

'TAKE UP THE CROSS'  
(MARK 8:34 AND PAR.)



# ‘TAKE UP THE CROSS’

(Mark 8:34 and par.):

The History and Function of the  
Cross Saying in Earliest Christianity

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'Take up the Cross' (Mark 8:34 and par.):

The History and Function of the Cross Saying in Earliest Christianity.

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#### DECLARATION

I, John Glenn Rumble, hereby declare that the thesis herein is my own work, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed, this sixth day of June, in the year two-thousand and eight,

JOHN GLENN RUMPLE

*To Christian,  
for taking the time to understand,*

*and to my mother, father, and brother,  
for giving me a foundation of faith and diligence.*

IN MEMORIAM ZADOK



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## ABSTRACT

THE principal contention of this thesis is that the earliest Christians viewed the crucifixion of Jesus as paradigmatic for discipleship, confirmation of which can be found in the history and function of a particular saying ascribed to Jesus, namely the ‘cross saying’ (Mk 8:34 and par.). To verify this claim, I explore both the literary tradition and material culture of early Christianity as they relate to the cross saying, explicating the various ways that “taking up the cross” functioned to ensure unwavering loyalty to Jesus. Taking a traditional exegetical approach, I also engage recent work on sapiential literature (mainly Q) and Historical Jesus studies, observing the diverse ways in which the first several generations of Jesus’ followers adapted this saying—both as an aphorism for inclusion in gospels, and in the development of cognate versions useful in more theological settings (e.g., Gal 2:20). Proceeding diachronically via a textual analysis of the cross saying in Q, the Synoptics, and then the *Gospel of Thomas*, I trace the ways in which the composers of these texts addressed the different social situations of their audiences in an effort to secure commitment to Jesus (or, in the case of *Gos. Thom.*, conformity to his enlightened teachings).

Then, turning from the literature to the social and political environment of the New Testament, I note the radical reversal, occurring early in Christian thought, which transformed the crucifixion of Jesus from a shameful social experience into one of honour, and worthy of emulation. Even more significant in terms of current research, I break from the opinions of several New Testament scholars in finding little evidence that the cross saying (presuming it was

dominical) functioned as a call to political insurrection. Rather, as evidenced in Christian material culture from the second and third centuries (symbols, the orant prayer posture, making the 'sign of the cross,' and so on), the association of crucifixion with discipleship was understood primarily in terms of religious devotion to Jesus.

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## PREFACE

THE meaning of Jesus' death has been the focus of much scholarly attention. In general, authors working to understand Jesus' crucifixion have regarded it largely in terms of its theological role in salvation and redemption, or its political meaning in the context of ancient Palestine. Less attention has been given, however, to how early Christian writers saw Jesus' death as *paradigmatic*: that they looked to his crucifixion to inform their ethics, behaviour, and even their identity as Christians. This work attempts to redress that situation. I hope in this thesis to provide one of the most comprehensive accounts of the transmission-history of the 'cross saying,' consolidating in one work all the various ways in which it functioned for the earliest Christians.

This work is primarily of interest to scholars investigating how this part of the Jesus tradition was first incorporated into Christian literature, but it may also be useful to academics who study the larger themes of discipleship in the New Testament, or martyrdom in the early church.

A traditional methodology was chosen for this analysis because, in my view, historical-criticism provides effective tools for investigation of the text itself, not because I am uninterested in more modern methods of literary criticism. In terms of structure, I have employed a diachronic approach in outlining the reception-history of the cross saying. By tracing its historical progression in these texts I feel that its various adaptations become more transparent. A diachronic approach also prevents making the assumption, found in some previous scholarship, that there is one overarching meaning for the saying: some authors have, as a result, attempted to harmonize its various appearances. The actual situation, however, appears somewhat more complex.

A fuller understanding of the social ramifications of cross-bearing requires a determination of how it was viewed generally by the wider populations of the Mediterranean—the social dimension of Jesus' death, and its impact on his followers, are otherwise lost. Readers will therefore notice a shift, beginning in the sixth chapter, away from biblical texts to an analysis of material evidences discovered by archaeology.

I have limited this study of the cross saying in two principal ways: to the very earliest period in Christian history (up to about the fourth century C.E.), and considering only where the cross saying and its cognates appear in Christian Scripture (the Synoptic gospels; Pauline letters; the *Gospel of Thomas*). Likewise, developing a theology of crucifixion as it applies to discipleship is outwith the parameters of this investigation.

I have also not examined the ways in which modern Christians apply the cross saying. But, if my sense of how it is understood and applied today can be trusted without providing the documentation to justify the claim, I suspect that viewing Jesus' death as paradigmatic—that is, as did the early Christians—is a perspective almost entirely lost in modern Christianity, where the death of Jesus is often viewed only in terms of personal redemption. This work attempts to recapture the radical criterion for discipleship presented in Jesus' demand to “take up the cross.”

*June 2008*  
*Indianapolis, Indiana*

J. G. R.

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE CROSS SAYING IN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

THERE existed in the oral and literary culture of early Christianity an aphorism which, apparently, summoned the followers of Jesus to their own executions. Any number of the statements attributed to Jesus could be described as difficult to accept, especially when one considers the cost involved to actually practice some of them; yet few sayings convey such graphic imagery concerning a disciple's fate—or generate such disconcertion for people who take Jesus seriously—as the ‘cross saying.’ There are other instances in his teaching where he associates discipleship with suffering and even martyrdom, but this statement is perhaps the most foreboding of its kind.<sup>1</sup> Notably, each Synoptic author preserved the cross saying, but in different forms and contexts—a significant phenomenon in itself for understanding its use by Christians of the first century.

### Overview

Before explaining the purpose of this introductory chapter, I present some of the larger goals for the entire work. In relation to the overall trajectory of

1. See the older but still important essay by J. C. O'Neill, “Did Jesus Teach that His Death Would be Vicarious as well as Typical?” in *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament* (eds. W. Hornbury and B. McNeil; London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 9–27.

the thesis, it is my aim to explore the history and function of the cross saying within earliest Christianity.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, I seek to contribute to New Testament scholarship by outlining the reception-history of this aphorism, based on its appearance in various early Christian texts. Scholars working in Q and Synoptic studies have proposed various meanings for the cross saying, and I shall interact with their works in an effort to evaluate these findings, positing that the saying had been applied in a number of ways by the time of the writing of the New Testament (observable in each author's placement and redaction of the saying).

To begin I shall trace what can be discerned about the likely history of the aphorism's literary transmission,<sup>3</sup> starting with Q, and thence to the extant textual witnesses of the Synoptic Gospels and the *Gospel of Thomas*—the only places in early Christian literature where it appears. Moving outside of these, I proceed to argue that the apostle Paul developed cognate versions of the cross saying, and I examine those passages in his letters where he links the believer's life with crucifixion.

Following these, I shall explore both the sociological impact of the cross saying on Christian identity, and its possible political ramifications. These aspects of how it might have functioned will be measured by examining textual and material evidences from early Christian culture. In doing so, I shall show that the particular notion that Jesus' followers must bear a cross—in imitation of him—had a very considerable (perhaps unparalleled) impact on the early Christian understanding of discipleship and Christian identity. That this was the case is further demonstrated by the emergence of crucifixion imagery in early Christian material culture, the subject of my final chapter. Thus, I justify my thesis: It appears that the cross saying, which claimed that the death of Jesus by crucifixion was paradigmatic for his disciples, was applied in a variety of ways by the early Christians—ways both literal and metaphorical.<sup>4</sup>

2. The phrase 'early Christianity' in this study refers to the time-frame extending from the middle of the first century C.E. to a time near the beginning of the third century C.E. (I shall present my reasons for assuming this date for the *Gospel of Thomas* in Chapter Four.)

3. For a diachronic summary of the transmission of the cross saying, see Appendix A.

4. For an overview of how the New Testament authors view Jesus' crucifixion as a model death for his followers, see Larry Hurtado, "Jesus' Death as Paradigmatic in the New Testament," *SJT* 57/4 (2004): 413–33.

Moreover, I contend that the cross saying was preserved within the literary culture of early Christianity precisely because it had an ongoing relevancy in defining what was central to a life of discipleship. To that end, some of the most significant literary and historical questions addressed for an understanding of the function of the cross saying include: Do the versions contained in the Synoptics vary from one another in any significant way? In what ways do the various Pauline expressions of being “co-crucified with Christ” apply the idea of bearing the cross in a symbolic manner? Given that the early Christians considered the cross saying important enough to retain it as a part of their ongoing tradition, did the saying’s meaning change over time? Put another way: How might its *Sitz im Leben* for Jesus differ from that of Paul, or even from subsequent generations of early Christians living outside of ancient Palestine? Before embarking on a search for the answers to these questions, I will introduce the main texts under consideration and identify their sources—part of the function of the remainder of this chapter.

Of first importance (and consequently the starting point of these introductory remarks) is the establishment of a useful definition for the designation ‘cross saying.’ Identifying the specific features of what constitutes a ‘cross saying’ will serve to distinguish this aphorism from other similar sayings of Jesus, resulting in the generation of a list of its primary occurrences within the New Testament and beyond. I shall then compile a list of several cognate versions of the cross saying—passages which advocate metaphorical crucifixion as part of a believer’s religious experience. As already mentioned, all such passages occur in letters written by the apostle Paul, and his incorporation of these cognate versions demonstrates that he adapted the cross saying for his own particular purposes.<sup>5</sup> Finally, this introductory chapter will review some of the options for interpretation of the cross saying found in past New Testament scholarship, and will conclude with a brief clarification of methodology and an outline of the entire thesis. Hence, for the purposes of defining the

5. All of the texts containing cognate versions of the cross saying actually pre-date texts which preserve the possible dominical version on which they are based. My handling of the texts in this way is justified later in this chapter, and much more extensively at the outset of Chapter Five.

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MK 8:34	<i>Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.</i>	And he called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”
MT 10:38	<i>καὶ ὅς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.</i>	. . . and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
MT 16:24	<i>Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.</i>	Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”
LK 9:23	<i>Ἔλεγεν δὲ πρὸς πάντας: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι, ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν, καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ’ ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.</i>	Then he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”
LK 14:27	<i>... ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής.</i>	. . . whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

---

TABLE 1 (a). Occurrences of the cross saying in early Christian literature (canonical).

parameters of this investigation, I now consider what features define a ‘cross saying.’

## Definition of a Cross Saying

The specific sayings under analysis in this study distinguish themselves, and therefore can be defined, by three basic attributes: (1) They are aphoristic in form (not narrative, or some other genre utilized by early Christian writers); (2) the *σταυρός* (“cross”) is unambiguously referenced within the saying—this thesis does not examine instances where Jesus speaks generally about suffering or the possibility of dying for him; (3) the author alleges that the saying

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GOS.	<b>πεχε·ι̅c̅ xe̅ πετα·μεστε·πεq·ειωτ</b>	Jesus said, “Whoever does not hate his
THOM.	<b>an̅ mn̅·teq·maay q·na·w·p̅·maohtic</b>	father and mother cannot be a disciple
55 (NAG	<b>an̅ na·ei ayw̅ n̅q·mece·neq·cny</b>	of me, and whoever does not hate
HAMMADI	<b>mn̅·neq·cwn̅e n̅q·qei m̅·peq·cpoc</b>	brothers and sisters and bear the cross
II. 2)	<b>n̅·ta·ze q·na·w̅we an̅ eq·o n̅·azic</b>	as I do, will not be worthy of me.”
	<b>na·ei</b>	

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TABLE 1 (b). Occurrences of the cross saying in early Christian literature (extra-canonical).

originated from Jesus. This definition of what constitutes a cross saying allows for differentiation between what might have been a dominical saying of Jesus requiring disciples to “take up the cross,” and what seem to be cognate versions of the saying appearing elsewhere in the New Testament.

According to the above parameters of what defines a cross saying, the verses in Tables 1 (a) and (b)—all deriving from early Christian writings—are the primary sources of literary data under analysis in the first part of this thesis. This list identifies not only the six occurrences of the cross saying from the literature of this time, but also reveals that the aphorism has been preserved within only the Synoptic Gospels—except for one notable case, where it appears as part of the extra-canonical document the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>6</sup>

6. All Greek texts for New Testament quotations are taken from E. Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Version 27 (New York: American Bible Societies, 2001), unless otherwise noted. All English translations of New Testament texts are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, unless otherwise noted. I provide fresh translations of each of these texts where I analyze them individually in later chapters. Coptic texts of the *Gospel of Thomas* are taken from Bentley Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7 together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1)*, and *POxy 1, 654, 655* (vol. 1; Leiden: Brill, 1989); English translations of the *Gospel of Thomas* are taken from J. Kloppenborg et al., *Q–Thomas Reader* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1990), 142. Coptic text and the English translation of the *Gospel of Philip* is also taken from Bentley Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, 166–67. I have retained word-breaks in order that the reader may discern units for translation purposes. Omitted from the above collection is Mk 10:21, where several manuscripts have incorporated what is most probably a scribal gloss. The inclusion of *apas τον σταυρον* in Jesus’ instructions to the rich man occurs in AWM (and in other Byzantine text-types), whereas  $\aleph$ BCD $\Delta$ , et al. represent a diversity of manuscripts that do not contain this statement, and more likely preserve the original text of Mk. Also, Mt 23:34 does not appear in

COGNATE VERSIONS OF THE  
CROSS SAYING IN PAULINE LITERATURE

While there are numerous places in both the writings of the New Testament and in extra-canonical documents which present suffering and death as unavoidable aspects of Christian life, for this study only those texts which make specific reference to crucifixion will be considered cognate versions of the cross saying. In every case but one, these adaptations mark a departure from the original saying in form (i.e., most of them are non-aphoristic theological statements), while still retaining the association of discipleship and crucifixion. A survey of the literature indicates that cognate versions of the cross saying exist in Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Romans, as well as a potential cryptic version in the *Gospel of Thomas*, which I introduce later in this chapter.

There is much scholarship focusing on those texts within the Pauline corpus which explicate the redemptive significance of Jesus' death for believers.<sup>7</sup> Yet the apostle often moves beyond viewing the crucifixion of Jesus merely in terms of its salvific meaning: the sufferings (*παθήματα*) and tribulations (*θλίψεις*) endured in the course of his own ministry allow him to identify profoundly with the suffering and death of Jesus, to such an extent that Paul declares his self-perception as a believer fundamentally reliant on his religious experience of "co-crucifixion" with Christ (Gal 2:20).<sup>8</sup> Specifically, Paul ar-

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this collection because the *σταυρός* itself is not specifically mentioned; rather, Jesus predicts that Jewish leaders will crucify (*σταυρώσετε*) his followers. This text does receive attention in this thesis, however, in Chapter Three.

7. Such texts within Pauline literature include: Rom 7:14, 14:15; Col 1:24, 2:20–3:17; Phil 2:5–11, 3:4–14; 2 Cor 8:9; 1 Tim 6:11–15. Other New Testament references include: Heb 12:1–3, 13:12–13; 1 Pet 2:20–25, 3:13–22, 4:1; Rev 7:14. This point was made by Hurtado, "Jesus' Death as Paradigmatic," 413. For scholarly work which explores mainly the redemptive aspects of Jesus' death, see Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965); Kenneth Grayson, *Dying, We Live: A New Enquiry Into the Death of Christ in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990); Joel T. Carroll, Joel B. Green, et al., *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995).

8. See S. J. Hafemann, "Suffering," in G. F. Hawthorne et al., eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove/Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 919–21; John S. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul*, JSNTS 6 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985); Robert

GAL 2:19B–20	<i>Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι: ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός:</i>	I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.
GAL 5:24	<i>οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ στοιξῶμεν.</i>	And those who belong to the Christ, Jesus, have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
GAL 6:14	<i>Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ.</i>	But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
ROM 6:6	<i>τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ.</i>	We know that our old self was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

TABLE 2. Cognate versions of the cross saying in Galatians and Romans.

gues in Galatians and Romans that Torah-observance, “the flesh,” the “old self,” and even “the world” have each been the subject of crucifixion in his life; indeed, he states that such a metaphorical execution characterizes the fundamental experience of all believers.<sup>9</sup>

The passages listed in Table 2 were made by Paul in his retort to the Galatian Judaizers, and, as such, obviously cannot be attributed to Jesus. However, as I contend at the outset of Chapter Six, such references to crucifixion in Paul’s thinking indicate his likely familiarity with the cross saying tradition. These statements are important not only because they demonstrate Paul’s awareness of the cross saying (or something like it he learned via oral tradition), but they also underscore the flexibility of such sayings in terms of their applicability in different times and settings.

Tannehill, *Dying and Rising With Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpfungmann, 1967), 55–83.

9. Crucifixion imagery is applied to dependency on the law in Gal 2:20, to “the flesh” in Gal 5:24, to “the world” in Gal 6:14, and finally to “the old self” in Rom 6:6. See Chapter Six for an exploration of each of these texts.

What is immediately noticeable in the Pauline cognate versions of the cross saying is the transition to a more metaphorical understanding of crucifixion as it applied to Christian existence and identity. Paul's writings may reflect a shift already underway in early Christianity in terms of exploring the symbolic function of cross-bearing, and there is additional evidence that Christians were indeed making such applications.<sup>10</sup> As I show in Chapter Three, a metaphorical interpretation of the disciple's participation in crucifixion is clearly present in Luke's version of the cross saying (9:23). The author indicates such when, following Jesus' imperative to "take up the cross," he adds *καθ' ἡμέραν* ("every day"). And, while Luke's gospel was almost certainly composed at a date later than that of Paul's letters, the reference to what can only be understood as a symbolic participation in crucifixion (presumably because it occurs "every day") in this gospel confirms that the saying was applied in non-literal ways outside of the Pauline corpus. Regardless, what should be noted here is that the presence of cognate versions of the cross saying in Pauline texts demonstrates the continuing significance of this statement across times, places, and circumstances which were markedly different from those of Jesus and his first followers.

In noting that metaphorical applications of the cross saying do exist, however, it remains unlikely that there is any direct literary dependency between Paul and the Synoptics. I shall, in any case, make the claim that all of these writings exhibit an awareness and absorption of a fundamentally earlier stage of a similar Christian tradition which may have developed along a parallel trajectory.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it seems probable that the oral tradition through which the seminal concept of 'bearing the cross' was transmitted also found written expression within early Christianity in the sayings gospel Q.<sup>12</sup> Many scholars

10. This point cannot be verified with any high degree of certainty, but I suggest its possibility based on the fact that Paul was not alone in applying the idea of cross-bearing in symbolic ways in early Christian writing.

11. I make this argument later with respect to the Synoptics in Chapter Three, and Pauline cognate versions in Chapter Five.

12. See Dale C. Allison, *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 105, 111–19. After justifying why I accept the Two-Source hypothesis, and establishing what I view as the parameters of Q, I address this point in detail in Chapter Two.

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Q 14:26	[<ὁς>] οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα οὐ <δύναται εἶναί> μου <μαθητῆς>, καὶ [<ὁς>] <οὐ μισεῖ> τ<ὸν> υἱὸν καὶ τ<ὴν> θυγατέρα οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.	[<The one who>] does not hate father and mother <can>not <be> my <disciple>; and [<the one who>] <does not hate> son and daughter cannot be my disciple.
Q 14:27	ὁς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.	The one who does not take one's cross and follow after me cannot be my disciple.
Q 17:33	[ὁ] εὕρ[ων] τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολέσει αὐτήν, καὶ [ὁ] ἀπολέσ[ας] τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ [ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ] εὕρήσει αὐτήν.	[The one who] finds one's life will lose it, and [the one who] loses one's life [for my sake] will find it.

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TABLE 3. The Q version of the cross saying (embedded within two sayings clusters).

agree that a collection of *logia* (if not Q as reconstructed in current New Testament scholarship, then something like it) seems to have greatly informed the writings of Matthew and Luke, whereas oral tradition probably constituted the main resource for Paul's thinking and writing since his letters do not reveal that he had any knowledge of Q.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, if there is any possibility that the composers of Q included the cross saying within that document, then a thorough understanding of the history of this saying requires that I examine this passage in its context.

#### Q 14:27—THE EARLIEST WRITTEN VERSION OF THE CROSS SAYING

Thus far I have presented two lists of literary data for analysis, both of which derive from extant sources: the gospel passages containing the cross sayings, and the Pauline texts where he adapts the notion of cross-bearing for use in his theological argumentation. Three texts remain for consideration: the reconstructed Q version of the cross saying, and what may be two very

<sup>13</sup>. See Joanna Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions," *Semeia* 65 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 37–65.

cryptic references to a believer's appropriation of Jesus' crucifixion appearing in different versions of the *Gospel of Thomas*. I shall discuss the Q saying first.

The authors of Q present the cross saying embedded within a cluster of discipleship-related teachings.<sup>14</sup> As seen in Table 3, the saying's connection with those verses around it probably formed on the basis of two linking tiers: Q 14:26 links easily with Q 14:27 by means of a catchword (in this case the repeated phrase "cannot be my disciple"), while Q 14:27 has likely attracted Q 17:33 as a commentary on cross-bearing.<sup>15</sup> Since Q 17:33 exists independently elsewhere, its association with the cross saying in this instance can be accounted for by the thematic similarity of the statements. Consequently, the cross saying functions simultaneously as the terminus of one sayings cluster (v. 26 + v. 27) and as the head of another (v. 27 + v. 33). I shall observe that, while the specific instance of clustering seen in Q 14:26/14:27/17:33 is a phenomenon frequently encountered in wisdom literature, in this case the statements in which the composers of Q chose to frame the cross saying may offer clues as to the meaning it had for them. Thus, I shall examine the literary function of the aphorism in its Q context, noting how it affects the presentation of Jesus' requirements for his disciples in this sayings gospel. The remaining texts to be introduced in this chapter both appear in the *Gospel of Thomas*—one in the Coptic version of that document and the other in the older Greek fragment POxy 1.

#### A VEILED REFERENCE TO CRUCIFIXION IN THE 'GOSPEL OF THOMAS'

A particularly cryptic cognate version of the cross saying appears in the *Gospel of Thomas* in saying 77. The passages presented in Table 4 come from editions of this gospel which were prepared nearly two hundred years apart: a

14. It is also part of a large group of sayings dealing with the wisdom theme of the 'Two Paths.' See my comments on this in Chapter Two.

15. Greek text from J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press; Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), 450–57; for an explanation of the sigla used in Table 3 see pp. lxxx–lxxxviii. English translation from J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Sayings Gospel Q in Greek and English* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 136–139.



Both the Greek and Coptic statements are presented in aphoristic forms, and they are directly attributed to Jesus by the author(s) of *Thomas*. The POxy 1 version of the saying differs from the Coptic version, with POxy 1 presenting saying 77 as part of saying 30. Reasons for this discrepancy could be accounted for in a number of ways: the transmission of the text across different languages, the historical gap between the composition of the two manuscripts, and so on. But there is perhaps a more subtle and functionally important reason for the dissimilarities—a reason based on literary and ideological purposes rather than simple scribal error. I argue thusly at the conclusion of Chapter Four, which is largely dedicated to the investigation of the cross saying in the *Gospel of Thomas*.

## Interpreting the Cross Saying

I have so far identified the location of each passage which will undergo detailed analysis later in the thesis, including every occurrence of the cross saying and every cognate version of the saying appearing in early Christian literature. During the exegesis which follows I shall endeavour to engage both older and more recent scholarship, interacting with various interpreters' approaches to these texts. However, before I begin that kind of interaction, I allow space to present a brief sketch of the various meanings which scholars have attributed to the cross saying.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, I hope to provide a grouping of interpretive options against which my own perspectives might be compared. I should note that several of these proposals come from academics working generations ago who laboured without access to many of the subsequent scholarly insights available to contemporary students of the New Testament. Thus, a modern, rigorous analysis of the cross saying in its literary context may render the conclusions of these scholars obsolete, or obligate me to set aside their viewpoints as untenable.

18. See also the review by Johannes Schneider, “σταυρος,” in *TDNT* (10 vols.; eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–76), 7:578–79.

For the sake of providing an overview of what commentators have said about the cross saying, I have placed each interpretation into one of two categories: those who take the aphorism as a *literal* reference to crucifixion, and those who believe that it should be understood *non-literally* in all cases.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, these broad categories of “literal” and “non-literal” each contain sub-categories, but for the sake of this summary those rudimentary notions serve as a way of clarifying and differentiating the conclusions made in foregoing publications which address the cross saying. Ironically, as I verify by way of this thesis, it is precisely that kind of categorization which has obfuscated the diverse meanings of the cross saying as preserved in the New Testament.

Before beginning the summary, I mention one conjecture regarding the cross saying that fits into neither a literal nor a non-literal category: that Jesus simply never said it. Believing that the concept of ‘taking up the cross’ was a post-Easter invention of the church added later to the gospel accounts, Rudolph Bultmann understood the saying as part of the “eschatological consciousness of the Church.”<sup>20</sup> Other scholars have made similar proposals, claiming that later Christian authors placed this *logion* into Jesus’ mouth due to the church’s experience of oppression.<sup>21</sup> B. Harvie Branscomb, for instance, claims that the cross saying “. . . seems to point to a time in the early Church when

19. Similarly, Michael Green, “Cross Bearing in Mark 8,” (ThM thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1982), 4–23; idem, “The Meaning of Cross Bearing,” *BSac* 140 (1983): 117–120, organizes the different perspectives into the “Literal Views (Martyrdom)” and the “Figurative Views,” although I find his sub-categorization of the viewpoints somewhat pedantic. I also reject aspects of Green’s conclusion about the meaning of the cross saying based, as they are, on a less-than-rigorous appraisal of their literary contexts in each Synoptic gospel. The earlier work of J. Gwyn Griffiths, “The Disciple’s Cross,” *NTS* 16 (1970): 358–64, also presents a collection of interpretations of this verse, yet he offers no discernable method of categorization which would clarify their differences.

20. Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1952), 1.37.

21. See, e.g., H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (vol. 1; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1877), 304; J. M. C. Crum, *St. Mark’s Gospel: Two Stages of Its Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 37; A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, (WC; 7th ed.; London: Methuen & Company, 1949), 114, who states, “[the saying] as it stands in Mk. is so adapted as to convey to the Church of his time the much-needed lesson ‘Be steadfast to endure persecution!’”

crucifixion always brought to mind the sufferings of Christ.”<sup>22</sup> I acknowledge that viewing the cross saying solely as the fabrication of second- or third-generation Christians, who created it to express the ongoing significance of Jesus’ death for believers, remains a legitimate position.

For the purposes of this investigation, however, I shall not address the issue of whether the aphorism is dominical, for the reason that in the end such estimations cannot be made with any degree of historical certainty. If persons unknown coined the cross saying at a later time and circumstance, then determining its original meaning becomes at best a matter of guessing authorial intention and weighing the numerous possible meanings. Rather, my goal here is to make conclusive observations about its function for Jesus’ earliest followers, doing so by means of an historical-critical process of investigation applied to the literary and material culture of early Christianity.

#### INTERPRETING THE CROSS SAYING AS A LITERAL REFERENCE TO CRUCIFIXION

Since a literal understanding of Jesus’ requirement that his disciples must “take up the cross” leaves almost no room for further speculation of what he means, it is not surprising that this category of interpretation has within it only three main viewpoints. In each of these proposals, scholars take the reference to cross-bearing as either an overt call to martyrdom, or at least the preparedness of Jesus’ followers to participate in such if necessary. Thus, the options for interpretation break down in the following manner:

(1) *The goal of discipleship is crucifixion.* This perspective holds that Jesus fully intended his disciples to experience martyrdom at the hands of the Roman oppressors.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the mark of successful discipleship is the follower’s actual crucifixion since he thereby shares the same fate as his master.

22. B. Harvie Branscomb, *The Gospel of Mark*, (MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937), 155.

23. See, e.g., William Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 231; Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu: Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen* (Töpelmann: Berlin, 1966), 298; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus as Recorded in the Gospels According to St. Matthew and St. Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 131.

(2) *Disciples must not resist martyrdom.* Most scholars whose interpretation of the cross saying is literal propose this view as its likely meaning, asserting that Jesus certainly does not mean that all believers will undergo execution for his sake.<sup>24</sup> The emphasis in this interpretation is instead that disciples must accept the principle of martyrdom—but should they face the actual threat, followers must still submit to death as an expression of their devotion to Jesus.

(3) *Jesus predicts an eschatological demise for himself and his followers.* The focus of this interpretation lies in the proleptic dimension of Jesus' statement, and while the words may be prophetic, the crucifixion they refer to is real.<sup>25</sup> As the cross saying immediately follows the first 'Passion prediction' in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, this interpretation stresses that Jesus anticipates his own death as the outcome of his ministry; furthermore—barring the failure of their courage—he predicts that his disciples will actually die at his side by crucifixion.

24. This seems to have been the predominant way of understanding this verse by Patristic writers, although non-literal applications involving asceticism can also be found in their writings. For a still-valuable survey on how this text was interpreted by Patristic writers (as well as others throughout the history of the church) see Richard Koolmeister, "Selbstverleugung, Kreuzaufnahme und Nachfolge: eine historische Studie über Mt. xvi. 24," in *Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile* (vol. 7; Stockholm: Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 1954): 64–94. Reserving my interaction with modern exegetes for Chapter Three (and since listing them all would require the insertion of a bibliography running to several pages), here I provide examples of scholars from previous generations who proposed this view: Hans H. Wendt, *The Teaching of Jesus* (trans. John Wilson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1893), 2.61; W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (ICC; 3d ed; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 111, 182; Donald R. Fletcher, "Condemned to Die, The Logion on Cross Bearing: What Does It Mean?" *Int* 18 (1964): 153–164; Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 26; F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co. 1972), 187; William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (NIC-NT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 308; R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 109; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (CGTC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 282.

25. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), 1.137, 1.336; C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1936), 60.

INTERPRETING THE CROSS SAYING  
AS A NON-LITERAL REFERENCE TO CRUCIFIXION

Scholars have, in general, proposed more non-literal interpretations of the cross saying than literal, as evidenced by the longer list of options which follows. Each one accentuates some smaller part of the saying, or explores how it relates to other biblical themes, or seeks to connect the statement to historical realities outside of those presented in the New Testament. Thus, non-literal interpretations of the cross saying include:

(1) *Cross-bearing refers to any form of suffering or persecution.* Commonly suggested as the true meaning for Jesus' demand to "take up the cross," this view claims that such a requirement is fulfilled when people endure rejection, shaming, persecution, or bodily harm because of their identity as Christians.<sup>26</sup> Approaching the saying in this manner has a long pedigree: from Luther, to Calvin, to Bonhoeffer—interpreters of this verse have sought to make the notion of cross-bearing meaningful for the lives of believers who face suffering, but not necessarily the actual threat of death.

(2) *Jesus is quoting a Zealot slogan.* Knowing that certain Jewish groups sought the violent overthrow of their Roman oppressors during the first century, some scholars claim that Jesus borrows the expression "take up the cross" from the Zealot movement.<sup>27</sup> Employing the provocative phrase to describe the tenets of discipleship, Jesus also underscores the political nature of his messiahship by its use.

26. John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (vol. 2; trans. William Pringle; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 303–304; on Martin Luther's understanding of this saying, see John C. Clark, "Martin Luther's View of Cross-Bearing," *BSac* 163 (2006): 335–47; cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (rev. ed.; trans. R. H. Fuller; London: SCM, 1959), 77–81; Colin Brown, "Cross," (*NIDNTT*; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985), 1.404; William Hendrickson, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark* (NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 330; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 417; and other modern scholars whose work I engage in Chapter Three.

27. See Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 266; S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 145.

(3) *Crucifixion is a metaphor for self-denial.* Taking their cue from both Pauline theology (cf. Gal 2:20) and the addition of the phrase ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν (“he must renounce himself”) to the cross saying by Mark—thereafter appropriated by Matthew and Luke—scholars propose that Jesus requires disciples to ‘die to themselves.’<sup>28</sup> This spiritualized explanation appears in Patristic writings (probably due to the cross saying’s perceived emphasis on asceticism), as well as in more contemporary works.

(4) *Jesus’ disciples must identify themselves by brandishing a Tau-mark on their foreheads.* This proposal links Ezekiel 9:4 with Jesus’ saying, requiring that disciples affix a ✕ or + on their faces, symbols which functioned as either an apotropaic ward or merely as a sign of devotion. Erich Dinkler proposed this “tentative hypothesis” several years ago; while ingenious, it has failed to convince many interpreters.<sup>29</sup>

(5) *Jesus parallels Abraham’s faith with that required of his disciples.* Based on the Genesis 22:6 account that “Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering” in order to sacrifice his son, this view claims that Jesus evokes the story of Abraham’s willingness to obey God as a model for his disciples.<sup>30</sup> Further evidence for this position derives from the *Midrash Rabbah* 56:3: “Abraham took the wood of the sacrifice and laid it on his son Isaac, like one who bears the cross on his shoulders.”<sup>31</sup> As interesting as these parallels seem, few scholars actually support this perspective.

At the conclusion of this thesis, it becomes clear which of the above options for interpreting the cross saying accurately convey its meaning (albeit, usually only for a particular literary setting), and which must be rejected as disconnected from any of their original literary or historical contexts. Thus, I present no immediate refutation of these proposals; rather, I offer such judge-

28. E.g., I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 372–73.

29. Erich Dinkler, “Jesu Wort von Kreuztragen,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1954), 110–129; idem, “Comments on the History of the Symbol of the Cross,” *JTC* (1965): 124–146.

30. Egon Brandenburger, “Cross,” (*NIDNTT*; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985), 1.103; Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua Studies in the Gospel* (trans. Paul P. Levertoff; London: SPCK, 1929), 191–192.

31. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, trans., *The Midrash Rabbah* (10 vols.; London: Soncino Press, 1939), 1.493.

ments during the course of my own examination of the various ways early Christian writers preserved the cross saying.

## Methodology and Outline

I take a fairly traditional approach in this thesis. I will analyze the texts outlined earlier in this chapter according to reception-historical and tradition-historical methodologies, taking each text in diachronic order to show something of the development and application of the idea of cross-bearing in early Christian literature. Following this, I conclude the thesis with three chapters exploring the possible impact of the cross saying on the social, political, and religious dimensions of first century Christianity.

