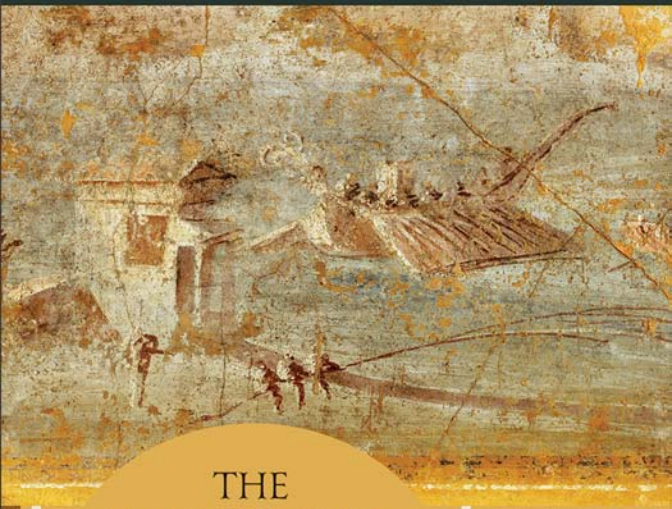

THE WORLD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts

JOEL B. GREEN
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EDITORS

16

Temple and Priesthood

DAVID INSTONE-BREWER

History and Buildings

The so-called Second Temple period (516 BC–AD 70) spans the history of two temple complexes: the first built by Zerubbabel and the completely new construction built by Herod that could properly be called the "third temple."

During this period there were also two Jewish temples in Egypt: on the island of Elephantine near Aswan in the fifth century BC, until it was destroyed in the fourth century; and the temple of Onias in Leontopolis in the second century BC, which offered sacrifices when the Jerusalem temple was desecrated by Antiochus and probably continued to do so until it was destroyed at about the same time as the Jerusalem temple on the orders of Vespasian.

We know very little about the physical size and nature of Zerubbabel's temple, except the measurements that are recorded in Ezra 6:3, which says that sixty cubits was both the height and the width of the building. This is considerably larger than Solomon's temple, which had a central hall of twenty by sixty cubits and was thirty cubits high (1 Kings 6:2). This is partly resolved by assuming Ezra's width is the external measurement, which included the thirty rooms arranged in three stories along the sides of the temple building, and by assuming that the height is the maximum point of a facade or some other tall structure. It is clear that the disappointment felt by those who compared Zerubbabel's temple with Solomon's (Hag. 2:3–9) was due more to the lack of gold than to the lack of stature.

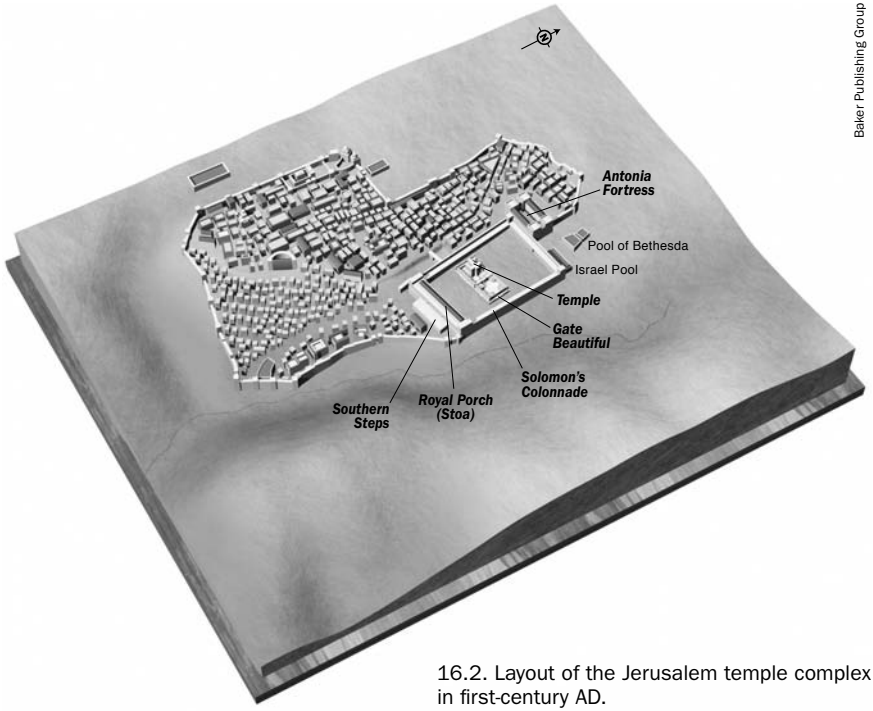
16.1. Model of Herod's temple, from the north.

The temple was probably extended and improved many times. Simon II (ca. 218–215 BC) is praised for repairs, fortifications, and extensions to the enclosure (Sir. 50:1–3). It fell into disrepair after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated it by sacrificing a pig on the altar in about 168 BC and removing all the gold vessels and furniture. When Judas Maccabeus restored the temple in 164 BC, he had to replace all the altars, sacred vessels, veils, and doors, and he even had to rebuild the priests' quarters.

Herod's Temple

Herod's rebuilding was based on the same pattern and size as the predecessors but with much greater magnificence and with greatly extended courtyards. In order to produce an extended area, he had to build up the hillsides surrounding the temple into a vast elevated platform. The so-called Wailing Wall consists of the remains of the edge of this elevation, and the huge size of the individual stones found there shows what an ambitious engineering project this was.

