of the work involved in feeding and clothing the family was done by women” (Sanders 1992:122). According to Horsley (1995:200), however, all able bodied persons, men, women and children will help at harvest time while men and women were involved in the production of textiles; there was no strict separation in the roles. We can also add that the income of the household would have been supplemented in most cases by developing a craft or working as day labourers (Fiensy 1991:135).

The standard house where the family lived generally consisted of a small room or two, which was arranged around a central courtyard shared with other families. The courtyard allowed for shared use of the oven, cistern and millstone – on a village level common use was made of a wine-press and olive-press (Horsley 1995:192; 1996:89; Fiensy 1991:124-26). Strange & Shanks (1990:196) give a slightly different description, as they describe a standard house as consisting of a series of rooms situated around two courtyards, used variously for domestic chores and keeping

⁴¹ E g Gn 5:4-32; 2 Sm 5:13-16; 1Chr 3:10-24; Rt 4:18-22; 1 Mac 2:1-5; Mt 1:1-17.

animals. The courtyard-house was linked to others through the alley, all of which combined to form the village, the largest social unit for peasants.

Generally Judeanism espoused a very positive family ethic. The love of brother (TReu 6:9; TSim 4:7; TGad 6:1-7; TJos 17:2-3; TBenj 7:5-8:2; Jub 36:8; 4 Mac 13:19-27), or the love of God and brothers (TDan 5:3) features in various texts. Brothers are encouraged to love one another and not calculate the wrong done to each other, “This shatters unity, and scatters all kinship” (TZeb 8:6). One must honour the parents (LetAris 228, 238; Jub 7:20; Ps-Philo 11:9) and appreciate the value of family (LetAris 241-42), and the worst form of neglect is the neglect of children (LetAris 248). The Tanak especially gave regulations that protected the family as a unit (Hanson 1994:183). Laws aimed at countering deviance covered issues such as incest (Lv 18:6-19), rape (Dt 22:23-29), adultery (Lv 20:10), marriage (Lv 21:7; Dt 25:5-10), divorce (Dt 24:1-4), and inheritance (Nm 27:1-11; Lk 12:13).

3.7.2 Marriage

Since “the foreigner was in the house”, we will first have a look at Judean attitudes towards intermarriage. In the post-exilic period intermarriage was prohibited. It was believed that intermarriage leads to religious disloyalty and so was a threat to the religious community (Cohen 1987:51). So generally, marriage or sexual intercourse with Gentiles was abhorred,⁴² something also noticed by Tacitus (Hist 5.5) – never mind the fact that the sons of Jacob took Gentile wives (Jub 34:20-21)! For example, the apocryphal Addition to Esther (14:15; LXX 4:17) states that Judean women should avoid having intercourse with uncircumcised men. Both Josephus (Ant 18.345) and Philo (SpecLaws 3.29) also express sentiments that the law does not allow marrying someone from another nationality. Overall the major issue was the protection of boundaries (cf Lieu 2002:308, on TJud 23:2), and some quarters even took extreme views on the question of intermarriage. It is said that a man who gives his daughter or sister in marriage to a Gentile must be stoned to death, along with the bride (Jub 30:7). Those who marry foreigners defile the nation, hence they are to be excluded from the Temple, and no sacrifice, fat or other offering must be accepted from them (Jub 30:16). The offering of fat was normally the prerogative of the priest (e.g. Ezk 44:15), and only the faithful – those who keep the boundary between

⁴² Cf TLevi 9:10; cf 14:6; Jub 20:4; 22:20; 25:1, 5; 27:10; 30:11; Ps-Philo 9:5; 18:13-14; 21:1; 30:1; 44:7; 45:3; Tob 4:12; 2 Ezra 8:70, 92; 9:9; 4Bar 8:1-8; Theodotus in Eusebius, PrEv 9.22.4-6; Tob 4:12.

Judean and Gentile secure – will be allowed to minister to God (cf CD 6.1-2). Intermarriage for the lay Judean was possible where the foreigner converted to Judeanism, however (see below). But generally, marriages were mostly endogamous, that is, marriage occurred with close kin (Hanson 1994:188).⁴³

Hanson (1994:188) explains that in “traditional societies, the marriage of a male and female is seldom (if ever) an arrangement between individuals. It is a social contract negotiated between families, with economic, religious and (occasionally) political implications beyond the interests of sexuality, relationship, and reproduction”. Divorce (cf Mk 10:2-9; Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; cf m.Git 9:10a) would therefore have had serious social ramifications. “It potentially affected the disposition of the woman’s dowry, the change of residences, the ability to find another spouse, and the honor of the families” (Hanson 1994:188).