Modern biblical scholarship has strongly resisted the attempts of previous generations to ‘harmonize’ the interpretation process (where only one meaning was sought for passages which appear in more than one location)—and rightfully so. Each biblical text must be approached on a macro-literary level as a unified entity, presenting an overall message which the author intends to convey. This does not guarantee absolute internal consistency at every point, as seen in the letters of Paul and in some of the gospel accounts, but each document must be evaluated as a whole when considering the context of any single passage. As I progress in this study, therefore, I shall follow the lead of J. D. Kingsbury, D. R. Bauer, and others who have taken care to keep issues of overall plot and character development (in the case of the gospel narratives) in view.<sup>32</sup>

At the opposite end of the spectrum, I will employ a micro-literary procedure which scrutinizes the various alterations and placements of the cross saying made by each Synoptic author. I discuss further in Chapter Two my assumption that the Two-Source hypothesis best addresses the so-called ‘Synoptic

32. See examples of this approach in, e.g., J. D. Kingsbury, “The Figure of Peter in Matthew’s Gospel as a Theological Problem,” *JBL* 98 (1979): 67–83; idem, “The Figure of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel: A Literary-Critical Probe,” *JSNT* 21 (1984): 3–36; idem, *Matthew as Story* (2d ed; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); D. R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, *JSNTSup* 31 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988).

Problem.’ This hypothesis allows for the use of redaction criticism since it “argues that the modification of source material reflects clear and consistent theological motivations on the part of the evangelists.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, redaction criticism will be utilized throughout in an effort to detect significant differences of meaning between the versions of the cross saying in the gospel texts.<sup>34</sup>

The last section of the thesis turns to the social setting of the earliest Christians in an effort to determine the impact of the cross saying in view of issues of honour and shame, the political environment, and the devotional/artistic dimensions of their lives. Scholarly works utilizing a social-scientific approach to biblical texts have multiplied over the past two decades, and I shall draw in part from these studies (as well as from archaeological findings and historical accounts) to explore the milieu in which Jesus’ followers applied this aphorism.<sup>35</sup> While the main thrust of the thesis is exegetical in nature, exploration of the social impact of the cross saying provides insights into its ongoing applicability for the earliest Christians living in an imperial Mediterranean culture.

There are newer, postmodernist methods of literary analysis which have taken root in New Testament scholarship over the 1980s and 1990s that I shall not apply to the texts under consideration in this thesis. For one example, the approach of ‘turning to the subject’ to measure the subsequent reaction to the

33. Paul Foster expounds further on the assumptions made by scholars using redaction criticism on pages 6–9 of *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel* (WUNT 2.177; ed. Jörg Frey; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). The quote comes from p. 8.

34. See also Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 2: “The prime requisite for redaction criticism is the ability to trace the form and content of material used by the author concerned or in some way to determine the nature and extent of his activity in collecting and creating, as well as in arranging, editing, and composing.”

35. See John H. Elliott, *Social Scientific Criticism of the New Testament and its Social World* (Decatur, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989); Philip Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context* (London/New York: Routledge, 1995); John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); R. L. Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.; Hendrickson, 1996); David Horrell, *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999); John J. Pilch, ed., *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2001).

literature, commonly known as ‘reader response theory,’ will not be featured in this work.<sup>36</sup> While I do appreciate the merit of this method, especially as it seeks to address some of the limitations of older forms of literary criticism,<sup>37</sup> my primary objective remains an historical investigation of extant texts and their literary and social contexts in antiquity. My focus, therefore, will be on the texts themselves and how they were likely received by the communities for whom they were written.

#### SUMMARY: OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

I conclude this chapter by presenting the trajectory for this investigation of the cross saying, previewing the predominant questions in each chapter.

Even though no extant version of Q exists (at least none has yet been discovered), in Chapter Two I begin my textual investigation with this hypothetical document, particularly because there is a high probability that the authors of Matthew and Luke had access to it during the composition of their gospels. Modern Q studies account for the presence of the cross saying in this catena, but have not addressed in detail what its location in the text reveals about how it functioned at this early stage.

Arguably the heart of this thesis, Chapter Three begins with an appraisal and rejection of the hypotheses of H. T. Fledderman and Jan Lambrecht regarding Mark’s use of the Q cross saying.<sup>38</sup> Instead, I argue that the texts re-

36. Joel B. Green outlines the various modern methodologies in Joel B. Green, ed., *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). See also Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Gospels and the Reader,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* (ed. Stephen C. Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97–118 for a survey and analysis of these various approaches. Also, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon and Edgar V. McKnight, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (JSNTSup 109; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

37. See Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (2 vols.; trans. Olive Wyon; reprint, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 31.

38. H. T. Fledderman, “Mark’s Use of Q: The Beelzebul Controversy and the Cross Saying,” in *Jesus, Mark and Q* (JSNTSup 214; eds. Michael Laban and Andreas Schmidt; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 17–33; J. Lambrecht, “Q-Influence on Mark 8,34–9,1,” in *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus—The Sayings of Jesus: Méorial Joseph Coppens* (BETL 59; ed. J. Delobel; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 277–304. More extensive documentation can be found in Chapter Three.

flect that the cross saying came to be used by the authors of Mark and Q via parallel traditions. I then explore the redactions of the cross saying made by each Synoptic author, differentiating each stage of the tradition history.

After this, I present my findings on the *Gospel of Thomas* texts in Chapter Four—analyzing both the cross saying (*logion* 55) and a possible cognate version of it (Coptic *logion* 77; POxy *logion* 30/77). Several questions confront the reader of the Thomasine version of the saying: How would a call to “take up the cross” be understood by the original composers, especially given the alternative theology they express throughout *Thomas*? What kind of asceticism does cross-bearing involve? Does the gospel actually encrypt a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus in *logion* 77? By the conclusion of this chapter I will have examined every text of the cross saying proper as preserved in Christian Scripture from the first to fourth centuries.

I segue from *Thomas*' cognate version of the saying into Chapter Five, which deals entirely with such versions. The ongoing functionality of the cross saying for subsequent generations of believers is made obvious by noting those instances in the Pauline corpus where the apostle applies crucifixion in metaphorical, diverse ways to convey aspects of his own theology. Each of the letters to the Galatians and to the Romans contains passages which specifically depict symbolic forms of crucifixion as integral parts of Christian religious experience.<sup>39</sup>

Moving away from the literary culture of early Christianity in Chapter Six, I pose questions about the social impact of early Christian identification with crucifixion, exploring how Jesus' followers contended with the issues of shame associated with this form of execution. I argue that the discovery of the crucified man in the ossuary at Giv'at ha-Mivtar strongly suggests that a person could endure the shame of the cross and still retain honour, even if only among a kinship group (or, in the case of Jesus and his disciples, a fictive kinship group).<sup>40</sup>

39. Paul obviously has much to say about metaphorical ‘death’ in his writings. For the purpose of this thesis, I shall examine only those texts which specifically mention that crucifixion was the cause of such spiritual/metaphorical ‘death’: Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Rom 6:6.

40. I refer to the ossuary with the name “Yehohanan” inscribed on its surface. See N. Haas, “Anthropological Observations on the Skeletal Remains from Giv'at ha-Mivtar,” *IEJ* 20 (1970): 38–59.

Because recent moves in New Testament scholarship depict Jesus in a highly political light, I next explore the general political atmosphere of Galilee at the time of Jesus in Chapter Seven. Several prominent New Testament scholars, such as John Dominic Crossan and Richard Horsley, have placed a heavy emphasis on the political ramifications of Jesus' ministry. Examining their arguments, I ask: Does the archaeological and literary evidence suggest that the cross saying would have been heard as a call to insurrection against Rome?

Finally, in Chapter Eight, I conclude the thesis with a survey of those material witnesses from early Christian art and artefacts which signify the high degree to which notions of crucifixion impacted their perception of religious experience and identity.<sup>41</sup> The earliest Christian art is replete with images which show how the cross and crucifixion remained meaningful symbols of the faith centuries after the death of Jesus, and perhaps reflect how radical notions of literal cross-bearing were domesticated by later generations of Christians.

This thesis offers the most detailed evaluation of the history and function of the cross saying in earliest Christianity to date. It redresses, to some extent, the penchant in modern Christianity to view the death of Jesus only in terms of its redemptive significance. By looking to Jesus' death as a model for living, the earliest Christians grounded their religious lives in a profoundly counter-intuitive approach to spirituality. Understanding it as a literal example of how to face death prepared them for the persecution that inevitably awaited them outside of the faith community; identifying with Jesus' crucifixion on a metaphorical level reminded believers that their lives had been radically and decisively separated from each aspect of worldly existence which threatened complete devotion to Jesus. I proceed, therefore, with the aim of detecting and establishing how these early Christians understood the meaning of cross-bearing.

41. I shall also distinguish the non-Christian use of the cross symbol from those which originated in early Christian groups.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Q AND THE CROSS SAYING

WHILE the Synoptics contain the first extant versions of the cross saying, the authors of these gospels presumably relied upon an earlier ‘sayings source,’ requiring that I begin a diachronic investigation of the aphorism there. A majority of scholars over the past thirty years have agreed that Q (referring to the hypothetical document apparently incorporated by the authors of Matthew and Luke into their respective narratives) provides the most satisfactory solution to the so-called ‘Synoptic Problem.’<sup>1</sup> Alternative explanations concerning the relationships between the Synoptics exist, but they do not represent the presumption of this thesis.<sup>2</sup>

### Presence and Position of the Cross Saying

I contend in this chapter that the position of the cross saying in Q reveals much about how it functioned for the composers of this sayings gospel. In order to justify this view, I shall first evaluate the reconstructed International

1. See Arland D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 1992); Christopher M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996); and undoubtedly the most comprehensive work to date on Q, John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

2. Kloppenborg examines and appraises these alternative views at length in chapter one of *Excavating Q* (pp. 11–54). It is beyond the scope or the purpose of this thesis to engage these divergent minority opinions.

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Q 14:26	<p>[&lt;ὅς&gt;] οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα οὐ &lt;δύναται εἶναί&gt; μου &lt;μαθητῆς&gt;, καὶ [&lt;ὅς&gt;] &lt;οὐ μισεῖ&gt; τ&lt;ὸ&gt;ν υἱὸν καὶ τ&lt;ὴν&gt; θυγατέρα οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.</p>	<p>[&lt;The one who&gt;] does not hate father and mother &lt;(can)not &lt;(be) my &lt;(disciple)&gt;; and [&lt;the one who&gt;] &lt;(does not hate)&gt; son and daughter cannot be my disciple.</p>
Q 14:27	<p>ὅς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.</p>	<p>The one who does not take one's cross and follow after me cannot be my disciple.</p>
Q 17:33	<p>[ὁ] εὕρ[ων] τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολέσει αὐτήν, καὶ [ὁ] ἀπολέσ[ας] τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ [ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ] εὕρήσει αὐτήν.</p>	<p>[The one who] finds one's life will lose it, and [the one who] loses one's life [for my sake] will find it.</p>

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TABLE 5. The International Q Project version of the cross saying, Q 14:27, framed by two thematically-related sayings.

Q Project (IQP) text of the cross saying (Table 5) and the other sayings which frame it. A case for what appears to have been the original text of the literary unit Q 14:26/14:27/17:33 (in which is found the cross saying at Q 14:27) can be made after I have compared the manner in which Matthew and Luke each incorporated the cross saying into his respective gospel.<sup>3</sup>

Because the reconstructed text of Q preserves the cross saying embedded within this cluster, I shall give particular attention to the two historical influences responsible for the phenomenon of clustering: the oral shaping of the tradition for a primarily aural presentation, and the tendency of the wisdom genre to amalgamate similarly themed aphorisms. I make space for such an evaluation of the wisdom genre for one reason: many interpreters seem unprepared to account for the inherent flexibility in application afforded by ancient aphoristic traditions. Consequently, they make the mistake of looking for *the* meaning of the cross saying tradition, as if it had merely one application within early Christian literature—an assumption proven false in this thesis.

3. English translation from J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Sayings Gospel Q in Greek and English* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 136–139.

The results of this analysis will clarify both the form and function of the cross saying in Q, providing the necessary foundation for my examination of the Synoptic versions of the cross saying in Chapter Three.

### THE CROSS SAYING IN Q

Scholars generally acknowledge that Q represented a very early (perhaps the earliest) Christian document, comprised mainly of Jesus' maxims, and composed possibly in Galilee. Their reconstructions of this document, based upon comparisons between Matthew and Luke, provide schemata of Q's content and structure which have gained general acceptance among academics.<sup>4</sup> While some details remain open for debate, what is most significant for this study is the fact that those seeking to define the parameters of Q include the cross saying in every hypothetical re-creation of it.

Accepting that the Q hypothesis does indeed provide the most satisfying answer to the Synoptic Problem, and allowing that scholars have deduced a relatively accurate schema of its content and arrangement, the important questions here must deal with what the *presence* and *position* of the cross saying in

4. For this thesis, I shall consider the parameters for Q as those established in James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); cf. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 100 (Fig. 16). The cross saying occurs in Q 14:27 (Q's chapters and verses follow Lukan sequencing), and functions as part of a larger cluster of related sayings (14:26/14:27/17:33). In its entirety, Q contains only brief narrative sections (3:3, 7-9, 16-17, 21-22; 7:1-10) and otherwise consists of sayings of Jesus. The following outline of Q can be found in pp. vi-viii of *The Critical Edition of Q* (editorial uncertainty regarding exact wording is represented by bracketed verses; question marks indicate serious uncertainty about the inclusion of verses thus bracketed): 3:[0-incipit], 2b-3a, 7-9, 16b-17, [21-22]; 4:1-4, 9-12, 5-8, 13, 16; 6:20-21, 22-23, 27-28, 29, 31, 32, 36, 37-38, 39, 40, 41-42, 43-45, 46, 47-49; 7:1, 3, 6b-9, ?10?, 18-19, 22-23, 24-28, [29-30], 31-35, 9:57-60; 10:2, 3, 4, 5-9, 10-12, 13-15, 16, 21, 22, 23-24; 11:2b-4, 9-13, 14-15, 17-20, [21-22], 23, 24-26, ?27-28?, 16, 29-30, 31-32, 33, 34-35, ?39a?, 42, 39b, 41, 43-44, 46b, 52, 47-48, 49-51; 12:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10, 11-12, 33-34, 22b-31, 39-40, 42-46, [49], 51, 53, [54-56], 58-59; 13:18-19, 20-21, 24-27, 28, 29, [30], 34-35; 14:[11], 16-18, ?19-20?, 21, 23, 26, 27, 34-35; 16:13, 16, 17, 18; 17:1-2; 15:4-5a, 7, [8-10]; 17:3-4, 6, [20-21], 23-24, 37, 26-27, ?28-29?, 30, 33, 34-35; 19:12-13, 14, 15-24, 26; 22:28, 30. I refer to these parameters below when considering the theological significance of including the cross saying in Q.

Q tell us about how the saying functioned in early Christianity. This needs a greater focus on the immediate context of Q 14:27 than found in previous work on the saying. It is my contention that prior scholarship on Q 14:27 has tended to use only the *presence* of the cross saying to bolster opinions about either the theology of Q, or its historical background. Yet, in order to ascertain its specific meaning in this document, I claim that more is revealed by examining the *position* of the saying in the text (i.e., its context).

To be sure, there are important issues raised by the mere presence of this aphorism in Q. The cross saying has attracted much attention because of what it says about Q's christology, especially due to the absence in Q of either predictions of Jesus' death, or of a 'Passion narrative.'<sup>5</sup> Arland Hultgren, for example, argues that Q 14:27 offers nearly conclusive evidence that the Q community had an awareness of Jesus' death.<sup>6</sup> John Kloppenborg, who maintains that Q 14:27 was part of the earliest editorial stratum of the document (that is, Q<sup>1</sup>), suggests that the cross saying stands alongside sayings with similar themes in Q which speak of prophetic persecution.<sup>7</sup> David Seeley, arguing otherwise, writes that Q 14:27 is best understood as an expression of Cynic–Stoic philosophy rather than conveying a Deuteronomistic-prophetic perspective.<sup>8</sup> I shall examine these perspectives in greater detail and say more about their adequacy later.

Certainly, the presence of the cross saying in Q is important for the broader task of clarifying the theology expressed therein. What some scholars have noted, but have not take into full consideration, is that the cross saying as it appears in the text of Q is not a stand-alone verse. Since Q presents the cross saying as part of a cluster, it is my contention that only by taking seriously the phenomena of clustering and thematic attraction can it be discerned how the

5. See Larry Hurtado, "Q and Early Devotion to Jesus," in *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), 217–57, who dismantles many of Kloppenborg's arguments that Q retains a peculiar christology because it lacks specific references to Jesus' death.

6. Arland Hultgren, *The Rise of Normative Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 31–41.

7. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 146, 369–74.

8. David Seeley, "Interpretations of Jesus' Death in Q," *Semeia* 55 (1991): 131–146; "Jesus' Death in Q," *NTS* 38 (1992): 222–34.

saying continued to function at this point in early Christianity. In other words, one is permitted some insight into the *Sitz im Leben* of the cross saying in Q because of clear thematic connections with the preceding and following sayings, associations created (or preserved) by the composers of Q.

It should be obvious that if the cross saying were preserved in such a manner as to 'float' freely in the text of Q, without obvious connection to the surrounding text, then we would be unable to determine how the saying functioned for the composers of Q. Fortunately, this is not the case. The cross saying appears in two distinct clusters wherein the subject of the preceding saying (Q 14:26) differs substantially from the subject of the following saying (Q 17:33). It follows that for Q the cross saying functioned as a climactic reminder that discipleship entailed both the rejection of family bonds and the acceptance of prophetic persecution. I assert in this chapter that the sayings cluster of Q 14:26/14:27/17:33 demonstrates that, for Q, the cross saying functioned to explicate the requirements of discipleship in precisely these ways.

## The Reconstruction of the Cross Saying in Q

I am in general agreement with the IQP reconstruction of the cross saying. However, several problems immediately present themselves when one makes an attempt to determine the original form of the cross saying in Q. The problems are connected mainly with the first sayings cluster (14:26/14:27) since the modifications made to it by Matthew and Luke are more dramatic than those made to 17:33.

First, some of the differences can be accounted for by comparing the Matthean incorporation of Q 14:26/14:27 into his gospel with Luke's adaptation of the saying into his text. In redacting these statements, the evangelists placed them into quite different contexts. Second, the variant readings of the cross saying, and those sayings which surround it in Matthew and Luke, require a decision as to which one represents the original form. Specifically, the question is: Which gospel account best preserves the primitive form of the

statement's initial and ending phrases? Similar determinations must be made about the various connections between objects in the structure of the saying. Finally, I must justify my acceptance of previous scholarship which retains the link between 14:27/17:33, viewing this combination as original to Q (and arguing that Luke excised this text, placing it at 17:33 in his gospel). This is based on the thinking that the author of Matthew, who presents these sayings together, retained their original structure.<sup>9</sup> Quite nuanced argumentation is necessary when attempting to reconstruct a hypothetical piece of literature, and my work here is, happily, made less arduous because of the insights of previous scholars.

### THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT

As previously noted, Matthew and Luke each place the cross saying in somewhat different contexts within their respective gospels. Reconstructing the original Q version of the cross saying therefore requires that I first consider the influence that such re-contextualization may have had on how each gospel author chose to place and structure the sayings.

In Matthew's text, Jesus addresses the cross saying to his disciples near the end of the 'Mission Discourse' (Mt 9:36–11:1), and the author incorporates the sub-grouping of sayings from Q that address 'family divisions' (Mt 10:34–39). Consequently, the cross saying functions as something of a climax for a unit of material concerning why disciples must break family bonds. On the other hand, Luke places the cross saying from Q in the middle of what has

9. The various reconstructions include: J. Dupont, "Renoncer à tous ses biens (Luc 14,33)," *NRTh* 93 (1971): 561–82; S. Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 430–31, 444–47; J. Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 60–61; R. Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen der Logienquelle und des Markusevangeliums*, *BBB* 54 (Königstein/Bonn: Hanstein, 1980), 304, 321–22; A. Polag, *Fragmenta Q: Textheft zur Logienquelle* (2d ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 70, 78; J. Lambrecht, "Q-influence on Mark 8,34–9,1," in *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus—The Sayings of Jesus: Mémorial Joseph Coppens* (ed. Joël Delobel; BETL 59; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters and Leuven University Press, 1982), 279; H. T. Fleddermann, "The Cross and Discipleship in Q," in *SBL Seminar Papers* 1988 (no. 27; Atlanta: SBL, 1988), 472–81; also R. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 197–202.

MATTHEW	LUKE
10:37 Ὁ φιλῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος, καὶ ὁ φιλῶν υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος:	14:26 εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με καὶ οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφὰς ἔτι τε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.
10:38 καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.	14:27 ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.

TABLE 6. The first cross saying cluster as redacted by Matthew and Luke.

been termed the ‘Travel Narrative’ (Lk 9:51–19:44). In this context, Jesus addresses a different audience in 14:25: *Συνεπορεύοντο δὲ αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί, καὶ στραφεὶς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς* (“Great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned to them . . .”). With the crowds now those receiving Jesus’ teaching in Luke, the cross saying defines the requirements of discipleship to those who perhaps remain undecided.<sup>10</sup>

It appears that this change of context accounts for the divergent placement of Q material by Matthew and Luke respectively: Table 6 summarizes the differences under discussion thus far. I now make a direct comparison between the texts of these gospels in an effort to determine the original form of the cross saying in Q.

#### VARIANT READINGS OF THE CROSS SAYING IN MATTHEW AND LUKE

As becomes clear upon viewing the comparison of the Matthean and Lukan redactions of the cross saying in Table 6, the most obvious variation between the texts is in their initial and ending phrases. Matthew begins with the parti-

10. Luke (9:23) does the same when redacting Mk 8:34 (addressed to the disciples) with the opening statement: *Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς πάντας*.

ciple ὁ φιλῶν (“the one who loves”), with Jesus warning against loving “father and mother” more than him. The gospel author then repeats his use of the participle in the following phrase, applying it also to a follower’s “son and daughter.” By way of contrast, Luke begins his longer sentence with the conditional clause εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με καὶ οὐ μισεῖ (“If anyone comes to me and does not hate”), a more harshly-worded statement made by Jesus which requires a person to “hate” a longer list of family members.

Most scholarly reconstructions assume that neither the initial phrase preserved by Matthew nor the one in Luke is original. Dupont and Polag agree that Luke’s opening phrase εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με belongs in Q.<sup>11</sup> Schultz, however, draws attention to other places where Luke has created a similar introduction for Q sayings (e.g., Lk 6:47).<sup>12</sup> Fleddermann points out that some assimilation to Mark 8:34 (also in a conditional form) likely occurs in Luke 14:26.<sup>13</sup> But the most important factor responsible for the use of this phrase by Luke is context: Jesus is speaking to a general audience rather than to his disciples. Assuming that Matthew has it right, and that the cross saying was first issued to disciples rather than to the “crowds,” results in the conclusion that εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με is probably not original to the Q saying.

Concerning ὁ φιλῶν in Matthew, we can attribute his use of the substantival participle to a penchant towards their use generally in his writing,<sup>14</sup> and also to a literary endeavour to create stylistic unity in the immediate context of the cross saying.<sup>15</sup> It seems highly likely that Matthew has altered the relative clause in the Q saying in order to conform it to the string of participles running through the final section of the Mission Discourse.

Furthermore, that Matthew softened the original Q saying best explains the difference between Matthew’s “loves *x* more than me” and Luke’s “does not hate *x*.” It is difficult to imagine Luke’s harsher “hate” wording as a secondary

11. Dupont, “Renoncer à tous ses biens,” 563; Polag, *Fragmenta Q*, 70.

12. Schulz, *Q*, 447.

13. Fleddermann, “Cross and Discipleship,” 476.

14. See J. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), 7, 33.

15. Fleddermann, “Cross and Discipleship,” 476, where he lists the string of eight substantival participles in Mt 10:37–41.

construction, and it likely reflects a Semitism present originally in Q.<sup>16</sup> Thus the original initial phrase was Luke's *οὐ μισεῖ* since it represents the more difficult reading.<sup>17</sup>

Minor differences appear in the dependent clauses: Luke includes "his" with "father" and connects these objects with *καὶ* (Matthew uses *ἦ*).<sup>18</sup> We detect more substantial differences, however, in Luke's fuller list of family members to be "hated": father, mother, wife and children, brothers and sister, extending even to one's own life. Fleddermann has noticed that

Luke shows the same tendency to extend the list of those the Christian is in conflict with, adding 'relatives' and 'friends' to Mark's 'brother' and 'parents' (compare Luke 21:16 with Mark 13:12). In this way Luke accentuates the separation of the disciples from their own.<sup>19</sup>

So, in this case, the simplicity of Matthew's text makes it likely that it preserves the four objects (father, mother, son, and daughter) as original to Q.

There are few variations between Matthew and Luke in the actual text of the cross saying, but I will deal briefly with four minor issues. First, because Luke generally avoids asyndeta, as shown in the work of J. Jeremias,<sup>20</sup> the lack of a connective *καὶ* in Luke's text is probably original. So, the *καὶ* introducing the relative clause in Matthew's text represents an addition by that

16. See K. Stendahl, "Hate, Non-Retaliatio, and Love: 1QS x, 17–20 and Rom. 12:19–21," *HTR* 55 (1962): 343–55; J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (x–xxiv), Vol. 28a (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1063.

17. Fleddermann, "Cross and Discipleship," 477, notices that "Luke drops one of Q's three main clauses, but he compensates for the omission by constructing a concluding verse (Luke 14:33) that uses the clause. Luke 14:33 probably also preserves the original Q sentence structure. If we look past the expressions that connect this verse to the preceding parables (*οὕτως οὖν πᾶς ἐξ ὑμῶν*), we can see the original Q structure shining through: *ὅς + οὐ(κ) + present indicative + object with article and possessive pronoun.*"

18. Luke consistently substitutes *ἑαυτοῦ* for *αὐτοῦ*: compare Lk 13:19/Mt 13:31; Lk 13:34/Mt 23:37; Lk 19:36/Mk 11:8. He uses it more frequently than the other gospel writer (Mt 32; Mk 24; Lk 57; Acts 21); see Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, 303. The Matthean *ἦ* does not function well with *μισεῖ* in Q, inasmuch as hating either parent would suffice if this participle were used.

19. Fleddermann, "Cross and Discipleship," 475; see also Dupont, "Renoncer à tous ses biens," 564.

20. Jeremias, *Sprache*, 60–61.

gospel's author. Second, since Jesus is addressing a general audience in Luke's text, the *ὅστις* ("whoever") naturally replaces the original *ὅς* ("the one") found in Matthew.<sup>21</sup> Third, Matthew uses *βαστάζει* ("pick up") elsewhere (even in a Q text: see Mt 3:11), so his use of *λαμβάνει* ("bear") probably stands as the first verb of the original relative clause in Q. Luke most likely graecized both this verb and the final *ἀκολουθεῖ* ("follow"), as suggested by Laufen.<sup>22</sup> And fourth, although Laufen prefers Luke's version, Matthew preserves a Septuagintism by using *ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου* ("follow after me")—and with this kind of background, the phrase likely represents the Q expression.<sup>23</sup>

Which author—Matthew or Luke—preserves the main clause in Q for these sayings? Again, in this instance it appears that Matthew softens the original saying. The text reads that those who love their family members more than Jesus *οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος* ("are not worthy of me"). A statement about the 'worthiness' of disciples certainly makes sense in the context of Matthew's broader Mission Discourse—for here Jesus is speaking to persons who are already his disciples: the harsher phrase "cannot be my disciple" would not fit the context well. Luke therefore likely preserves the more demanding original statement *οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς* ("cannot be my disciple"), applying it generally to those who refuse to comply with Jesus' conditions. Indeed, this text presents Jesus addressing the crowds, and, by means of such categorical language, he thereby presents the 'cost of discipleship' to the uninitiated.

Two additional observations help in answering the question of which phrase was the original main clause of the sayings. Since Luke has no difficulty with the use of *ἄξιος* elsewhere in his gospel, and also in Acts,<sup>24</sup> it seems improb-

21. See the older but still relevant article by H. Cadbury, "The Relative Pronouns in Acts and Elsewhere," *JBL* 42 (1923): 150–157; also V. Spottorno, "The Relative Pronoun in the New Testament," *NTS* 28 (1982): 132–141.

22. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, 303.

23. Fleddermann, "Cross and Discipleship," 478–79, confirms this decision by comparing the ways that Matthew and Luke redact the Mk 8:34 overlap text, where Matthew clearly eliminates the redundant *ἀκολουθεῖν* (see Mt 16:24). For the Septuagint forms of this expression see: 3 Kgdms 19:20; Isa 45:14; Ezek 29:16; Hos 2:7.

24. See Lk 7:7, 20:35; Acts 5:41, 13:25, 15:38, 28:22.

able that he would have avoided using it in the main clause if it represented the original wording in Q. Luke similarly retains the triple-ending formula appearing in Matthew's οὐκ ἔστω μου ἄξιος. Luke has, however, moved the third repetition of the main clause to the end of the section on discipleship at 14:33 ("So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has *cannot be my disciple*"). It follows that originally Q had three sayings with the same main clause of οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.

Having addressed each concern involved in the reconstruction of Q 14:26/14:27/17:33, I confirm my agreement with the IQP version displayed in Table 5. I now address one final matter concerning Jesus' statement about "losing one's life" which follows the cross saying in Q 14:27/17:33.

#### LUKAN EXCISION OF Q 17:33

Researchers have recognized Q 17:33 as one of the few instances in the sayings gospel where the ordering in Matthew seems preferable to the Lukan redaction.<sup>25</sup> Two considerations support the idea that the placement of the saying in 17:33 in Luke represents a shift from its original Q setting: (1) the addition of τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ to Luke 14:26 does seem influenced by the original Q sequence, and (2) there is a dramatic shift in context from teachings on discipleship to apocalyptic statements (cf. Mt 10:5–42; Lk 17:22–37).<sup>26</sup> I conclude this section with a brief examination of both points.

25. John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 158–159.

26. In opposition to this thesis, a minority of scholars have suggested that Lk 17:33 actually represents a rewrite of Mk 8:35 rather than a Q/Mk overlap. See F. Neiryck, "Recent Developments in the Study of Q," in *Logia* 29–75 in *Early Rabbinic Judaism* (SJLA 13; ed. Jacob Neusner; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 49–51; also J. Zmijewski, *Die Eschatologiereden des Lukas-evangeliums: Ein traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Lk 21,5–36 und Lk 17,20–37*, BBB 40 (Königstein/Bonn: Hanstein, 1972), 479–82. Against this, see Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 158, who notes that both Mt 10:39 and Lk 17:33 have conformed to Mk 8:35 to a small degree, but that the agreement between Mt 10:30 and Lk 17:33 in introducing the main clause of the conditional sentence with καί [NA<sup>25</sup>: ADRW θ 068 f<sup>1</sup> sy sa; NA<sup>26</sup>: "δε" P<sup>75</sup> B L Ψ f<sup>13</sup> 892] makes a Lukan rewrite improbable. Luke's avoidance of doublets is also considered here. H. Schürmann, "Die Dubletten im Lukasevangelium," in *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1968), 276, has noted that Lk

Regarding the first of these considerations, H. Schürmann calls attention to Luke's inclusion of τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ ("his own life") in Luke 14:26, a phrase that does not appear in the parallel text of Matthew 10:39.<sup>27</sup> He posits, therefore, that the original Q position of τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ following Q 14:27 (retained in Mt 10:38) influenced Luke's composition of 14:26. That Matthew 10:37 corresponds with Q/Luke 14:26 provides further evidence that Matthew preserves the original Q setting over the entire unit of 14:26/14:27/17:33. It seems reasonable to conclude that Luke was aware of the prior arrangement of τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ in Q, due to its inclusion in Luke 14:26.

The context into which Luke redacted 17:33 presents an even stronger argument that it was originally appended to the cross saying as per Matthew.<sup>28</sup> Luke employs Q 17:33 within the Lot correlative (Lk 17:28–37), but in a way that makes no sense without the redaction of Mark 13:15–16 as a precursor for the Q saying. If Q 17:33 were simply affixed to the Lot section it would, by implication, immediately criticize Lot and his family for attempting to save themselves from destruction! A placement of this kind would make nonsense of the Lukan and Q apocalypses.<sup>29</sup>

Luke redacts Mark 13:15–16 immediately following Luke 17:28–30 to clarify his interpretation of the mistake made by Lot's wife. The Lukan redaction in 17:31 of καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ("with all his goods in the house") to Mark 13:15 also suggests that Luke incriminates Lot's wife because of her concern for the possessions she left in Sodom. To make this connection even stronger, Luke adds the ominous phrase μνημονεύετε τῆς γυναικὸς Λώτ ("Remember Lot's wife") in 17:32—before inserting the Q

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21:18 represents the only true Lukan repetition of a Q saying (12:7) and that most likely Lk 17:33 represents one of fourteen Mk/Q overlaps.

27. H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (vol. 1, HTKNT 3.1; Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1969), 544.

28. See Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 159, for the list of Q scholars in agreement with this conclusion. Some, however, disagree; notably Polag, *Fragmenta Q*, 78; also R. Schnackenburg, "Der eschatologische Abschnitt Lk 17,20–37," in *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R. P. Bédarida Rigaux* (eds. A. Descamps and A. De Hallaeux; Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 123–125, who suggests that 17:29 and 17:33 once formed a cluster based on the catchword ἀπώλεσεν (17:29)/ἀπολέσει (17:33). In my thinking, this linkage is exceedingly tenuous and thus improbable.

29. Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 544.

saying. As a result, the placement of Q 17:33 here serves as Luke's warning about the dangers of greed and attachment to worldly possessions, a theme which he addresses frequently in his gospel.<sup>30</sup>

I have noted the two pieces of evidence which suggest that Matthew (10:37–39) preserves the original order of Q 14:26/14:27/17:33: (1) the addition of *τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ* in Luke 14:26 seems to indicate Luke's recollection of the original Q cluster, and (2) Lukan redactional excision of Q 17:33 provides the best explanation for the shift in context away from teachings on discipleship to a somewhat awkward apocalyptic setting in Luke's gospel. Consequently, there is clear justification for considering Q 17:33 as attached to the cross saying, and for considering these sayings as a unit for exegetical purposes.

Having examined the IQP reconstruction of the cross saying cluster, I now turn to an investigation of two phenomena common in the wisdom genre: clustering and thematic attraction. I maintain that the influences responsible for the assemblage of Q 14:26/14:27/17:33 as a unit (especially the process of oral transmission) must be properly understood to appreciate the function of the cross saying for the composers of Q.