Herod promised he would replace the temple itself as quickly as possible to minimize the interruption of the offerings. Remarkably he succeeded in demolishing the old temple, laying new foundations, and building the new temple in eighteen months. Unfortunately, the work on the foundations was insufficient for the weight of the temple, which consequently started to sink and had to be repaired during Nero's reign (Josephus, *Ant*. 15.389–91, 421).



16.2. Layout of the Jerusalem temple complex in first-century AD.

The general layout and internal size was based on Solomon's temple, which emulated the standard four-section pattern of tenth-century BC temples in Palestine: a courtyard with altar and purification vessels; a porch bound by pillars but no door; a door leading into a sanctuary containing a lampstand, a table for bread, and an incense altar; and an inner sanctuary that was empty but would have contained the ark with cherubum if this had not been lost during the exile.

Hebrew and Greek terminology for these different sections is varied. The whole complex is the "house" (Hebrew *bayit*; Greek *oikos*) or "sanctuary" (*miqdāš*; *hagios*); the whole building is the "temple" (*hêkāl*; *hieron*); the two internal sanctuaries are also called *hêkāl* in Hebrew but generally *naos* in Greek; the outer and inner sanctuary are literally known as "holy [place]" and "holy of holies," respectively, in both Hebrew and Greek. A few other terms are also used.

The extended courtyards of Herod's temple were bounded by a double portico on three sides and a taller treble "royal" portico on the south side. This large area was divided into three concentric areas: for Jewish men; for Jewish men and women; and for anyone, including gentiles. Periodic signs warned gentiles not to transgress this boundary; some of these signs have survived. However, a secret tunnel from the Fortress of Antonia, overlooking the courtyards from the north, led straight to the eastern gate of the inner courtyard, at the entrance to the temple

itself, so Roman soldiers could erupt into the center of any disturbance (Josephus, *Ant*. 15.424). The priestly vestments were also kept in the fortress, released by the Romans at festivals to remind the high priest that the Romans were in charge (*Ant*. 15.403–8).

Two veils adorned Herod's temple, one separating the holy place from the holy of holies, and one covering the outer door of the holy place. Until the first century AD, the two veils were distinguished by different terminology (inner and outer, respectively, were *pārōket* and *māsak* in Hebrew and *katapetasma* and *epispastron* in Greek), so that the temple could be called "the house of the veil" (singular *katapetasma* in Sir. 50:5). However, Josephus referred to them both as *katapetasma* (*J.W*. 5.211–19), and Hebrews refers to the inner veil as the "second" *katapetasma* (Heb. 9:3). They were probably identical, as implied by their original description (Exod. 26:36; 36:35–38), so Josephus described the outer one, which was visible: "Babylonian tapestry, embroidered with blue, fine linen, scarlet, and purple, a wondrous piece of artistry . . . a panorama of the whole heavens" (*J.W*. 5.211–14, Thackeray LCL).

Lee Martin McDonald

16.3. Southern steps entering the temple mount in Jerusalem, from the first century BC/AD.

The Synoptic Gospels report that a veil was torn during Jesus' crucifixion (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45); this may have been the outer veil. Although the inner one might have more symbolic value, no one would have know it had been torn. The veil of Christ's flesh in Heb. 10:19–20 could refer to either veil because it admits believers into the "holies" (*hagiōn*), a term that is used in the LXX for both the holy of holies and the holy place (cf. Lev. 16:2; 2 Chron. 5:9).

Priesthood

Priests were descended from the family of Aaron, which was part of the tribe of Levi. At some point, probably during the reign of David, the Zadokite family became a particularly important family for the high priesthood, and their genealogy may have been changed when this happened. Priests were divided into twenty-four courses (as specified in 1 Chron. 24:1–19) that were still recognized in Qumran and early rabbinic literature. Each course was on duty for two weeks each year, plus the major festivals, when all the courses attended the temple to help with the large number of people bringing offerings (*m. Sukkah* 5.7).

Jewish High Priests

Joazar son of Boethus (4 BC)
Eleazar son of Boethus (4 BC–?)
Jesus son of See (?–?)
Annas (AD 6–15)
Ishmael son of Phiabi (AD 15–16)
Eleazar son of Annas (AD 16–17)
Simon son of Camithus (AD 17–18)
Josephus Caiaphas son-in-law of Annas (AD 18–36)
Jonathan son of Annas (AD 36–37)
Theophilus son of Annas (AD 37–?)
Simon Cantheras son of Boethus (AD 41)
Matthias son of Annas (AD 41–44)
Elionaeus son of Cantheras (AD 44–46)
Ananus son of Annas (AD 62)

The hereditary high priesthood envisioned in the Pentateuch ended with Onias III in 174 BC, when his brother Jason bribed Antiochus Epiphanes to make him high priest. Menelaus (who was not even a Levite) gained the post with a similar bribe three years later, and when he was accused of pilfering temple gold, Alcimus was appointed. Onias III was murdered in 171 BC, so his son was the Onias (IV) who went to Egypt and founded the rival temple in Leontopolis (2 Macc. 4:33; contrary to Josephus, *J.W.* 1.1). In Jerusalem, the temple sacrifices and priesthood lapsed until Judas Maccabeus, of the priestly Hasmonean family, led a revolt and restored the temple in 164 BC. This family retained the combined high priesthood and secular kingship until Antigonus was beheaded by Herod the Great in 37 BC. The high priesthood then became a political appointment supervised by Rome, with about thirty individuals holding the post before it lapsed with the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Many priests lived outside Jerusalem, including a large number at Jericho, and traveled in when they were on duty. At these times they could share the sacred portions that could be eaten only by priests and their families in a state of cultic purity. These included portions of offerings made in the temple and the "heave offerings" that consisted of about one-twenty-fourth of all produce grown in the country. Priests who were farmers were exempt from this tax. By the first century, the sacred tithe of one-tenth of all produce, which Mosaic law called the tithe for the Levites, was probably distributed only among the priests.