In terms of residence, we saw above that the traditional family was patrilocal, where marriage consisted of the woman being transferred from her original home to the home of her husband. With this came a transfer of authority from that of her father to her husband as well. He would manage her property or dowry that was provided by the bride’s family. She retained ownership, however, which passed on to her children, distinct from the property of the husband, his kin-group and his children from other marriages. The dowry – which was often used as a public display of wealth and honour – was actually the full or partial payment of the family inheritance given to the daughter at the time of marriage (cf Gn 31:14-16; Jos 15:18-19; m.Ket 6:6) (Hanson 1994:189).

Besides the above, the reproduction of the family unit was of paramount importance. Women played an important role as they obviously were the main source for a family’s reproduction. Crass as it may sound, in a patriarchal society, “a woman was basically a regenerative-sexual being ... It was the man’s family she was committed to multiply when getting married” (Sanders 2002:118). The wife’s sexuality was subject to the husband’s exclusive use and authority as she was vital for the perpetuation of his family (Horsley 1995:199-200). But the children would also fulfil another important function – they continue the existence of the twelve patriarchs (cf Sanders 2002:118). In the Tanak Tamar may have seduced her father-in-law, Judah, to have sex with her, but this was in order to carry out the custom of Levirate

⁴³ Cf Jdt 8:2; Tob 1:9; 3:15-17; 4:12-13, and Jubilees, that retells Biblical stories.

marriage. The focus of the story is Tamar's determination to provide progeny for her deceased husband (Sanders 2002:118). The survival of the family is also encountered in other examples of womanly "heroism".

The stories of Tamar, Ruth, Esther, Hannah, Abigail and many other women in the Bible, heroic as each was in her own right, are built around the family heritage theme of God's fulfillment of the divine promise of progeny and land God had made to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 12. All had consciously or subconsciously sinned in some way that the family might survive, and the Bible honors them all.

(Sanders 2002:119)

3.7.3 The Father-Son Relationship

Despite the potential fertility of the daughter, she was of less value than a son (Sir 22:3; 42:9-14). For example, the daughter would be sent out as a debt-slave to help pay off debts, while the son would remain to ensure the continuity of the household (Horsley 1995:199). Overall, the values of Judean society, pretty much like others in antiquity, gave prominence to the father-son relationship – even the husband-wife relationship is modified and in part suppressed to accommodate it. It also afforded intrinsic attributes to the father-son relationship that defined the roles and status of each party. For now we will concentrate on the role and status of the father (Oporto 2001:227-28).

The father exercised control over his son throughout his entire life. The father decided whether the new born son is accepted into the family and the father later welcomed him into the family by giving him a name. The father also had to give his consent in everything that the son did, like getting married, performing an economic transaction or accepting a public office. The authority of the father was such that he could legally sell his son or even condemn him to death (Philo, SpecLaws 2.232, 243-48; Josephus, Ant 4.260-64; 16.365; m.Sanh 7:4).

The father also had a series of obligations to fulfil towards his son. This included the elementary tasks of feeding him, education, protection, economic assistance and giving him a job. Particularly the task of education or instruction was important (Pr 4:1-4; Tob 4; SpecLaws 2.228; b.BB 21a). The son amongst other things had to

learn how to run the house and family property. “An important aspect of domestic education consisted in telling and learning the great deeds of the ancestors, those deeds which had brought prestige and honor to the house. The illustrious ancestors’ example was used to model the character and lifestyle of those who would one day have the responsibility of continuing the house’s name” (Oporto 2001:227; cf Apion 2.204). Oporto states further that during the years of education the father had to treat his son with severity, whereby his authority was imposed by means of punishments – this was typical of agrarian societies. In this manner the order of the house was preserved and the future paterfamilias learned how to exercise his authority (Sir 30:1-13; Pr 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; SpecLaws 2.240). We can add here that in order to maintain the family on its land as a viable social and economic unit, the Tanak emphasised patrilineal inheritance, where the first-born son inherits twice as much as any brothers (Dt 21:17; cf m.BB 8:3-5). If there was no first-born son, the daughter would inherit, followed by the brother and the father’s brother (Nm 27:8-11).

The father also had the responsibility to teach his son the religious traditions. The Tanak in various passages (Ex 12:26-27; 13:14-15; Dt 6:20-24; Jos 4:6-7, 21-23) specifies that the father must explain an event, memory or institution. So the exodus, the conquest and the gift of the land, and their common history (Tob 4; 4 Mac 18:10-19; Philo, SpecLaws 4.150; Josephus, Apion 1.60; m.Pes 10:4) would be explained via the privileged father-son line of communication.