## The Cross Saying and the Wisdom Tradition

I stated earlier that one cannot expect to find that the early Christians retained a singular meaning for the cross saying. This is due mainly to the flexibility of the wisdom genre; indeed, the genius of the wisdom tradition lies foremost in its ability to be adapted to the changing circumstances of life. Aphorisms such as the cross saying fall squarely within the tradition of teaching known as 'wisdom.' This means that interpreters should view its preservation in various writings as a testimony to the fact that assorted communities of Christians continued to find it meaningful as time passed and as their situa-

30. See Lk [3:10–14]; 6:20, [24]; 12:13–15, 16–21, 33; 16:13, [14–15], [19–31]. Q also expresses contempt for a fixation on worldly goods, made apparent in the verses redacted from Q, listed here without brackets.

tions changed. In the following three sections I explore the issues of sapiential literature, the impact of oral transmission on the saying, and the implied narrative assumed by the composers of Q. I conclude the chapter by examining the thematic subsection of ‘Two Paths’ which contains the cross saying. Each of these issues impacts one’s understanding of the form and function of the cross saying as presented in Q.

### Q AND SAPIENTIAL LITERATURE

Identifying חכמה (*hokmah*, “wisdom”) as the genre of literature under investigation clarifies our understanding of the *form* of the cross saying as it appears in Q. As an aphoristic text, the cross saying is of a piece with the essential makeup of Q: a document of sentence literature retaining only faint impressions of the historical situations in which its individual sayings were delivered. The text of Q therefore presents the reader with a non-narrative collection of wisdom sentences characteristic of the ancient wisdom genre.

Israel’s earliest stages of ‘wisdom tradition’ have been understood as an hereditary adaptation of earlier instructional and sentence collections from Egypt and Mesopotamia.<sup>31</sup> The topics and perspectives of Israel’s wisdom texts have been described as “a priori analogous to that of similar works in other ancient nations.”<sup>32</sup> As in other states, the prevailing wisdom genre functioned within Israel as a vehicle for preserving and disseminating established values,<sup>33</sup> and the Hebrew Bible preserves three such examples: Proverbs, Job, and Qoheleth. While containing theological emphases unique to Israel, these

31. K. Kitchen, “The Basic Literary Forms and Formulations of Ancient Instructional Writings in Egypt and Western Asia,” in *Studien zu Altägyptischen Lebenslehren* (OBO 28; eds. E. Horning and O. Keel; Freiburg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 235–82; R. Williams, “Scribal Training in Ancient Egypt,” *JAOs* 92 (1972): 214–21; J. M. Thompson, *The Form and Function of Proverbs in Ancient Israel* (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1974), 37–41.

32. Stuart Weeks, “Wisdom in the Old Testament,” in *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?* (ed. S. Barton; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 31–46, esp. 29. Weeks objects to making the category ‘wisdom tradition’ signify that the ancient Mediterraneans self-consciously understood ‘wisdom’ as a distinct school of thought. He suggests that the concept of ‘wisdom tradition’ should be understood as a category created by modern scholarship and useful in explaining certain *literary* phenomena in the Hebrew Scriptures.

33. *Ibid.*, 19. It also functioned as a means of educating the aristocracy.

texts all display the compositional conventions that typify the broader ancient Mediterranean wisdom genre. In a similar fashion, the sayings collection Q also falls broadly into the category of sapiential sentence literature.<sup>34</sup>

The aphoristic style of the cross saying was certainly not an uncommon literary form within early Christian tradition either: in fact, viewed in their literary context, aphoristic sayings in the gospels comprise a substantial amount of the teaching material attributed to Jesus.<sup>35</sup> Thus the cross saying augments a larger body of early Christian aphoristic texts, representing “the single literary form most frequently attributed to Jesus in early Christian literature.”<sup>36</sup>

34. See the discussion in Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 154–165.

35. From the outset, modern New Testament scholarship experienced difficulty in labelling and categorizing sayings material. Subsequent generations of scholars have produced more definitive analyses, but studies targeting the aphoristic sayings often remain indeterminate regarding their number, and the complete range of observable maxims has often defied even broad systems of categorization. In earlier studies M. Dibelius made a distinction between the Greek *chreia* and the *gnome* by noting the generic character of the *chreia* and how most *gnomes* were attributed to individuals: see M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (5th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1966), 151–152. R. Bultmann classified the gnomic sayings differently, noting their independence from the narrative in which they are often enscenced, and his theory of *Herrenwörter* (“dominical sayings,” or more specifically *logia*) is still broadly accepted. See R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; Oxford: Basil Blackwell/New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 69–108. Distinctions such as *Volkspruchwort* (“folk saying”), *Kunstspruchwort* (“artful saying”), and *Weisheitspruch* (“wisdom saying”) may be helpful for modern classification, but they do not always reflect the differentiation understood by the ancients; see Thompson, *Form and Function*, 20. Beyond their linguistic classification, the scholarly numeration of aphorisms attributed to Jesus in early Christian literature varies according to (1) how parallels are configured and (2) the inclusion/exclusion of extra-canonical sayings. The number of entries in John Crossan’s lists alone range from 133 (those found in Mark, Q, and their parallels) to 291 (an unwieldy collection of all Jesus’ non-narrative sayings from both canonical and extra-canonical sources). Cf. C. E. Carlston, “Proverbs, Maxims and the Historical Jesus,” *JBL* 99 (1980): 91; John Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 330–41; idem, *Sayings Parallels: Workbook for the Jesus Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986), 34–130.

36. David Aune, “Oral Tradition and the Aphorisms of Jesus,” in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (JSNTSup 64; ed. Henry Wansbrough; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 211. Ron Piper points out that the gathering of proverbial maxims was considered the task of a sage by the time of Sirach (*Wisdom in the Q-Tradition*, 7–8). M. Küchler, in “Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens,” (OBO 26; Freiburg/Göttingen; Univeristätsverlag Freiburg/Verlag Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 174, has also observed further examples beyond the Jew-

Because the history of New Testament scholarship on the gospels' aphoristic sayings has been presented elsewhere, I shall not rehearse it here.<sup>37</sup> I note, however, that scholarship on Christian aphoristic texts has consistently understood them as a continuation of the wisdom tradition of Israel, whose form commonly retains no narrative structure.<sup>38</sup> Q presents the challenge of interpreting its sayings based on references to historical settings which it assumes the reader knows, without actually providing that narrative structure in the text. Before addressing that issue, I explore how the transmission of the cross saying via oral tradition may have affected its appearance in Q.

#### THE ORAL PREDECESSOR OF THE TEXT

Q is a collection of Jesus' sayings, and, as such, it presumes an oral pre-history for the aphorisms it contains, as noted in Table 7. Several older and some more recent publications explore the historical processes involved in the transference of oral tradition to text, and interacting with this scholarship helps in answering two fundamental questions concerning the cross saying in Q. First, to what degree can we assume the textual version of the cross saying corresponds to the original spoken version? Second (and perhaps the more significant question), in what ways might oral transmission of the cross saying have impacted its textual form in Q? I shall first clarify my presumption about the accuracy of the textual version of the cross saying. I then examine how

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ish texts of Proverbs, Sirach, and Qoheleth. Thus, the list of extant Jewish texts which preserve aphoristic collections includes: Proverbs; Sirach; Qoheleth; Philo (*Hypothetica* 7:1–9); Josephus (*Contra Apoinem* 2:190–219); Mishna *Aboth* 1:1–15, 2:4b–7, 8–14; Pseudo-Phocylides; Pseudo-Menander; Q; James; *Gos. Thom.*; POxy 1, 654, and 655; the Sentences of Sextus; and the Teachings of Silvanus. Cf. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 140–165.

37. Alan Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony, & Wisdom Redaction in Q*, NovTSup 91 (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 1998), 1–86.

38. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition*, 6–11. James Robinson's categorization of Jesus' sayings in Q as *LOGOI SOPHON* (wisdom sayings) has found broad acceptance among Q scholars. See J. M. Robinson, "Logoi Sophon: On the Gattung of Q," in *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (eds. J. M. Robinson and H. Koester; Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1971), 71–113.

<i>Date</i> C.E.	<i>Source</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Provenance</i>
30	<b>Dominical Saying of Jesus</b>	Aramaic	Judea/ Galilee
40	<b>Oral Tradition</b>	Aramaic/ Greek	Palestine/ Diaspora
50	<b>Q 14:26–27</b>	Greek	Palestine

## KEY

—— Probable route of transmission

----- Unverified route of transmission

TABLE 7. Transmission of the cross saying from the possible dominical origin to Q 14:26–27.

oral transmission tends to simplify matters of content—an important factor when considering the phenomenon of sayings clustered together in a text.

Recent scholarship has sought to measure the linguistic distance between ‘orality’ and ‘textuality’ in the ancient world, with the purpose of quantifying the degree of impact that moving from one modality to another had on oral tradition. Werner Kelber’s 1983 publication *The Oral and Written Gospel* (reprinted in 1997)<sup>39</sup> marked an initial effort in the application of Walter Ong’s theory of communication history to New Testament texts (the gospel of Mark in particular). Kelber, like Ong and others before him, presumed that an ‘oral mentality’ pervaded the mostly nonliterate audiences to which Jesus spoke, with the result that they had “only tenuous connections with literate culture.”<sup>40</sup> In this model, the presumed disparity between ‘oral culture’ and ‘literate culture’ means that once an oral saying is committed to text it

39. Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing In the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983; reprint, Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997). Kelber deploys theories found in Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1977); idem, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Methuen, 1982). See also Eric Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

40. Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 21.

undergoes a fundamental alteration of form. Kelber asserts that, in general, the process of writing down a saying effects a “linguistic dislocation,” and that textualizing Jesus’ sayings results principally in a “transmutation rather than a transmission” of their content.<sup>41</sup> In Kelber’s view, the gospel of Mark represents a conscious effort in early Christianity to shift the “living” Jesus tradition (oral) to a static/“dead” mode (textual).

Reacting to the virtually metaphysical distinction between orality and textuality suggested by Kelber, several writers have correctly rejected his perceptions as too simplistic.<sup>42</sup> John Halverson roundly critiqued Kelber’s conclusions, included here as a summary of the deficiencies of Kelber’s thesis:

Though not unimpressive in its ingenuity, *The Oral and Written Gospel* creates a house of cards. It presupposes a cultural situation of nonliteracy that cannot be supported. It hypothesizes continuing communities of prophets speaking for the risen Lord for which no persuasive evidence is adduced. It tends to identify oral tradition almost entirely with Q-like sayings and deny oral tradition any memorials of the passion of Jesus—both gratuitous assumptions that defy common sense. Without evidence, it supposes that Mark knew Q and deliberately excluded it from his gospel. . . . There is no reason to think that Mark was a ‘counterform’ to oral tradition. Far from subverting it, the gospel has every appearance of canonizing it, to the extent that Mark knew it. The equation of orality with life and textuality with death is demonstrably false. Writing does not silence words of the past, but on the contrary preserves them. It is orality that forgets.<sup>43</sup>

Several scholars have shown that the historical reality was most likely an ongoing ‘linguistic reciprocity’ between speech and text, where the two media simultaneously exerted influence over each other throughout the history of

41. Kelber, *Oral and Written Gospel*, 14–34.

42. See Deborah Tannen, “The Myth of Orality and Literacy,” in *Linguistics and Literacy*, (ed. William Frawley; N.Y.: Plenum, 1982), 37–50; Brian Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Ruth Finnegan, “What is Orality—If Anything?” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1990): 130–149. For argumentation against Kelber’s assumption that the ancients possessed a bias against the written word see Loveday Alexander, “The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco–Roman Texts,” in *The Bible in Three Dimensions* (ed. D. J. A. Clines; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 221–47.

43. John Halverson, “Oral and Written Gospel: A Critique of Werner Kelber,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 180–195, esp. 195.

a particular tradition.<sup>44</sup> This kind of speech—literature interplay had been an integral feature of the preservation of Israel’s tradition prior to the production of the New Testament documents. Susan Niditch has demonstrated that large portions of the tradition contained in the Hebrew Bible retain qualities which bear the earmarks of their original oral context. In *Oral World and Written Word*, she observes:

The interplay between orality and literacy is a central feature of Israelite self-expression and as such is a vital thread in ancient Israelite culture. Recognition of Israelite attitudes to orality and literacy and the complex interplay between the two forces us to question long-respected theories about the development of the Israelite literary traditions preserved in the Bible.

We reject the romantic notion of an oral period in the history of Israel followed by the time of literacy in which Israelite literature becomes written and bookish. The oral and the literate interact throughout Israel’s history. . . .<sup>45</sup>

The linguistic tradition inherited by Jesus—namely, that of ancient Israel—evidences the close interaction of oral and literate culture.<sup>46</sup> It is therefore obvious that much of Jesus’ spoken teaching depends on his audience’s prior awareness of the *textual* tradition of the law (i.e., they had most likely heard it read aloud).<sup>47</sup>

44. Paul Achtemeier, “*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109/1 (1990): 7. For an exploration of the interplay between oral and written tradition as evidenced in the history of Israel and continued by Jesus, see Thomas Boomershine, “Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of Ancient Orality and Literacy,” *Semeia* 65 (1995): 14–21; Martin S. Jaffee, “Oral Culture in Scriptural Religion: Some Exploratory Studies,” *RelSRev* 24, no. 3 (1998): 223–30; Samuel Byrskog, *Story As History—History As Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (WUNT 123; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000).

45. Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), 134.

46. This is not to say that elements of Jesus’ teaching do not appear to be Cynic-like, opening the possibility that Jesus was influenced by Hellenistic traditions (a position taken by David Seeley and a few other scholars). I argue in the next section that even the Cynic-like elements in Jesus’ teaching have a clear precedent in Israel’s literary tradition, and that more evidence is required to justify the proposal that Jesus’ teaching reveals Hellenistic philosophical underpinnings.

47. Cf. Richard Horsley, “The Oral Communication Environment of Q,” in *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1999), 123–149.

The New Testament documents themselves are but one example that the complex interplay between orality and literacy continued amongst Jews of the first century.<sup>48</sup> Jesus himself seems to have relied primarily on an oral medium for the original expression of his teaching. However, Paul's integration and interpretation of portions of the Jesus tradition, and the manner in which the Synoptic authors incorporate Q, demonstrate that oral–text interplay occurs in later generations of Christian tradition.<sup>49</sup> As the historical context of communities changed, the Jesus tradition was carried forward and modified by successive generations in order for it to continue to be meaningful to them.

I have examined the above attempts to understand the process of making a saying into a text because it is both linguistically simplistic and historically unverifiable to make the assertion that the textual form of the cross saying bears little resemblance to its spoken form. For this analysis I therefore do not assume that 'textualization equals transmutation.' I do grant that some changes likely occur between spoken word and the written page, but even these modifications do not result in the production of a heretofore unseen version of the cross saying retaining no link to its historic origins. Such a proposal radically dislocates oral and written forms of communication, and fails to account for the interdependence which existed between these two media throughout antiquity.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, the fact that communities employ alternative media to preserve their traditions does not force us to conclude that the mere use of an alternative medium somehow creates a fundamentally new tradition. Nor does the dynamic between orality and textuality automatically destabilize the form of the original saying. Q, a catena of Jesus' sayings, represents a type of 'literary

48. Vernon Robbins, "Oral, Rhetorical, And Literary Cultures: A Response," *Semeia* 65 (1995): 75–91.

49. See Joanna Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions," *Semeia* 65 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995): 37–65; Calvin Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context* (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1975).

50. Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word*, 127.

imitation' of oral communication.<sup>51</sup> I find it reasonable to view the textual versions of the cross saying as corresponding on a fundamental level to the spoken phrase from which it derives.

There is obviously no access to the original oral articulation of the cross saying; it is a phenomenon that is therefore not subject to analysis. What we now possess are textual versions of that saying which were placed by various authors into a number of literary contexts, modified into slightly different forms, and applied in various ways. Thus, from a diachronic perspective, analysis of Q is significant for two reasons: (1) Q may perhaps contain an earlier form of the cross saying than found in the Synoptics or in the *Gospel of Thomas*, and (2) it is entirely possible that Q represents the first literary context into which the saying was placed.

Essentially, the inter-connectedness of the spoken word and the written page in antiquity ensured that Jesus' sayings were continually accessible to vocalization—one of the primary functions of the Q document. In fact, "the oral environment was so pervasive that *no* writing occurred that was not vocalized."<sup>52</sup> So, in composing and structuring Q, less concern was given to the visual patterns of the text than to any organization recognizable by the ear.<sup>53</sup> Units of thought could be stressed aurally by use of repetition of phrases, themes, or words, to provide a cumulative and memorable effect for its hearers.<sup>54</sup> And, in my judgement, the first sayings cluster of Q 14:26/14:27 demonstrates precisely this kind of rhetorical activity.

Paul Achtemeier has made an important observation on this kind of organization—aimed primarily at listeners, rather than readers—found in Q. He writes:

51. This phrase, coined by John Niles, describes a useful model for describing the process of composition for some oral-style literature. See John Niles, "Understanding *Beowulf*: Oral Poetry Acts," *JAF* 106 (1993): 131–155.

52. Achtemeier, "Omne verbum sonat," 15.

53. G. A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 14–15, 29, 110; idem, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

54. See Achtemeier, "Omne verbum sonat," 9–19, for a detailed summary of the scholarship on this.

The oral environment of late Western antiquity guaranteed that the sheer act of committing traditions to writing did not eliminate their continued transmission in non-written form, and recent investigations have emphasized the mnemonic structure of non-classical oral tradition materials. It should not be surprising, therefore, that some at least of the mnemonic techniques of oral transmission have left their mark on the written forms of traditions once orally transmitted, and recent investigation has sought to demonstrate their presence.<sup>55</sup>

The mnemonic structure of Q 14:27/14:27/17:33 (shown below) is most easily detected in the repetitions found in the initial sayings cluster (14:26/14:27). The two phrases within Q 14:26—sayings which repeat directives for the disciples' affiliation with different generations of family members—could represent a separate clustering event. Nevertheless, the Q text bears clear marks of oral transmission in its repetition and structure:

The one who does not *hate his father and mother* cannot be my disciple;  
 The one who does not *hate his son and daughter* cannot be my disciple;  
 The one who does not *take up one's cross and follow after me*  
cannot be my disciple.

I claim that the aural effect created by repeating the identical beginning phrase *ὁς οὐ* (“the one who does not”) and the identical ending phrase *οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής* (“cannot be my disciple”) seems the best way to account for the first cluster in which the cross saying appears (Q 14:26/14:27). The mnemonic technique of using *symploche*, a rare combination of *anaphora* (initial repetition) and *epiphora* (end repetition), indicates that the crafter of this sayings cluster produced something of a “rhetorical gem.”<sup>56</sup>

55. Achtemeier, “*Omne verbum sonat*,” 7.

56. For discussion on *anaphora* see R. N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (2d ed.; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 18; N. Turner, *Handbook for Biblical Studies* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 42. See, for example, Q 6:20–23; 7:22–24; 11:39b–44, 46–52. Other biblical examples of this include: Ps 13, 29; 1 Cor 3:9, 10:21, 23; 2 Cor 7:2; Gal 3:28; 4:4–5; 5:26; Phil 2:1; 3:6; 4:12. For discussion on *epiphora* see Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 62; N. Turner, *Handbook for Biblical Studies*, 68. No instances of this occur in Q. New Testament examples of this include: 1 Cor 7:12–13; 9:19–22; 12:4–6; 2 Cor 11:22, 27. For *symploche* see W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 277. Biblical texts which seem to approximate this kind of rhetorical activity include Ps 67 and Mic 5:9–13. I am indebted to H. T. Fledder-

I have argued in this section that the textual form of the cross saying likely corresponds with the oral form preceding it. However, the saying undoubtedly experienced an ongoing process of re-contextualization and application in early Christian communities as part of their living oral tradition. Q 14:27 is part of a sayings cluster on discipleship which bears the marks of its oral transmission. The first important insight on how the cross saying functioned in early Christianity comes from noting its integration with a saying on family relations by the use of repetitive beginning- and end-phrases in Q. The composers of Q convey that discipleship under Jesus must override even the closest human bonds, an obligation linked to taking up the cross in such a way as to imply the ‘death’ of such associations. I shall examine the issue of breaking family bonds as it relates to the cross saying in greater detail in my examination of the Synoptic versions. I agree with A. D. Jacobson’s assessment, however, that, “Both Q 9:59–60a and 14:26 represent radical calls to follow Jesus that entail a de facto attack on the family.”<sup>57</sup>

The cross saying in Q is also connected to a saying about “losing one’s life,” the formation of which can be attributed to thematic attraction (Q 14:27/17:33). As I later demonstrate, both sayings are part of a larger section on the theme of choosing the better of ‘Two Paths.’ But what ‘path’ do the authors of Q propose as the correct one for those attempting to discern the meaning of these sayings? This question seeks to clarify the narrative backdrop assumed by the composer(s) of Q—a narrative essential for interpreting the sayings correctly. Thus, I turn to this larger question in the next section, confirming that the life of Jesus functioned as the implied narrative (and, consequently, his life exemplified the true ‘path’) for interpreting the sayings of Q.

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mann, “The Cross and Discipleship in Q,” in *SBL Seminar Papers 1988* (no. 27; Atlanta: SBL, 1988), 472–81, for the observation that this cluster forms a “rhetorical gem.”

57. On the dissolution of family bonds in Q see A. D. Jacobson, “Divided Families and Christian Origins,” in *The Gospel Behind the Gospels: Current Studies in Q* (NovTSup 75; ed. Ronald Piper; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1995), 363–64. Jacobson rightly notes the “especially shocking” call to forsake a father figure in the context of Jewish families.

## THE IMPLIED NARRATIVE OF Q

The lack of narrative content in Q has resulted in disagreement over how to best understand the various sayings it contains.<sup>58</sup> As an example of a literary genre which places little emphasis on historical settings, Q offers only tentative answers for many of the historical and theological questions we may bring to it. Interpreting the cross saying in Q is difficult because of the need to supply a tacitly-assumed narrative context, and the lack of historical setting is probably responsible for the wide range of scholarly interpretations.

In this section I wish to determine the implied narrative behind these statements for the sake of understanding their meaning for readers of Q. By making a reference to the cross, the authors of Q seem to assume that their readers had an awareness of Jesus' death. I claim that it is reasonable to assume that the death of Jesus functions as the narrative backdrop of this second cross saying cluster because (1) the lack of a narrative framework typified this genre, but often authors assumed a knowledge of the historical setting, and (2) Q does, in fact, offer some evidence of the 'narrative world' from which it originated. Both reasons, which I shall expand upon in brief, help clarify the historical background to which the cross saying implicitly refers.

As a collection of sayings, it would be unrealistic to expect that Q preserves an overt narrative framework, for, more often than not, authors of wisdom literature opted for non-narrative settings for their material. Usually presupposing an historically instituted and communally honoured law-/behaviour-code, wisdom literature functioned primarily to exhort and even persuade the reader toward righteous behaviour in his various daily circumstances.<sup>59</sup> To accomplish this, it sought to *generalize* for an extended audience

58. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 372–74.

59. It has been noted by W. A. Beardslee, "Uses of the Proverb in the Synoptic Gospels," *Int* 24 (1970): 61–73, that, more often than not, the proverbial wisdom preserved in the gospels was functional rather than abstract; it was expected to have meaningful expression within the specific situations of people's daily lives. He has noted that ancient Israel's proverbs and instructional sayings tend to avoid expressing abstract or general truths, and he makes the distinction between "practical wisdom" and "speculative wisdom," stating that the former (apposite) variety of wisdom is the type which occurs most frequently in the wisdom literature of both the Hebrew Bible and the gospels. Speculative wisdom, on the other hand, is scarcer in Israel's literary tradition.

those lessons learned in *specific* historical situations. In other words, instructional/sapiential literature is not a *Gattung* concerned with preserving the precise historical setting of the oral or literary event that produced it.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, too much ‘historicizing’ of *hokmah* would act as a limiting factor on its intended functionality. Instead, one generation would pass down wisdom maxims to subsequent generations, thereby allowing such sapiential sayings to be subjected to endless changes, fresh variations, and novel applications. The historical situation that produced the original *hokmah* was, to some degree, intentionally left behind.<sup>61</sup>

The inter-generational transmission of the cross saying as part of the early Christian Jesus tradition undoubtedly accounts for its placement within Q, being a sapiential sayings collection. The composers of Q apparently felt no urgency requiring them to mention the original historical setting of the cross

60. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition*, 4–5. Here Piper makes an important observation which helps explain the ahistorical and generalizing tendencies of aphoristic sayings: “Partly because they are self-contained, aphoristic sayings can be applied to a variety of contexts and situations. The degree of openness may vary and may be related to the extent of metaphorical imagery which exists for a given saying. . . . It does not seem helpful therefore to distinguish between proverbs and ‘non-proverbial wisdom sentences’ on the basis of degree of hermeneutical openness. But aphoristic sayings will not be restricted to a single specific setting or situation,” and “aphoristic sayings are most frequently expressed in impersonal terms, since they are ostensibly not limited to a particular situation or context.”

61. See M. V. Fox, “Two Decades of Research in Egyptian Wisdom Literature,” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 107 (1980): 120–135. Wisdom tradition could be grounded historically by inserting it within a larger narrative framework. This literary convention provides a key point of contact between instructional sayings and a broader narrative setting. An Egyptian example of this kind of exploitation of a narrative framework can be found in Papyrus Insinger and O.BM 50627. Here, in the *Instructions of Any* and the *Counsels of Šube ’awilum*, the narrative setting of a father–son debate allows the author to develop the theme (the nature of education) much further than possible if the argument were baldly stated without this narrative device. Here the wisdom sayings are uttered by the protagonist in a narrative monologue rather than presented as statements made by a general author. See also Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 168, 173, 176, 185f. Weeks points out that this tendency to provide a back-story for traditions can be found throughout early Jewish literature. The Deuteronomistic historian essentially presents his message as a speech offered by specific characters; hence the law becomes an oration. The need for a “story setting” for some of the psalms was felt so strongly that these texts were later attributed to specific events in the life of David: the ostensible narrative setting was acquired quite secondarily.

saying.<sup>62</sup> Only later, in the act of narrativizing the cross saying, do the Synoptic authors embed it within specific settings and historical events that make apparent their individual ideas about its function (the subject of Chapter Three).

But, since Q maintains no such narrative, does this mean that Q evidences nothing of the historical framework in which the cross saying was originally spoken? In other words, does anything of the broader context of Q (not merely the sayings cluster) offer any insight into how the cross saying was understood?

Kloppenborg has noted that the shape of Q differs from other collections such as the *Gospel of Thomas*, rightly concluding that narrative framing *can* be detected in Q.<sup>63</sup> He has demonstrated that Q possesses a “proclivity” towards narrative, and that the narrative world assumed by Q corresponds to the genre known as the “wisdom tale.”<sup>64</sup> The overall narrative arc detectable in Q—beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, followed by teachings on discipleship, and ending with sayings about the Son of Man and judgement—

62. See W. S. Vorster, “Redaction, Contextualisation and the Sayings of Jesus,” in *Logia: The Sayings of Jesus* (ed. Joël Delobel; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 491–500.

63. Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 89–90.

64. John S. Kloppenborg, “‘Easter Faith’ and the Sayings Gospel Q,” *Semeia* 49 (1990): 71–99. Here Kloppenborg summarizes the work of George Nickelsburg, “The Genre and Function of the Marcan Passion Narrative,” *HTR* 73 (1980): 153–184, who argues that Mark’s Passion narrative follows a pattern discernable in previous “wisdom tales” (examples include Joseph’s story in Gen 37–42; Esth; Dan 3, 6; 3 Macc; and Wis 2–5). Kloppenborg argues that the essential narrative elements of the “wisdom tale” are illustrated in Wis 2–5: “The actions and professed knowledge of God of the righteous man (2:12–13, 16) prove to be a *provocation* to his opponents, who form a *conspiracy* against him (2:12a). That leads to a *trial* and *condemnation* (2:20), resulting in an *ordeal* (2:17, 19) and, eventually, a ‘shameful death’ (2:20). This portion of the story may also depict the *decision* of the hero when faced with the choice of obedience or disobedience to God and his *trust* in God, often framed as a *prayer*. . . . The second main part of the tale relates the rescue of the wise man, who, in Wisdom, only ‘appears’ to die (3:2–4) but in fact possesses immortality (3:4b). He is *vindicated* in the presence of his persecutors, *exalted* and *acclaimed* (5:1–5) while his enemies react in dismay (5:2) and experience *punishment* (5:9–14),” (p. 78, italics his). Kloppenborg then goes on to detail these same narrative elements in the various sayings of Q (p. 79). He continues his argumentation in *Excavating Q*, 372, stating that, “although Q does not narrativize or emplot these elements, most of the narrative functions of the wisdom tale are present.”

retains the narrative shape of other “wisdom tales” and places Q in the Jewish Deuteronomistic-prophetic literary tradition.<sup>65</sup>

I agree with Kloppenborg in his response to those who would attribute Greco–Roman Cynicism as the primary influence on Q. While it is undeniable that some of Q’s sayings have a striking resemblance with those found in some Cynic thought, I contend that there is not enough historical or textual evidence to justify the assertion that Greco–Roman Cynicism functions as the best interpretive framework for Q (a conclusion informed, in part, by my historical analysis of first-century Galilee, explored in Chapter Seven). Rather, the narrative framework of the “wisdom tale,” with its “persecution–death–vindication” schema (and variations) for God’s chosen messengers, accounts best for the text of Q as it stands.

Presupposing instead that the “wisdom tale” functions as the best narrative framework for Q, Kloppenborg addresses the issue of Q’s awareness of Jesus’ death:

Q assumes a ‘narrative world’ in which the death of Jesus was an emplotted element . . . . Instead of choosing to emplot the death of Jesus as a specific situation in this narrative world, however, Q chose rather to treat the narrative elements of the wisdom tale *collectively*. The elements of the wisdom tale refer not exclusively to Jesus’ fate but *generally* to the Q people and to the sages and prophets who preceded them . . . it seems clear not only that Q is well aware of the death of Jesus but that it has also invoked a framework by which to understand its significance. The Deuteronomistic understanding of the prophets is common in Q and thus it seems plausible that Q understands Jesus’ death as an instance of the “typical”—perhaps climactic—prophetic death. Jesus’ death is also seen within the context of a collective interpretation of the “wisdom tale.” Persecution, rejection, suffering, and death are the fate of all God’s envoys and the righteous. Jesus’ fate is an instance of this fate.<sup>66</sup>

65. Hurtado, “Q and Early Devotion to Jesus,” 236–39, shows how the “death–ascent/assumption–future judgement” schema presented in Q should not be contrasted with other schemas found in the New Testament, such as the “death–resurrection” or “humiliation–obedience–exaltation–acclamation” schemata of some Pauline texts. He states, “True, this Deuteronomistic theme has more prominence in Q than in these other writings, and thus Q perhaps shows that the theme played more of a role in early Christian proclamation than might otherwise be thought. But, although Q confirms the range in the repertoire of first-century christological expression, its Deuteronomistic emphasis has clear connections in other New Testament texts,” (pp. 238–39).

66. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 372–73.

Larry Hurtado has also argued persuasively that both the individual sayings units and the macrostructure of Q depend upon an “implicit narrative,” and that the historic reality of Jesus’ death provides the best narrative framework for the interpretation of Q 14:27. In the following passage he shows the inadequacy of arguments from silence which suggest the “Q people” maintained a radically different christology than other early Christian groups (a view held by Kloppenborg, among others).<sup>67</sup> However, the argument also provides further justification for interpreting the Q version of the cross saying in light of Jesus’ own death:

The redactors of Q chose to provide an organized collection of Jesus’ teachings, not a narrative of his ministry (though I contend that a narrative outlook or scheme is presupposed in Q). Accordingly, there is no narrative of his execution, no “passion account.” . . . the choice of the composer(s) of Q to prepare an organized sayings collection, and not to narrate Jesus’ death, means little more than the obvious: as a sayings collection, Q has no extended narration of *anything*, including Jesus’ death.<sup>68</sup>

As part of the instructional genre, Q preserves the teachings of Jesus in a way that expunges the historical settings in which these sayings were first uttered. I have argued, however, that the content of the sayings themselves—as well as their position in Q—does retain a narrative substructure, and that this necessarily informs the interpretation of the sayings. The cross saying, especially in the ways it has clustered, fits well with the broader Deuteronomistic-prophetic perspective found in Q. It also presupposes knowledge of the historical event of the death of Jesus precisely because of the narrative arc detectable in Q corresponding to other narratives of his life. I now clarify how this understanding impacts the interpretation of the cross saying in Q and the accompanying verse Q 17:33, appearing as they do in a collection of sayings on the theme of deciding between ‘Two Paths.’

67. See also Hultgren, *Normative Christianity*, 38; Marinus de Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Responses to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 83–84.

68. Hurtado, “Q and Early Devotion to Jesus,” 241.

THE CROSS SAYING AND  
WISDOM'S 'TWO PATHS'

This section examines the issue of thematic attraction, made evident by the topical arrangement of the cross saying within a larger structural grouping. With varying degrees of specificity, scholars have attempted to outline the apparent topical units of sayings in Q.<sup>69</sup> The cross saying clearly falls within a sub-grouping of sayings which together address the common wisdom theme of the 'Two Paths' (Q 13:24–16:13). This theme appears in both the cross saying and the *logion* following it. Thus, Q 14:27/17:33 clarifies the 'Two Paths' in the following manner:

The one who does not take one's cross and follow after me  
cannot be my disciple.  
The one who finds one's life will lose it,  
and the one who loses one's life for my sake will find it.

Table 8 displays the parameters of this subgroup as well as the variety of subjects addressed therein.

The 'Two Paths' theme can be traced back to the wisdom genre's primary concern with the question: What should one do? At the most basic level, wisdom entails having both the intelligence and the training to make correct judgements for one's own behaviour. Effectively, this means that "wisdom demands a choice between two ways, and this choice distinguishes two peo-

69. Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 90–92, provides a summary of groupings made by Q. T. W. Manson and J. D. Crossan (both of whom propose only four main divisions), along with those of A. Polag (with eleven divisions) and W. Schenk (with fourteen). Kloppenborg's own grouping, presented here, exhibits only minor disagreement with Schenk's: (1) John's preaching of the Coming One, Q 3:7–9, 16–7; (2) The temptation of Jesus, Q 4:1–13; (3) Jesus' inaugural sermon, Q 6:20b–49; (4) John, Jesus and "this generation," Q 7:18–28; (16:16); 7:31–35; (5) Discipleship and mission, Q 9:57–62; 10:2–24; (6) On prayer, Q 11:2–4, 9–13; (7) Controversies with Israel, Q 11:14–52; (8) On fearless preaching, Q 12:2–12; (9) On anxiety over material needs, Q 12:(13–14, 16–21), 22–31, 33–34; (10) Preparedness for the end, Q 12:39–59; (11) Two parables of growth, Q 13:18–19, 20–21; (12) The two ways, Q 13:24–30, 34–35; 14:16–24, 26–27; 17:33; 14:33–34; (13) Various parables and sayings, Q 15:3–7; 16:13, 17–18; 17:1–6; (14) The eschatological discourse, Q 17:23–37; 19:12–27; 22:28–30.