Although most priests were Sadducees, the Pharisees had enjoyed much political and religious influence during at least part of the Hasmonean period, from about

76 BC under Queen Alexandra (whose brother was the Pharisee leader Simeon ben Shetah) and perhaps her son Hyrcanus. Even in the first century a few priests were Pharisees, and the title "Rabbi" may have originally indicated a priestly teacher; at least five of the six individuals consistently given this title before AD 70 were priests.

Later rabbinic traditions suggest that the Pharisees instructed the priests how to carry out their duties properly, but this is unlikely. It is possible that the high priests did indeed need help on the Day of Atonement, because most of them were political appointees with no experience (cf. *m. Yoma* 1.6; 5.1), but there is nothing to substantiate the later rabbinic assertions that the priests acted in accordance with Pharisaic rulings (e.g., *t. Kipp.* 1.8; *b. Yoma* 19b). Indeed, the later rabbis complained that the priests acted against Pharisaic teaching (e.g., *m. Pesaḥ.* 5.8).

Worship

Although worship at the temple of Zerubbabel was interrupted only for three and a half years by Antiochus Epiphanes, this began a serious decline from which that temple never really recovered. The building of the temple at Leontopolis roughly coincided with this interruption, which gave legitimacy to the rival temple and demonstrated that Jews could survive without sacrifices at Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem temple lost further legitimacy with the disruption of the hereditary priesthood and the adoption of a new calendar in the second century BC (as implied by the calendar discussions in *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*). Some Jews broke away, including those who went to live at Qumran. They still respected the temple's sacrifices but thought that the festivals were celebrated on the wrong dates and that the rites were imperfect due to wrongly appointed high priests.

However, even those who were disaffected with the temple calendar did not attempt to set up a separate worship center. It is possible that the priesthood helped to accommodate those who used a different calendar. They were willing, for example, to accept a Passover offering that was brought on the "wrong" date and treat it as a peace offering, because this was processed in exactly the same way (*m. Pesaḥ.* 5.2; *m. Zebaḥ.* 1.1, 3).

Little is known about actual prayers or songs in the temple. Although the OT frequently mentions Levitical singers, there is little or no evidence of them in the first century AD, though Ben Sirach mentions them in the second century BC (Sir. 50:18). The fact that prayers did not have any fixed wording before the destruction of the temple (*m. Ber.* 4.4) suggests that they were not prayed publicly by the temple priests. A possible exception is the Eighteen Benedictions, since this was said at the time of morning and evening sacrifice, with an extra one on Sabbaths at the time of the afternoon offering (*minḥâ*); accordingly, it is likely that this was originally associated with temple worship. However, the only wording that was fixed by the first century was the one-line benediction at the end of each of the eighteen sections.

Lee Martin McDonald

16.4. *Mikveh*, or purification pool, situated on the southern steps of the temple mount in Jerusalem.

Perhaps a priest ended each section of communal private prayer with a benediction, possibly accompanied by a trumpet blast or prostrations (cf. Sir. 50:16–21).

Finances

Like many ancient temples, the Second Temple had more money than it could use, and this made it a target for conquest. Antiochus Epiphanes stole all the temple's gold vessels and emptied the treasury in 167 BC (Josephus, *Ant*. 12.248–50); yet, a hundred years later, when Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 63 BC, the temple had already accumulated two thousand talents (about six million shekels) and many new gold vessels that he magnanimously left there (Josephus, *Ant*. 14.72). This money came mainly from offerings.

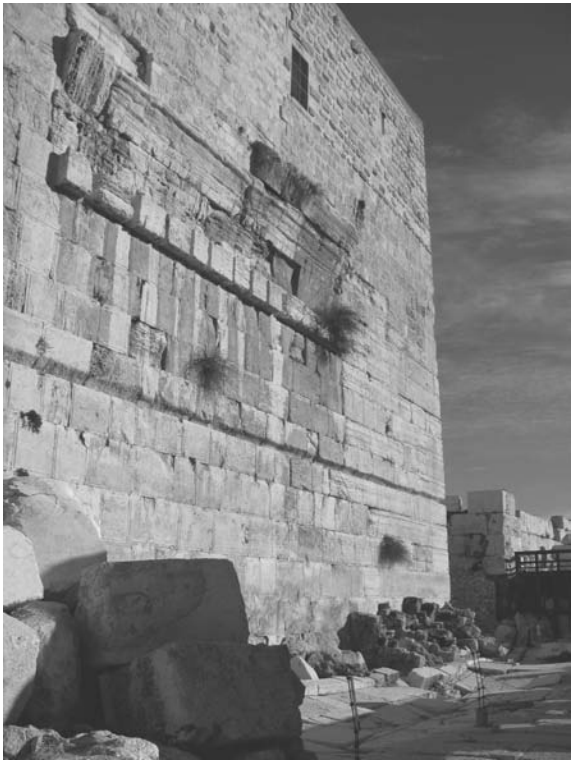
Every Israelite male was expected to pay a half-shekel annual temple tax, except for priests (which annoyed some rabbis; *m*. *Šeqal*. 1.3b–5). Those who did not travel to Jerusalem could pay at booths set up once a year in the provinces. Qumran Jews argued that this tax should be paid only once per lifetime because they did not think that 2 Chron. 24:5 should overturn the Torah (4Q159 frg. 1 2.6–7). It is possible that others agreed, because Peter was asked if his rabbi, Jesus, paid the tax, as though this was not a foregone conclusion (Matt. 17:24).