Besides the roles and obligations of the father, the son had his own towards the father (Oporto 2001:228-29). This had great relevance for the continuity of the household depended on it. For example, the son was obliged to honor and obey his father as long as he lived (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16). He also had to assist and care for him in his old age (Pr 1:8; 4:1; 19:26; 20:20; 23:22; 30:17; Sir 3:3-16; Ps 126:3-5; Philo, Decal 111-120, 165-67; SpecLaws 2.223-62).⁴⁴ So anyone who despised his father

⁴⁴ It must also be remembered, however, that in the Greco-Roman world, death was a grim reality, so not too many would have reached an “old age”. According to Bolt (1998), Roman tombs suggest an average life expectancy of about twenty-two years for men and twenty years for women, with Egyptian tombs indicating a figure of around thirty years for both. Bolt also indicates that alternative estimates based on comparative populations studies claim that most people of the Greco-Roman world had an average life expectancy of around twenty to twenty-five years; that only 40 percent of the population reached that age; and that only 50 percent of children made it to their tenth birthday. The precariousness of life in the first-century was due mainly to three key factors. There was the brutal influence of Roman military power, malevolent magic, where the curses of such magic aimed at bringing suffering or

was cursed and cut off from blessing. He who did not take care of his father in old age was a blasphemer and disobedience was deserving of death (Dt 21:18-21; 27:16; Sir 3:8-9; Apion 2.206). The law of the rebellious son (Dt 21:18-21) was still in force in the Hellenistic-Roman period (Philo, SpecLaws 2.232, 243-248; Josephus, Ant 4.260-64; 16:365) attesting to the importance that was attached to the responsibilities of the son. It was at the moment of the father's death where the son showed his respect in the most visible way. The son had to give a proper burial and carry out the necessary funeral rites (Gn 25:9-11; 35:29). At death the father became a family ancestor and in the burial rite the son was recognised as the new *paterfamilias*

and from then on one of his principal functions would be to venerate the remains of the ancestors to whom the living still felt themselves bound as members of the same family. This obligation was one of the most sacred that a son had towards his father, and it did not finish on the day of burial but was prolonged in a series of funeral ceremonies after the burial and in the annual commemorations whose celebration was also entrusted to the son.

(Oporto 2001:229).⁴⁵

Now archaeological evidence illuminates the burial customs of Judeans in our period. Burial sometimes took place in decorated wooden coffins, as is demonstrated by the tomb-caves near Jericho. These wooden coffins date to the late-Hasmonean period through to 6 CE (Hachlili 1979). But during our period a distinctive burial custom developed in Judeanism, referred to today as *ossilegium*. After initial burial, where the body was placed on a shelf or placed in long cavities carved in a burial cave (called *loculi*), Judeans, about a year later, performed a secondary burial, where the bones of their dead were gathered into ossuaries or bone boxes. It was mainly practiced in and around Jerusalem from just before the turn of the era until 70 CE. Ossuaries were usually made of limestone and on occasion, clay. The usual practice was when more space was needed in the cave, the bodies were exhumed, and the bones were placed in charnel piles where bones of a similar type of various persons were stacked together (Fine 2001:39-40). Fine (2001:41-43) has connected the use

death to its victims, and lastly, human illness, the ancients not having access to modern medicine and health measures.

⁴⁵ Cf Gn 49:29-32; 50:25; Jos 24:32; Tob 4:3-4; 6:15; 14:9, 11-12; Jub 23:7; 36:1-2, 18; 2 Mac 5:10; War 5.545; TReu 7:1; TLevi 19:5.

of ossuaries with the emergence of the local stone-carving industry, which was given strong impetus by Herod the Great's building programs in Jerusalem and the city's prosperity. The Temple mount, the Temple itself and Herod's palace were constructed largely of stone. It is also in this period that we see the emergence of stone tables and dinnerware.

In addition we can mention that in the tomb-caves near Jericho, two inscribed ossuaries (one in Hebrew and one in Greek) with an inscribed bowl (in Hebrew) were found in one loculus. The two ossuaries naming the deceased persons within were stacked on top of each other. The funerary bowl found with them refer to the persons in the ossuaries, and it indicates that an Ishmael, a third generation son, commemorated his father and grandfather (Hachlili 1979).

Thus in antiquity the father-son relationship was the closest and most lasting of all relationships. Its importance was based on the need for the continuity of the family. Oporto (2001:229) explains that from

his father the son inherited the house with its properties, its honor and its worship, and in order to preserve this heritage he received authority over all those persons who formed part of the household. The value attributed to this continuity shows that what mattered was not individuals but the household. It was the household which perpetuated itself in time; the head of the family was only its representative and guardian at any specific time. Because of this, fathers saw in their sons another "I", one more link in the chain of succession who would guarantee the continuity of the household and who would honor them as ancestors (Sir 30:4; 44:10-11; 46:12).