Q SAYING	SUBJECT
13:24	The Narrow Door—Few Enter and Most Cannot
13:25–27	The Master Refuses Those He Does Not Know
13:28–29	Some Dining With the Patriarchs—Others Barred
13:30	Reversal of the First and the Last
13:34–35	Jerusalem Rejects God’s Messengers
14:11	The Humble Exalted and The Exalted Humbled
14:16–24	Two Kinds of Dinner Guests
14:26	Hating Parents and Hating Siblings
<b>14:27</b>	<b>Bearing the Cross and Following Jesus</b>
17:33	Finding or Losing Life
14:34–35	Good Salt or Useless Salt
16:13	God or Mammon

TABLE 8. The cross saying within the topical sub-grouping of ‘Two Paths’ sayings in Q.

ples.”<sup>70</sup> The view that *hokmah* was able to provide an individual with the ability to stay on the path which leads to life (i.e., the path approved by Yahweh) was unique to the Israelite wisdom tradition.<sup>71</sup> In some cases, wisdom calls people to make a decision between paths which literally leads to life or death (e.g. Prov 2:11–5, 20; 3:17, 23; 4:11–12, etc.).<sup>72</sup> One’s orientation to Yahweh, another distinct emphasis of Israelite wisdom, was revealed in the path so chosen (cf. Mt 7:24–27; 25:1–13).<sup>73</sup>

Even when read independently of its wider context, the cross saying calls upon the hearer to make a decision to pursue the path of Jesus (“the one who does not take up one’s cross and *follow me . . .*”). And, analogous to wisdom sayings where one’s orientation to Yahweh is bound up in the decision, Q’s sayings require a decisive response to the person of Jesus. The cross saying is not alone in Q in highlighting the prominence of Jesus. About the decisiveness of Jesus in Q, Hurtado notes:

70. Stephen Barton, “Gospel Wisdom,” in *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Wisdom in the Bible, the Church, and the Contemporary World* (ed. S. Barton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 95.

71. Barton, “Gospel Wisdom,” 26.

72. See N. C. Habel, “The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9,” *Int* 26 (1972): 131–157.

73. Weeks, “Wisdom in the Old Testament,” 20.

Q was a shaped literary expression devoted to Jesus, and expressive of his impact and continuing importance for those who composed it and fellow followers of Jesus for whom they composed it. At every point in Q, readers must decide whether to assent to what is said, and at every point, either explicitly or implicitly, that assent depends upon a judgment about Jesus.<sup>74</sup>

In other words, aphorisms in Q show Jesus' teaching as more than just practical advice for 'successful living.' Kloppenborg notes that, "To characterize Q as 'sapiential' is not, therefore, to imply a depiction of Jesus as a teacher of this-worldly, prudential wisdom. . . ." <sup>75</sup> That the Q sayings tend to require a direct response to the person of Jesus, an emphasis sustained in their Synoptic presentations, offers additional confirmation that the historical events of his life serve as their proper interpretive framework. In other words, the 'path' of the disciple was none other than that already taken by Jesus.

In common with earlier Israelite wisdom, the cross saying presents the choice for faithful discipleship, exhorting the hearer to a way of life approved by God and exemplified principally by the life of Jesus; but the cross saying creates a disturbing juxtaposition by presenting the 'path to life' as unavoidably linked to his death.<sup>76</sup> Thus, it seems likely that the need for an explanation of this juxtaposition caused the creation of the Q cluster 14:27/17:33. In effect, 17:33 functions as a commentary on 14:27 by outlining the ramifications of deciding to follow or to depart from the path of Jesus: "the one who loses his life for my sake will find it." For this reason, it appears that the three sayings of Q 14:26/14:27/17:33 circulated as two separate clusters at one time with the cross saying functioning as the similarity between them, and subsequently appearing as a singular literary complex in Q.

## Summary

This chapter has shown that the *position* of the cross saying in Q provides essential information for discerning its function at the time of Q's composi-

74. Hurtado, "Q and Early Devotion to Jesus," 245.

75. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 388.

76. *Gos. Thom.* 55 ("and bear the cross as I do . . .") makes this connection even more explicit.

tion. In accepting the IQP version of the cross saying, it becomes apparent that it acts simultaneously as the terminus of one cluster (14:26/14:27) and as the head of another (14:27/17:33). Since there is no textual evidence that the sayings presented in Q 14:26/14:27/17:33 ever existed independently of each other, the phenomenon of clustering ensures that the Q version of the cross saying provides a built-in interpretive framework.

Likewise, the effects of oral transmission can be detected in the first cross saying cluster (14:26/14:27), wherein Jesus states uncompromisingly the disciples' requirement to break family bonds and "take up the cross." In the 'narrative world' assumed by Q, namely the historical life of Jesus, we see how the second sayings cluster (14:27/17:33) functions to clarify the 'path to life,' a subject frequently addressed in wisdom literature. For the composers of Q, Jesus' death was considered paradigmatic; his death provided an exemplar for disciples who may suffer persecution (even death) as part of the line of prophetic figures before them.

In the next chapter, I shall observe that at least one of the Synoptic redactions of the cross saying attempts to tone down the radical demands of the Q version of the cross saying. As I contend throughout this thesis—while Q presents the cross saying in stark and literal language, readers must be prepared for metaphorical applications to begin to appear in the tradition adapted by later generations of Christians.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE SYNOPTIC VERSIONS OF THE CROSS SAYING

HAVING analyzed the cross saying in a hypothetical document (Q), used to solve a problem of shared sources in two books of the New Testament, this diachronic investigation of the history and function of the cross saying in earliest Christianity now moves to the occurrences of the saying in those very texts. Here we must analyze its various literary functions within three books of the New Testament which were later canonized and grouped together under the more general heading of ‘gospels.’<sup>1</sup> In order to gain the fullest understanding of the cross saying in these literary contexts, I will, at the outset of this chapter, need to make a few brief comments concerning the genre and purpose of the Synoptics in earliest Christianity.

Concurrently, because this chapter presents a diachronic analysis of the literary function of the cross saying in each Synoptic gospel, it is necessary to provide a justification for beginning with Mark rather than Matthew (traditionally positioned first in the NT canon), or even with Luke. Regarding this issue, I am persuaded (along with a majority of NT scholars) that the evidence

1. Exactly when this occurred is uncertain. Many academics think that the designation ‘gospel’ was attached at some point during the second century, perhaps concurrent with the addition of titles associating the books with apostles (i.e., gospel according to Matthew, gospel according to John) and apostolic associates (i.e., gospel according to Mark, gospel according to Luke). See Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM Press; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000). Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), 259 ff., refers to these texts as “Jesus books,” to indicate that they “represent a distinctive kind of early Christian literary work” as adaptations of Roman-era βίβλι.

points to Mark pre-dating both Matthew and Luke.<sup>2</sup> It is not my purpose here to engage at length those issues surrounding the Synoptic Problem and the accompanying plethora of scholarship devoted to it. Accordingly, for the following reasons—each of which I find convincing, and for which I offer detailed argumentation in this chapter—I shall assume Markan priority: (1) the cross saying in Mark seems to be a *parallel* tradition to the Q version, and (2) the Synoptic authors apparently incorporated Mark’s version of the cross saying virtually wholesale into their own works.

Starting with Mark, then moving on to Matthew, and finally examining Luke, this chapter examines the literary distinctiveness of the cross saying in each respective gospel. Using a common methodological approach for the analysis of the Synoptic versions of the cross saying, I shall comment on each author’s particular redaction and reconstruction of the saying. After making these observations, I shall also examine the literary context, noting how the cross saying has been positioned within each respective narrative.<sup>3</sup>

## The Genre and Function of the Synoptic Tradition in Earliest Christianity

What does it mean for our understanding of the cross saying that the early Christians incorporated it into the texts which came to be known as ‘gospels’? The fundamental purpose of these writings—and an insight into how the earliest Christians utilized them—is revealed by a clarification of their genre. Over the past three decades several scholars have sought a more precise cate-

2. See the opening section of Chapter Two for additional comments on the Synoptic Problem.

3. I agree with Dwight Peterson, *The Origins of Mark: The Markan Community in Current Debate* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000), 151–202, esp. 156–159, who points out that endeavours to reconstruct gospel communities are fraught with an uncertainty. Accordingly, I have relegated observations relating to how the cross saying might have functioned for the different gospel audiences to Appendix B.

gorization for the literary genre employed by the gospel authors.<sup>4</sup> After comparison of the Synoptic gospels with contemporaneous ancient literature possessing similar features, many scholars have found it necessary to move beyond previously held (and somewhat inadequate) perspectives of these documents as being simply ‘biographies of Jesus,’ or even (as some have proposed) unique texts with no actual literary equivalence in the ancient world whatsoever. Some scholars, however, still hold these views.<sup>5</sup>

The recent effort of Richard Burridge consolidates much work done in this area, drawing similarities between the gospels and the ancient Roman-era *βίοι*.<sup>6</sup> While the broad designation *βίος* seems to offer the best category in which to place the canonical gospels (due to their similarity with other literature of the time), the purpose for which the early Christians wrote them cannot be understood as a strict analogue of typical *βίοι* from this period.<sup>7</sup> Rather, the canonical gospels exhibit a more complex and inimitable convergence of “form, content and function” than that found in either Roman or Jewish biographies of the time.<sup>8</sup> As the only surviving Christian texts of their

4. The following authors delineate the literary characteristics of the gospels: David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 46–63; William Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 14–29; Edgar McKnight, “Literary Criticism,” *DJG*, 473–81.

5. See, for example, John Meier, “Matthew, Gospel of,” in *ABD*, 4:622–641.

6. Richard Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), esp. 74–101 for a helpful summary of the current debate in clarifying the genre of the gospels.

7. See Perry V. Kea, “Writing a *bios*: Matthew’s Genre Choices and Rhetorical Situation,” in *SBL 1994 Seminar Papers* (ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 574–86, who makes important remarks about the mutability of genre, and thus the “historically localized nature of genre” in relation to Synoptic tradition.

8. I cite these as the central defining characteristics of any literary type as noted by Aune, *The New Testament*, 24. There is no exact correlation between Jewish biographies of the time and the canonical gospels. Various comparisons have been made between the gospels and rabbinic texts which extol the teachings and ‘lives’ of revered figures such as Abraham and Moses. Philip Alexander has concluded that there are no true parallels to the canonical gospels in rabbinic writings: P. Alexander, “Rabbinic Biography and the Biography of Jesus: A Survey of the Evidence,” in *Synoptic Studies: The Ampleforth Conferences of 1982 and 1983* (JSNTSup 7; ed. C. M. Tuckett; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 19–50; similarly, Jacob Neusner, *Why No Gospels in Talmudic Judaism?* (BJS 135; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1988), 33–47; idem, *In Search of Talmudic Biography: The Problem of the Attributed Sayings* (BJS 70; Chico,

kind from the first century, the canonical gospels preserve in narrative form those events of Jesus' life considered *theologically significant* by each respective author. Moreover, the use of these texts went beyond merely being read as 'inspirational literature' within the early Christian communities for whom they were written. Larry Hurtado asserts:

Obviously, the authors did not aspire simply to contribute literary biographies of Jesus to the larger world of Roman-era literature. This is reflected by the authors not thinking it important to attach their names to their accounts. Moreover . . . for them Jesus was not simply a great man who exemplified traits of character to be emulated. Instead, all four sought to promote the Christian view of Jesus as a uniquely significant figure, the singular vehicle of God's redemptive purposes. These authors saw their writings as part of the larger early Christian activities of proclamation, consolidation of converts, defense of faith, and formation of group identity. These wider and prior activities are the immediate context and the particular impetus of the canonical gospels.<sup>9</sup>

Except for the version of the cross saying contained in the *Gospel of Thomas* (the subject of Chapter Four), we have no access to applications of this aphorism that might differ from those preserved textually in the Synoptics. Nevertheless, these instances provide enough data to confirm that the earliest Christians found the cross saying meaningful in more than one way. While it is entirely possible that there might have been additional applications, the Synoptics unmistakably exhibit at least three distinct contexts for discipleship: (1) disassociation with family, which can lead to division and death; (2) preparedness for martyrdom for one's association with Jesus; and (3) acceptance of condemnation and 'shaming' as a criminal during one's present life, in order to receive honour at the "coming of the Son of Man." Therefore, the overall purpose of this chapter will be to demonstrate, through analysis of the gospel accounts, that early Christians found cross-bearing meaningful in these three ways.

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Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984); idem, *Are There Really Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels?* (SFSHJ 80; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 131–59.

9. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 278–79.

## The Cross Saying in the Gospel of Mark

Mark contains one of the five occurrences of the cross saying in the Synoptic tradition. The author of Mark placed this version of the cross saying at the head of a small unit of sayings on discipleship—a collection which functions as the pedagogical climax of Jesus’ ‘Passion prediction’ at Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27–38). Since the production of Mark presumably occurred earlier than the other canonical gospels, it is important that hypotheses concerning the literary relationship between Mark and Q are evaluated first.

### MARK 8:34B AND Q 14:27: EVIDENCE FOR A PARALLEL TRADITION

*Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.<sup>10</sup>*

And summoning the crowds together with his disciples he said to them: “If anyone desires to follow after me, he must renounce himself, pick up his cross, and follow me.” (Mk 8:34)

*ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.*

The one who does not take one’s cross and follow after me cannot be my disciple. (Q 14:27)

H. T. Fleddermann has argued—and his view represents that of a handful of other scholars, notably Jan Lambrecht—that Mark’s version of the cross saying, while containing significant differences from Q, does exhibit basic liter-

10. I note that *ὅστις* appears in AC<sup>2</sup>Θℳsy<sup>h</sup>, whereas *ἄλλοι* appears in *ℳBC\*DLWΔο214f<sup>1-13</sup>28.33.565.700.892.al lattsy<sup>hmg</sup>* contain the text as presented. Another minor textual variation worth noting appears in the manuscript tradition, and it most likely represents editorial assimilation to Mt 16:24/Lk 9:23. The following mss contain *ἔλθειν* (“come”): *ℳABC<sup>2</sup>KLΓf<sup>13</sup>33.892.1241alaurc(k)lbo*, rather than *ἀκολουθεῖν* (“follow”), which is represented in: *ℳ<sup>45</sup>C\*DWΘο214f<sup>1</sup>ℳlat*. Two mss contain both *ἔλθειν* and *ἀκολουθεῖν*: *Δsa<sup>mss</sup>*. Peculiarly, 2427 is the only known manuscript to omit the saying entirely.

ary dependency upon the earlier text.<sup>11</sup> Since Fleddermann has published the most extensive argumentation that the author of Mark redacted Q's version of the cross saying, I shall interact primarily with his work, thereby offering the reasons why I disagree with his conclusions.<sup>12</sup> According to my evaluation, a detailed comparison of Mark 8:34b with Q 14:27 plainly reveals that the authors did not have access to the same sources; rather, they preserve separate versions of a saying derived from parallel (oral) traditions.

Citing the cross saying as a "classic overlap text" between Q and Mark, Fleddermann initially acknowledges that they exhibit two "very different formulations" of the cross saying.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, he goes on to insist upon Markan dependency on Q for two reasons: (1) He cannot find the cross saying (or a version thereof) elsewhere in the New Testament—"The silence in Paul is particularly significant"<sup>14</sup>—and consequently he argues that there is no evidence of its prior transmission via oral tradition; and (2) he believes that the textual evidence suggests that the cross saying was a creation of the authors of

11. The following scholars address the issue of Mark's supposed dependence on Q: M. Devisch, "La relation entre l'évangile de Marc et le document Q," in *L'évangile selon Marc: Tradition et redaction* (BETL 34; ed. M. Sabbe; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 59–91; P. Vassiliadis, "Prolegomena to a Discussion on the Relationship Between Mark and the Q-Document," *DeltBM* 3 (1975): 31–46; Rudolf Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen der Logienquelle und des Markusevangeliums* (BBB 54; Königstein/Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1980), 59–92; F. Neriynck, "Recent Developments in the Study of Q," in *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus—The Sayings of Jesus: Méorial Joseph Coppens* (BETL 59; ed. J. Delobel; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 29–75; J. Schüling, *Studien zum Verhältnis von Logienquelle und Markusevangelium* (FB 65; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1991), 167–187; C. M. Tuckett, "Mark and Q," in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*, (BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 149–175; H. T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q: A Study of the Overlap Texts* (BETL 122; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), 8–16; J. Lambrecht, "Q-Influence on Mark 8,34–9,1," in *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus—The Sayings of Jesus: Méorial Joseph Coppens* (BETL 59; ed. J. Delobel; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 277–304, esp. 285–88.

12. H. T. Fleddermann's published work with references to the cross saying includes: "The Cross and Discipleship in Q," in *SBL 1988 Seminar Papers* (ed. D. J. Lull; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 472–82; *Mark and Q*, 133–141; "Mark's Use of Q: The Beelzebul Controversy and the Cross Saying," in *Jesus, Mark and Q* (JSNTSup 214; eds. Michael Laban and Andreas Schmidt; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 17–33, esp. 27–33.

13. *Ibid.*, "Mark's Use of Q," 30.

14. *Ibid.*, 30.

Q rather than being dominical. Since I think that Fleddermann's observation of Markan redactions actually seems to argue *against* his conclusions, I will address these two points first, before more closely evaluating the supposed Markan redactions of the Q text.

To suggest that the cross saying was an invention of the authors of Q simply because it appears nowhere else in the New Testament (in particular the Pauline corpus) places an unreasonable expectation on these other biblical texts, because not every literary type is inclined to preserve and incorporate aphorisms. It goes without saying that the absence of a particular aphorism of Jesus in Paul's various correspondences should not, by default, make that saying suspect. Were that test for authenticity applied universally to the Jesus tradition, nearly *all* of the aphorisms found in the Synoptic gospels would fail. For example, not only does Paul neglect to catalogue many of Jesus' aphoristic teachings, but he seems to include material from the Jesus tradition not expressly found in the Synoptics.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, we have no evidence that Paul's writing ever utilized the *βίος* form or genre: all of Paul's extant texts correspond to contemporaneous Graeco-Roman letter formats and rhetorical styles, as appropriate for his direct influence over specific churches.

To be sure, Paul consistently applied the Jesus tradition to Christian converts, but rarely did he quote it verbatim.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in my view, if we must look to Paul for confirmation of the historical authenticity and impact of a particular saying or tradition originating from Jesus, a better criterion would be that of finding its *application* in a section of Pauline polemic or pastoral writing. By this measure, Paul not only knew of the cross saying, but apparently formulated cognate versions of it which appear in letters to both the Romans and Galatians (see Chapter Five). This would suggest that he found the idea expressed in the cross saying useful for his own thinking and teaching.<sup>17</sup>

15. David Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul: The Use of the Synoptic Tradition in the Regulation of Early Church Life* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1971), 139–150.

16. *Ibid.*, 146–147.

17. Fleddermann, "Mark's Use of Q," 30–31, takes a different perspective: "The cross forms a major theme in Paul's theology, and Paul returns to it again and again. The cross is God's power and weakness, God's wisdom and folly (1 Cor 1:18–25). Paul talks about being crucified with Christ (Gal 2:19), and he can talk about enemies of the cross of Christ

In other words, Paul's writings contain exactly the sort of evidence that one would expect to find for confirmation that later generations of believers continued to find the cross saying tradition meaningful. While Pauline rhetoric could, in theory, have given rise to the formulations we find in the gospels (i.e., later authors expressing Paul's thoughts on Jesus' archetypal death in epigraphic forms), I argue (again, in Chapter Five) that this seems very unlikely. In my view, the evidence suggests that Paul's language presupposes the dominical sayings. Against Fleddermann's accusation that there is no evidence that Paul knew of the cross saying is the fact that Paul formulated cognate versions of the saying in his writing to subsequent generations of Christians. There he makes the same connection between Jesus' death and the life of the disciple expressed in the Synoptic requirement to "take up the cross."

Since Fleddermann sees "no evidence that the Cross saying circulated in the oral tradition prior to Q," he instead postulates that the authors of Q actually composed the cross saying themselves. Regarding Q 14:26–27, he argues that the "extraordinarily dense rhetorical features prove that the sayings form an original unit and were not at one time separate sayings that were secondarily adapted to one another."<sup>18</sup> Fleddermann states correctly that there are no data which confirm that the sayings found in Q 14:26–27 ever circulated independently of each other. However, I contend that the same "extraordinarily dense rhetorical features" which Fleddermann points to as proof of *literary* editorial work actually bear the marks of *oral* transmission typically preserved in the sayings collection genre (the genre of Q). I shall not rehearse here the detailed examination of the Q 14:26–27 cluster featured in Chapter Two. Rather, I repeat here for emphasis what Fleddermann has overlooked in his own analysis of these texts: that the sayings cluster of Q 14:26–27 produces an aural effect which functions as a mnemonic device. In other words, the

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(Phil 3:18), but nowhere does Paul say that the Christians should take up the cross or carry the cross." Here, Fleddermann fails to make the essential connection between the original saying and its application by a later generation of Christians. While it is true that Paul does not specifically state that Christians should "take up the cross," the idea of Jesus' death by crucifixion as paradigmatic for Christian discipleship occurs in several places in Paul's writings (e.g., Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 8:11; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5–11, etc.). See Charles B. Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

18. Fleddermann, "Mark's Use of Q," 31.

Q 14:27	MARK 8:34B
<p>οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μοι, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.</p>	<p>εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.</p>

TABLE 9. Comparison of the cross saying in Q and Mark.

dynamics of oral transmission—not literary consolidation—produced the cluster wherein appears the Q version of the cross saying. Thus, we can best account for the manner of its preservation in Q by bearing in mind the genre and purpose of this text; which is to say that we must persistently acknowledge the essential connection between this text and orality, since it appears in a *sayings* gospel.<sup>19</sup>

In all likelihood, Q predates any of our Synoptic texts, making Fleddermann’s proposals about the “creativity” of the composers of Q an exceedingly thorny endeavour. Where is the proof for such an assertion? The numerous syntactical variations and the basic contextual dissimilarities which appear in comparing Q 14:26–27 with Mark 8:34 make unlikely the suggestion that Mark exhibits a literary dependency on Q. In addition, Mark’s phrase ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν (“he must renounce himself”) introduces a metaphorical application to cross-bearing not present in Q. Taken as a whole, these differences suggest that Mark had no access to Q and that the two therefore preserve parallel traditions.

Justification for this claim comes mainly from a comparison of the essential structures of Q 14:26–27 and Mark 8:34. The Q version contains relative clauses explicating the conditions of discipleship, followed by a main clause, all expressed in negative terms. Conversely, Mark 8:34b contains a conditional clause followed by three imperatives, all of which are expressed in a

19. For example, as part of Jewish wisdom tradition, Q preserves mainly the pithy, memorable aphorisms of Jesus; interaction with Q meant reading it aloud; and certainly, to some extent, Q’s content informed the oral presentations (that is, the preaching and teaching) of some of the early Christians.

positive manner. Fleddermann's argument for Markan redaction proves unconvincing in that it must account for differences in nearly *every* part of the saying.<sup>20</sup> Both his and Lambrecht's arguments fail to produce the kind of evidence necessary to prove literary dependency: namely, where do Q's own redactions appear in Mark?<sup>21</sup> Since these features simply do not exist, the requirements needed to prove that Mark knew Q cannot be met by comparison of structure in this case. While there is *thematic* similarity between these texts, the likelihood that this is a case of literary dependency seems highly unlikely, especially when one notes the shared features of these texts: a similarity that consists of only five identical, variously positioned words (as demonstrated in Table 9). Instead, I claim that the differences in structure between the Q version of the cross saying and Mark's version point to the fact that these two sources preserve parallel traditions rather than exhibiting any kind of verifiable literary dependency.<sup>22</sup>

What is more, the respective contexts in which Q and Mark preserve the cross saying are very dissimilar. Q 14:27 functions as the culmination of three sayings which explain the costs of discipleship in stark terms. On the other hand, Mark 8:34b introduces a collection of sayings on discipleship which relates directly to the failure of the Twelve to comprehend Jesus' teaching near Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27–33). Fleddermann, however, does not address the fact that Mark 8 contains no statement about the abandonment of family, that being the immediate context of the cross saying in Q. Instead, he

20. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 138–141; "Mark's Use of Q," 28–33.

21. Lambrecht, "Q-Influence," 279–82. Both Lambrecht and Fleddermann's reasoning proceeds from an assumption which remains unsubstantiated in their arguments: i.e., merely offering possible reasons for the many *differences* between Mk 8:34 and Q 14:26–27 does not mean that the authors have thereby justified their initial presumption that these texts must automatically have a direct literary connection.

22. For similar conclusions, see: H. N. Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in its Historical and Social Context* (SupNT 114; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), 38–42; Ronald Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teachings of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 197–202, esp. 200–202; for additional arguments against Fleddermann and Lambrecht's proposal of "Q-influence" in this section of Mk 8, see Henk Jan de Jonge, "The Sayings on Confessing and Denying Jesus in Q 12:8–9 and Mark 8:38," in *Sayings of Jesus—Canonical and Non-Canonical: Essays in Honour of Tjitze Baarda* (SupNT 84; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1997), 105–121.

provides an explanation for some of the textual variations between Q 14:27 and Mark 8:34b by suggesting that Mark must have lifted the cross saying and inserted it into a less than suitable context. Specifically, Fleddermann points to τὸν ὄχλον (“the crowds”) as the main justification for his thesis of a Markan redaction of Q’s cross saying.<sup>23</sup> Imagining that the author composed this section of the text with the crowds in mind, Fleddermann accounts for both the positive recasting of the cross saying and the repetition of ἀκολουθεῖτω at the saying’s conclusion. Once again, however, it is only by operating on the prior *assumption* that Mark had access to Q that he can draw such conclusions. Since the textual evidence suggests that Mark did *not* know Q, we should consider these Markan redactions (of a parallel tradition) as nothing more than the natural artefacts of embedding aphoristic material within a narrative.<sup>24</sup>

I do agree, however, with Fleddermann’s proposal that Mark’s verbs echo those found later in the Passion narrative of his gospel. The imperative ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν seems to be an interpretive addition to the cross saying, whereby Mark foreshadows Peter’s denial in the Passion narrative with the use of the same verb.<sup>25</sup> We cannot know for certain whether Mark coined this metaphorical phrase, or if he preserved an interpretation that had already been added by Christians who quoted or applied it.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the verb ἀράτω (“take up”) may function as a precursor for the activities of Simon of

23. Fleddermann, “Mark’s Use of Q,” 29, where he argues, “The most significant difference between Mark’s saying and the Q saying is Mark’s positive formulation. Mark’s context makes it probable that the shift comes from Mark. In his introductory verse (Mk 8.34a), Mark has Jesus address both the disciples and the crowd. The crowd in Mark is basically friendly towards Jesus, and they are potential disciples. For this reason, the positive formulation which aims to win acceptance fits Mark’s context better than the uncompromising negative formulation of Q, so it is likely that Mark is responsible for the positive form of the saying.” Likewise, in *Mark and Q*, 139, he states, “If we examine the Marcan context, it becomes apparent that all the differences between Mark and Q result from Marcan redaction . . . Mark writes a special introduction for the collection: καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς (Mark 8:34a).”

24. On this phenomenon, see my comments in Chapter Two, in the section entitled “The Implied Narrative of Q.”

25. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 140. Both compound and simple forms of the verb appear: ἀπαρνέομαι (Mk 8:30, 31, 72); ἀρνέομαι (Mk 14:68, 70).

26. The addition of this interpretive phrase may indicate that Mark preserves a version of the cross saying dated later than Q’s more literal version.

<i>Date C.E.</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Provenance</i>
30	<b>Dominical Saying of Jesus</b>	Aramaic	Judea/ Galilee
40	<b>Oral Tradition</b>	Aramaic/ Greek	Palestine/ Diaspora
50	<b>Q 14:26–27</b>	Greek	Palestine
60			
70	<b>Mk 8:34</b>	Greek	Rome

KEY

— Probable route of transmission  
 - - - - - Less probable route of transmission  
 - - - - - Unverified route of transmission

TABLE 10. Transmission of the cross saying from the possible dominical origin to the parallel tradition of Q 14:26–27 and Mark 8:34.

Cyrene (Mk 15:21, ἀρρη).<sup>27</sup> As I explore more fully in the following section, the cross saying in Mark 8:34 undoubtedly conforms on a literary (stylistic) level to other sections of Mark's gospel.

I make two conclusions concerning Markan redaction of the cross saying: (1) Mark's version of the cross saying bears a strong literary resemblance to other parts of the author's own work, especially in the Passion narrative, and (2) Mark 8:34b simply fails to evidence any kind of literary dependency upon Q. This would therefore strongly suggest that Mark knew of the cross saying from another source, a parallel tradition that repeated and adapted the cross saying, as shown in Table 10.

27. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, 141.

MARK 8:34B IN ITS  
LITERARY CONTEXT

In its broadest literary context—the entirety of Mark’s gospel—the function of the cross saying is to clarify the disciple’s overall commission to “follow after” Jesus (1:17–18, 20). Mark begins his narrative with Jesus’ own commission from God (1:11), initiating a story arc wherein the implications for that charge gradually unfold during the course of his ministry. Jesus responds to the disclosure of his eventual fate of execution—described simultaneously as the result of God’s calling and as the plot of the religious leaders in response to Jesus’ activity—by accepting and ultimately fulfilling it. By way of contrast, Mark repeatedly describes the disciples as only dimly perceiving their own commission to “come after” Jesus, and in the end they reject any possibility of suffering with him (14:17–21, 44–50).

In terms of Mark’s literary intent, the disciples’ story clearly functions as a parallel/contrast to Jesus’ own story. Many scholars note the use of three-fold patterns throughout the narrative structure of the gospel, which apparently serve to accentuate those aspects of the story most central to Mark’s presentation of Jesus and his disciples.<sup>28</sup> Clearly, the author has shaped the story through these repetitive sequencings in order to control the reader’s evaluation of the characters’ actions. In his assessment of Mark’s rhetorical intentions, Robert Tannehill notes:

28. See, e.g., Vernon K. Robbins, “Summons and Outline in Mark: The Three-Step Progression,” *NovT* 23, 2 (1981): 97–114, which includes specific analysis of how *προσκαλέομαι* “. . . is used with special frequency in the Gospel of Mark. The term occurs not only in viii 27–x 45 but also throughout the narrative as a means of introducing a scene in which Jesus challenges, instructs, and commands those who gather around him. . . . Analysis of the settings in which special summoning occurs reveals the presence of three-part scenes equidistantly spaced throughout the Gospel. These three-part scenes function as interludes that establish the narrative program on the basis of interaction between Jesus and his disciples. These interludes bring themes and activities from the preceding narrative to a conclusion in the same context in which they introduce themes and activities that direct the narrative program in the next section of the Gospel. These interludes function, therefore, as formal transition scenes that divide the narrative on the basis of sequential stages of interaction between Jesus and his disciples,” (pp. 105–106). Thus: Mk 1:14–20; 3:7–19; 6:1–13; 8:27–9:1; 10:46–11:11; 13:1–37.

Judgements of good and bad are influenced by certain norms and standards suggested within the story. . . . In the Gospel of Mark it is clear that Jesus is the central figure of authority. The author does not wish to cast doubt on Jesus' words but wishes to affirm them as true and important. Jesus and the author, then, speak with one voice, and the words and deeds of Jesus provide the norms in light of which the actions of other characters should be evaluated. This is particularly true for the disciples who are called to follow Jesus. The author intends us to judge the behaviour of the disciples by whether they are in harmony or conflict with the words and deeds of Jesus. Thus, the call to take up one's cross and destroy one's life in 8:34–35 is not only a new statement of the disciple's commission but also a new statement of the norm by which the disciples are to be judged. Once again we see that these verses have an important function in the total narrative: They state the norm by which the author expects us to judge the disciples' subsequent behaviour.<sup>29</sup>

For Mark's audience, the Passion narrative eventually relates the story of how Jesus fulfils his commission and how the disciples fall short. It cannot be doubted that Mark intends his readers to identify on some level with the disciples as they are depicted in the text. While their initial presentation seems positive, the readers soon find that the disciples suffer from an inability to perceive Jesus' destiny—or their own role in this story. Peter, as representative of the group, appears to make a breakthrough in his revelatory statement in 8:29. He experiences short-lived success, however, when he and Jesus immediately clash over their respective notions of the proper destiny of the messiah. The story progresses to a demoralizing end for the disciples in view of their failure to remain faithful to Jesus amidst his passion (14:28), albeit with a glimmer of hope for a resolution (16:7).<sup>30</sup> Again, Tannehill makes a suggestion regarding Mark's literary purpose.

The resolution awaits a new decision to follow Jesus, one which must begin with the admission of past failure. Thus the story is a weapon for tearing apart and tearing open our comfortable assurances that we are adequate disciples. By involvement in a story we become aware of the gap between what we are called to be and do, represented by Jesus' decisions, and what we actually are, represented by the disciples' false choices.<sup>31</sup>

29. Robert C. Tannehill, "Reading It Whole: The Function of Mark 8:34–35 in Mark's Story," *QR* 2 (1982): 73.

30. I consider Mk 16:8 to be the ending of this gospel, as do many scholars.

31. Tannehill, "Reading It Whole," 76.

The cross saying appears within a larger block of material which provides an important context for its function in Mark. As already noted, most scholars perceive this section as the ‘theological fulcrum’ of the gospel as a whole. For, beginning in 8:22, the focus shifts away from the ministry of Jesus in the hinterland of Galilee to the passion of Jesus in the city of Jerusalem; from serving and teaching the rural proletariat to a confrontation with the urban religious elite, ending in Jesus’ execution. Mark orients his readers towards this outcome by beginning this section with the first of three ‘Passion predictions’ (cf. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34), in which Jesus discloses his identity as the messiah, and outlines the portentous ramifications of that truth for both himself and his followers.