Other money was also collected in the thirteen "trumpet chests"—probably named after trumpet-like horns for funneling coins into small holes. These received freewill offerings or payment in lieu of burnt offerings or sin offerings.

The half-shekel tax theoretically paid for public sacrifices made on behalf of everyone, but in practice only a tiny proportion of the money was used this way, and worshipers tried to make sure their coins were used for this purpose (*m. Šeqal.* 3.1–3). The debates about what the temple authorities did with the excess money suggest that the finances were completely nontransparent, but not even the later rabbis were willing to consider that fraud occurred (cf. *m. Šeqal.* 4.2–4).

Destruction

It is difficult to imagine the feeling of loss when the temple was destroyed. Daily worship to God, which was offered on behalf of every Jew, had stopped. Hence, individuals felt the burden to replace this worship by other means. Family gatherings, which included a temple visit (such as Passover and celebrations after a birth) felt incomplete. The second tithe—a kind of holiday tax that was spent on enjoying oneself in Jerusalem—was redundant. Sins that required sin offerings and serious sins that awaited the Day of Atonement now remained unforgiven. Those with corpse impurity could be purified only by the ashes of the red heifer, and because it was transmitted by touch, the whole nation gradually became impure.



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16.5. Southwestern corner of the temple mount. A portion of Robinson's arch is visible, protruding from the wall. The arch formed an entrance into Herod's temple, which the Romans destroyed in AD 70.

For some decades, many Jews followed policies that lived in expectation of a new temple. They accumulated the second tithe in the hope that they could one day

spend it in Jerusalem (*t. Maʿaś. Š.* 3.13–14; *b. Pesaḥ.* 7a; *b. Sanh.* 30a). They continued to discuss the administration of temple offerings in the hope that the discussion itself was a substitute for carrying them out, or perhaps because they wanted to be ready to reinstate the system. The second century saw increased interest in offerings that were "put to pasture till they are blemished"—which in temple times had been done to offerings that could not be offered because (for example) they were the wrong gender (e.g., *m. Pesaḥ.* 9.6–8; *m. Zebaḥ.* 8.1–3). Perhaps this was another way they coped with no longer being able to sacrifice offerings.

The half-shekel tax became voluntary after AD 70 (*m. Šeqal.* 8.8), and Josephus assumed that it stopped completely (*J.W.* 7.218) because Vespasian had replaced it with the *fiscus Iudaicus*—a tax of the same value paid to the cult of Jupiter in Rome. However, it is likely that people continued to put money aside for some time in the hope of taking it to a new temple. The rabbis certainly continued to discuss the half-shekel tax until the Bar Kokhba revolt, but there is relatively little interest in it thereafter. The tractate concerning it is hardly discussed in the Talmud, which may indicate that they had accepted their long-term loss of the temple.

Yohanan b. Zakkai, who in many ways rescued Judaism after the destruction of the temple, argued that sacrifices could be replaced by almsgiving, echoing Jesus' quotation, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (*ʾAbot R. Nat.* 4.5; Matt. 9:13; cf. 12:7—both quote Hosea 6:6). He also pragmatically ended the rite of *Sôṭâ* (the test of an adulteress) when the dust of the temple floor was no longer available (*m. Sotah* 9.9); he allowed the *lulav* (the palm branch plus citrus fruit) to be waved outside Jerusalem throughout the Feast of Tabernacles (*m. Sukkah* 3.12); and he let the New Year *shofar* be blown at every town with a court (*m. Roš. Haš.* 4.1). These reforms helped Judaism to continue without a physical temple or sacrifices, and gradually Jewish theology found ways to continue Jewish life and worship without a temple.

Temple and Priests in the New Testament

The NT does not disparage the temple, and Jewish Christians continued to use it and brought offerings (Matt. 5:23–24; Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42; 21:26). When it was destroyed, there was little consternation among Christians, because the temple had been largely appropriated into their theology as a spiritual dwelling place of God. On earth, this spiritual temple consisted of the body of God's people (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21), while in heaven it represented the presence of God, into which Jesus had entered, and where Christian worship reaches God's attention (Heb. 6:19; 8:2; 9:11, 24; 10:20).

In Revelation the temple is found solely in heaven and is inhabited by (and perhaps partly made up of) believers who have died (3:12; 7:15). Revelation envisions a new temple in Jerusalem, but its worship is tainted, and it is contrasted

with the true temple in heaven (11:1–2, 19). When, at the end, a new Jerusalem is built on earth, it pointedly does not contain a temple (21:22).

Jewish priests were still respected in the NT—they are not criticized when consulted concerning Scripture and rites (Matt. 2:4; 8:4 par.) or performing temple rites (Luke 1:9), and the office of high priest is regarded with respect (Acts 23:5). However, almost all of the many references to "high priest" are negative, in both the singular (referring to the current holder of the office) and the plural (usually translated "chief priests" and referring to a class of ruling priests, not merely to former holders of the post of high priest).