3.7.4 Summary

In our period the family was the basic social unit, of production and consumption, of reproduction and socialisation, and personal honour and identity. All family types basically strived to be patriarchal, patrilineal, patrilocal, and to have productive sources held collectively. Also striving for self-sufficiency, the family as a unit, being part of an agrarian society, had an inseparable relationship with the land. It was the family's source of food, and the means by which the family line and inheritance could be perpetuated. Most families lived in small villages and towns, which were surrounded by their agricultural fields. The family house consisted of a room or

several rooms arranged around one or two courtyards. Judeanism espoused a positive family ethic, and various regulations in the Tanak ensured the continuance of the family as a unit.

Marriage strategies were predominantly endogamous, and was basically never arranged by the two individuals concerned, having economic, religious and political implications as well. The authority over the wife was transferred from that of her father to that of her husband, to whose home she is also transferred. The women played a vital role in the perpetuation of her husband's family, but also to provide a progeny in fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 12.

Lastly, Judeanism, much like other societies of antiquity, gave prominence to the father-son relationship. It was the closest and most lasting of all relationships. The son came under the complete authority of the father, who had the responsibility of educating his son on how to run the household and family property. The father also had to teach his son the religious traditions. The continuity of the household was dependent on how the son fulfilled his obligations. He had to be obedient, and take care of his father in old age, and venerate him as a family ancestor through burial rites and annual commemorations. It was also upon the father's death that the son, the link in the chain of succession, would be recognised as the new paterfamilias.

3.8 WHAT OF THE GENTILES?

3.8.1 A Clash of Cultures

The Judeans certainly had a consciousness of difference vis-à-vis other peoples. In addition to the various texts already referred to in this chapter, others may be added. It is said that because of exile, "Everyone will be offended at your customs" (SibOr 3:271-72). In SibOr 4:35-36 it is said that men will never imitate the piety or customs of those who love God, because they desire shamelessness. Good views of Gentiles were generally few and far in between.⁴⁶ Contact with Gentiles had to be avoided

⁴⁶ All nations will worship and bless God in 1 En 10:21. The discerning nations must receive Enoch's books so they may fear God (2 En 48:7 [J]). The T12P in particular expresses favourable views towards Gentiles. God will save all the Gentiles when the 2 Messiah's arrive (TSim 7:2), although traditional and current of enemies will be destroyed (TSim 6:3-4). A king will arise from Judah and he "will found a new priesthood in accord with the gentile model and for all nations" (TLevi 8:14). The salvation of the Gentiles seems to be implied in TJud 24:6 – this accords with TNaph 8:2-4, which says that the future king from Judah will bring salvation

(LivPro 10:5; 4 Bar 7:37) and the most frequent criticism against Gentiles focussed on idolatry and sexual immorality.⁴⁷ The Greeks are “overbearing and impious” (SibOr 3:171). There is the warning not to “become involved in revolting gentile affairs” (TJud 23:2; cf TDan 5:5, 8). The Gentiles are “abominable and lawless” (3 Mac 6:9, 12). Psalm of Solomon 17:15 laments that “the children of the covenant” living among Gentile rabble adopted foreign customs. Jubilees use the solar calendar (and the Sabbath) as a distinguishing mark between Judeans and Gentiles. As far as the author is concerned, the lunar calendar is associated with the error of the Gentile nations (Baumgarten 1997:85). The deeds of Gentiles are “defilement and corruption and contamination; and there is no righteousness with them” (Jub 21:21); they are sinners (Jub 23:24). In contrast, the Judeans are “a race of most righteous men” (SibOr 3:219); “For to them alone did the great God give wise counsel and faith and excellent understanding” (SibOr 3:584-85). Judeans are from “a chosen and honoured race from the seed of Jacob” (TJob 1:5). Jubilees 15:31 states that God caused for spirits to rule over the Gentiles to led them astray and it is hoped for Jacob: “May the nations serve you, and all nations bow down before your seed” (Jub 22:11; cf 26:23).