In what way does the imminent journey to Jerusalem, described in the larger literary section containing the cross saying, colour its interpretation? In my view, this extended section of material dealing with Jesus’ impending death, and how his destiny affects discipleship, actually starts with Mark 8:22 and reaches to 10:52.<sup>32</sup> Prior to this point in the gospel narrative, opposition to Jesus had mounted steadily (2:6–12, 16, 18, 24; 3:2–4, 21–35; 6:1–6; 7:1–13), but with no specific mention of retribution ending in internment and crucifixion. Now, however, Jesus’ actions and instructions clarify his identity and destiny in such a way as to dash his disciples’ triumphalist expectations. The disciples must also face the reality that their own identities and destinies are inexorably tied to that of Jesus. The entire ‘journey narrative’ of Mark 8:22–10:52 serves, as John Donahue observes, to “... clarify who Jesus is (Christology) and what it means to follow him (discipleship). The key to understanding Jesus properly will turn out to be the mystery of the cross.”<sup>33</sup>

Of note is the gospel author’s placement of two healings at the parameters of this literary unit: a blind man of Bethsaida (8:22–26), and blind Bartholo-

32. Many commentators begin the section with 8:27. I am, however, in agreement with Ernest Best that there are solid exegetical reasons for a slightly expanded section beginning with 8:22. I shall soon argue in this section that the healings of blind men on either side of this section of Mk function to illustrate the need for the disciples to receive ‘spiritual sight’ regarding the identity of Jesus. See Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel According to Mark* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), 2–3.

33. John Donahue, *The Gospel of Mark* (SP; vol. 2; ed. Daniel Harrington; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 264–65.

mew (10:46–52). These healings effectively ‘sandwich’ a section of text where Jesus seeks to end his disciples’ own spiritual blindness concerning his role as messiah; the restorations to sight function as physical illustrations of Jesus’ spiritual objective with his own followers.<sup>34</sup> In 8:22–26, Mark ostensibly utilizes the blind man’s prolonged, two-staged healing in Bethsaida to symbolize the disciples’ own gradual recognition of Jesus’ identity in Caesarea Philippi in the following scene.

Another point I must address concerns the context of the cross saying in 8:22–10:52 as it relates to Mark’s use of motif. Since the cross saying defines authentic discipleship as “following after” Jesus, it is tempting to see this emphasis as contributing to the frequent Markan motif of ‘the way.’ Interpreters such as Werner Kelber and Ernest Best have noted Mark’s utilization of *ὁδός* (“way”) throughout this gospel, and they are not alone in claiming that its occurrence in this section (8:27; 9:33; 10:17, 32, 46, 52) accentuates the ‘way of discipleship.’<sup>35</sup> Yet, a careful analysis of Mark’s usage of *ὁδός* indicates that no special theological meaning can be attributed to the term other than the author’s intention to advance the narrative ‘journey’ of Jesus.<sup>36</sup> In

34. Many commentators have noted that Jesus ‘opens the eyes’ of his disciples to the ramifications of his messianic role in this central section of Mk: e.g., R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (New York/London: Harper & Bros., 1935), 90–91; Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (rev. ed.; trans. J. Marsh; Oxford: Basil Blackwell/New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 350; William L. Lane, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 286–87; Elizabeth Johnson, “Mark 8:22–26: The Blind Man from Bethsaida,” *NTS* 25 (1978): 370ff.; Dennis Sweetland, *Our Journey with Jesus: Discipleship According to Mark* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987), 51–52.

35. Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 65–85; Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup 4; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 15–18.

36. Clearly, the first occurrence of *ὁδός* in 1:2–3 (“Prepare the way of the Lord”) cannot refer to Christian discipleship, but to Jesus’ own road. One could possibly argue that this notion prepares the reader for understanding the disciples’ ‘path’ of following Jesus. This takes one beyond the text, however, and does not account for the fact that Mk makes no overt attempt to connect *ὁδός* with discipleship elsewhere in his gospel. In 2:23, Jesus and the disciples “make their way” through the fields and receive a rebuke from the Pharisees for violation of Sabbath regulations. Jesus teaches about unresponsive hearers by referring to seed that falls on “the path” in 4:4, 15. The disciples’ journey is referenced in 6:8, with no mention of cross-bearing. The crowds might faint on “the way” home if Jesus does not feed them in 8:3. In 8:27 the reference to “the way” occurs *prior* to the first Passion

other words, interpreters make too much of Mark's usage of *ὁδός* in this section when they suggest that the word has exactly the same theological meaning found elsewhere in the New Testament.<sup>37</sup> While the cross saying in 8:34 certainly deals with following and emulating Jesus, Mark makes no overt connection with 'the way' (either in 8:27, or more widely in his gospel) and this particular facet of discipleship. For this reason, and to avoid unintended theological connotations, I am in agreement with Robert Gundry's assertion that *ὁδός* should be translated 'road' in Mark more often than not.<sup>38</sup>

Mark begins the literary section immediate to (and containing) the cross saying (8:27–9:1) with a change of geography from Galilee to Caesarea Philippi. It is here, in the villages nestled at the base of Mount Hermon, that Jesus stops and unveils a new dimension to the concept of messiahship (8:27–30), beginning with Peter's confirmation that he is the Christ. Next, Jesus declares that his ministry—and consequently the destiny of his followers—can no longer be understood separately from suffering, death, and resurrection (8:31–33). As previously mentioned, it is in this section that Mark presents the first of three 'Passion predictions.' Peter's repudiation of this notion leads to a pointed discourse from Jesus on the nature of discipleship, in which he emphasizes the willingness to embrace the shame of suffering (8:34–9:1). In other words, this section begins with two segments of text which juxtapose an acceptable confession of Jesus' identity as messiah (v. 29) with an unac-

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prediction or to Jesus' teaching on the cross and discipleship in 8:34–9:1. The disciples' argument over positions of greatness prompts Jesus to mention "the way" in 9:33–34, but, again, this has no connection to his passion. "The way" of a group of travellers (not specifically the disciples) is mentioned in 10:32. Blind Bartimaeus encounters Jesus on "the way" (10:46), and, after his healing, follows "on the way" (10:52). The Triumphal Entry scene describes crowds which spread garments on "the way" in front of Jesus (11:8). Jesus' teaching of "the way of God" (12:14) refers to the validity of his public teaching, not to crucifixion. This brief overview demonstrates rather clearly that *ὁδός* functions in a variety of 'ways' in Mk, and therefore cannot be attributed with some overarching theological sense that mainly or specifically refers to discipleship, despite the fact that it is used in such a manner outside of Mark in other New Testament writings (cf. Acts).

37. Like the Qumran separatists, the early Christian community used 'The Way' as a means of self-designation (e.g., Acts 9:2; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

38. Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 441–42.

ceptable perspective on the nature of that role (vv. 32, 33). The disciples cannot understand their own role if they fail to understand that of their leader.

In this section of Mark, the context of the cross saying contains Jesus' teaching about his destiny as a suffering messiah and the disciples' subsequent negative reaction. In particular, Peter—who rebukes (ἐπιτιμᾶν) Jesus for proposing the inevitability of such suffering—finds himself acting as a colleague of Satan (8:33).<sup>39</sup> Behaving as a patron rather than a disciple, Peter elicits the strongest of responses from Jesus: “Get behind me, Satan!” Mark pointedly asserts in this text that whatever Peter may believe about the Jewish messiah clearly conflicts with Jesus' own understanding of that role.<sup>40</sup> In support of this view, Paul Achtemeier states that,

... one cannot speak of Mark's view of discipleship without speaking of Mark's view of Jesus. His view of following Jesus is grounded in his Christology. Mark apparently was incapable of understanding Jesus in any other way than as the Jesus who suffered. That is the key to understanding his career and his fate... any understanding of Jesus that failed to take his suffering and death on the cross into account could only be false.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, mindful of the situation of his readers, Mark may have wanted to stress that their own sufferings, similar to those of Jesus, indicated compliance with God's larger design rather than some kind of failure in their Christian religious experience.

Interpreters have noted that the broader literary unit containing Jesus' travel from Galilee to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52) features three distinct sequences in which: (1) Jesus issues a prediction of his passion, (2) one or more

39. Something near to a chiasmic construction (or at least a repetition with rhetorical effect) appears in v. 33 and v. 34 with Mark's use of ἐπιτιμᾶν, where Peter's “rebuke” of Jesus is countered by Jesus' own “rebuke” of Peter. In Judaism at this time, ἐπιτιμᾶν functioned as a technical word for castigating or attempting to subjugate evil powers.

40. It could be taken from this episode that Peter discovers that simply naming Jesus as messiah has not necessarily defined him more accurately. See Lamar Williamson, Jr., *Mark* (IBC; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), 153, where he notes that Peter finds out that his remark is “... a devil of an idea ... Jesus' rebuke reminds Peter where disciples belong. ‘Behind me’ (v. 33) and ‘after me’ (v. 34) are identical in Greek. Disciples are not to guide, protect, or possess Jesus; they are to follow him.”

41. Paul Achtemeier, *Mark* (Proclamation Commentaries; ed. Gerhard Krodel; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 99.

disciples demonstrate their resistance and misunderstanding, and (3) Jesus, in a didactic section concluding the episode, corrects their mistaken notions of discipleship.<sup>42</sup> This section of Mark bears a resemblance to other episodes in the gospel account where the author shows no hesitancy depicting the disciples in a negative light. The fact of Jesus' command to the disciples that they "must tell no one about him" (8:30)—echoing the way in which he silences demons earlier in the gospel—underscores the disciples' flawed or inadequate understanding of him at this point.<sup>43</sup>

The preceding analysis of the literary context of the cross saying emphasizes Mark's positioning of the teaching concerning discipleship in 8:34–9:1—the disciples must accept Jesus' prediction of his suffering and, in light of this, must remain unashamed of it. Interpreters sometimes ignore this context and instead frame these sayings on discipleship in terms which predominantly lay emphasis on a disciple's need to be prepared for suffering in general. In other words, I am referring to explanations for these sayings which concentrate centrally on the theme of suffering itself, rather than bearing in mind the main thrust of the text: that disciples must refuse to be scandalized by the cross of Jesus. Ernest Best, for example, suggests that Mark inserted the sayings concerning discipleship between Jesus' Passion prediction and the Transfiguration to emphasize that death gives way to resurrection in the lives of the disciples.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Rudolf Laufen posits that Mark included 9:1–8 as a way to encourage cross-bearing: ergo, suffering leads to glorification.<sup>45</sup>

While one cannot deny that these sayings do connect—on a literary and thematic level—to later Christian themes about death and resurrection, Mark's major accent in this section lies on the disciples' acceptance of Jesus' prediction of *his own* death, and the assertion that disciples must not reject the

42. E.g., Williamson, *Mark*, 150–151.

43. It must be noted that the concept of a 'suffering messiah' had no real meaning in ancient Judaism. For a discussion on how Mk subtly forewarns the reader about the coming the Passion narrative within the first section of his gospel, see: John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995), 24–29.

44. Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983), 87.

45. Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen*, 340–41.

SUMMARY	VERSE
Introduction: Identification of the audience	8:34a
Foundational Maxim: Deny self, take up cross, follow	34b
Elaborations and Implications:	
“For whoever seeks to save his life . . .”	35
“For what does it profit a person . . .”	36
“For what can a person give in exchange . . .”	37
“For whoever is ashamed of me . . .”	38
Conclusion: Promise of Kingdom	9:1

TABLE 11. Outline of teaching on discipleship in Mark 8/9.

cross out of its association with shame.<sup>46</sup> For Mark, Jesus sets his own terms of messiahship, and only disciples who accept those terms can understand how his death functions as a paradigm for their lives.<sup>47</sup> So it is not suffering, per se, that the disciples must embrace: it is Jesus’ own messianic role and impending death which they must accept before they can proceed as his followers. In the analysis of the cross saying that follows, I suggest that this framework ought to remain at the forefront of readers’ understanding of Mark’s entire arrangement of the discipleship sayings of 8:34–9:1.

I concur with Lamar Williamson, who makes the following observation concerning the trajectory of this literary unit: “The flow of the text has moved from ‘Who is Jesus?’ (vv. 27–30) through ‘What does being Christ mean?’ (vv. 31–33) and now turns to ‘What does being a disciple mean?’ (vv. 34–38).”<sup>48</sup> In the same way that Mark constructs later episodes, this scene culminates with the misunderstandings of his followers, which prompts Jesus to offer instruction on discipleship. As such, Mark’s edition of this teaching section can be outlined as in Table 11.

The statements which come after v. 34 expand on Jesus’ foundational principle regarding discipleship, and merit analysis in their own right as they

46. In Chapter Six, I explore the issues surrounding crucifixion in honour/shame societies.

47. Remarkably, only the centurion who stood by at the crucifixion seems to perceive the connection between Jesus’ suffering and his identity in this gospel (Mk 15:39).

48. Williamson, *Mark*, 154.

relate to the cross saying. In particular, vv. 35–38 add a distinctly apocalyptic dimension to Mark’s sayings compilation, about which I shall say more in a later section of this chapter. I shall not, however, examine these subsequent verses in great detail, limiting the primary focus of my attention to the cross saying itself.

MARK 8:34B—

DISCIPLESHIP AS A DEATH MARCH

Mark frames Jesus’ teaching using the familiar *προσκαλεσάμενος* (“summoning”) in reference to both the multitudes and the disciples. This phrasing occurs elsewhere in the gospel and is clearly editorial.<sup>49</sup> Mark targets “the crowds” as the recipients of this particular version of the cross saying.<sup>50</sup> By way of comparison, Matthew writes that Jesus addresses the saying to “the disciples” (Mt 16:24), unlike Luke, who states that “all” (of the people) receive this instruction (Lk 9:23).<sup>51</sup> Thus, Jesus’ abrupt gathering of the crowds together with his own closest followers reveals that Mark, like Luke, intends a universal audience for this core teaching on discipleship.

The private conversation between Jesus and Peter, which occurs immediately prior (vv. 32–33), acts as something of a foil against which Mark presents this very public statement. Lest Mark’s readers think that a true perception of the suffering messiahship of Jesus leads to concomitant suffering only for his inner circle, Jesus speaks to the gathered multitude without discrimination.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the author does not present the cross saying as an additional instruction for current disciples who wish to continue to follow Jesus. More pointedly, the saying addresses to a general audience the prerequisites for even *beginning* to follow him. As Lane observes, “. . . the

49. E.g., Mk 3:23.

50. In the parallel version of the saying, derived from Q, only Lk (14:25–27) presents Jesus offering this teaching to “the crowds.”

51. Later in this chapter I justify my suggestion that Luke’s “all” refers not to “all the disciples” but to “all the people.”

52. For further comments on the crowds in this context see Gundry, *Mark*, 433–34.

stringent demand for self-renunciation and cross-bearing extends not only to Church leaders but to all who confess that Jesus is Messiah.”<sup>53</sup>

The opening words of Mark’s version of the cross saying, when compared against the end of the verse, present something of a tautology: “If any one desires to follow after me, he must . . . follow me.” What accounts for this kind of repetition? I have argued above that Mark appropriates the cross saying from a tradition parallel to Q. It appears that the tradition from which Mark draws contains a phrase intended as an interpretive commentary on cross-bearing. Q 14:27 mentions nothing of self-renunciation, which probably means that this idea was previously developed, and now appears as part of the tradition which Mark inherits. The redundancy thus created by the beginning and ending of this version of the cross saying derives from a chiasmic formation which becomes apparent if we understand the renunciation of self as explicative of cross-bearing:

A	if anyone desires to follow after me . . .
B	he must renounce himself . . .
B’	[he must] pick up his cross . . .
A’	and follow me.

As already noted, the emphasis of renouncing oneself (*ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν*) does not appear in the Q version of the saying. Mark likely received the saying with this interpretive phrase already intact, since the sayings unit as a whole (vv. 34b–38) seems best understood as a pre-Markan formulation (albeit with Mark’s editorial stamp clearly in evidence).<sup>54</sup> Karl-Georg Reploh

53. Lane, *Mark*, 306.

54. I find the arguments of Ron Piper both cogent and persuasive in this regard. See his appendix “Mk 8:34b–38 and Lk 14:26–35,” in *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition*, 197–202, esp. 199. Similar conclusions have been reached in other scholarship on this passage: Wilfred Knox, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 1.63–65; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (HThK 2; 2d ed.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), 174–178; Morna Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the Term ‘Son of Man’ and its Use in St. Mark’s Gospel* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 117; Maria Horstmann, *Studien zur markinischen Christologie; Mk 8, 27–9, 13 als Zugang zum Christusbild des zweiten Evangelium* (NTA, n.s. 6; Münster: Aschendorff, 1969), 34; Etienne Trocmé, *The Formation of the Gospel According to Mark* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 123; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HThK 11.1, 2; vol. 2;

suggests that the addition of “they must renounce themselves” reflects an idiomatic Greek translation of an originally Aramaic phrase also translated “μισεῖ . . . τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ” (Lk 14:26, “hate . . . his own life”).<sup>55</sup> In a similar vein, Günther Schwarz sees the Aramaic ܢܒܪ (“ignore”) behind ἀπαρνησάσθω.<sup>56</sup> Although each author offers interesting proposals, a common deficiency hampers both of their studies: both Replloh and Schwartz fail to provide further linguistic evidence to confirm that connotations of self-renunciation existed as *equivalents* of the supposed Aramaic originals of “hatred,” or “ignore,” respectively. That is to say, these claims, while theoretically possible, remain unsubstantiated in view of the available lexicographical data.<sup>57</sup>

Whatever the origin of the emphasis on self-renunciation, the form of the imperative ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν suggests that Mark probably modified the cross saying in order to bring it into conformity with the Passion narrative. Mark’s use of ἀράτω (rather than Q’s λαμβάνω) ensures that the saying agrees with the story of Simon of Cyrene (15:21). In point of fact, Simon is the only person in Mark’s Passion narrative to actually “carry the cross.”<sup>58</sup> We can therefore account for those features of the cross saying in Mark which distinguish it from the other Synoptic versions as modifications designed to produce a literary similarity with later sections of Mark’s narrative.

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Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1976–77), 57; Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark* (NCEB; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 217; Best, *Following Jesus*, 31–34, esp. 31; Gundry, *Mark*, 435.

55. Karl-Georg Replloh, *Markus, Lehrer der Gemeinde; eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu den Jüngerperikopen des Markus-Evangeliums* (SBM 9; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969), 126–127.

56. Günther Schwarz, “. . . ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν . . . ? (Markus viii Parr.),” *NovT* 17 (1975): 109–112.

57. Nowhere in my own search of Aramaic texts in connection with these terms have I discovered *sanah* (“hatred”) or ܢܒܪ (“ignore”) having additional connotations of “renounce” or “deny.” Further exploration may uncover such, but at the time this thesis was researched these connotations appeared in no reference work available to me.

58. Surely Mark’s use of ἀράτω for cross-bearing in both this saying and in the events of the Passion narrative is no accident. Even Simon is *forced* to “carry the cross” in the text of Mk 15:21 as he follows after Jesus, which highlights yet again the natural human tendency towards self-preservation and avoidance of suffering which Jesus addresses in the verses following the cross saying (8:35–38).

Contrary to many current English translations of this phrase (which seem to take their lead from the KJV), I have resisted translating ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν as “he must deny himself.”<sup>59</sup> I avoid this rendering because, in its Markan context, the meaning of the phrase does not function as a call to asceticism—often the meaning taken for “deny himself” in more public circles. Rather, ἀρνέομαι (the prefix ἀπ serving to strengthen the notion) implies a refusal to acknowledge that a relationship exists between two parties, and the Synoptic authors consistently use the term in such a manner.<sup>60</sup> Louw and Nida suggest that the phrase be translated “must say No to himself,” but also warn:

There are a number of problems in rendering appropriately ἀρνέομαι and ἀπἀρνέομαι as in Lk 9.23 and Mk 8.34. In a number of languages it simply makes no sense to translate ‘to say No to oneself,’ nor is it possible in many instances to use an expression such as ‘to deny oneself,’ since it almost always implies denying oneself something. Sometimes the meaning may be expressed in a figurative or idiomatic manner, for example, ‘to refuse to pay attention to what one’s own desires are saying’ or ‘to refuse to think about what one wants for oneself.’ In certain instances other kinds of idioms may be employed, for example, ‘to put oneself at the end of the line’ or even ‘to say to one’s heart, Keep quiet.’<sup>61</sup>

That a disciple must essentially say “No” to himself implies that there must be a willingness to saying “Yes” to Jesus. To that end, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν

59. In translating ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν, the following popular English versions contain “deny”: KJV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, NIV-UK, NASB. The REB translates the phrase as “renounce himself,” whereas the CEV and the TEV offer the interpretive spin of “you must forget about yourself.” The LB retains an ascetic notion: “you must put aside your own pleasures.” The *Nouvelle Version Segond Révisée (Colombe)* and *La Bible du Semeur* contain “qu’il renonce à lui-même,” whereas *La Bible en Français Courant—NT (FC)* offers the somewhat weaker notion of “qu’il cesse de penser à lui-même.” The German ELB leans towards asceticism in its translation: “verleugne er sich selbst,” whereas the IBS publication *Hoffnung Für Alle* renders a pointed, meaning-based translation: “der darf nicht mehr sich selbst in den Mittelpunkt stellen.”

60. E.g., Mt 10:33, “. . . but whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven”; 26:34, “. . . before the cock crows, you will deny me three times”; Lk 8:45, “And Jesus said, ‘Who was it that touched me?’ When all denied it, Peter said, ‘Master . . .’”; 12:9, “. . . but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.”

61. Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, eds., *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2d ed.; New York: UBS, 1988), 1.621.

refers to “a radical denunciation of all self-idolatry and of every attempt to establish one’s own life in accordance with the dictates of the self,”<sup>62</sup> rather than obligating followers to some kind of bodily discipline or ascetic practice. In light of this, the subsequent call to “pick up the cross” summons potential disciples to a ‘death march’ as the evidence of their devotion to Jesus. The further development of this teaching in vv. 35–38 leaves little room for doubt that Jesus requires nothing short of this level of commitment from his disciples.

Before examining the reference to the *σταυρός* in this saying, it must be noted that a certain literary echo with later sections of the gospel can be detected in the emphasis on “deny himself.” With Jesus’ Passion prediction so recently uttered (v. 31), the phrase *ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν* in the cross saying prepares Mark’s audience for the upcoming events which take place during Jesus’ trial and execution. There, rather than “denying himself,” the disciple Peter will, instead, deny Jesus. This happens despite the fact that throughout his gospel Mark presents Peter as something of an archetypal figure, a leader among the group of disciples.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless: it was Peter who had only just received Jesus’ reprimand for his misguided intentions (vv. 32–33). It will be Peter’s denial that Jesus explicitly foretells (14:29–31). And finally, in his haste to distance himself from his condemned master, the self-preserving actions of Peter at Jesus’ trial will go on record as an example of failed discipleship (14:66–72). Thus, on a literary level in Mark’s gospel, the emphasis on self-renunciation found in 8:34 foreshadows future failures among the disciples in their own reaction to Jesus’ suffering.

As I have already stated, Mark presents Jesus foretelling his own death (he offers no specific details concerning the manner of that death in any of the three Passion predictions, unless one takes the cross saying as a prophetic utterance—an unwarranted perspective on the nature of this text, in my

62. Lane, *Mark*, 307.

63. Besides the attention given to his actions during Jesus’ trial, Peter appears as the most conspicuous disciple throughout Mark’s gospel. Jesus calls Peter as his first disciple (1:16); Peter is the first disciple whom Jesus renames (3:16); Peter’s name always appears first when listed with the “inner circle” of disciples (5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33); he frequently speaks for the entire group (1:36; 8:29; 9:5–6; 10:28; 11:21); and Jesus names only Peter when instructing the women to inform the disciples of his resurrection (16:7).

view), and with the mention of the *σταυρός* in v. 38 Jesus now insists that the disciples should also prepare for a like fate.<sup>64</sup> There has been much scholarly conjecture as to the probability of the historical Jesus issuing such a strong statement concerning the cross in anticipation of his execution in Jerusalem. Moreover, what would it mean on a religious or political level if he *did* utter it at that point? By investigating the socio-political environment in which the saying might have emerged, I make judgements concerning the plausibility of Jesus making this declaration in Chapter Seven of this study. In that chapter I shall closely examine the *Sitz im Leben* of Jesus' ministry, exploring how a saying referencing the *σταυρός* might have functioned in an original setting of Galilee. For now, however, I limit my attention to the functionality of a saying which references the cross, specifically within the gospel of Mark.

Unlike the disciples, “the crowds” to whom Jesus issues the call to “pick up the cross” were not privy to Jesus' recent disclosure of his impending death in Jerusalem (8:31–32). Based on Mark's construction of this episode, only the Twelve could possibly have understood such a reference to the cross as being connected with Jesus' previous statement about his own suffering.<sup>65</sup> With the introduction of the crowds—who presumably know nothing of Jesus' revelation of a suffering messiah—Mark's Jesus confronts the onlookers with a saying which evokes their experience of crucifixion in general, without any insight into how this might identify a person with Jesus' own experience. Indeed, *we* may know ‘the rest of the story’ regarding the eventual fate of Jesus in Jerusalem (undoubtedly true of the gospel of Mark's original audience as well), but Mark's text challenges the reader/hearer to imagine how this summons to “pick up the cross” might have been understood by people who have no deeper understanding of Calvary to give it either theological or spiritual significance.

I contend that the Synoptic versions of the cross saying generally support the wider notion expressed in New Testament writings that Jesus' death is paradigmatic for discipleship. Yet, if the cross saying truly is dominical, one

64. *Σταυρός* appears four times in Mark's gospel, equal to the number of appearances in the gospel of John.

65. The word *σταυρός* appears here for the first time in Mark's gospel (v. 34), where Jesus states that it forms an essential component of the definition of discipleship.

cannot assume that all persons hearing it for the first time would have immediately associated it with Jesus' own passion. Rather, in Mark 8:34 "picking up the cross" merely qualifies a devotee to begin the road of discipleship. By confronting the crowds (again, people without intimate knowledge of Jesus, or a connection to him) with cross-bearing, Mark's version of the cross saying exhibits the kind of radical edge found in Q's cross saying more closely than some of the other Synoptic versions.<sup>66</sup>

On a literary level, however, it cannot be doubted that the reference to the *σταυρός* in this gospel conjured the image of Jesus' well-known fate in the minds of Mark's post-Passion audience. A critical question therefore arises which impacts on both the historical and literary function of this saying. As the text stands, readers of Mark must consider whether Jesus intended his disciples to suffer with him in any forthcoming conflict in Jerusalem. In other words, does the disciples' abandonment of Jesus in Jerusalem represent a rejection of what he envisions here in the cross saying as their concomitant destiny?

Perhaps tellingly, later in Mark's story Jesus apparently had no difficulty in accepting Peter's adamant protest, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you," (Mk 14:31) as a real possibility. William Manson thusly observes that:

It is to be noted that Jesus does not reject this offer. He knew that the resolution of his followers would break down when the crisis came; but there is not a hint that he would not have allowed them to go to the cross with him, had their courage not failed.<sup>67</sup>

Manson continues, by questioning,

... whether the orthodox theories of the Atonement would have been differently framed if Jesus had been crucified between James and John, instead of between two thieves... It is sufficient to note that the historical fact appears to be that when Jesus speaks of the suffering Son of Man that he means something in which he and his fol-

66. See Chapter Two, "Summary."

67. William Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 231.

lowers should share. That he did in fact suffer alone was due to the failure of his disciples to rise to the claims of the idea of the Son of Man.<sup>68</sup>

I mention the possibility that Jesus fully expected his disciples to die at the same time as himself because it remains a plausible explanation of Mark 8:34. Yet, whatever one might think of Jesus' intentions for his followers vis-à-vis any anticipated opposition in Jerusalem, mention of the cross at this point in the life of the historical Jesus, or in Mark's gospel, decisively frames discipleship in terms of a death march. Jesus' summons essentially acknowledges that others will inevitably consider his disciples a threat to the social status quo. To remain with him, true followers of Jesus must accept that the world may sentence them to death as criminals.<sup>69</sup> Discipleship therefore possesses an inherent, inexorable quality of public shaming and violent opposition for the person who hopes to stand for God in the midst of "this sinful and adulterous generation" (v. 38).

#### MARK 8:34B AND ITS APOCALYPTIC POSTSCRIPT

Before moving on to Matthean material, I must address how vv. 35–38 cast this version of the cross saying in a particularly apocalyptic light. Ron Piper has written on this phenomenon in an appendix to *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teachings of Jesus*, and I will interact mainly with his work, which focuses on the apocalyptic context provided by these verses.

68. Manson, *Teaching*, 231–32.

69. I remain entirely unconvinced by the suggestion that 'discipleship' somehow stands apart from 'following' (i.e., a two-tiered system where 'discipleship' represents the specific will of Jesus for individuals and 'following' refers to somehow coming after Jesus in a more general manner) as presented in both the works of H. Kablefeld, "Jünger und Herrn," *Geist und Leben* 30 (1957), 1–6, and R. P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 122–125. Their attempt to make a distinction between these two concepts seems completely arbitrary to me. Some commentators have taken their conclusions seriously, going so far as to state that "Ch. 8:34 is not a call to discipleship but a statement regarding the conditions for following Jesus"; see Lane, *Mark*, 307. In my estimation, such a view makes Jesus' initial summoning of the crowd to inform them of the conditions of following him in v. 34 into an academic exercise.

Through use of the catchword *ψυχή* (“life”),<sup>70</sup> Mark follows the cross saying with a sustained focus on a person’s choice regarding his allegiance to the “Son of Man.” In v. 35, Jesus states bluntly that a disciple’s loyalties have an impact on the fate of that individual’s *ψυχή*, which can be lost by trying to “save” it. Conversely, a person who “loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.”<sup>71</sup>

Elsewhere in his gospel Mark relies on the rhetorical impact of ‘double questions,’ and in the case of vv. 36–37 they serve to intensify and sustain the focus on personal decisions about discipleship.<sup>72</sup> The warning against abandoning “me or the gospel” comes to a climax in the strongly apocalyptic warning in v. 38. By contrasting the literary unit of Mark 8:35–38 with its parallels in the double tradition, Ron Piper observes that:

Despite the similarity of this saying to Lk 12:9/Mt 10:33 at the conclusion of the collection in Lk 12:2–9 par, the Markan saying exhibits a much stronger apocalyptic colouring than its counterparts in the double tradition. . . . This is evident particularly in the phrase *ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἀμαρτωλῷ* and in the less ambiguous agency of the Son of Man as judge and not simply as witness. The influence of Dan 7:13 ff. is also discernible in the allusions to ‘coming’, ‘glory’ and ‘angels’. In contrast to Lk 12:8–9 par, Mk 8:38 presents only the negative warning of judgement for those who are ‘ashamed’ of ‘me and my words’.<sup>73</sup>

I am convinced that what Piper advances is correct: that the phenomenon of linking the cross saying with apocalyptic material in Mark and its parallel in the double tradition proceeds in a somewhat different direction than its parallel in Q.<sup>74</sup> Ernest Best theorized that this amalgamation most likely occurred

70. Most scholars attribute a meaning to this word similar to Louw and Nida’s ‘inner self’, ‘life,’ or ‘person,’ *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1.266; Ernst Haenchen, however, suggests that this reference should be expanded to include physical dimensions of life in *Der Weg Jesu: Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen* (Töpelmann: Berlin, 1966), 298.

71. The addition of *καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου* (a phrase absent in parallel texts in Mt and Lk) certainly reflects Mk’s post-Easter perspective. See Harold Riley, *The Making of Mark: An Exploration* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1989), 100.

72. See F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark: Contributions to the Study of Markan Redaction* (BETL 31; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1972), 125–126.

73. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition*, 199.

74. *Ibid.*, 199–201.

early in oral tradition, and thus was already in place when Mark inherited it.<sup>75</sup> Whenever this linkage occurred, it is the tone of Mark's apocalyptic section that appears notably stronger than its parallel in the double tradition. Thus, as Piper concludes, what appears in Mark 8:35–38,

... is at least a stage removed from the emphases at work in the construction of the other aphoristic sayings-collections, and not simply by Mark's own probable additions (cf. Mk 8:35, 9:1). While reasonable persuasion is not abandoned in the argument of 8:34b–38, there is evidence of a more pressing concern to confront the hearer with the loss necessarily involved in following Jesus and a warning against retreating from this. In this way, Mk 8:34b–38 is different even from its closest sister-collection, Lk 12:2–9/Mt 10:26–33. So, while the similarities between the collections may suggest a common origin, the differences would suggest at least a differing development in the tradition. It would seem, therefore, that before the collection reached the hands of Mark any contact with the circles responsible for the double-tradition collections was probably lost and a more intense apocalyptic influence was exerted on the collection.<sup>76</sup>

For what reason might the cross saying have attracted an apocalyptic setting early in the history of its transmission? Thematic attraction, based upon a common emphasis on *shame* issues, seems the most plausible explanation for this phenomenon. It appears entirely reasonable that an aphorism requiring a follower to embrace the public disgrace of crucifixion would find resonance with apocalyptically-oriented statements which warn against "saving one's life" and "being ashamed" of the Son of Man in this world. Facing threats of public shaming and loss of life epitomize the focus of both statements.

75. Best, *Following Jesus*, 31. Best offers five reasons for this conclusion: (1) Mt 10:38–39 offers independent attestation for the assimilation of this sayings unit; (2) Mk emphasizes the linkage between the sayings by repeated use of *γάρο*; (3) Mk tends to incorporate long sections of aphoristic material rather than assemble them himself (e.g., 4:21–25; 9:42–49); (4) the use of a catchword (in the case of 8:34b–38, *ψυχῆ*) is a feature of the oral transmission of a tradition; (5) Mk 9:1 appears as a seam in this text because of the abrupt introductory formula, meaning that the previous text was originally a discrete unit of material. Many (if not most) subsequent studies on this passage agree with Best's conclusions, although J. Lambrecht weighs the strength of the various arguments in "Q-Influence," 277–304, esp. 297–98.

76. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition*, 200.

<i>Date</i> C.E.	<i>Source</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Provenance</i>
50	<b>Q 14:26–27</b>	Greek	Palestine
60			
70	<b>Mt 10:37–38</b>	Greek	Rome
	<b>Mt 16:24</b>	Greek	Antioch

KEY

—/— Probable route of transmission

----- Less probable route of transmission

TABLE 12. Transmission of the cross saying indicating the parallel literary traditions utilized by the author of Matthew.

Conceivably, Mark’s inclusion of the cross saying, with its subsequent stark apocalyptic warning, indicates something of the author’s fear that devotion to Jesus—or perhaps even the proclamation of the gospel itself—was somehow at stake for his original audience. More needs to be said about the meaning of “taking up the cross” in an honour/shame culture, especially in view of the pronounced emphasis on shame issues which frames the cross saying in Mark (and the other Synoptic parallels). Accordingly, I consider the sociological dynamics of an honour/shame culture as it pertains to this saying in Chapter Six.