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17

Jews and Samaritans

LIDIJA NOVAKOVIC

Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans," explains the author of John's Gospel (4:9). This statement is consistent with other sources that speak about strained Jewish-Samaritan relations in antiquity. Yet the exact nature and the cause of the separation between these two groups are far from clear. The evidence from Jewish and Samaritan literature is frequently biased, unreliable, or both. According to the Jewish sources, which are generally hostile to Samaritans, the latter were semipagans who rejected the Jerusalem temple and regarded Mount Gerizim as the exclusive legitimate place of worship. According to the Samaritan sources, most of which come from Byzantine and medieval times, Samaritans were true Israelites who stood in unbroken continuity with the religion of ancient Israel. The self-designations of the Samaritans, who have survived until today as a tiny community of approximately seven hundred people living in Holon and on Mount Gerizim, include terms such as "guardians of the Torah," "guardians of the land of Israel," and "Israelite Samaritans." Should, then, the Samaritans be regarded as a Jewish sect, especially in view of Judaism's variegated character before AD 70, or as an independent form of Yahwism? The matter is further complicated by numerous similarities in the beliefs, practices, and sacred texts of both groups, which suggest close relations over a long period of time. If so, when exactly did the final parting of the ways between the Jews and the Samaritans take place?

Historical reconstructions of Jewish-Samaritan relations have unfortunately suffered from ambiguous and inconsistent terminology. Until about forty years

ago, most scholars made no distinction between the inhabitants of the political district of Samaria and the Samaritan religious community. Since then, it has been customary to apply the term "Samaritans" only to the Yahweh-worshipers whose religious center was Mount Gerizim and the term "Samarians" to other inhabitants of Samaria.

Literary and Archaeological Evidence

According to 2 Kings 17, after the Assyrians deported most of the citizens of the northern kingdom, they populated the towns of Samaria with pagan immigrants. When some of the new settlers were killed by lions because of their ignorance of "the law of the god of the land" (vv. 26–27), the Assyrian king sent one of the exiled northern priests to teach them how to worship the God of Israel. Consequently, the inhabitants of Samaria accepted Yahwism but also continued with their former religious practices. The account concludes with a condescending statement: "To this day their children and their children's children continue to do as their ancestors did" (v. 41).

The polemical character of this report significantly reduces its historical reliability. Scholars generally recognize that the numbers of Israelites who were taken into exile and of the foreign immigrants who were settled in Samaria were relatively small. Moreover, although 2 Kings 17:29 contains the term *šōmrōnîm*, which does not occur anywhere else in the HB, the original account most likely referred to the Samarians—that is, the syncretistic population of Samaria. The pagan origin of the inhabitants of Samaria is also presumed in the Ezra-Nehemiah cycle about the adversaries of the Jewish returnees from the Babylonian captivity who opposed the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple and the reconstruction of the city walls (cf. Ezra 4:1–16; Neh. 4:1–8). Yet none of the biblical writings mention a rival cult associated with Shechem and Mount Gerizim. Moreover, both references to Mount Gerizim in the MT of Deuteronomy (11:29; 27:12) present it in a positive light.

One of the earliest references to the Samaritans appears in Sir. 50:25–26, an early second-century BC text that describes them as "the foolish people that live in Shechem" (v. 26). The condescending tenor of the passage is unmistakable, but it is unclear whether the author refers to the Samaritans as a distinct ethnic group comparable to other pagan nations or merely as an objectionable religious community. What can be said with more certainty is that by the second century BC, the Samaritans were identified through their association with Shechem and perceived as "foolish." This association is supported by Josephus's comment that Shechem was located on Mount Gerizim and served as the Samaritans' capital (*Ant.* 11.340). The reasons for such a derogatory assessment are not provided, however, and there is no mention of the Gerizim temple.

Second Maccabees, usually dated to the last quarter of the second century BC, contains two passing references to the Samaritans. In 2 Macc. 5:22–23, the

group associated with Mount Gerizim is included in the Jewish people. According to 2 Macc. 6:1–2, Antiochus IV Epiphanes renamed the Jerusalem temple as "the temple of Olympian Zeus" and the Gerizim temple as "the temple of Zeus-the-Friend-of-Strangers." Neither passage displays an explicit hostility toward the Samaritans.

In 1979 two inscriptions, dated respectively from the third to second and from the second to first centuries BC, were discovered on the island of Delos. The dedicators of these inscriptions call themselves "the Israelites in Delos who make offerings to hallowed *Argarizein*" (see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 16). Since these people presume the sacredness of Mount Gerizim, most scholars identify them as Samaritans. They clearly perceive themselves as Israelites. Since, however, the context of these inscriptions is unknown, nothing else can be said about this community.

The NT contains several passages that provide some information about Jewish-Samaritan relationships in the first century AD. In Matt. 10:5–6, Jesus instructs his disciples not to enter any town of the Samaritans but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Regardless of whose view is reflected in this text, that of the historical Jesus or of the Matthean church, it clearly presumes that Samaritans are not Israelites. According to Luke 9:51–53, the residents of one Samaritan village refused to show hospitality to Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. In the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), however, a Samaritan who shows mercy to an injured Jew becomes a model of neighborly love. Similarly, Luke 17:11–19 singles out a Samaritan among the ten lepers who have been healed by Jesus as the only one who has shown gratitude. The last two passages, like the account of the Samaritan mission in Acts 8:4–25, not only betray a sympathetic view of the Samaritans but also portray them as devoted observers of the Torah. The most instructive NT passage about Jewish-Samaritan relations in antiquity is the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4:4–42, which mentions a disagreement between the Jews and the Samaritans with regard to the proper place of worship and the Samaritan expectation of a messianic figure. Nevertheless, like other NT references, this text does not offer any specific information about the appearance of the Samaritans as a distinct religious community.