Not surprisingly, to maintain identity, most Judeans of the ancient world sought to separate themselves from their Gentile neighbours. In the East, they formed their own autonomous ethnic communities, and in cities such as Rome and Alexandria there were neighbourhoods largely inhabited by Judeans. Following Ezra, Judeans in this period also increasingly had little tolerance for marriages with Gentiles. They also buried there dead separately. In the polyethnic Hellenistic and Roman empires, the Judeans “carried their separateness to unusual lengths”, and their refusal to participate in Gentile religious activities was unparalleled (Cohen 1987:46). Mainstream Judeanism rejected the Hellenistic idea that all men are brothers and equal before God and this “theoretical and practical ἀμιξία, which ran counter to the

to Israel, but he will also “assemble the righteous from among the nations” and TAsh 7:3: God will save Israel and the nations; cf TBenj 11:1-3; TGad 7:2.

⁴⁷ It is said to the Gentiles: “You neither revere or fear God, but wander to no purpose, worshipping snakes and sacrificing to cats, speechless idols, and stone statues of people; and sitting in front of the doors at godless temples you do not fear the existing God who guards all things” (SibOr 3:30-34). Idolatry is also attacked in SibOr 3:545-54; SibOr 5:276-80; 5:484-500; TJob 2:2-3:3, 5:2; TMos 2:8-9; LetAris 134-35; Jub 12:2-5; 20:7-9; 21:5; 22:18, 22. It is also said that Judeans do not commit adultery and “do not engage in impious intercourse with male children, as do Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Romans, spacious Greece and many nations of others, Persians and Galatians and all Asia, transgressing the holy law of immortal God” (SibOr 3:596-600; cf SibOr 4:33-34; SibOr 5:430).

whole tendency of Hellenistic times, was a constant and particular reproach against the [Judeans]" (Schürer et al 1986:614).⁴⁸

Negative views of Gentiles were just one part of a mutual exchange. For educated men of the period the Judean religion was a *barbara superstitio* (Cicero, *pro Flacco* 28.67). A fictitious tale developed concerning the Exodus from Egypt, the foundations being laid by Manetho (Apion 1.227-53). In the course of time the story developed but the essence of the story is thus: A number of lepers were banished by the Egyptian king and were sent into the quarries or the desert. One of them was a priest of Heliopolis named Moses (Manetho said his real name was Osarsiph). Through his influence the lepers apostasized from the Egyptian gods and gave them a new religion. Under his leadership they left the country and eventually came to Jerusalem, which they conquered and occupied for a long time (Schürer et al 1986:151). The Alexandrian grammarian Apion said that the Judeans paid divine honours to the head of an ass (Apion 2.80). Tacitus picks up this story and links it to the fact that the Judeans in the desert were made aware of many springs of water by a herd of wild asses (Hist 5.3-4).

Juvenal says Judeans will show the way only to fellow Judeans, and will direct only the circumcised to a well (Sat 14.103-4). In Alexandria it was apparently said that Judeans took an oath not to be well-disposed to any Gentile, and that they offered a Greek in sacrifice on a yearly basis (Apion 2.121-4; 2.89-96). Apollonius Molon claimed that Judeans were the most incompetent of barbarians, and contributed no useful invention to the general culture (Apion 2.148)

Much fun was made of three points in particular by the educated world: abstention from pork, strict observance of the Sabbath and imageless worship. Juvenal (Sat 6.160; 14.96-106) speaks of the land where "customary kindness bestows on pigs a ripe old age" and where "pork is accounted as precious as human flesh". In the Sabbath observance he sees "nothing but indolence and laziness, and in [Judean] divine service only worship of clouds and the sky" (Schürer et al 1986:152). Similarly Seneca (in Augustine, *City of God* 6.11) accuses the Judeans of laziness and of wasting one-seventh of their lives in idleness through their observance of the Sabbath.

⁴⁸ Cf Hecataeus (300 BCE) in Diodorus 40.3.4; Ant 13.245, 247; Apion 1.309; 2.121, 148;

So much of the Judean literature that attacked Gentile ways also had an apologetic purpose. Most of the apologetic literature was “directed towards strengthening the confidence of a [Judean] audience in their own heritage, and it is doubtful whether a gentile audience was ever intended to read it” (Schürer et al 1986:609). Josephus argues that the Judeans were not inferior with regards to their antiquity compared with other nations. He discounts the story that Judeans originated from Egyptian lepers. Judeans were originators of all civilization. In the process Josephus also used material of Eupolemus, Artapanus and Aristobulus. He further answers the charges of atheism, religious and social segregation, and Judean peculiarities (e.g. circumcision) (Schürer et al 1986:610-616). Judeans may have been accused of being bad citizens by not worshipping the emperor, but a daily sacrifice was offered for the emperor in the Temple (Apion 2.73-77; War 2.197).