## The Cross Saying in the Gospel of Matthew

It should become quite apparent, based on the analysis to follow, that the authors of Matthew and Luke do not preserve markedly different versions of the cross saying within their gospels. In fact, the texts of both Q and Mark appear to have been handily available during composition, and were freely incorporated into Matthew and Luke by their respective authors, as indicated in Table 12. This means that two points must be noted in analyzing these

texts: (1) We do not find in either of these gospels a heretofore unseen (third) parallel version of the cross saying that was somehow unknown to the authors of Q or Mark;<sup>77</sup> and (2) the editorial or redactional features of the sayings will prove substantive in considering how each author sought to integrate the saying into his respective narrative.<sup>78</sup>

Matthew incorporates the cross saying twice into his gospel. In the first instance (10:38), the gospel writer features the Q 14:26–27 sayings cluster, with its radical demands to break family bonds in order to qualify as a “worthy” disciple of Jesus. In the second occurrence (16:24), Matthew’s text follows the Markan account almost verbatim, similarly associating the disciples’ own cross-bearing with the first of Jesus’ three ‘Passion predictions.’ In examining these passages, I shall first seek to establish each one within its literary context in Matthew, followed by an analysis of their respective text critical and redaction issues.

#### MATTHEW 10:38 IN ITS LITERARY CONTEXT

καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.

And whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

Ulrich Luz has described Matthew as the “new gospel of Mark,” inasmuch as the narrative pattern of Matthew adheres very closely to that gospel, espec-

77. Allen Willoughby, however, suggests, “It is clear that in the Synoptic Gospels we have three recensions of this saying, viz. (a) Mk 8:34 = Mt 16:24 = Lk 9:23, a positive form. . . . (b) Mt 10:3, a negative form. . . . (c) Lk 14:27, another negative form in a different context. . . . The latter two look like independent transitions of a Semitic original,” in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 110–111. Eung Chun Park, *The Mission Discourse in Matthew’s Interpretation* (WUNT 81; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 155, similarly sees three “recensions” of the cross saying, but offers scant justification for this view. Since placing a saying in “a different context” obviously says nothing about literary dependency where aphoristic material is concerned, I provide more substantial reasons for rejecting this view below.

78. See Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen*, 332, for a discussion of Matthew’s penchant to assemble “heterogeneous traditions” based on thematic attraction.

ially in the later sections of the book.<sup>79</sup> Outlining the text of Matthew remains a notoriously difficult task,<sup>80</sup> but for the purposes of this thesis it is sufficient to note that the first appearance of the cross saying (the first appearance of *σταυρός* in Matthew at all, for that matter) occurs in a literary unit about the proclamation in Galilee of the Kingdom of God (4:17–16:12).<sup>81</sup> The sub-unit 8:1–11:30 addresses the specific ministry of Jesus and his disciples,<sup>82</sup> and within this larger section ch. 10 has been widely referred to as the ‘Mission Discourse.’ Here, Jesus makes explicit in his teaching to the disciples how he regards the ongoing tensions that have, until that point in their recent itinerant ministry, merely been implicit.<sup>83</sup>

The immediate literary context of the cross saying, vv. 34–39, follows an extensive discussion of hostility and persecution in response to the disciples’ ministry. After “giving them authority” to perform exorcisms and healing miracles (10:1), Jesus counsels the disciples to depart from those who do not gladly receive them (vv. 14–16), to be wary of people plotting to “hand them over” to synagogues or governors for punishment (vv. 17–18), and to expect division and even “hatred” from family members who might betray them (vv. 21–22). Matthew returns to this last topic of family divisions in vv. 34–36,

79. Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Book of Matthew* (trans. J. Bradford Robinson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8.

80. Donald Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?* (rev. ed.; Paulist Press: New York, 1996), 25; see also David Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSup 31; Sheffield, Almond Press, 1988). A very general outline, offered by Luz, *Theology of the Book of Matthew*, 80, reads: 1:1–4:6 (Prologue); 4:17–16:20 (Proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Galilee); 16:21–25:46 (Jesus on the way to Jerusalem); 26:1–28:20 (Conclusion—Passion and Resurrection). I suggest that the ‘journey’ episode should include 16:13 ff later in this section.

81. These divisions are based on the repeated phrase *ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς . . .*, indicating a new direction for Jesus’ activity. See Werner Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (17th ed.; trans. Howard Clark Kee; reprint, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 106. Also, regarding the twenty-seven appearances of *σταυρός* throughout the NT, the word appears in Mt more frequently than in any other single NT writing (five times).

82. Luz, *The Theology of the Book of Matthew*, 62, speaks of Jesus’ ministry in this section as a “chronological sequence of healing miracles in chapters eight through nine, a crescendo setting the stage for his conflict with Israel’s leaders.”

83. J. Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew* (eds. Howard Clark Kee and J. Overman; Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996), 158.

where Jesus, quoting the LXX version of Micah 7:6, makes the startling announcement:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have not come to bring peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man 'against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's enemies will be those of his own household.'<sup>84</sup>

Originally, Micah 7:6 stood as a text predicting the occurrence of family infighting prior to the end times, but in Matthew's setting it has been applied to the present activity of Jesus and his disciples.<sup>85</sup> The *μάχαιραν* ("sword") to which Jesus refers therefore does not amount to a call to some epic eschatological battle; rather, in this instance, its metaphorical sense highlights the division (possibly resulting in permanent fragmentation) that occurs within families when some members decide to follow Jesus.<sup>86</sup> In this vein, Luke entirely omits *μάχαιραν* in the parallel passage (Lk 12:51), stating: *δοκεῖτε ὅτι εἰρήνην παρεγενόμην δοῦναι ἐν τῇ γῆ; οὐχί, λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ἢ διαμερισμόν* ("Do you think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division").

Verses 37–39 form a sub-section within the Mission Discourse, further describing the demands of discipleship and ending with a final explanation of the core principle which underlies these conditions. The sayings cluster Q 14:26–27, evidently incorporated into Matthew's text at this juncture for its instruc-

84. Matthew altered the LXX version of Mic 7:6 slightly by replacing *υἰόν* with *ἄνθρωπον*, along with a few other minor substitutions. The Micah passage warns of a time of troubles occurring just before the eschaton, a topic found elsewhere in intertestamental literature (e.g., 1 En. 100:2; 4 Ezra 6:24, etc.). The notion of family divisions continued into the mid-fifth century C.E. in Jewish literature, with Talmudic texts (e.g., *m. Sota* 9:15) warning that the generation preceding the advent of the messiah will be particularly evil. See also Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* (WBC, vol. 33A; Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1993), 292.

85. Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 395, understands the *logia* in v. 37 to be, "Nachklang und Weiterführung des Michawortes," quoted in vv. 35–36.

86. See David Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SP, vol. 1; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 150–152.

MATTHEW	Q
10:37 Ὁ φιλῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος, καὶ ὁ φιλῶν υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος:	14:26 [ῥῶς] οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα οὐ <δύναται εἶναί> μου <μαθητῆς>, καὶ [ῥῶς] <οὐ μισεῖ> τ<ὸν υἱὸν καὶ τ<ὴν> θυγατέρα οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.
10:38 καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.	14:27 . . ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς.

TABLE 13. Comparison of Matthew 10:37–38 with Q 14:26–27.

tional relevance, allows for no illusions about the life of discipleship.<sup>87</sup> Previously in the Mission Discourse, Jesus theorized about situations which could test or even displace a disciple's complete devotion to him. Verses 37–39 directly identify these threats to discipleship as: (1) love of family members, and (2) concern for personal safety and comfort.<sup>88</sup>

#### MATTHEW 10:38 AND THE “WORTHY” DISCIPLE

Turning now to the cross saying in v. 38, I note the obvious redactions which appear as the author incorporates the text of Q 14:26–27. Comparison of these two texts provides important data for determining the ways in which Matthew sought to incorporate the message of the cross saying within his own gospel narrative (Table 13). As regards the actual text of Matthew used for

87. Park, *The Mission Discourse*, 78, observes that Matthew's Mission Discourse is “the most elaborate and extensive among the synoptic parallels. Not only is the mission charge proper expanded to include further issues that are related with mission, but also the narrative framework of the section is expanded to such a degree that it is no longer just a literary foil to convey the mission charge proper, but an important component of discourse, expressing a crucial concern of Matthean theology, i.e., the transition from *missio Christi* to *missio ecclesiae*, and the parallelism between the two.”

88. See Floyd Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1975), 134, who notes that “self seeking is self-defeating” for disciples of Jesus.

this comparison, the passage evidences a well-established manuscript tradition, with only a few cases of homoeoteleuton in some copies.<sup>89</sup>

Unlike its parallel in Luke 14:26, Matthew retains the three-part structure found in Q and formed by the two sentences comprising v. 37 and the cross saying in v. 38. The author does not retain the exact wording of Q, however, reformulating the original expression οὐ μισεῖ . . . οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητῆς into ὁ φιλῶν . . . οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.<sup>90</sup> The shift from οὐ μισεῖ (“the one who does not hate *x* . . .”) to ὁ φιλῶν . . . ὑπὲρ ἐμέ (“the one who loves *x* more than me . . .”) seems driven by the need to interpret the Semitic idiom expressed in the disquieting call to “hate” one’s own family members.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Matthew adjusts the end of these statements in vv. 37–

89. B\**Dal* all omit καὶ ὁ φιλῶν υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμέ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος in v. 37, although the scribe of B\* caught this error and added the saying at the bottom of the column. As stated, in each case homoeoteleuton seems the most reasonable explanation for the omission of this phrase. A longer omission occurs in ℱ<sup>19</sup>, where the first clause of v. 37 skips to ἄξιος at the end of v. 38.

90. In my opinion, not enough evidence exists within this specific text to confirm that Mt somehow had access to an Aramaic version of Q, as some scholars have suggested. For example, Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 110–111 sees Mt 10:38–39 (and its parallel in Lk 14:27–28) as “literal translations of Aramaic originals.” Yet, as Kloppenborg establishes in *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 51–64, Q was most likely originally composed in Greek. This means that even if Q<sup>MT</sup> and Q<sup>LK</sup> existed and featured noticeable differences, these versions of Q were still dependent on a Greek original. In other words, *contra* Beale, Allen, and others who have made similar suggestions, there is no way of confirming that Mt actually had access to Aramaic versions of these sayings which he simply translated ‘literally’ into Greek. It seems more reasonable to posit that Mt offers an *interpretation* of the Greek phrase of Q, which featured a Semitic expression (an idiom which Lk does not feel the need to interpret for his audience).

91. As noted above, Lk 14:26 retains the Semitic idiom rather than interpreting it. This notion of “hatred” towards others stems not from some emotional state of personal animosity; rather, it denotes a prior loyalty which excludes the possibility of entering into a binding relationship with someone else. Examples of such usage from the Hebrew Bible include: Gen 29:31, Deut 21:15, Mal 1:2–3, etc. See R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 189. Similar ideas occur in the literature of the Qumran separatists (4QTest 14–20), where the Levitical priests disregard their own families as a demonstration of loyalty to God. Later Rabbinic teaching also required that students forsake parental commitments, both in reference to devotion to their teacher (*m. Bab. M.* 2:11) and to God (*b. Yebam.* 5).

38 to match the expressions concerning others' ἀξίος ("worthiness") found earlier in vv. 11 and 13 of this same chapter.<sup>92</sup> It would make little sense to retain Q's pronouncement that the individuals described in these sayings "cannot be my disciple" since Matthew addresses these teachings to those who are *already* disciples of Jesus.

So, in this first instance of the cross saying in Matthew, the author retains much of its original Q formulation, save for the addition of an initial connective (καί) and a new ending pertaining to "worthiness." Here, as in Q, the cross saying highlights the sometimes bitter choice required of disciples who found themselves in conflict with family members, presumably over the disciple's overriding commitment to Jesus. In the context of being sent on their mission, disciples must overcome their natural inclinations towards family interests and self-preservation (the emphasis of v. 39), and the stark language of crucifixion acknowledges the degree of pain involved in such loyalty to Jesus. As Wolfgang Trilling states,

The rejection of self and dedication to God have something external to be measured by. There is a boundary in life against which can be seen whether dedication to Jesus is the act of the whole will. That boundary is death . . . but all dedication—and that is the theme of [the disciples'] lives—has something in it of this dying. This is the infallible criterion of the sincerity of [the disciples'] hearts.<sup>93</sup>

Jesus' continuing statements in v. 39 (and to some extent in vv. 40–42) confirm that such unconditional loyalty to him may result in a disciple being assigned the fate of a criminal: death. In this case, to "find his life" may refer to shying away from making the ultimate sacrifice of one's physical body. Yet in this context, as noted by Suzanne de Diétrich, "the term has a larger mean-

92. On the change of phrase, Walter Grundmann notes that this is "eine von Matthäus bevorzugte Ausdrucksweise, die der Missionssprache der hellenistischen Gemeinde entstammen kann," in *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 300. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 189, suggests that the expression "not worthy to be my disciple" means essentially that the individual described "is not suitable/the right sort of person to be my disciple." While his suggestion is essentially correct, the idea of 'worthiness' had implications that extend beyond "suitability" in the honour/shame culture of the first-century Mediterranean world. I explore this notion further in Chapter Six.

93. Wolfgang Trilling, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, (vol. 1; London: Burns & Oates, 1969), 193. Bracketed insertions are mine.

ing than that. It may mean allowing some dear affection or some human consideration to close the way of obedience.”<sup>94</sup> Matthew makes clear the ultimate costs involved in associating oneself with the life and ministry of Jesus by his placement of the cross saying within the Mission Discourse.

MATTHEW 16:24—

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FOLLOWING JESUS

*Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.*

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone desires to come after me, he must renounce himself, pick up his cross, and follow me.”

Since Matthew contains all but 50 of Mark’s 662 verses, it comes as no surprise that there is extensive harmony between these two gospels, especially in the second half of Matthew.<sup>95</sup> In this latter section much of the larger storyline follows the Markan structure, and Matthew variously integrates his own material with that from other sources. And, like Mark, Matthew’s narrative describes Jesus’ journey towards Jerusalem, highlighting three Passion predictions (16:21, 17:22–23, 20:17–19).<sup>96</sup> Consequently, with respect to the overall flow and structure, the entire unit of 16:13–20:34 moves the story inexorably forward towards Jesus’ fate of crucifixion. Concerning this section of Matthew’s account, Donald Senior observes, “The Petrine story is a bridge, culminating some of the discipleship themes and orienting the reader towards the passion. The journey to Jerusalem begins.”<sup>97</sup>

94. Suzanne de Diétrich, *Saint Matthew* (LBC; London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1961), 67.

95. John Riches, *Matthew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 10.

96. Mt extends the section between the second and third Passion prediction by incorporating the parable of the workers at 20:1–16.

97. Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?*, 35. Unlike some other scholars who suggest a starting point for this ‘journey’ sequence at 16:21 (see above), I agree with Senior that the Caesarea Philippi scene functions as a bridge to this new section, and should rightly be considered part of it.

MATTHEW	MARK
16:24 <i>Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.</i>	8:34 <i>Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.</i>

TABLE 14. Comparison of Matthew 16:24 with Mark 8:34.

As in 10:38, suffering as a disciple remains the central thrust of 16:24, yet, in this instance, that suffering has been specifically linked with Jesus' own anticipated death. Following Peter's recognition of his identity as "the Christ" (v. 16), Jesus begins "from that time on"<sup>98</sup> to issue instructions and warnings about his forthcoming ordeal in Jerusalem (v. 21). Peter reacts to this revelation by roundly denouncing it (v. 22), which prompts a forceful response from Jesus which judges Peter's 'passion-free' version of messiahship an idea emanating from Satan himself. With a mind "not set on the things of God" (v. 23), Peter eventually learns that his worldly perspective on suffering is incompatible not only with messiahship, but with discipleship as well (as demonstrated in his own evasion of personal suffering later in 19:27; 26:56, 69–75).<sup>99</sup> And, like Mark's gospel, this incident opens the way in Matthew's text both for instruction concerning the nature of discipleship, and the subsequent description of Jesus' transfiguration.

98. Mt uses ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς... to indicate a new phase of Jesus' ministry (see also 4:17).

99. Such a presentation of Peter—simultaneously representative of the disciples and failing Jesus on occasion—must have been part of the programme which the Synoptic authors wished to communicate to audiences who were struggling with 'keeping the faith' in the face of difficulties. Alfred Plummer summarizes Peter's role thusly: "If he is first in rank and first in confession of faith, he is also first in tempting, and first in denying, his Master," in *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew* (London: Elliot Stock, 1910), 234–35.

A NEW CONTEXT FOR THE CROSS SAYING  
IN MATTHEW 16:24

At the outset of 16:24, the author begins the verse as he typically does when making a transition, using  $\tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$  (“then”) to provide a segue from Jesus’ criticism of Peter’s unwelcome idea, to a scene where Jesus offers instruction to the entire group of disciples.<sup>100</sup> Introducing the cross saying, Matthew omits any reference to Jesus addressing this teaching to “the crowds,” as found in Mark’s version (see Table 14).<sup>101</sup> But for what reason? Concerning the way in which “the crowds” function in Matthew’s narrative, J. R. C. Cousland observes:

... the ‘following’ of the crowds is largely supplicatory. They follow Jesus in order to be ministered to; they are sheep without a shepherd and they follow out of their need. The same cannot be said of the twelve disciples. They follow Jesus because he has commanded them to, and because they are able to help Jesus assuage the needs of the crowds. Just how different the two groups’ situations are can be ascertained from a consideration of what following Jesus entails for the crowds and the disciples. For the former, their following of Jesus results in an experience of his compassion. He allays their sufferings and heals their illnesses. He delivers them from their distress and restores them to a normal mode of existence. For the disciples, however, the reverse is true. They are called from their normal mode of existence to one that, by its very nature, entails suffering. They may have to forego their attachment to their families and take up their cross to follow Jesus. They experience persecution on his account as a matter of course, and give up everything to follow him. One could almost say that their starting point, as it were, a normal life with all its attachments (family, jobs), is the finishing point for those who are healed.<sup>102</sup>

Matthew, therefore, presents the cross saying as a teaching to which only the inner group of Jesus’ followers are privy. That authentic discipleship patterns itself after Jesus’ own afflictions and death is an insight reserved for disciples alone, and not for the general public.

100. On  $\tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$  see Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC, vol. 33B; Dallas: Word Books Pub., 1995), 482–83.

101. Like its parallel in 10:38, this passage evidences a solid manuscript tradition with only minor variations: only  $\text{Ἰησοῦς}$  appears in B\*, and no name at all appears in 565 pc sa<sup>ms</sup>.

102. J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (SupNT 102; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002), 167.

The conditions of discipleship, nevertheless, still apply to whomever desires or “wishes” (*θέλει*) to follow Jesus, effectively expanding its application to Matthew’s audience via the reported experience of the original disciples.<sup>103</sup> Matthew replaces Mark’s initial *ἀκολουθεῖν* (“follow”) with *ἐλθεῖν* (“come after”), but otherwise copies the Markan version of the cross saying verbatim.<sup>104</sup> Unlike the negative formulation in Matthew 10:38, here the cross saying appears as a positively-framed command aimed at willing disciples who must “renounce” themselves and “take up the cross and follow me.”<sup>105</sup> In the *logia* which follow the cross saying in vv. 25–27, Matthew alters Mark’s text to some extent, but still retains much of the same vocabulary and syntax.<sup>106</sup>

Given the context (originally created by Mark), Matthew’s version of the cross saying in 16:24 should be understood as nothing less than Jesus preparing his disciples for martyrdom. With Jesus’ own death as its immediate referent (v. 21), the overt mention of the cross functions as a reminder that disciples follow the path of condemned persons—they must live life en route to execution. George Cox captures the message: “Obedience to death is the mark of Messiahship. It is also the mark of Christian discipleship.”<sup>107</sup>

103. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 431; also Michael J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), 154.

104. The verb *ἐλθεῖν* (“come after”) appears only here in Mt with reference to discipleship, and suggests the action of literally walking behind/following a person. This metaphor would have been immediately associated with discipleship at this time. Cf. 4:19, where Jesus says to Peter and Andrew, “*δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου.*”

105. For further details regarding the meaning of “renouncing” one’s life, see my above comments concerning Mk’s account. Because it contrasts with the preceding aorist imperatives, some scholars have noted the present imperative force of the final *ἀκολουθείτω* (“follow me”), emphasizing the ongoing faithfulness required of disciples. E.g., see Filson, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 189. For the general use of *ἀκολουθεῖω* in Matthew see the thorough work of J. R. C. Cousland, *Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 145–148.

106. See Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 482 for a complete listing of Mt’s redactions in vv. 25–27. Unique to Mt at this point is the addition of Ps 62:12 in v. 27, appended here to the saying about judgement in v. 26.

107. G. E. P. Cox, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM, 1952), 113.

Date C.E.	Source	Language	Provenance
50	<b>Q 14:26–27</b>	Greek	Palestine
60			
70	<b>Mk 8:34</b>	Greek	Rome
	<b>Lk 14:26–27</b>	Greek	Antioch
	<b>Lk 9:23</b>		

## KEY

—/— Probable route of transmission

----- Less probable route of transmission

TABLE 15. Transmission of the cross saying indicating the parallel literary traditions utilized by the author of Luke.

## The Cross Saying in the Gospel of Luke

Like Matthew, the author of Luke incorporates both the Q and Markan versions of the cross saying into his gospel. Unlike these other texts, however, Luke's version of the cross saying must be viewed in its two-volume context. The versions of the cross saying in Luke point forward to some of the harsh consequences for being a follower of Jesus, as portrayed in Acts (and, thus, not only to those events relating to the crisis of Jesus' execution in the gospel narrative). In other words, the prophetic confrontation inherent in the activity of Jesus, later replicated in the disciples' own actions in Luke's second volume, represents a conflict that is nothing less than "programmatic for the Lukan narrative" as a whole.<sup>108</sup>

To bring to a conclusion this chapter's analysis of the cross saying as it appears in the Synoptic texts, I examine both occurrences of the cross saying in Luke. This section notes the ways in which Luke incorporates the Markan

<sup>108</sup> Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 63, 68.

version of the cross saying at 9:23, the Q version of the saying at 14:25–27, and how, on a literary level, these texts act as a precursor not only for Jesus' execution, but also for the martyrdom of Stephen and James in Acts. Finally, I suggest ways in which this aphorism may have functioned specifically for the apparent recipient of this gospel: Theophilus.

#### THE LITERARY CONTEXT OF LUKE 9:23

*Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς πάντας: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι, ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν, καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.*

Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must renounce himself, and take up his cross every day and follow me."

Luke, like Matthew, thoroughly incorporates the majority of Markan material, and also follows the sequence of Mark's presentation fairly closely (see Table 15).<sup>109</sup> The broad sweep of Luke's narrative, however, presents the disciples in both a negative and positive light, offering a more complex array of responses to Jesus for the reader to consider than those found in Mark.<sup>110</sup> Luke also emphasizes with greater force the paradigmatic nature of Jesus' death for the disciples, beginning with Jesus' vision for how they must respond when their ministry provokes conflict (6:27–36). Furthermore, Jesus repeatedly prepares his disciples for adversity (e.g., 12:4–12; 21:12–19). Concerning how often Luke parallels Jesus' fate with that of his followers, Carroll and Green observe:

What Jesus prophesies, Acts narrates. Arrest, hostile interrogation, and bold defense—again and again this cycle is enacted. Into it step Peter and John (Acts 4), the apostles as a group (ch. 5), Stephen (6:8–8:1), James the brother of John and then Peter again (ch. 12), and of course Paul (16:19–40; chs. 21–28). Only Stephen and James actually complete the pattern by going to death as Jesus had before them, and only Stephen's martyrdom is narrated in any detail. Clearly, though, Luke leaves Paul

<sup>109</sup>. Seven-tenths of Mk's material appears in three main sections in Lk: 3:1–6:19; 8:4–9:50; 18:15–24:11. See Kümmel, *Introduction*, 130.

<sup>110</sup>. Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 76–77.

on the brink of martyrdom, and so to the Jesus–Stephen parallels may also be added the Jesus–Paul parallels.<sup>111</sup>

To make explicit the connection between Jesus’ fate and the fate of his followers, Luke’s first incorporation of the cross saying occurs when Jesus leaves the relative protection of the hinterland and begins to move towards a confrontation with the religious leaders in the city. Luke 4:14–9:50 presents Jesus’ itinerant ministry in Galilee, followed by the familiar ‘journey to Jerusalem’ narrative in 9:51–19:27. Replicating the Markan program, the author of Luke introduces the first ‘Passion prediction’ at the juncture where Jesus departs Galilee and turns towards Jerusalem. Consequently, beginning in ch. 9, Luke’s Jesus predicts his own fate in Jerusalem no less than five times (9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31–33; 24:6–7), exceeding the number of such foretellings found in either Matthew or Mark.

Following the first Passion prediction (9:22), the author of Luke immediately inserts the cross saying (v. 23), completely omitting Peter’s misunderstanding and consequent rebuke by Jesus (Mk 8:32–33).<sup>112</sup> By excising the episode involving Peter, Luke creates a more immediate link between the command to “take up the cross” and the prediction of Jesus’ own suffering.<sup>113</sup> The first instance of the cross saying in Luke appears within a section of didactic material concerning the nature of discipleship, in which Jesus

111. Carroll and Green, *Death of Jesus*, 81.

112. I find intriguing the suggestion made by David Gooding, *According to Luke: A New Exposition of the Third Gospel* (Leicester: IVP, 1987), 153–156, that Luke arranges the material in ch. 9 in a chiasmic form. Gooding suggests that Lk 9:1–27 concerns the “setting up of the Kingdom as viewed from our world,” and that 9:28–50 presents the “setting up of the Kingdom as viewed from the other world. . . . Luke’s selection and arrangement of material is that the leading of themes of vv. 1–27 recur in a kind of mirror-image in vv. 28–50.” Thus, the chiasm appears as such in ch. 9:

A.	vv. 1–9	Briefing and Sending of the Twelve	}	‘this world’ perspective
B.	vv. 10–17	Feeding of the Five Thousand		
C.	vv. 18–27	Confession of Jesus as Christ		
			}	‘other world’ perspective
C <sup>1</sup> .	vv. 28–36	Transfiguration of Jesus		
B <sup>1</sup> .	vv. 37–43	Healing of the Father’s Only Son		
A <sup>1</sup> .	vv. 43–50	Further Instruction of the Twelve		

113. See Eben Scheffler, *Suffering in Luke’s Gospel* (ATANT 81; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1993), 148.

LUKE	MARK
9:23 Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς πάντας: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι, ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν, καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.	8:34 Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.

TABLE 16. Comparison of Luke 9:23 with Mark 8:34.

teaches that the persecution first leveled at him will inevitably be experienced by the disciples because of their association with him.

#### LUKE 9:23—CARRYING THE CROSS DAY AFTER DAY

The few minor variants in the manuscript tradition of this text can be explained, generally, as attempts to conform its language to the parallel versions of this verse.<sup>114</sup> The most significant haplography occurs where D and the Old Latin manuscripts omit *καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν*, an omission which seems caused by parablepsis—in this case homoeoarcton.<sup>115</sup> Also, the most noteworthy Lukan redaction in this text, the phrase *καθ' ἡμέραν*, does not appear in  $\aleph^1$  C D  $\mathfrak{M}$  it *sys.hmg* *sa*<sup>ms</sup>. Such a deletion is likely due to an effort to harmonize this text with Mark's version.

The comparison of Luke 9:23 with Mark 8:34 in Table 16 reveals several minor grammatical alterations made by the author, with one key addition to the text which greatly affects its interpretation. To begin with, Luke's *ἔλεγεν* differs from Mark's *εἶπεν*, the imperfect indicating either that Jesus repeatedly taught on this topic, or, more likely signalling the continuation of the discourse ("he went on to say").<sup>116</sup> The author of Luke directs this saying to

114. Instead of *ἀρνησάσθω* (as attested in  $\aleph$  AB<sup>2</sup>DKL $\Theta$  $\Xi$ f<sup>13</sup>33pc) the following mss use the somewhat stronger *ἀπαρνεσασθω*:  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ B\*CRW $\Psi$ f<sup>1</sup> $\mathfrak{M}$ .

115. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 147.

116. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 372.

the crowds mentioned in vv. 11–17 by the use of *πάντας*, even though, in the intervening text vv. 18–22, Jesus addresses the disciples exclusively. The vagueness of *πάντας* may serve the author’s purpose by alerting his reader to the general nature of this call to discipleship. I agree with Fitzmyer: “The transition here is not elegant.”<sup>117</sup>

Luke alters the aorist infinitive *ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν* of Mark to the phrase *ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι*, thereby introducing a present infinitive which expresses the ongoing commitment inherent in following Jesus. This emphasis comports with the broader Lukan theme portraying discipleship as a pursuit of “the way” of Jesus along the road.<sup>118</sup> The author achieves a similar result later by the addition of *καθ’ ἡμέραν* (“every day”) to the phrase referencing cross-bearing.

Luke uses the verb *ἀρνέομαι* previously in his gospel (8:45), but in this instance (i.e., in the context of the cross saying) the author supplies the personal direct object *ἑαυτὸν* (cf. 12:9; Acts 3:13–14; 7:35).<sup>119</sup> Bultmann con-

117. Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (1–1X): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB, vol. 28; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1981), 786.

118. I quote at length Joseph Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian: Aspects of His Teaching* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 133–134, for his useful summation of this motif: “Even though ‘following’ is merely another way of saying ‘discipleship,’ there is a special nuance given to the former in the Lucan writings. These two volumes are dominated by a geographical perspective with Jerusalem as its central focus. In the Gospel itself Luke depicts Jesus en route, moving without distraction from Galilee where his ministry begins, to Jerusalem, the city of destiny. In that city Jesus’ *exodos*, his transit to the Father through passion, death, burial, and resurrection, takes place. In the Acts of the Apostles Jerusalem becomes the place from which the Word of the Lord must be carried forth by his witnesses to all Judea, Samaria, and even ‘to the ends of the earth’ (1:8; cf. Lk 24:47). In dependence on this perspective the Christian disciple in Luke’s view must be a follower on the road that Jesus treads. Thus, even though Luke has taken over from his Marcan source the challenge, ‘Follow me!’ as disciples are called, that call and challenge are now coloured by the Lucan geographical perspective. The disciples must not only walk behind him, but in his very footsteps.” Furthermore, “The Way” serves as Luke’s designation for the primitive groups of disciples (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

119. I note the odd suggestion of “treat himself as a stranger” as a meaning-based translation of the phrase *ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν* in Burton Easton, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1926), 140–141. G. H. P. Thompson, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 150, pithily suggests that this phrase calls for the “execution of self-interest.” For further details on the specific meaning of *ἀρνέομαι* in this context see my above comments for Mk; also H. Schlier, “ἀρνε-

tends that ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν, first appearing in Mark and now adapted by Luke, “is foreign to Semitic usage.”<sup>120</sup> He argues that the expression basically functions as the Greek equivalent of the earlier phrase μισεῖν τὴν ψυχὴν, which appears in the parallel versions (see Lk 14:26). This hypothesis seems reasonable, although impossible to substantiate without further textual evidence. In fact, nowhere else in the New Testament does the notion of ‘self-renunciation’ appear, except in the Synoptic versions of the cross saying.<sup>121</sup>

Jesus says that disciples must ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν; however, in Luke’s gospel it is only Simon who actually does so (23:26).<sup>122</sup> Without the qualifier which follows, this statement could be interpreted as nothing less than a call to martyrdom. Literal self-sacrifice is a possibility in v. 24, where Jesus pledges “but whoever loses his life for me will save it.” Taken metaphorically, the statement could refer to any persecution of his followers (i.e., the situation implicit in vv. 25–26 seems one of general persecution). In other words, the call to discipleship in v. 23 seems to acknowledge the contingency that “self-renunciation in discipleship *may* include martyrdom.”<sup>123</sup> Some commentators on Luke deem this phrase a *vaticinia ex eventu*, assuming that the early church tended to conform such sayings of Jesus to events in his life.<sup>124</sup>

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ομαι,” *TDNT* (10 vols.; eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–76), 1:471.

120. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 161.

121. The notions expressed in Tit 2:12 and 2 Tim 2:13 have different meanings than that found in the cross saying.

122. Only outside of the Synoptics, in Jn 19:17, does Jesus carry ἑαυτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν (“his own cross”). Some scholars suggest that Lk has “christianised” Simon, contrasting his actions with those of the disciples, who make little appearance during Jesus’ passion. In my view, however, this suggestion seems to make too much of Simon’s role in the narrative, since Lk does not, in general, present the disciples as deserting (note also that disciples eventually do experience martyrdom in Lk’s second volume). See Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 785; Jack Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 66.

123. Scott Cunningham, “Through Many Tribulations”: *The Theology of Persecution in Luke–Acts* (JSNTSup 142; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 85–86 (italics mine).

124. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 786, speculates that this saying exists merely as a corruption of “take up my yoke” (cf. Mt 11:29), altered by early Christians to fit the events of Jesus’ crucifixion. I find his argument unconvincing inasmuch as it depends on a negative answer to the larger question of whether Jesus was able to predict his own death, rather than on any kind of textual or redactional evidence.

By far the most significant difference between Luke's cross saying at 9:23 and the other Synoptic versions is the author's inclusion of *καθ' ἡμέραν* ("every day"). This exact phrase appears in 1 Corinthians 15:31, where Paul states *καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνῄσκω* ("every day I face death"). Its occurrence in Paul has led some scholars to suggest that Luke, influenced by the Apostle's expression, introduced it into his gospel<sup>125</sup>—the likelihood of which seems small given that Luke seems quite fond of the phrase (e.g., 11:3; 16:19; 19:47; 22:53). A point of agreement among the majority of academics commenting on this redaction, however, is that in adding this phrase Luke has made possible an entirely metaphorical application of cross-bearing.<sup>126</sup> In effect, by connecting the notion of *daily* cross-bearing with discipleship, the author invites the reader to explore the saying's spiritual or metaphorical application, which could therefore resemble those found in the writings of Paul (cf. Gal 2:20, etc.). Thus, Frederick Danker provides this summary of the cross saying as it appears in 9:23: "The use of this metaphor indicates that Christians must be willing to run the risk of being misunderstood as criminals. . . *καθ' ἡμέραν* means that *occasional scintillating displays of courage or interest in notoriety* are not under discussion here."<sup>127</sup>

The verses immediately following the cross saying in Luke 9 (vv. 24–27) replicate Mark's structure, connecting Jesus' teaching on discipleship with apocalyptically-oriented warnings. Luke redacts these sayings slightly, as in v. 26 where the Son of Man comes in "his own glory" rather than the glory that belongs to the Father alone (cf. Mk 8:38). Likewise, in Luke's version the angels do not merely accompany the Son of Man, but share in his glory. It is said of the Son of Man in this text that he will, in particular, judge the courage which the disciples evidence while under persecution—with the

125. See, for example, J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1957), 131.

126. E.g., Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 373, who reckons, "The saying is, however, from the first metaphorical, since it refers to the action of the already condemned man in bearing the patibulum of his cross to the place of execution. Hence the saying refers not so much to literal martyrdom as to the attitude of self-denial which regards its life in this world as already finished."