In contrast to these sporadic references to the Samaritans, the writings of Josephus contain several lengthy passages that discuss their origin and relationship to the Jews. The following survey includes only some of the most significant passages in Josephus (more fully, see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 67–285). This does not mean that Josephus had firsthand knowledge of Samaritans. He never describes their beliefs and customs and shows no familiarity with the Samaritan Pentateuch. He was also apparently unaware of the existence of the Dositheans, a Samaritan sect that regarded a certain Dositheus as the prophet like Moses, foretold in Deut. 18:15–18 (Isser, *Dositheans*, 163–64). Most of Josephus's accounts are derived from Scripture and other literary (or oral) sources, which he utilizes for his own purposes (Pummer, *Samaritans*, 66). In *Jewish Antiquities*, where Josephus mentions

the Samaritans most frequently, he regularly presents them as a foil for the Jews in order to commend the latter to his Roman audience. Josephus's more neutral portrayal of the Samaritans in *Jewish War* better reflects the actual relationship between Jews and Samaritans in the first century AD, which was not as antagonistic as it is sometimes assumed (see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 282).

In *Ant*. 9.288–91 and 10.183–85, Josephus offers his interpretation of 2 Kings 17:24–41. He firmly links this biblical passage to the Samaritans of his day by emphasizing the ethnic discontinuity between the northern Israelites and the new inhabitants of Samaria. The latter are, he says, called Cutheans in Hebrew (after their Persian and Median countries of origin) and Samaritans in Greek (after their new settlement in Samaria; see *Ant*. 9.290; 10.184). Josephus regularly emphasizes the foreign origin of the Samaritans (cf. *J.W.* 1.63; *Ant*. 11.302; 13.255–56). In all of these instances, he uses the terms "Samaritans" and "Cutheans" as synonyms, regardless of whether his sources made such an identification or not.

At the same time, however, Josephus underscores the religious sincerity of these new converts to Yahwism and presents them as genuine proselytes. Yet he also adds that the Samaritans are opportunists in their dealings with the Jews. When the Jews prosper, the Samaritans behave as though they are their relatives, but when the Jews are in difficulties, the Samaritans deny any association with them (*Ant*. 9.291; for similar accusations of opportunism, see *Ant*. 11.341; 12.257).

Josephus is the only ancient author that provides an account of the building of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim (*Ant*. 11.302–47). He reports that during the campaign of Alexander the Great against the Persian king Darius, Manasseh, the brother of the high priest Jaddua, married a daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria who was of Cuthean origin. The elders of Jerusalem, however, coerced Jaddua to ask Manasseh to divorce his non-Jewish wife or resign from his sacerdotal duties. When Sanballat learned that Manasseh would rather dissolve his marriage than relinquish his priestly privileges, he promised to build him a temple on Mount Gerizim like the one in Jerusalem if he remained married to his daughter. Sanballat was able to fulfill this promise with the help of Alexander the Great, to whom he pledged unreserved allegiance. In the meantime, however, Jaddua also secured Alexander's goodwill by predicting the latter's victory over the Persians. When the Samaritans heard that Alexander had sacrificed to Israel's God in the Jerusalem temple, they opportunistically declared that they too were Jews and invited Alexander to bestow a similar honor on their temple on Mount Gerizim. He promised to do so on his return but was prevented by his premature death. Josephus closes his report by remarking that the religious community at Shechem welcomed those Jews who claimed to have been unjustly accused by the citizens of Jerusalem of eating unclean food, breaking the Sabbath commandment, or other similar transgressions.

Josephus's narrative about Jaddua, Manasseh, and Sanballat resembles a similar account in Neh. 13:28–29, which mentions one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, who was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. Whether

Josephus's account expands Neh. 13:28 or represents an independent account, it is clear that he presents the Samaritan temple and its priesthood in a negative light: the Gerizim temple was built with the help of a foreign king, and its first high priest was a Jewish renegade married to a foreign woman. This narrative also offers an alternative interpretation of the origin of the Samaritans. Unlike those passages that portray them as descendants of the Medes and Persians, they are presented here, for the most part, as apostate Jews. Such diverse accounts most likely reflect the ambiguous attitude toward the Samaritans that Josephus shared with his Jewish contemporaries.

Josephus's other reports about the Samaritans in the pre-Roman period include accounts of their cowardly compliance with the decrees of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (*Ant*. 12.257–64), of quarrels between Jews and Samaritans in Egypt about whether the temple in Jerusalem or the one on Mount Gerizim had been built according to the Mosaic law (*Ant*. 12.7–10; 13.74–79), and of the capture of Shechem and the destruction of the Gerizim temple by John Hyrcanus I (*J.W.* 1.62–63; *Ant*. 13.254–56). His accounts about the Samaritans in the Roman period include the stories of a group of Samaritans who scattered human bones in the temple area (*Ant*. 18.29–30), of a Samaritan prophet during Pilate's procuratorship who misled a band of followers by promising to show them the sacred vessels buried at Mount Gerizim (*Ant*. 18.85–87), of a violent incident between the Samaritans and the Galileans during Cumanus's procuratorship (*J.W*. 2.232–46; *Ant*. 20.118–36), and of a Roman massacre of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim (*J.W*. 3.307–15).