The apologists further placed emphasis on the humane regulations of the law, especially to foreigners (Apion 2.209-14; Philo, Virtues 12.88; cf Apion 2.255-75). The stipulations of the law are pure in every respect and most ideal (Apion 2.188-219). The law has excellence and is of great antiquity (2.154, 156), and in terms of character Moses was blameless (2.158-61). Philo also concentrated on the excellence and humanity of the law and its moral strictness in general, but he was also concerned to demonstrate that circumcision, unclean animals and Sabbath observance were reasonable and purposeful (SpecLaws 1.2-7; 4.125; Hyp in PrEv 8.7.10-20). Ps-Aristeas and Aristobulus before him had done much the same (PsAris 128 ff., 142-69; Aristobulus in PrEv 13.12.9-16).

In addition, Judeanism had a problem with the relationship between universalism⁴⁹ and particularism. The tension is that God is both Lord of all and also the national God of Israel. The Messianists (at least some of them) “resolved the tension between these conceptions by affirming the universality of God and denying all doctrines that bound God to a particular nation or land. For most [Judeans], however, this was not a viable option” (Cohen 1987:81).

2.258; Tacitus, Hist 5.5; Juvenal, Sat 14.103-4.

⁴⁹ We can bring attention here to Second-Isaiah which states that God had chosen Israel to be his servant, to whom he first gave the Law and Judgement. But Israel must proclaim this to the nations (Is 42:1-4; 49:1-6); Israel must become a light to the Gentiles (Is 42:6; 49:6); the religion of Israel must become a world religion and then the Gentiles will also be accepted by God (Is 56:1-8; cf Rm 3:28-9).

The Judeans enjoyed special privileges in the Diaspora (and Palestine), thanks especially to the decrees of Julius Caesar and Augustus, whereby the Judeans could manage their own affairs. They could practice their religion and send contributions to the Jerusalem Temple (Schürer et al 1986:114-21). Despite this legal protection, however, the “otherness” of Judeans combined with their protected rights often led to friction with local Gentiles – this kind of situation is mirrored in the territory of Palestine. In Caesarea Gentiles and Judeans were repeatedly involved in bloody conflict. Judeans protested after a soldier had torn up a Torah scroll and thrown it into the fire. The protest it caused only ceased after Cumanus had the soldier executed (War 2.228ff.). In addition, there was disagreement between Greeks and Judeans over access to a synagogue in a Gentile district in Caesarea. It led to open conflict and the desecration of the synagogue. Soon thereafter, the Judeans of Caesarea heard that the local garrison of Roman troops plundered the Temple treasury in Jerusalem, and consequently attacked them. The Roman troops responded, and the events contributed towards the outbreak of the Great Revolt (Bull 1990:110). Gentile hostility towards Judeans broke out in particular at the outbreak of the Jewish war. For example, the residents of Scythopolis massacred the Judeans in the city as the Judean revolt erupted in the summer of 66 (War 2.466-68; Life 26). The effects of the revolt were also felt in Alexandria (War 2.457-98) and other places. “While the triumph of the revolution was thus being decided in Jerusalem, bloody battles were taking place in many other cities inhabited by both [Judeans] and Gentiles. Where the [Judeans] were in the majority, they massacred their Gentile fellow-citizens, and where the latter had the upper hand they struck down the [Judeans]” (Schürer et al 1973:487). Philo says that the people of Ascalon bore relentless hostility towards Jews (Embassy 205). Of the Phoenicians, the Tyrians were, according to Josephus, especially hostile in their attitude to Judeans (Apion 1.70). At the outbreak of the revolution in 66 CE, the head of the Temple police, Eleazar, son of the high priest Ananias, convinced the other priests to abolish sacrifices for Gentiles, including the one offered for the emperor (War 2.408-21).

3.8.2 God-Fearers and Proselytes

The irony of the above is that besides the mutual hostility, there were those Gentiles that in some form or another attached themselves to the Judean way of life, even becoming proselytes. Three points have been suggested regarding the success of Judean propaganda: 1) Judeanism was represented in a form that would have been acceptable to Greeks and Romans. The peculiar and unpalatable was left in the

background with main emphasis placed upon the concept of God , the one Lord and Creator who rewards according to moral conduct; 2) there was the practical direction of Judeanism towards training conduct in ordinary life; 3) the possibility that Judeanism fulfilled the potential needs of monotheism, expiation of sins and ritual purification, and the reward of a happy afterlife – these elements maybe being present in pagan religions in some form or another (Schürer et al 1986:153-158).