127. Frederick Danker, *Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 194–195 (emphasis mine).

warning that, “Both the Father and [the angels] constitute the public before whom the Son of Man will manifest his shame over disciples who manifested their public shame over him.”<sup>128</sup>

THE LITERARY CONTEXT  
OF LUKE 14:27

Luke includes the cross saying again in the travel narrative (extending from 9:51–19:46), where the focus becomes Jesus’ progression towards Jerusalem and the inevitable conflict awaiting him there. During this journey Jesus continues to minister to the crowds and teach his disciples. The crowds respond to him in amazement—in stark contrast to the religious leaders—by trying to touch him, and giving glory to God.<sup>129</sup> In fact, the cross saying appears in both of the passages in Luke where Jesus explicitly summons the crowds to discipleship (9:23; 14:27). Along the trek to Jerusalem Jesus repeatedly instructs his followers on the true nature of discipleship. In fact, to accentuate this point, no sooner does the travel discourse begin than three men approach Jesus and volunteer for discipleship (9:57–62). But each one disappears when he learns the true demands of following Jesus.

Foreshadowing the expansion of the church in Acts, Jesus sends seventy-two disciples to various locations within Israel which he plans to visit at some point (10:1–16). Like him, these disciples offer a ministry consisting of both healing and instruction (10:9); nevertheless, Jesus warns his followers that they can expect a hostile response to their message (10:3). Yet, as his representatives, the people’s rejection of them equates to a rejection of Jesus, and even of God himself (10:16).

The literary context immediately preceding the cross saying in 14:27 consists of a parable uttered in response to the statement: “Blessed is the one who will dine in the kingdom of God,” (14:15). The parable recounts a story about dinner guests who respond in an unworthy manner after having been summoned to a party (vv. 16–24). In the story, one by one the guests originally invited to the banquet begin to exempt themselves from attending, sham-

128. Fitzmyer, *Gospel of Luke*, 789.

129. See Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke*, 31.

ing the host with the weakness of their excuses. To this, the master of the house responds in rage, instructing his servant to open the invitation to people “in the streets and alleys . . . the highways and hedgerows,” as replacements for the original invitees. Luke confirms the reason for this change of plan: “so that my home might be filled,” (v. 23).

After telling this parable, Jesus turns immediately to the *ὄχλοι πολλοί* (“great crowds”) and informs them of the costly requirements they must fulfil for discipleship and entry into the Kingdom (v. 25). The abruptness of this shift seems intentional, showing that the ensuing teaching which contains the cross saying (vv. 25–27) stands in antithetical parallelism to the parable of the banquet in vv. 15–24.<sup>130</sup> G. H. P. Thompson recognizes the contrast made between the experience of being invited to a party and the experience of being summoned to discipleship: “The popularity of Jesus contrasts with the probable unpopularity of the demands that follow. . . .”<sup>131</sup> Not only is Jesus saying that discipleship under him is ‘no party’; he confirms his disdain for those too distracted by their own affairs to respond to his summons.

LUKE 14:27—PUTTING TO DEATH  
THE CONSTRAINTS OF FAMILIAL RELATIONS

*ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής.*

Whoever does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Among those versions of the cross saying found in the Synoptic gospels, Luke 14:26–27 sets forth the requirements for discipleship in the sternest, most unyielding language. Luke derives this text from Q, where the saying about hating relatives was apparently previously connected with the idea of cross-bearing.<sup>132</sup> It is evident that the initial section of the sayings cluster (v. 26) has parallel forms which appear in early Christian writings both within and outside the New Testament (Mt 19:29; Mk 10:29; Lk 18:29; *Gos. Thom.*

130. See Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (x–xxiv)* (AB, vol. 28A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1060.

131. Thompson, *Gospel According to Luke*, 204.

132. See Chapter Two, “The Oral Predecessor of the Text.”

LUKE	Q
14:26 εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με καὶ οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς ἔτι τε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.	14:26 [⟨ὄς⟩] οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα οὐ ⟨δύναται εἶναί⟩ μου ⟨μαθητής⟩, καὶ [⟨ὄς⟩] ⟨οὐ μισεῖ⟩ τ⟨ὸ⟩ν υἱὸν καὶ τ⟨ὴν⟩ θυγατέρα οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.
14:27 ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.	14:27 ὄς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.

TABLE 17. Comparison of Luke 14:26–27 with Q 14:26–27.

101). Wherever the cross saying appears as an extension of this requirement to sever familial ties, however, the authors preserve the order found in Q (cf. Mt 10:37–38; Lk 14:26–27; *Gos. Thom.* 55).

Table 17 compares Luke 14:26–27 with Q 14:26–27, although I omit v. 25, as Luke clearly created it as a transitional comment which introduces Jesus' teaching to come.<sup>133</sup> Several redactional features become apparent in the above comparison, although most of these modifications can be explained as attempts to make the text correspond with similar expressions found elsewhere in the Lukan narrative.

The teaching is introduced with the expression εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με, which has led some scholars to draw a distinction between 'coming to Jesus' and permanent discipleship. For example,<sup>134</sup> Fitzmyer says of this phrase that "Jesus clearly distinguishes 'discipleship' proper from mere 'coming' to him. Many will come to him, but only some will fulfil the conditions required. . . ." Perchance Luke intended such a meaning. At a minimum, by adding this

133. Although it evidences a solid mss tradition otherwise, v. 25 is omitted in  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  (the earliest extant text of Lk). On this verse as a Lukan formulation see J. Jeremias, *Sprache*, 241.

134. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke* (x–xxiv), 1063.

phrase to the beginning of these sayings, the author of Luke makes clear that Jesus addresses those wanting to establish a life of devotion to him.<sup>135</sup>

Unlike Matthew, Luke does not soften the Semitic idiom which applies the word *μισεῖ* (“hate”) to various family members.<sup>136</sup> *Μισεῖ* occurs previously in this gospel (6:22, 27), where Jesus describes the contempt that some people will visit upon his followers. Here, however, he uses the term in a way that forces his disciples to re-evaluate the privilege which they afford natural family bonds. Where a choice exists between allegiance to a kin group or to Jesus, the disciple must regard as contemptible those individuals who would pull him away from devotion to Jesus.<sup>137</sup>

To further differentiate the possibilities, Luke departs from the shorter, symmetrical (and thus more primitive) list of family members to be “hated” listed in Q (Mt replicates this list more faithfully). Luke heightens the drama, while widening the scope of the disciple’s hate: he personalizes the Q version of v. 26 by inserting *ἑαυτοῦ* after *πατέρα*, changes *τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα* (“son and daughter”) to *τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα* (“wife and children”), adds *τοὺς ἀδελφούς* (“siblings”) for good measure, and ends with *καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ* (“and his own life”) in case any doubt remains about

135. E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (The Century Bible, rev. ed.; London: Thomas Nelson, 1966), 195, is surely mistaken in suggesting that here Jesus intentionally uses the term “come after” (i.e., as a servant) rather than “come to” (i.e., for instruction as a disciple) as a way of indicating the humble status of his followers. The phrase *ἔρχεται πρὸς* and synonyms like *ἀκολουθεῖν* clearly functioned as descriptors for entering into discipleship in the ancient world.

136. Some minor MS variations exist for this verse. Instead of *ἑαυτοῦ* after *πατέρα*, the following texts have *αυτοῦ*:  $\mathfrak{B}^{45}$   $\aleph$  A D W  $\Theta$   $f^{1,13}$   $\mathfrak{M}$ ;  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  has replaced  $\tau\epsilon$  in  $\mathfrak{B}^{45}$  A D W  $\Theta$   $\Psi$   $f^{1,13}$   $\mathfrak{M}$  lat sy<sup>h</sup>, and neither appears in  $\mathfrak{B}^{75}$  it; word-order is reversed for *ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ* in  $\mathfrak{B}^{45}$  A D L R W  $\Theta$   $\Psi$   $f^{1,13}$   $\mathfrak{M}$ ; word order changes from *εἶναί μου μαθητῆς* to *μου εἶναί μαθητῆς* in  $\mathfrak{B}^{45,75}$  K N  $\Psi$   $f^{13}$  28 *al*; also, from *εἶναί μου μαθητῆς* to *μου μαθητῆς εἶναί* in A D W  $\Theta$   $f^1$   $\mathfrak{M}$ . Given the structure of this phrase elsewhere in Lk (cf. 9:42; 14:32; 15:20; Acts 2:26) and because of stronger MS support, I agree with Fitzmyer, *Gospel of Luke* (x–xxiv), 1064, who views *ἔτι δέ καὶ* as preferable to the NA<sup>26</sup> (and now NA<sup>27</sup>) choice of *ἔτι τε καὶ*. Either way, little changes in terms of the meaning of this phrase. For more on “hate” as a Semitic idiom, see Robert Stein, *Luke* (NAC, vol. 24; Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 279; also, the dated (but still significant) work of T. C. Finlayson, “Christ Demanding Hatred: Luke xiv.26,” *ET* 1.9 (1879): 420–30.

137. See R. H. Stein, “Luke 14:26 and the Question of Authenticity,” *Forum* 5/2 (1989): 188 on “hating” family members.

the extent of the hatred. These “pedantic additions”—as Bultmann sees them—feature elsewhere in Luke’s gospel.<sup>138</sup>

Hating one’s life could lead to the next condition of discipleship which Jesus announces in v. 27: *βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ* (“he must carry his cross”).<sup>139</sup> Luke’s use of *βαστάζει* (“take up, carry”) differs from Matthew’s *λαμβάνει* (“take hold of, grasp”), but *βαστάζει* appears several times in Luke and also in John 19:17 (where the word is used to describe Jesus carrying the cross himself—something he does only in John’s gospel).<sup>140</sup> In its association with the sayings on hating family, the cross saying evokes a level of shame that disciples must willingly embrace to stay faithful to Jesus (i.e., treatment as outcasts).

Luke, throughout his gospel, reiterates that the primary goal of discipleship is to share in the same destiny as Jesus.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, in imitation of Jesus, a true disciple must make tough decisions that at times rebuff those who accommodate the status quo—which can result in rejection and condemnation for the disciple. Actual martyrdom could result from following Jesus, as seen in this passage, but the call to loyalty in vv. 26–27 requires “a social rejection of unconverted relatives at least.”<sup>142</sup> In other words, a disciple may not allow even the most primal of compulsions—loyalty to family and preservation of self—to interfere with commitment to Jesus. Commenting on this passage, William Manson says, “The requirement to hate father and mother, etc., means that the most extreme violence must be offered to one’s own affections and inclinations in cases where family ties conflict with per-

138. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 160. For Lk’s use of *τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα* see 2:33, 8:51, 18:20; for *τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα* see 14:20, Acts 21:5; for *τοὺς ἀδελφούς* see Lk 8:20, and esp. 18:29; for *τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ* see 17:33. The expansion of Q’s list of relations, especially the addition of “wife” (cf. 18:29), exposes something of the author’s tendency towards asceticism. On this see Michael Goulder, *Luke: A New Paradigm* (JSNTSup 20, vol. 2, pt. 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 596.

139. This entire verse is omitted from R Γ *al* vg<sup>ms</sup> sy<sup>s</sup> bo<sup>ms</sup>, probably due to homoeoteleuton; also, an initial *καὶ* appears in Ⳁ<sup>2</sup> A D W Θ Ψ *f*<sup>1.13</sup> ℣ latt sy<sup>c</sup>.p.<sup>h</sup>.

140. Other occurrences of *βαστάζει* in Lk—7:14; 10:4; 11:27; 22:10.

141. See Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke*, 109–139: “And to that end, it cannot be doubted that Lk viewed Jesus’ destiny, his death, as martyrdom (23:47).”

142. J. D. M. Derrett, “Taking up the Cross and Turning the Cheek,” in *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Studies* (ed. A. E. Harvey; London: SPCK, 1985), 64.

Date C.E.	Source	Language	Provenance
50	Q 14:26–27	Greek	Palestine
60			
70	Mk 8:34	Greek	Rome
	Lk 14:26–27    Mt 10:37–38    Lk 9:23    Mt 16:24	Greek	Antioch

## KEY

—/— Probable route of transmission

----- Less probable route of transmission

TABLE 18. Transmission of the cross saying indicating the parallel literary traditions utilized by the authors of Matthew and Luke.

sonal allegiance to the call of Christ. Natural feelings must in such a case not only be denied but slain.”<sup>143</sup>

In every case, Jesus categorically excludes from discipleship those unwilling to meet these conditions by stating: οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής (“[that one] is not worthy to be my disciple”). This clause appends the sayings in v. 26, v. 27, and later in v. 33, where Jesus presents yet another condition of discipleship: renouncing all possessions. The repeated phrase “cannot be my disciple” which appends each of these statements makes it more likely to be original than Matthew’s softer “is not worthy of me,” (Mt 10:37).<sup>144</sup>

<sup>143</sup>. William Manson, *The Gospel of Luke* (MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 175.

<sup>144</sup>. Thus: Gerhard Kittel, *Die Probleme des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum* (BWA(N)T 3; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1926), 54; Bultmann, *History of Synoptic Tradition*, 160. T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of its Form and Content* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 237–40, contends that Mt confused the Aramaic *šwly* (“apprentice”) with *šwy* (“equal, worthy”), thus creating a new ending for this saying in his gospel. Yet, this is not very plausible, as pointed out by Fitzmyer, *Gospel of Luke* (x–xxiv), 1064: “though [šwy] is well attested in contemporary Aramaic, *šwly*’ is not. It is much more likely that Matthew has simply changed the saying to suit a contemporary Christian view of discipleship.”

Luke ties the teaching on discipleship found in vv. 26–27—of “hating” family and carrying the cross—to the two parables which follow in vv. 28–33.<sup>145</sup> Here Jesus asks prospective followers to consider carefully whether they actually possess the resources to ‘go the distance.’ He warns that shame and derision awaits those who start what they cannot finish (vv. 28–30). Equally, defeat awaits those who do not plan ahead for what will be required in the life of discipleship (vv. 31–32). In the end, he underscores the total and absolute repudiation of self-interest inherent to discipleship by stating: “In the same way, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple,” (v. 33).

## Summary

By this point I have traced the ways in which the cross saying was presented at various stages of its literary history from textual traditions which all presumably date from the first century C.E. I also examined what it likely meant at each of these stages of transmission, arguing that Matthew and Luke utilized at least two parallel literary traditions when adapting the cross saying for their respective gospels: one found in Q, the other recorded in Mark. I shall now offer a brief summary of these findings in a diachronic manner, noting the conclusions made in the previous two chapters concerning the differentiation of the tradition at each stage of its transmission (as shown in Table 18).

CIRCA 50 C.E.—Although it remains a hypothetical document, Q apparently contained the cross saying (14:27), and it is therefore one of the earliest textual occurrences for which there is any evidence in first-century Christian literature. The cross saying functions in the Deuteronomistic-prophetic context of the Q catena as a call to those following Jesus to both sever family ties and to prepare for rejection, ending possibly in death itself. As a consequence, persons choosing the better of life’s ‘Two Paths’ (in this case the one advocated by wisdom and demonstrating loyalty to God) stand in line with Jesus and the prophets in their willingness to forfeit the aforementioned family allegiances and even their own lives in fulfillment God’s plan.

145. The  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  in v. 28 connects these parables to that which preceded them.

CIRCA 70 C.E.—I have argued that the gospel of Mark (8:34) preserves a version of the cross saying which originated from a parallel oral tradition to that of Q, and is the second-oldest known textual tradition containing the cross saying from first-century Christian literature—possibly written shortly after the Neronian pogrom in Rome. Mark’s cross saying confronts the faltering disciples within his narrative with a different view of Jesus’ messianic role than their own—a role that required his suffering and death, and which in turn become requirements of any person seeking to follow him. Rather than deny Jesus as does Peter at the Markan trial and crucifixion, faithful disciples must deny *themselves*—an addition to the cross saying not present in Q. Mark’s version of the cross saying frames discipleship as a ‘death march,’ where crucifixion stands as the culmination of a life lived in opposition to the world and due to one’s association with Jesus. Additionally, Mark features an apocalyptic postscript to the cross saying, where at a future judgement the Son of Man condemns those who preserved their own lives and honour by consorting with the world, and consequently find themselves disassociated from Jesus and “lose their lives” because of it.

CIRCA 70–100 C.E.—Of the two occurrences of the cross saying in Matthew’s gospel, the author first redacts Q 14:26–27 into a section commonly described as the ‘Mission Discourse’ (8:1–11:30). Jesus’ discussion of the hostility and persecution endured by his disciples in the text immediately preceding 10:38 frames his call to abandon familial ties and to take up the cross as the price of prioritizing discipleship over social obligations. Here, however, the author shifts away from the harsh language of Q, substituting “the one who loves *x* more than me . . .” rather than “the one who does not hate *x* . . .” Furthermore, Matthew appends to Q’s “cannot be my disciple” a statement about the “unworthiness” of a disciple who places family interests and self-preservation over loyalty to Jesus.

Next, Matthew redacts Mark’s cross saying into a section of his gospel narrative which similarly owes its structure to Mark: Jesus’ journey towards Jerusalem and the three accompanying ‘Passion predictions’ made by him along the way. As in Mark, it is Peter’s misunderstanding of the messianic role which prompts the teaching material containing the cross saying (16:24). Yet, unlike Mark, Matthew’s Jesus does not confront the crowds with the re-

quirements of cross-bearing, but reserves this instruction for those already committed to discipleship. With his own suffering and death as the paradigm, Jesus here prepares his devotees for their own martyrdom as they follow the path of their condemned Master.

Luke also incorporates both the Markan and Q versions of the cross saying into his gospel (at 9:23 and 14:26–27 respectively), but, unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke omits Jesus' rebuke of Peter for his misunderstanding of the messianic role. Rather, the author inserts the cross saying immediately following the first 'Passion prediction,' which has the effect of linking Jesus' own suffering with that of his disciples. The grammatical alterations made in Luke's redaction serve to emphasize the ongoing commitment to follow Jesus inherent in discipleship, especially in the addition of the phrase "every day" to Jesus' demand to "take up the cross." Significantly, Luke 9:23 stands as the only instance of any Synoptic version of the cross saying where readers are invited to explore the saying's meaning on a spiritual or metaphorical level.

The 'Travel narrative' (9:51–19:46) provides the literary context for the second occurrence of the cross saying in Luke (14:26–27). In contrast to the previous, somewhat spiritualized call to "take up the cross every day" in ch. 9 of the gospel, this version of the cross saying sets forth discipleship in very stern terms. Luke retains Q's requirement to "hate" various family members, but expands and personalizes the list of people to include "*your* father," "wife and children," "siblings," and extends the hate even to one's "own life." Luke consistently presents discipleship as imitation of Jesus. Here, however, the extent of that imitation is fully disclosed: the disciples' willingness to be treated as outcasts means that they must share the same destiny as Jesus—rejection and condemnation. Thus, Luke 14:27 stands as a warning against allowing any other commitment—whether to family or to self—to stand in the way of loyalty to Jesus.

The above review demonstrates that, over time, early Christian writers adapted the cross saying to express their various interpretations of the requirements of discipleship. At their heart, the Synoptic versions of the cross saying function to remind subsequent generations of Christians that by following Jesus they put themselves at risk. Discipleship involves confronting others with the message and ministry of Jesus—which often means challenging the

status quo, and may even require separation from family and facing martyrdom. Thus, not only does the life and ministry of Jesus serve as an example for followers; by preserving the cross saying in their respective βίαι, the Synoptic authors signify that his death is paradigmatic as well.

What is clear is that the early Christian authors continued to find the cross saying meaningful, applying it on both literal and metaphorical levels. Indeed, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter Five, the development of cognate versions of the cross saying provides further evidence that early Christian writers found cross-bearing a useful way of explaining various aspects of Christian experience. Before looking at these cognate versions, however, I next examine the one occurrence of the cross saying outside of the New Testament canon—that found in the *Gospel of Thomas*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE CROSS SAYING IN THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

AFTER over one hundred years of scholarship on the Greek fragments found at Oxyrhynchus,<sup>1</sup> and less than sixty years of scholarship on the Coptic text found at Nag Hammadi,<sup>2</sup> exegesis of sayings found within the *Gospel of Thomas* remains a task fraught with difficulty. Primary concerns for any scholarly investigation of *Thomas' logia* include decisions about their date of composition, a feasible provenance for the autograph, and what literary dependency appears in the text, if any. While these matters do impact interpretation, the most important consideration (and simultaneously the greatest challenge) for understanding this text comes in correctly ascertaining the original composer's unspecified worldview and operative theology. In fact, the author of *Thomas* seems to have intentionally created a hermeneutical testing ground for readers of this gospel, declaring from the outset that the one who discovers the interpretive key to these secret sayings of the living Jesus "shall not taste of death" (*Gos. Thom.* 1). It would appear that much is at stake regarding the conclusions made in this particular chapter!

1. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt discovered the Greek manuscript fragments under consideration in this chapter in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt (modern Behneseh) during two separate excavations: the initial dig occurred in 1897 (POxy 1) and the other in 1903 (POxy 654 and POxy 655). Their original publications occur in logia ihsou: *Sayings of Our Lord from an Early Greek Papyrus* (London: Henry Frowde, 1897); idem, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part I* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898); idem, *New Sayings of Jesus and Fragments of a Lost Gospel from Oxyrhynchus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1904).

2. For the story of their discovery in 1945 see: J. M. Robinson, "The Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices," *BA* 42 (1979): 206–224; idem, "Getting the Nag Hammadi Library into English," *BA* 42 (1979): 239–48.

The investigation of the cross saying in the *Gospel of Thomas* therefore begins by addressing the introductory issues of dating and provenance. I then examine textual matters specific to saying 55, including an explanation of why I see little evidence to justify the view that *Thomas* exhibits literary dependency on similar Synoptic tradition, a conclusion that comports with the findings of Stephen J. Patterson and some other Thomasine scholars. I also note the appearance and significance of the staurogram in the Coptic manuscript of *Thomas*.<sup>3</sup> What follows is an attempt to make sense of the cross saying within both the context of this sayings collection and the broader theology underlying it. Before the chapter concludes, I give brief attention to saying 77 (saying 30/77b in POxy 1), which may have functioned as a veiled reference to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, an event that some interpreters of *Thomas* claim had little significance for its original composers.<sup>4</sup>

## Date and Provenance of Thomas

The original paleographic analysis of the Oxyrhynchus fragments (POxy 1) by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt suggested a *terminus ad quem* of 200 C.E. for the composition of *Thomas*.<sup>5</sup> The physical evidence provided by these manu-

3. The ‘staurogram’ can be defined as a monogram composed of the superimposed Greek letters *tau* and *rho*. Larry Hurtado has argued that it appears as possibly one of the earliest Christian visual representations of Jesus. I explore the relation of the staurogram to the cross saying in Chapter Eight. See Larry Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 135–154.

4. Saying 30 in POxy 1 corresponds to saying 30 + 77b in the Coptic *Gos. Thom.*, with some interesting variations. This indicates that fluidity may have existed in the saying’s functionality and interconnectivity at an early time, or that later Christians felt free to innovate and make distinct compositions of the *Gospel of Thomas* which preserved the sayings in different sequences.

5. Grenfell and Hunt, *logia ihsou*, 16. These conclusions were challenged, and an earlier date suggested for the Greek fragments, by Søren Giversen, “The Palaeography of Oxyrhynchus Papyri I and 654–55,” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Boston, November 1999. At the time of my research this paper was unavailable to me. I am unaware of any subsequent publication of this paper, and I had no success in my attempts to contact Prof. Dr. Giversen to request a copy).

script fragments, however, offered little help in determining an original composition date, which resulted in scholars arguing for dates ranging from 50 C.E. (making *Thomas* nearly contemporary with Q) to around 150 C.E. The complexity of assigning a date to *Thomas* is due to several factors, not the least of which concerns the differences between the Greek and Coptic versions. These discrepancies signal that those who utilized this gospel changed or augmented various *logia* during the intervening period, and perhaps also in translation, an unsurprising phenomenon considering the history of most sayings compilations.<sup>6</sup>

Until relatively recent years, the debate over dating *Thomas* turned on which particular external factors individual scholars chose to employ for the purpose of making comparisons. This meant that those scholars arguing for an earlier date tended to compare *Thomas* with other early Christian literature, noting the parallels with more primitive texts such as Q and parts of the authentic Pauline corpus,<sup>7</sup> while researchers arguing for a later date compared the content of the *logia* with trends in gnostic thought-systems which developed only in the second century and thereafter.<sup>8</sup> To make this comparison, however, these 'late-date' scholars frequently took it as fact that *Thomas* did exhibit such gnostic perspectives—an assumption which has become increasingly difficult to justify in light of recent work clarifying both the nature of second-century gnosticism, and the theology exhibited in the *Gospel*

6. See my discussion of this phenomenon as it pertains to Q in Chapter Two.

7. Notably, Henry E. W. Turner and Hugh Montefiore, *Thomas and the Evangelists* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 40–78; R. Cameron, "Parable and Interpretation in the *Gospel of Thomas*," *Forum* 2:2 (1986): 3–39; H. Koester, "Q and Its Relatives," in *Gospel Origins & Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1990), 49–63, esp. 50–53; and S. J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1993), 18–71.

8. Reading the works of the scholars referenced in this short list reveals a general split on this issue between North American and European perspectives, with European academics tending to favour a later date for *Thomas*. Cf. R. M. Grant and D. N. Freedman, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus* (London: Collins, 1960); W. R. Schoedel, "Naassene Themes in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas," *VC* 14 (1960): 225–34; B. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas* (trans. E. Sharpe; London: Collins, 1961); O. Cullmann, "The Gospel of Thomas and the Problem of the Age of the Traditions Contained Therein: A Survey," *Int* 16 (1962): 418–38.

of *Thomas*.<sup>9</sup> I shall have more to say later on the underlying theology of *Thomas* and its meaning for interpreting *logia* preserved in this gospel.

By categorizing the *Gospel of Thomas* as a collection of ‘sayings of the wise,’ and thereby placing the gospel within a wider stream of sapiential literature (e.g., Proverbs, Qoheleth, certain intertestamental compilations, Q, and other collections of wisdom literature from the ancient Near East), the studies of James Robinson and John Kloppenborg provide a means of comparison based on genre.<sup>10</sup> While this approach gives no more precise a date for *Thomas*’ composition than the others, it does permit argumentation aimed at determining the “intellectual location of the gospel”<sup>11</sup> within the trajectory of early Christian theological development.

An important distinction must be made at this point between *Thomas* and other collections of ‘sayings of the wise.’ Unlike more generic collections, the *Gospel of Thomas* consistently presents its teaching as coming from one source. That is to say, the figure of Jesus remains central in this collection as an authoritative revealer of truth. On this feature of *Thomas*, Larry Hurtado states:

Clearly, therefore, as is the case for the canonical and other extracanonical writings . . . *Gos. Thom.* is a “Jesus book” and not merely a “wisdom” text such as the Old Testament book of Proverbs or the rabbinic tractate *Pirke Aboth*. It is not a collection of “sayings of the wise,” but a compilation of *Jesus*’ sayings; he is not one of a line or group of teachers, but the only teacher recognized in the compilation. Moreover, these sayings claim to encode truth of ultimate value. Their cryptic meaning promises (and discovery of their meaning conveys) a profound awakening to one’s own true being and transcendent significance. What is on offer is not simply a way of life intended to bring success and tranquility (unlike ancient philosophical traditions), or even to manifest righteousness and the fulfillment of God’s will (unlike Jewish Wis-

9. For summaries of scholarship on problems regarding understanding *Thomas* as ‘gnostic’ see F. T. Fallon and R. Cameron, “The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis,” *ANRW* 2:25.6 (1988): 4195–251; S. J. Patterson, “The Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Tradition: A Forschungsbericht and Critique,” *Forum* 8:1–2 (1992): 45–97; G. J. Riley, “The Gospel of Thomas in Recent Research,” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 2 (1994): 227–52.

10. J. M. Robinson, “*Logoi Sophoi*: On the Gattung of Q,” in *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (eds. J. M. Robinson and H. Koester; Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1971): 71–113; J. S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

11. Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997), 15.

dom tradition). Instead, *Gos. Thom.* touts conscious participation in a life of a wholly different plane.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, I note here that the focus on Jesus in *Thomas* (i.e., nearly all *logia* begin with “Jesus said . . .”) does not correspond with what seems generally true of the ancient sayings genre—that is, sayings collections almost always originate from multiple sources.

Frequently, efforts to compare *Thomas* and Q emphasize a common oral tradition behind both gospels,<sup>13</sup> with some scholars detecting stratification within both documents which reveals the accretion of new kinds of sayings material over time.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Q, *Thomas* evidences no obvious organization,<sup>15</sup>

12. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 454–55.

13. See, e.g., J. M. Robinson, “On Bridging the Gulf from Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or Vice Versa)” in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (eds. C. W. Hendrickson and R. Hodgson, Jr.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1986), 127–175; Cameron, “Parable and Interpretation,” 34; J. H. Sieber, “The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament,” in *Gospel Origins & Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (eds. J. E. Goehring, C. W. Hendrick, J. T. Sanders, H. D. Betz; Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1990), 64–73, esp. 66.

14. In reaction to the work of S. J. Patterson, J. D. Crossan has replaced his earlier stratification of *Thomas* (two layers, one reflective of Jerusalem Christianity and the other from Edessa) found in *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 427–28, with that presented in *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 247–56. Patterson’s more complex attempt at observing stratification in *Thomas* follows closely the method suggested for Q by Kloppenborg: a foundational oral sapiential layer oriented towards the Kingdom of God (Q<sup>1</sup>), followed by a secondary redaction involving apocalyptic-oriented instruction (Q<sup>2</sup>). Patterson, on the other hand, suggests that *Thomas* redacts the common oral material available to Q into a mystical and individualistic context (which obviously more closely resembles gnosticism than anything found in Q’s redactions). See S. J. Patterson, “Wisdom and Q in Thomas,” in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (eds. L. G. Perdue, B. B. Scott, and W. J. Wiseman; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 187–221. William Arnal provides yet another stratification for *Thomas*, one based closely on Kloppenborg’s model for Q, but which accounts for a new social setting that affected the redaction of the common *logia* theoretically available to both. See W. E. Arnal, “The Rhetorical Marginality: Apocalypticism, Gnosticism and Sayings Gospels,” *HTR* 88 (1995): 471–94.

15. On this, Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 455, observes, “. . . unlike most examples of Wisdom books, and unlike Q as well, the sayings of *Gos. Thom.* have no readily discernible thematic organization. This is a particularly curious feature of the writing, and perhaps more significant than commonly recognized. It certainly limits considerably any generic link between

except where sayings or lines may have attracted each other due to catchword or theme.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of whether *Thomas* actually does evidence layers of redaction—claims that seem difficult to substantiate in my view<sup>17</sup>—those taking this approach typically situate *Thomas*' original stratum of composition during the early oral transmission of the Jesus tradition (50–60 C.E.), and often view *Thomas*, like Q, as pre-dating narrative gospels.

Recently, however, April DeConick has drawn into question the dominance of the binary model which repeatedly approaches the study of *Thomas* in tandem with the analysis of Q.<sup>18</sup> Wanting to approach *Thomas* in its own right, DeConick suggests a “rolling corpus” model, where the gospel’s original “kernel material” underwent augmentation and development in response to various crises occurring over a time-period spanning from 50–150 C.E.<sup>19</sup> For instance, she finds evidence that the original “kernel material” originated in Jerusalem in the mid-first century based on her detection of early Jewish Christian consternation regarding Gentile circumcision echoed in the *Gospel of Thomas* 53.<sup>20</sup> Continuing in this vein, DeConick goes on to identify a number of Thomazine sayings with other ideological struggles she observes taking place within early Christianity.

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*Gos. Thom.* and Q, and also raises a serious question about what kind of historical connection (‘trajectory’) there could be between the two. A sayings collection overtly organized thematically with a structure that also reflects an inchoate narrative (or narrative substructure), such as Q seems to have been, is hardly in quite the same genre as a compilation that, whether by design or default, is lacking in observable structure.”

16. See, e.g., Allen Callahan, “‘No Rhyme or Reason’: The Hidden Logia of the *Gospel of Thomas*,” *HTR* 90 (1997): 411–26; Stevan Davies, “The Christology and Protology of the *Gospel of Thomas*,” *JBL* 11 (1992): 663–82.

17. For what I view as appropriate criticism of the above authors’ theories on stratification in *Thomas*, see Risto Uro, *Thomas: Seeking the Historical Context of the Gospel of Thomas* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 106–126.

18. A. D. DeConick, “The Original *Gospel of Thomas*,” *VC* 56 (2002): 167–199.

19. Idem, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and its Growth*, *LNTS* 286 (ed. John M. G. Barclay; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 64–110.

20. A claim similarly made by her *Großdoktervater* G. Quispel in his essay, “Reincarnation and Magic in the Asclepius,” in *From Poimandres to Jacob Böhme: Gnosis, Hermetism, and the Christian Tradition* (eds. R. Van den Broek and C. van Heertum; Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica/E. J. Brill, 2000), 214–15.

Her theories do not pass without criticism, however. Assuming that debates over circumcision, for instance, occurred only during the initial expansion of Christianity into Gentile areas, DeConick fails to acknowledge that this issue remained in play for some groups well into the second century.<sup>21</sup> Thus, as Risto Uro rightly observes, “DeConick’s attempt to reconstruct a series of redactional impulses which would reflect regularly developing crises or issues in the Christian movement at large does not take into account the geographical and cultural differences and presumes that certain experiences were current only in certain periods among early Christian groups.”<sup>22</sup>

If theories of stratification or even a “rolling corpus” model seem tendentious, might other approaches to *Thomas* exist which could indicate a possible date for the text? A relatively recent trend in Thomasine scholarship seeks to make intertextual comparisons between *Thomas* and the canonical gospel of John.<sup>23</sup> At least in the United States, the most widely known scholarly effort along these lines remains the work of Elaine Pagels. In her popular book *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*, Pagels argues that John and *Thomas* actually stand in opposition to each other; these texts were separately produced by conflicting Christian communities who viewed Jesus’ identity and

21. For an analysis of *Gos. Thom.* 53 see A. Marjanen, “*Thomas* and Jewish Religious Practices,” in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (SNTW; ed. R. Uro; Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1998), 178–180; for mid-second century texts which refer to the ongoing circumcision debate see: Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 19.3, *Barn.* 9:1–5, and Epiphanius, *Pan.* 33.5.11.