Two major groups of post-Josephan literary sources about the Samaritans are the rabbinic texts[1] and the Samaritan chronicles.[2] For the rabbis, the Samaritans were both Jews and non-Jews (cf. *t. Ter*. 4.14; *y. Demai* 25d; *y. Giṭ*. 43c; *m. Ber*. 7.1; *y. Ber*. 11b; *y. Ketub*. 27a; *b. Qidd*. 75b; *b. Sanh*. 85b; *b. Nid*. 56b). The Samaritan chronicles, in contrast, offer insights into the Samaritan self-understanding, which could provide a needed counterbalance to the antagonistic presentation of the Samaritans in the Jewish sources. They trace the origin of the Samaritans back to the eleventh century BC, when the wicked priest Eli allegedly moved Israel's cultic center from Shechem to Shiloh. The Samaritans were those Israelites who stayed in Shechem and remained faithful to the worship of the God of Israel, thus avoiding the paganism of the northern kings and the heresy of the Judeans.[3] Most scholars, however, are hesitant to use these documents for historical reconstructions because they embody many late traditions that cannot be substantiated.

1. See Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Samarians in Tannaitic Halakhah," *JQR* 75 (1984–85): 323–50; Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (AGJU 23; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 99–105.

2. Paul Stenhouse, "Samaritan Chronicles," in *The Samaritans* (ed. Alan D. Crown; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 218–65.

3. John Macdonald, *The Samaritan Chronicle No. II (or: Sepher Ha-Yamim): From Joshua to Nebuchadnezzar* (BZAW 107; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), 111–23, 157–59.

Archaeological excavations at Mount Gerizim, which began in the 1980s, led to a discovery of the remains of the sacred precinct surrounded by a large city. According to the excavator, Yitzhak Magen, the Gerizim temple was originally built in the mid-fifth century BC (Persian period) and was later enlarged in the second century BC (Hellenistic period).[4] Magen believes that this evidence invalidates Josephus's dating of the building of the Samaritan temple in the time of Alexander the Great; Josephus apparently confused the erection of the city around the sacred area in the late fourth century BC with the building of the temple itself.

The Origin of the Samaritans

It is not easy to reconstruct the origin of the Samaritans on the basis of the evidence surveyed above, which is frequently ambiguous and inconsistent. Many scholars still give more weight to Jewish perspectives on Samaritan origin,[5] but there is a growing interest in the Samaritans' own claims.[6] One way of integrating both viewpoints is to regard the Samaritans as a Jewish sect that had its roots in northern Yahwism.[7] For lack of a better term, many scholars still use the designation "sect," despite its anachronistic insinuation of a normative Judaism, because it conveys the idea that the Jews and the Samaritans were two intrinsically related groups that shared many similarities, such as strict monotheism, Sabbath observance, circumcision, synagogue worship, and celebration of the festivals prescribed in the Pentateuch. The unique feature of the Samaritan religious community, which differentiated them from all other Jewish groups, was the Gerizim temple. There were other religious communities, such as the Qumran covenanters and the early Christians, who were critical of the Jerusalem temple, but they did not build alternative temples for themselves. Also, two other Jewish temples—Elephantine and Leontopolis—were built outside Palestine. There is no doubt that the building of the Gerizim temple on the Palestinian soil, regardless of when it actually took place, was met with disapproval by the Jews. What is less clear, however, is whether this affair also led to a definitive rift between the two groups. The available evidence points not only to periods of hostility but also to periods of intense

4. Yitzhak Magen, "The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.* (ed. Oded Lipschits et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 157–211; idem, *A Temple City* (vol. 2 of *Mount Gerizim Excavations*; JSPub 8; Jerusalem: Staff Officer of Archaeology—Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria; Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008).

5. See James Alan Montgomery, *The Samaritans, the Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology and Literature* (Philadelphia: Winston, 1907).

6. For recent trends in Samaritan scholarship, see Ingrid Hjelm, "What Do Samaritans and Jews Have in Common? Recent Trends in Samaritan Studies," *CBR* 3 (2004): 9–59.

7. Reinhard Pummer, "Samaritanism—a Jewish Sect or an Independent Form of Yahwism?," in *Samaritans: Past and Present; Current Studies* (ed. Menachem Mor and Friedrich V. Reiterer in collaboration with Waltraud Winkler; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 16–17.

communication by means of trade, travel, migration, and scribal interactions. This suggests that the separation was not a sudden occurrence but a gradual process.