Seemingly there were many Gentiles in the Hellenistic-Roman period “who attached themselves more or less closely to [Judean] communities, took part in the [Judean] divine service and observed [Judean] precepts sometimes more, sometimes less completely” (Schürer et al 1986:160-161). According to Dunn (1991:125), “there can be no disputing the fact that many Gentiles were attracted to [Judeanism] and attached themselves to the local synagogues in varying degrees of adherence ... *loudaizein*, ‘to live like a [Judean]’, was already a well established term to indicate the adoption of [Judean] practices”.

Plutarch (Cicero 7.6.5) refers to a freedman of the first-century BCE who was suspected of Judeanising. Seneca (in Augustine, City of God 6.11) speaks of many who adopted the custom of the Judean Sabbath. Other writers that refer to Gentiles adopting some Judean customs are Epictetus (quoted by Arrian, Dissertationes 2.19-21), Petronius (fragment 37), Suetonius (Lives of the Caesars 12.2) and Juvenal (14.96-99). Josephus reports that every city in Syria had Judeanisers (τοὺς ἰουδαίζοντας; War 2.463); in Antioch many Greeks were attracted to Judean religious ceremonies and were in some measure incorporated into the Judean community there (War 7.45); in Damascus almost all women were devoted to Judeanism (War 2.20.2.560), and women of high social standing often too (Ant 18. 81-4; cf Ac 13:50; 17:4). He also distinguishes between God-fearers and Judeans who from various parts of the empire brought gifts to the Temple (Ant 14.110). Josephus explains that many Judean customs were adopted in Gentiles cities, especially the abstinence of work on the Sabbath, the observance of the fast days and the lighting of Sabbath lamps (Apion 1.166-67; 2.282). Philo refers to those Gentiles who have not undergone circumcision. They are “sympathisers”, for they honour the one God, but they are not converts (QExodus 2.2). Later rabbis referred to such a person as a *ger toshab* and they also spoke of “Heaven Fearers” (*yirei shamayim*) (Feldman 1986; Tannenbaum 1986). Philo also claims that Judean institutions, especially the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement, have won the attention of the whole inhabited world (Moses 2.4.20-24) and he speaks of pious men and those who practice

wisdom in Grecian and barbarian lands (SpecLaws 2.42-44) which must refer to Gentiles attracted to the spiritual or ethical aspects of Judeanism.

Acts speak of φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν (“fearers of God”: Ac 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26) or σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν (“worshippers of God”: Ac 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4; 17:17; 18:7), while θεοσεβής (“God worshippers”) is found on inscriptions as well. For example, in Pisidian Antioch Paul is said to have addressed those who fear God, distinct from Israelites (Ac 13:16, 26) and afterwards Judeans and devout proselytes followed him (Ac 13:43). In Thessalonica Paul converted Judeans and God-fearing Greeks (Ac 17:4) and in Athens he preached in the assembly to the Judeans and God-fearing Greeks (Ac 17:17). It is possibly from these groups that there came the Greeks who went up to worship in the Temple during Passover (Jn 12:20). It was the Sabbath and dietary laws that these Gentiles observed most strongly, but they must be distinguished from full proselytes.

But MacLennan & Kraabel (1986) have argued that the “God-fearers” in Acts were a literary and theological invention. Excavated synagogues of Diaspora communities (dating from the first century BCE to the seventh century CE) have uncovered over one hundred inscriptions. None of them use φοβούμενος or σεβομένος, and θεοσεβής appearing about ten times, refers to “Jews”. There is one possible exception, the inscription at Aphrodisias (Asia Minor), yet it should not necessarily be understood that these Gentiles were interested in Judean religion. Also θεοσεβής did not have a single meaning, as it could also apart from referring to Judeans, also refer to Gentiles and Gentile Messianists.

“God-fearer” may not be a technical terms for a specific group of Gentiles that are attached to the synagogue, but neither can the term exclude those Gentiles genuinely interested in the religion of the Judeans. “God-fearer” seems to have been an umbrella term that referred to Gentiles who were in various ways in a relationship with Judeanism, be it for religious, political or social reasons (Lieu 2002:31-47; Feldman 1986; Tannenbaum 1986). Even Acts betrays a “broader” understanding of the term as it speaks of “God-fearing proselytes” (σεβόμενοι προσήλυτοι: Ac 13:43).

Judeans were seemingly eager to accept and retain Gentile converts. Some of the anti-Judean literature of the time was to discourage conversion to Judeanism. Tacitus (Hist 5.5) offers a measure of truth when he said that Judean proselytes

“learned nothing so quickly as to despise the gods, to abjure their fatherland, and to regard parents, children and kindred as nothing” (cf Schürer et al 1986:153). Horace (Satires 1.4.142-43) alludes to the Judeans as if they characteristically encourage Gentiles to join them; “we, like the Judeans, will compel you to make one of our throng”. This attests to the fact that Judeanism held a powerful attraction for some. The New Testament also makes reference to proselytes (Ac 2:11; 6:5; 13:43; Mt 23:15). Israel felt itself to be a teacher of the peoples of the world. Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho (121-2) indicates that Is 49:6 was understood this way. SibOr 3:195 says Judeans “will be for all mortals leaders to life”, and we may draw attention to Paul’s self-awareness in this regard (Rm 2:19-20). According to Cohen (1987:57) some Judeans engaged themselves in “missionary” work – referring to Matthew 23:15 and the story of the house of Adiabene – but there is “no evidence for an organized [Judean] mission to the gentiles, but individuals seem to have engaged in this activity on their own” (cf MacLennan & Kraabel 1986).

The conversion of Asenath requires rejection of idolatry and avoidance of meat sacrificed to idols or the meat of strangled animals (JosAsen 9; 10:12-13; 11:4ff.; 12:5ff; 13:11; 21:13-14). This goes without saying, but during the existence of the Temple, three main demands were made according to the rabbis for the acceptance of proselytes into the Judean community: 1) circumcision; 2) baptism, or a ritual purification; and lastly, 3) an offering in the Temple (SifNm 15:4; m.Ker 2:1; m.Pes 8:8; m.’Eduy 5:2; b.Ker 9a; b.Yeb 46a).⁵⁰ For women only the last two were relevant.

Judith, written or redacted in second century BCE, describes conversion of an Ammonite general (Jdt 14:10). It has essential aspects of conversion: belief in God, circumcision, and joining the house of Israel. The Greek version of Esther (114 BCE) understands “and many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Judeans” (Esth 8:17) to mean the Gentiles “were circumcised” (Cohen 1987:52-53). Josephus also reports that foreign male rulers who wished to marry into the Herodian household had to be circumcised (Ant 20.1, 3; cf 16.5). Josephus also writes of the Roman general, Metilius, who at the outbreak of the Great Revolt, begged for his life and promised to become a Judean by being circumcised (War 2.10). He also related how Izates, king of Adiabene, wished to become a Judean, but he was advised by his mother (herself a Judean convert) and Ananias, a Judean merchant, not to

⁵⁰ Later rabbinic traditions indicate that both immersion and circumcision was required for full conversion (b.Yeb 46b).

undergo circumcision in order for him to keep his crown (Ant 20.34-46). Eventually, Izates was circumcised (cf Ant 13.1; 16.6; War 1.10), however.

Philo stresses the moral meaning of circumcision, and refers to Alexandrian Judeans who dismissed physical circumcision in favour of its allegorical meaning. Philo himself, however, affirmed its physical necessity as well (MigAbraham 92). This represented the majority opinion, but according to Saldarini (1994:159), the discussions show that in the Talmudic period, and certainly in the first century, the practice of circumcision was local and varied. Nevertheless, in most cases circumcision was required of converts (Sim 1996:175-176; Schürer et al 1986:169),

Based on the importance of ritual immersion in our period, we must agree with the view that it formed part of the conversion process. Cohen (1987:53) is a bit more cautious as he argues that “it seems most likely that baptism/immersion was part of the conversion process in at least some [Judean] circles in Palestine by the first century of our era” although not all Judeans “of the first century recognized baptism/immersion as a ritual of conversion”. A saying of Epictetus (reported by Arrian, *Dissertationes* 2.19-21) is best understood as referring to proselyte baptism (“But if a man adopts the manner of life of a man who has been baptized and has made his choice, then he really is, and is called, a Judean”).

For Gentile woman, marriage with a Judean man was a *de facto* equivalent of conversion (Cohen 1987:54). Conversion to Judeanism at times also entailed taking on a Hebrew name (JosAsen 15:7). Proselytes were regarded in important matters as equals to born Israelites with regard to duties and rights by the rabbis. But there could be a suspicion that they might lapse in halakhic matters (m.Nid 7:3) although for the greater part rabbinic statements is positive with regards to converts (Schürer et al 1986:176). Philo encouraged accepting proselytes as brothers (Virtues 20.103) and placed emphasis on the welcome and equality of rights extended to full proselytes (SpecLaws 1.51-53). A proselyte, however, was not equal in every sense. He/she might not call on the ancestors of Israel as his/her fathers (m.Bik 1:4), and in the theocracy ranked second from last: priest – levite – Israelite – *Mamzer* – *Nathin* – proselyte – freed slave (m.Hor 3:8). Thus overall, Judeanism could accept converts into the fold but without sacrificing its ethnic identity (Sim 1996:177).