The dominant view in scholarship is still a so-called two-episode paradigm (Hjelm, *Samaritans*, 30). It presumes that there was an initial split between the Jews and the Samaritans, usually associated with the erection of the Gerizim temple (either in Persian or Hellenistic times), followed by a final schism in the second to the first century BC (Hasmonean time). An alternative view is that Samaritanism developed from Judaism's formative period, beginning with the third century BC, as one among several Jewish factions that had disagreements about cult, beliefs, and society, until it finally split from rabbinic Judaism in the present era (Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews*, 163). Regardless of whether one considers the destruction of the Samaritan temple by John Hyrcanus I in 128 BC to be the decisive event that caused the definitive breach between Jews and Samaritans, there is no doubt that it significantly contributed to their eventual separation. From that time onward the Samaritans sought to legitimate their independent existence by establishing their own identity as the true Israel over against the Jewish community. They firmly rejected all claims to the primacy of Jerusalem, which might have intensified in the Hasmonean period. Mount Gerizim, even without the actual temple on it, continued to be regarded as the only legitimate place of worship. One of the most significant means of validating Samaritan religious claims was the adaptation of certain passages from the Pentateuch to create a sectarian version known as the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The Samaritan Pentateuch

Since the Samaritans could not find support for their beliefs and practices in the prophetic and other writings that emphasize the centrality of Jerusalem, they accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture. The Samaritan Pentateuch is, apart from several variations in wording and slightly different orthography, identical to the Jewish Torah. Since, however, the Torah as a unified work is a postexilic Jewish product, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and thus the emergence of the Samaritans as a distinct religious group, could not have predated the fifth century BC. The discovery of the pre-Samaritan harmonizing versions of the Pentateuch among the biblical fragments from Qumran has significantly contributed to our understanding of the history of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The most complete forms of this textual type are found in the texts of Exodus (4QpaleoExod^{m}) and Numbers (4QNum^{b}). These texts are called "harmonizing" because they introduce textual blocks, typically from Deut. 1–9, into the parallel passages in Exodus and Numbers and thus "harmonize" both versions of the same event. Qumran documents demonstrate that the harmonizing texts of the Pentateuch, none of which reflect a specifically Samaritan ideology, were in circulation in Palestine in the last two centuries BC (Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 69–87). One of these harmonizing texts was later

adapted by the Samaritans to emphasize the sacredness and centrality of Mount Gerizim. Harmonizing versions of the Pentateuch were probably chosen either because of their widespread use or because of their tendency to resolve scriptural inconsistencies through harmonization.

Samaritan sectarian adaptations of the Pentateuch are usually dated from the second to the first century BC. The Samaritans, however, did not suddenly decide to accept the Pentateuch of the Jews in the south. Rather, as Reinhard Pummer argues, "When the Samaritan 'sectarian' changes were made, they were made in texts that had circulated among Yahwistic Samarians long before the breach in the 2nd/1st century B.C."[8] Moreover, the Samaritan scribes modified the received text with the help of the same exegetical techniques that were used by other Jewish scribes at the time. The main characteristic of this exegetical tradition is scribal freedom to manipulate the received text to make it more compatible with existing beliefs and practices.

The first group of changes in the Samaritan Pentateuch involves the replacement of all allusions to Jerusalem as the central place of worship with references to Mount Gerizim (*hargarizîm*, usually spelled as one word). Moreover, the Samaritan Decalogue includes a new commandment about the building of the altar on Mount Gerizim, which is created through the addition of Deut. 11:29a; 27:2b–3a, 4a, 5–7; and 11:30 after Exod. 20:17 in the Exodus version of the Decalogue and after Deut. 5:18 in the Deuteronomy version of the Decalogue. The total number of the commandments is still ten, because the first commandment is considered to be an introduction to the Decalogue. The Exodus version of the Decalogue has two additional expansions that are not motivated by sectarian interests but reflect the expansionistic, harmonizing tendencies typical for the pre-Samaritan textual type: (1) Deut. 5:24–27 is added after Exod. 20:18, and (2) Deut. 5:28b–29; 18:18–22; and 5:30–31 are added after Exod. 20:21. Another unique feature of the Samaritan Pentateuch is the reading of "Gerizim" in Deut. 27:4 for "Ebal" in the MT, which is also used in the construction of the tenth commandment of the Samaritan Decalogue. Yet whether this textual variant represents a sectarian adaptation is less certain. In this case, the Samaritan Pentateuch may have preserved the older version of the text.

The second group of changes involves a consistent replacement of the formula "the place that the LORD your God will choose," which appears twenty-one times in Deuteronomy (12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23, 24, 25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11), with the formula "the place that the LORD your God has chosen." In this way, the Deuteronomistic predictions about the future election of Jerusalem—from the standpoint of the wandering Israelite tribes—are turned into declarations that God had already chosen Shechem/Gerizim.

8. Reinhard Pummer, "The Samaritans and Their Pentateuch," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 237–69 (264).

The Samaritan Pentateuch thus provides scriptural proof for the Samaritan claim that it was they, and not the Jews, who worshiped God in accordance with the most ancient Israelite traditions. It validates the sanctity of Mount Gerizim by confirming that God chose this mountain as the exclusive place of worship, beginning with Abraham, who built the first altar at Shechem (Gen. 12:6–7).

Conclusion

The view of the Samaritans as the syncretistic semipagan neighbors of the Jews cannot be justified, because it is based on the uncritical acceptance of antagonistic presentations of the Samaritans in Jewish sources, especially in the writings of Josephus. The main difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was not their ethnicity or religiosity but the location of their cultic center. The erection of the Gerizim temple and its eventual destruction by John Hyrcanus I significantly contributed to the gradual partition and the eventual separation of these two groups. The production of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which in light of the Qumran pre-Samaritan harmonizing texts could not have taken place before the second century BC, was an important step in this process and allowed the Samaritans to legitimate their independent existence vis-à-vis Jerusalem-oriented Judaism. In this sense, perhaps, we can talk about the Samaritans as a Jewish sect, or as a variety of Judaism. This, however, does not mean that the former "broke away" from an "orthodox" version of Judaism. Rather, Samaritanism was but one among many expressions of Yahwism that developed around the turn of the era.

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