22. Uro, *Thomas*, 126.

23. See G. J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). I. Dunderberg has written several articles, including “John and Thomas in Conflict?” in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 SBL Commemoration* (NHMS 44; eds. J. D. Turner and A. McGuire; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 361–80; “*Thomas*’ I-Sayings and the Gospel of John,” in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (SNTW; ed. R. Uro; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 33–64; “*Thomas* and the Beloved Disciple,” in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas* (SNTW; ed. R. Uro; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 65–88. See also Elaine Pagels, “Exegesis of Genesis 1 in the *Gospels of Thomas* and John,” *JBL* 118 (1999): 477–96; H. W. Attridge, “‘Seeking’ and ‘Asking’ in Q, *Thomas*, and John,” in *From Quest to Q: Festschrift James M. Robinson* (BETL 146; eds. J. Ma. Asgeirsson, K. De Troyer and M. W. Meyer; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2000), 295–302.

goals for his followers very differently.<sup>24</sup> Whether John and *Thomas* actually do comprise the products of inter-Christian debate and theological controversy (a view that I think is hard to justify),<sup>25</sup> the occurrence of similar themes in *Thomas* and John does seem to point to a trend by certain Christian groups near the beginning of the second century to reinterpret Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, I find the arguments of Richard Valantasis persuasive, wherein he posits a date of 100–110 C.E. for the original composition of the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>27</sup> Valantasis suggests dating *Thomas* in the first decade of the second century for a compelling reason: the Thomasine *logia* appear to fulfill a similar function to both the Johannine project and the letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch—texts which, it seems, were synchronously written.<sup>28</sup> John’s gospel, whether a benign reinterpretation or an actual rejection of the Markan approach, offers a new perspective on what it meant to ‘know Jesus’ as a living force within the believing community. As H. Koester observes, the author of John’s gospel “understood his task to be the fresh interpretation of the Jesus tradition in his own church in the light of the passion narrative.”<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Ignatius’s letters to the churches similarly present a theology of participating in Christian community by imitation of Jesus’ suffering and martyrdom. Hence, Valantasis detects a shared theological goal in these two projects, even if they seek to achieve that goal in different ways:

Just about the time that John attempted to renew his community by a return to the original and earliest modality of understanding of Jesus’ relationship to his followers,

24. See chapters two and four in Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

25. Against the view that Jn consciously argues against proponents of Thomasine theology, I am convinced by the arguments found in Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 474–79.

26. I do not want to give the impression that Jn was rejected by an “orthodox” majority of Christians by making such a statement. On the contrary, as pointed out by Charles Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), no special reverence was given to Jn by heterodox Christians that was not also afforded to the rest of the New Testament writings.

27. Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, 12–21.

28. On Ignatius see William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, Hermenia (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1985), 4–7.

29. H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels and Their Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1992), 28.

Ignatius attempted to guide the church into further hierarchical reformation by the promulgation of the church offices of bishop, presbyter, and deacon as a means of replicating the presence of Christ in the community—a presence made manifest in the proper celebration of the eucharist and also in martyrdom as sacramental participation in the life and immortality of Christ. This pattern of revelation based upon an immediate access to Jesus either through martyrdom or through the structures of the church, and the centrality of the passion and the crucifixion of Jesus, mirror the activity of John's gospel.<sup>30</sup>

It must be admitted that there are no direct literary parallels between the *Gospel of Thomas* and either John's gospel or Ignatius's letters. Those thematic elements which they do share—concepts such as truth, light, and immortality—point to a shared theological concern to revitalize or reinterpret the Jesus tradition in a more insightful or 'correct' manner.<sup>31</sup> Of each of these texts, the *Gospel of Thomas* contains the strongest revisionist tone, going so far as to speak disdainfully of other Christians who hold different views than those of its composer(s).<sup>32</sup> Even so, Valantasis offers a summary of what appears to be a common purpose behind *Thomas*'s, John's, and Ignatius' respective approaches:

... the author wrote the *Gospel of Thomas* at this point (100–110 C.E.), at the same time as John's gospel and Ignatius' letters, as part of the debate about the renewal of the church and about the way that Jesus relates to the community of his followers. All three of these texts situate the believer in intense relationship with Jesus, each revolving around a different center. . . . The *Gospel of Thomas* connects the hearer and seeker to the very voice of the living Jesus speaking in the midst of an interpreting community. This revisioning of the relationship of Jesus to community in the first decade of the second century C.E. has often been identified with a Gnosticizing tendency within formative Christianity, so that at various times in the history of scholarship John, *Thomas*, and Ignatius have been scrutinized as gnostic writers. This tendency, however, does not primarily relate to a gnostic theological construction, but to a renewal movement emergent at this time to reconsider and reformulate the relationship of Jesus to the church as a foundation for Christian living.<sup>33</sup>

30. Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, 18–19.

31. Also noticed by R. Wilson, *Studies in the Gospel of Thomas* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1960), 146–147.

32. This elitism appears in *Gos. Thom.* 3, 13, and 52. For further discussion see Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 458–59.

33. Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, 19–20.

I shall say more later about the unique way in which the composers of *Thomas* sought to “reformulate the relationship of Jesus” to the individual, as well as elucidating the theology of its composers, in order to deduce how the cross saying might have functioned for them. At this point, I merely seek to make transparent my reasons for assuming that the *Gospel of Thomas* was produced early in the second century as part of wider efforts to revise aspects of the Christian faith.

But before proceeding to examine saying 55, another presupposition I hold about this text requires clarification: Where (and thus, among whom) did the *Gospel of Thomas* originate? A few notable features of *Thomas* seem to point towards a Syrian provenance for the text. Michel Desjardins, affirming a position held widely among students of *Thomas*, states, “A setting in or around Palestine (i.e., Syria or Alexandria) for the *Gos. Thom.* is suggested by the work’s Judaeo-Christian flavour. Nobody denies this point. Differences of opinion revolve around just how ‘Jewish’ the work actually is.”<sup>34</sup> Those differences of opinion involve determining the number of Semitisms present in the text,<sup>35</sup> the presence of a saying about the position of James the Just (*Gos. Thom.* 12), and concerns about Sabbath observance (*Gos. Thom.* 27)—undoubtedly issues important in Jewish Christian circles in Palestine.<sup>36</sup> Scholars such as Robert Murray have also noted the similarities in outlook—particularly a shared orientation towards asceticism—between early Syrian Christianity and Jewish Christian groups.<sup>37</sup> It thus remains possible that Syrian Christianity

34. M. Desjardins, “Where was the Gospel of Thomas Written?” *TJT* 8/1 (1992): 123.

35. Possibilities include: *Gos. Thom.* 25, 27, 45, etc. For discussions on the Semitic expressions in these texts see: J. Ménard, “Les problèmes de l’Évangile selon Thomas,” in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig* (NHS 3; ed. M. Krause; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 209–228, and *L’Évangile selon Thomas* (NHS 5; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 9–13; on Semitic characteristics appearing in Coptic, see B. Dehandschutter, “Le lieu d’origine de l’Évangile selon Thomas,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 6/7 (1975–76): 129–130.

36. See G. Quispel, “The Gospel of Thomas Revisited,” in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section ‘Études’ 1; ed. B. Barc; Quebec: University of Laval; Leuven: Peeters, 1981), 242–44; also H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament Vol. 2: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), 152.

37. R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 11–17; Quispel, “The Gospel of Thomas Revisited,” 237.

was influenced at least in part by the Jewish Christian perspective at an early stage of development, elements of which may be detected in some of the sayings preserved in *Thomas*.

Academics have observed the similarities between the *Gospel of Thomas* and later documents thought to originate in Syrian Christianity of the second and later centuries. Comparisons have been made with several such texts, including: the *Liber Graduum*, the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Book of Thomas*, the *Acts of Thomas* (and notably the *Hymn of the Pearl* found in *Acts Thom.* 108–113), the *Gospel of Phillip*, and Tatian's *Diatessaron*.<sup>38</sup> Not all parallels suggested for these texts

38. For the *Liber Graduum*: D. A. Baker, "The 'Gospel of Thomas' and the Syriac 'Liber Graduum,'" *NTS* 12 (1965): 49–55; J. Ménard, *L'évangile selon Thomas*, 16–22; for the *Odes of Solomon*: A. F. J. Klijn, *Edessa, die Stadt des Apostels Thomas: Das älteste Christentum in Syrien* (Neukirchener Studienbücher 4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), 45–64; H. J. W. Drijvers, *History and Religion in Late Syria* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994); J. H. Charlesworth, *Critical Reflections on the Odes of Solomon, Vol. 1: Literary Setting, Textual Studies, Gnosticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel of John* (JSPSup 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 22–23; for the *Book of Thomas*: J. D. Turner, *The Book of Thomas the Contender from Codex II of the Cairo Gnostic Library from Nag Hammadi (CG II, 7): The Coptic Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary* (SBLDS 23; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), esp. 176; H. Schenke, "The Book of Thomas," in *New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1: Gospels and Related Writings* (trans. R. McL. Wilson; ed. W. Schneemelcher; Cambridge: James Clark; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 232–40; for the *Acts of Thomas*: P. Poirier, "Évangile de Thomas, Actes de Thomas, Livre de Thomas: Une tradition et ses transformations," *Apocrypha* 7 (1996): 9–26, and idem, "The Writings Ascribed to Thomas and the Thomas Tradition," in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (NHMS 44; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 303; for the *Hymn of the Pearl* see H. Puech, *En quête de la Gnose, Vol. 2: Sur l'Évangile selon Thomas: Esquisse d'une interprétation systématique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 44; Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987), 359–61; cf. H. J. W. Drijvers, "The Acts of Thomas," in *New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1: Gospels and Related Writings*, 322–39, esp. 331; also S. Parpola, "Mesopotamian Precursors of the Hymn of the Pearl," in *Mythology and Mythologies: Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences* (Melammu Symposia II; ed. R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), 181–93; for the *Gospel of Phillip*: Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures*, 325; W. W. Isenberg, "Introduction [to the *Gospel According to Phillip*]," in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7 together with XIII, 2\*, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and POxy 1, 654, 655* (vol. 1; ed. B. Layton; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 131–139, esp. 134; H. Schenke, "The Gospel of Phillip," in *New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 1*, 179–187, esp. 183; for the *Diatessaron*: G. Quispel, "Der Heliand und das Thomasevangelium," in *Gnostic Studies* (Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 34:2; vol. 2; Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1975), 70–97; and "The Latin Tatian or the *Gospel of Thomas* in Lim-

and *Thomas* are without dispute, but the literary and ideological similarities which exist leave little room for doubt that, as Desjardins concludes, “all of these sources emerged out of the same general milieu.”<sup>39</sup> What is more, the identification with (and unique esteem for) the disciple Thomas, a documented phenomenon within Syrian Christianity from around 140 C.E. onward,<sup>40</sup> remains one of the most significant links between the *Gospel of Thomas* and these later texts.

Finally, several scholars have linked *Thomas* with Edessa, since later texts—whose concern was to elevate the status of the disciple Thomas—seem to have originated from there. Some hold this view with utmost certainty,<sup>41</sup> while sceptics “await substantiation” of the claim.<sup>42</sup> Still other researchers contend that Edessa seems an unlikely provenance for the *Gospel of Thomas* given that it was originally composed in Greek rather than Syriac.<sup>43</sup> Stevan

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burg,” in *ibid.*, 159–168; T. Baarda, “Thomas and Tatian,” in *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: Vrije University, 1983), 37–49; J. Ménard, *L'évangile selon Thomas*, 22–27; cf. H. J. W. Drijvers, “Facts and Problems in Early Syriac-Speaking Christianity,” *SecCent* 2 (1982): 157–175; Fallon and Cameron, “Gospel of Thomas,” 4225.

39. Desjardins, “Where was the Gospel of Thomas Written?,” 125.

40. See Fallon and Cameron, “Gospel of Thomas,” 4227; Magaretha Lelyveld, *Les logia de la vie dans l'évangile selon Thomas: A la recherche d'une tradition et d'une rédaction*, Nag Hammadi Studies 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 152; cf. S. Patterson arguing for a two-stage development, with a formative tradition of *Thomas* occurring in Palestine, and a secondary redaction in Syria (accounting for the significance of James and Thomas respectively) in J. Kloppenborg, M. Meyer, S. Patterson and M. Steinhauser, *Q–Thomas Reader* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1990), 91–93; see also the more general discussion of the Jewish influence in Syriac Christianity in H. Drijvers, “Syriac Christianity and Judaism,” in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (ed. J. Lieu et al.; London: Routledge, 1992), 124–146.

41. L. W. Banard, “The Origins and Emergence of the Church in Edessa during the First Two Centuries A.D.,” *VC* 22 (1968): 161–175; H. J. W. Drijvers, “Edessa und das jüdische Christentum,” *VC* 24 (1970): 4–33; A. F. J. Klijn, “Christianity in Edessa and the Gospel of Thomas,” *NovT* 14 (1972): 70–77; Puech, *En quête de la Gnose*, 41–44; Quispel, “The Gospel of Thomas Revisited,” 234: “It is absolutely certain that this apocryphal gospel originated in Edessa.” For more on Edessa see J. B. Segal, *Edessa: 'The Blessed City'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

42. Murray, *Symbols*, 25; see also Desjardins, “Where was the Gospel of Thomas Written?” 126–128.

43. See B. Ehlers, “Kann das Thomasevangelium aus Edessa stammen?” *NovT* 12 (1970): 284–317; Dehandschutter, “Le lieu d'origine,” 129–130, who views Egypt as a more likely

Davies, for example, proposes that Antioch seems a better guess for its original setting.<sup>44</sup> I do not need to make decisions at this point about such specific settings—only to note that there is still debate concerning the most appropriate locale in which to situate *Thomas*.<sup>45</sup> I simply state here that, given the evidence, I assume a general Syrian provenance for the *Gospel of Thomas*.

### Saying 55: Taking up the Cross “In My Way”

Unfortunately, the cross saying in the *Gospel of Thomas* does not appear in the Greek fragments POxy 1, 654, or 655, but only in the Coptic manuscript from Nag Hammadi, which most likely dates from the fourth century.<sup>46</sup> The Coptic version, however, was almost certainly translated from a Greek original.<sup>47</sup> I shall first examine the relatively few grammatical issues encountered in saying 55, and then follow with brief comments on the appearance of the staurogram (an important cross-related scribal phenomenon to which I shall give detailed attention in Chapter Eight). For reference, Table 19 contains both the Coptic text (including divisions between the grammatical components of each word), as well as my own translation.<sup>48</sup>

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provenance than Edessa; Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas*, 76. Against this view, see the response of Klijn, “Christianity in Edessa,” 70–77; Fallon and Cameron, “Gospel of Thomas,” 4228–230.

44. Stevan Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom* (New York: Seabury, 1983).

45. For a recent summary of this debate see Uro, *Thomas*, 26–30. Uro views Syria as the most likely provenance for *Thomas*. Also H. J. W. Drijvers, “Facts and Problems in Early Syriac-Speaking Christianity,” in *East of Antioch* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 157–175, while an older work, remains important to this discussion.

46. For dating based on the binding cartonnage see J. M. Robinson, “Introduction,” *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7 together with XIII, 2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1), and POxy 1, 654, 655* (vol. 1; ed. B. Layton; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 16; cf. Søren Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis* (Acta Theologica Danica 5; Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963), 40.

47. On whether *Thomas* was originally composed in Greek, see the discussion in Fallon and Cameron, “Gospel of Thomas,” 4228–230.

48. Coptic texts have been taken from B. Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex II*; translations are my own. I would like to thank Mr. W. G. Morrice of Edinburgh for his thoughtful input regarding the Coptic translation. Separation of the morphemes accords with that found in

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GOS.	<b>ⲡⲈⲪⲈⲛ̅ⲓⲉ̅ ⲭⲈ ⲡⲈⲦⲁⲙⲈⲤⲈⲦⲈ ⲡⲈⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ</b>	Jesus says this, “Whoever will not
THOM.	<b>ⲁⲛ ⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲈⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ Ⲓⲛⲁⲩⲟⲥ ⲡ̅ⲙⲁⲟⲩⲧⲏⲤ</b>	hate his father and mother cannot be
55	<b>ⲁⲛ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ ⲛⲈⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ Ⲥⲛⲏⲩⲩⲩ</b>	my disciple, and whoever will [not]
	<b>ⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲈⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ ⲛ̅ⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ ⲙ̅ⲡⲈⲒⲚⲈⲒⲦⲟⲧ ⲤⲡⲟⲤ</b>	hate brothers and sisters and will [not]
	<b>ⲛ̅Ⲧⲁⲩⲉ ⲒⲈ Ⲓⲛⲁⲩⲟⲥ ⲁⲛ ⲈⲒⲟ ⲛ̅ⲁⲩⲓⲟⲤ</b>	take up the cross as I do, will not
	<b>ⲛⲁⲉⲓ</b>	come to a state of being worthy of
		me.”

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TABLE 19. Saying 55 in the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*.

My (somewhat awkward) rendering in Table 19 preserves the future tense of the verb forms found in the Coptic text, whereas many published English versions of *Thomas* simply express the verbs in the present tense for the sake of smoothness. This occurs from the outset, where **ⲡⲈⲦⲁⲙⲈⲤⲈⲦⲈ**, a Subach-mimic form of **ⲡⲈⲦⲛⲁⲙⲈⲤⲈⲦⲈ** (first future), appears more often than not as simply “he who does not hate” in several modern versions of *Thomas*.<sup>49</sup> Some scholars, such as Hans-Gebhard Bethge (working as part of *Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften*), attempt to integrate both present and future tenses in the English version—resulting, in my judgement, in an inelegant translation.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, saying 55 begins with the injunction to “hate” one’s parents and brothers and sisters as a prerequisite of discipleship, in a manner recalling the Q version of the cross saying incorporated by Matthew and Luke. Additionally, the *logion* comports with the requirement found at the beginning of saying 101—again, that a disciple “hates” his father and mother. There is a

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M. Grondin’s Coptic–English interlinear translation of the *Gos. Thom.*, found here: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9068/>.

49. See Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 72–73, 88–89.

50. This group’s translation, “Jesus says: ‘Whoever does not hate his father and his mother cannot become a disciple of mine. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters (and) will not take up his cross as I do, will not be worthy of me,’” appears in S. J. Patterson and J. Robinson, eds., *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 7–32, esp. 20. Although the claim is made on p. 7 that, “When sayings appear without a narrative framework, a translation in the present tense is preferable,” the translation repeatedly combines present and future tenses in the same sayings.

difference between the two Thomasine summonses to hate family members, where in 101 the author(s) append **ἄταζε** (“as I do”) to the obligation to hate one’s parents; in saying 55, however, **ἄταζε** modifies the phrase pertaining to “taking up the cross.” Either case corresponds to the other appearance of the word in *Thomas* where Jesus offers himself as an exemplar for discipleship.<sup>51</sup>

So, in one instance Jesus calls for hatred of parents and siblings, thereafter invoking himself as a model for cross-bearing; whereas elsewhere he points to his own example of hating his family as worthy of emulation. This hatred functions in *Thomas*—as well as in the gospels of Matthew and Luke—as a prerequisite for the life of discipleship.<sup>52</sup> G. Quispel claims that the omissions of “wife and children” (cf. Lk 14:26) and “sons and daughters” (cf. Mt 10:37) in the *Gospel of Thomas* indicate that, “We are told to break, if necessary, with the family we came from; yes, but not with the family we founded.”<sup>53</sup> Yet, given the general tendency towards asceticism found in this gospel—especially the emphasis on a solitary (**μοναχος**) and single (**ογα ογωτ**) existence<sup>54</sup>—Quispel’s suggestion for *Thomas*’ meaning appears, in my view, an unlikely exception.<sup>55</sup> The tendency towards asceticism reflected in several of *Thomas*’ sayings is such an important topic, especially as it relates to “taking up the cross,” that I shall return to it later.

Next, the prefix **περ** functions as a possessive adjective, which can have different forms according to the gender of the noun it modifies. Some scholars—and here again I deal with Quispel since he was among the first to suggest this—view the repetition of the possessive adjective in **περπειωτ . . . μη περμααγ** (“his father and his mother”) as an indication that this saying was origi-

51. **ἄταζε** appears in *Gos. Thom.* 55, 101, and 108.

52. See my comments on the Synoptic version of this call to “hate” family members in Chapter Three.

53. G. Quispel, “Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas,” *NTS* 5 (1959): 287.

54. *Gos. Thom.* 49: “Blessed are the solitary (**μοναχος**) and elect, for you will find the kingdom”; see also *Gos. Thom.* 16 and 75. This word should not be understood as referring to the later socially recognizable role of celibates (such as monks, etc.); see E. A. Judge, “The Earliest Use of *Monachos* for ‘Monk’ (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism,” *JAC* 20 (1977): 72–89.

55. A similar conclusion is made by A. J. B. Higgins, “Non-Gnostic Sayings in the Gospel of Thomas,” *NovT* 4 (1960): 292–306.

nally Aramaic or Syriac.<sup>56</sup> It is more accurately understood, however, as the reiteration of the possessive—an observable feature of Coptic in general. For instance, and by way of comparison, the Greek parallel version of the saying in Luke 14:26 contains only one possessive (ἐαυτοῦ) at this point. Yet the Lukan text, when translated into the Sahidic Coptic New Testament, exhibits the possessive adjective on each noun.<sup>57</sup> The Sahidic translation of Luke 14:26 therefore corresponds grammatically with what we observe in *Gos. Thom.* 55, meaning that the particular use of the possessive adjective found in *Thomas* may simply reflect a Coptic idiom rather than indicating an Aramaic or Syriac influence behind the text.<sup>58</sup>

In the same way, Quispel views **ⲕⲚⲁⲱ ⲡ̄ ⲙⲁⲔⲬⲦⲤ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲁⲉⲓ** (very literally: “will not be able to become a disciple to me”) as suggestive of an Aramaic original because of the expression “disciple to me” (a dative form) rather than the more familiar “disciple of me” (a genitive form) found in the Synoptic texts.<sup>59</sup> Again, this idiom appears as a dative in the Coptic translation of Luke 14:26: **ⲙⲛ̀ ⲤⲞⲙ ⲛ̀ⲉⲣⲡ̄ ⲙⲁⲔⲬⲦⲤ ⲛⲁⲓ**, and thus by itself does not provide conclusive evidence that *Thomas* was originally composed in another language than Greek.<sup>60</sup>

The conjunction **ⲁⲮⲱ**, which here connects the two sets of family members identified as worthy of hatred by disciples (parents and siblings), often appears after Coptic first future verbs, as in this case. The appearance of **ⲛⲉⲓⲕⲛⲬⲱ ⲙ̀ⲛ̀ ⲛⲉⲓⲕⲱⲛⲉ** (“his brothers and his sisters”) agrees with the Luke 14:26

56. Quispel, “Some Remarks,” 287.

57. *Sahidica: The Sahidic Coptic New Testament*, Logos Bible Software (Logos Research Systems, Inc.), Bellingham, Wash.

58. See W. Schrage, *Das Verhältnis des Thomas-Evangeliums zur synoptischen Tradition und zu den koptischen Evangelienübersetzungen* (BZNW 29; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 121.

59. Quispel, “Some Remarks,” 287. For these observations, Quispel relies on the work of A. Guillaumont, “Sémitismes dans les logia des Jésus,” *Journal Asiatique* CCXLVI (1958): 113; idem, “Les sémitismes dans l’Évangile selon Thomas: Essai de classement,” in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 1981, 190–204; cf. K. Kuhn, “Some Observations on the Coptic Gospel According to Thomas,” *Mus* 73 (1960): 317–23.

60. In my opinion, that earlier scholars were quick to see Semitisms in saying 55, and that it belonged to an “early Palestinian tradition” (and thus derivative of an “Aramaic original”), has more to do with the ideas presented in the saying itself rather than conclusions based on linguistic analysis with other Coptic texts as I present here.

version of this saying (Mt 10:37 has “sons and daughters”). This phrase noticeably lacks the negative (**AN**), which caused some scholars to question whether the expression betrays an Aramaic root<sup>61</sup>—again, not a necessary conclusion, as this could be an example of a distributed negative (found in the earlier clause) or the omission of the negative particle, which sometimes occurs before first future verbs.<sup>62</sup>

Mention of the cross occurs in the next phrase, with **Ḇḩḩḩḩ Ḇḩḩḩḩḩḩ Ḇḩḩḩḩḩḩ** (“and will [not] carry his cross as I do”) distinguishing itself from its Synoptic parallels by the addition of **Ḇḩḩḩḩḩḩ**. In this word, the feminine noun **ḩḩḩḩ** (“manner”/“way”) must be differentiated from the similar feminine noun **ḩḩḩḩ** (“road”/“path”) appearing in *Gos. Thom.* 9. The essential function of **Ḇḩḩḩḩḩḩ** in this *logion* is therefore to show Jesus pointing to his own manner of cross-bearing as paradigmatic for discipleship. Obviously the Coptic **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ** is a loan-word from the Greek *σταυρός*, and, notably, this word appears in the Nag Hammadi manuscript with the staurogram (**ϣ**), which I examine in the following section.<sup>63</sup>

The final phrase of *logion* 55, **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ ḩḩ ḩḩḩ Ḇḩḩḩḩḩḩ ḩḩḩḩḩḩ** (very literally: “will not come to exist in a state worthy to me”), agrees with the way Matthew (10:37) concludes the cross saying. The word **ḩḩḩḩ**, qualitative of **ḩḩḩḩ** (“to act, do, become”), serves to express a state or condition of being. Whereas **Ḇḩḩḩḩḩḩ** (“worthy”) takes the dative preposition **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ** (“to me”), the Greek adjective *ἄξιος* takes the genitive case in the Matthean text (*οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος*, “he is not worthy of me”). This comparison merely demonstrates a feature typical of Coptic construction, one which appears regularly in translations of Greek texts as stated before with reference to **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ ḩḩ ḩḩḩḩḩḩ**.

61. See Quispel, “Some Remarks,” 287.

62. For examples of this see J. Martin Plumley, *An Introductory Coptic Grammar* (London: Home & van Thal, 1948), a hypertext version of which can be found at <http://www.metalog.org/files/plumley/html/home.htm>; see esp. § 213.

63. In fact, three Greek loan-words appear in the Coptic version of verse 55 alone: **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ**, **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ**, and **ḩḩḩḩḩḩ**.

Date C.E.	Source	Language	Provenance
40	Oral Tradition	Aramaic/ Greek	Palestine/ Diaspora
50	Q 14:26–27	Greek	Palestine
60			
70	Mk 8:34	Greek	Rome
	Lk 14:26–27 Mt 10:37–38 Lk 9:23 Mt 16:24	Greek	Antioch
120	Greek <i>GTh</i> (33b)	Greek	Syria

KEY  
 —/— Probable route of transmission  
 - - - - - Less probable route of transmission

TABLE 20. Transmission of the cross saying indicating the influence of Synoptic literature upon *Thomas*.

In the observation of the above grammatical issues in *Gospel of Thomas* 55, I have noted that at some points the Thomasine version of the cross saying appears more similar to the Lukan, while elsewhere it more closely reflects Matthew's. This fact has been noted in other analyses of the text. Arguing that *Thomas* here exhibits literary dependency on the Synoptics, several scholars propose that this saying is "... a mixed text resulting from the conflation of Matt. 10.37–38 and Luke 14.26–27,"<sup>64</sup> or a "combination"<sup>65</sup> or an "amal-

64. Gerd Lüdemann, *Jesus After 2000 Years: What He Really Said and Did* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2001), 617, where he states: "The logion is a mixed quotation made up of Matt. 10.37(–38) and Luke 14.26(–27). Thomas has woven the saying about taking up the cross (cf. Mark 8.34 parr.) into the parallelism."

65. Grant and Freedman, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus*, 163–164, state, "This saying is a combination of Luke 14:26–27 (hating father and mother, brothers and sisters, carrying cross, becoming disciple) with Matthew 10:37–38 (being worthy of me). From Luke, Thomas omits mention of wife and children, perhaps because the Gnostic will have neither; he

gamation”<sup>66</sup> of these passages. J. P. Meier argues for precisely this kind of redactional activity, stating, “Here we have a prime example of how the *Gospel of Thomas* melds various phrases from various Synoptic Gospels to create its own form of a Gospel saying.”<sup>67</sup> It seems unlikely that the author of Thomas created this saying with no influence from Synoptic tradition, although some have argued, unconvincingly in my view, that such is the case.<sup>68</sup> Whether by direct literary transmission, or perhaps because the wider communal memory

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adds to carrying the cross ‘as I do’ . . . perhaps because as in John 19:17, Jesus bears his own cross (Simon of Cyrene carries it in the synoptic gospels).”

66. J. D. Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 136, states, “Matt. 10:37–38 had retained three stitches, but Luke 14:26 had reduced the former double-stitch saying into one. *Gos. Thom.* 55 also reduces the three stitches to two, but he does so by incorporating the cross saying within the second stitch of the family saying: “Whoever does not hate his father and mother cannot become a disciple to Me/ And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters [*cannot become a disciple to Me,*]/ And [*whoever does not*] take up his cross in My way will not be worthy of Me.’ . . . Those lines in parentheses and italicized have dropped from Thomas’s version in a different mode of amalgamation from either Matthew’s or Luke’s.”

67. J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, vol. 3: Companions and Competitors* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 105–106.

68. See the analysis of this saying by Michael Fieger, *Das Thomasevangelium: Einleitung, Kommentar, und Systematik* (NTAbh 22 Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1991), 165–167. See also: Cameron, “Parable and Interpretation,” 3–39; C. Hedrick, “Thomas and the Synoptics: Aiming at a Consensus,” *SecCent* 7/1 (1989–90): 56; Sieber, “The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament,” 69–70; Patterson, “The Gospel of Thomas,” 45–97, and *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1993), 45, where Patterson states, “. . . both versions of the saying in Thomas preserve a double-stitch parallel structure more tightly than the corresponding versions in Matthew and Luke. Now it may seem that an excerppter or gnostic redactor could have had an eye for ‘parallelismus membrorum’, and thus deliberately created these nice Thomas specimens from the more literally formulated sayings in Luke 14:26–27/Matt 10:37–39. But if one accepts this, one would then have to suppose that the redactor turned around and immediately ruined his or her own handiwork in Thom. 101 by adding the final phrase, which breaks the ‘parallelismus’! Thus, with no compelling evidence to suggest Thomas’ dependence here on the synoptics, it is more reasonable to judge that Thomas’ author/editor knew the saying from traditional circles, in which it was formulated variously in a two-stitch structure.” Arguments against Patterson’s view can be found in C. Blomberg, “Tradition and Redaction in the Parables of the Gospel of Thomas,” in *Gospel Perspectives: vol. 5, The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels* (ed. David Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1984), 177–206; C. Tuckett, “Thomas and the Synoptics,” *NovT* 30 (1988): 132–157; K. Snodgrass, “The Gospel of Thomas: A Secondary Gospel,” *SecCent* 7/1 (1989–90): 38.

retained the impact of reading these texts, the Synoptic editions of the cross saying seem to have directly influenced the composition of the *Thomasine* version. Before positing a meaning for saying 55, I now address a manuscript issue that may have an impact on its final interpretation: the presence of the staurogram.

## The Staurogram in Saying 55

On the forty-second page of the Nag Hammadi Codex II (the tenth page of the *Gospel of Thomas* text), near the end of line twenty-eight, a scribal phenomenon known as the ‘staurogram’ appears.<sup>69</sup> Here, copyists transmitting the text substituted the superimposed letters *tau* and *rho* (ϣ) for the letters **ταΥΡ** in the word **εταΥρροε**, indicating this word’s inclusion in a group of theologically significant terms found in early Christian manuscripts, and known as *nomina sacra*.<sup>70</sup> While it still remains impossible to determine whether the staurogram appeared in earlier manuscripts of Coptic *Thomas* (at least until such time as a document is discovered), its presence here indicates that Christians using this text likely approached the transmission of this word as an act of

69. An image of the facsimile can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9068/pictures/cross.jpg>.

70. For a recent assessment of the history and function of the *nomina sacra*, as well as the current state of scholarship on this phenomenon, see Larry Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95–134. Prior studies include the seminal work of Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich: C. H. Beck’sche, 1907; reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); see an update of Traube’s work in A. H. R. E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.: The Sources and Some Deductions* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Bavata 8; Leiden: Brill, 1959); also in José O’Callahan, “Nomina Sacra,” in *Papyris Graecis Saeculi III Neotestamentariis* (AnBib 46; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); see also Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*, (Schweich Lectures 1977; London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 26–48; Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 36–37; Larry Hurtado, “The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 655–73.

piety.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, we cannot know whether the Greek predecessor of the Coptic manuscript contained the staurogram since the saying would have been located on precisely those sections of the manuscripts now lost. I note that what remain of the Thomasine Oxyrhynchus papyri do, however, contain five other *nomina sacra*.<sup>72</sup>

Concerning the staurogram in general, scholars have noted that it appears as a scribal feature in early Christian manuscripts dating from the mid-second century onward.<sup>73</sup> Like similar innovations, the *tau-rho* combination functioned previously in other pre/non-Christian contexts,<sup>74</sup> but was adapted for use by Christian scribes as part of an ongoing accumulation of sacred words appearing in their texts. In its context within early Christian manuscripts, such as the *Gospel of Thomas*, the staurogram did not technically act as a free-standing monogram like other such ligatures (such as the *chi-rho*). Rather, as

71. See the discussion of this in Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 99–134. It seems probable that the use of the staurogram and other early Christograms pre-dated their appearance in the extant manuscripts which contain them.

72. POxy 1 has four:  $\overline{IC}$  (*IΗΣΟΥΣ*),  $\overline{OC}$  (*ΘΕΟΣ*),  $\overline{IP}$  (*ΠΑΤΗΡ*),  $\overline{ANOC}$  (*ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟΣ*); POxy 654 contains  $\overline{THC}$ ; See Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 97 ff.

73. See Erich Dinkler, *Signum Crucis* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1967), 177–178; Kurt Aland, “Neue Neutestamentliche Papyri II,” *NTS* 10 (1963–64): 62–79; idem, “Neue Neutestamentliche Papyri II,” *NTS* 11 (1964–65): 1–21; Larry Hurtado, “The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, The *Nomina Sacra* and the Staurogram,” in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (eds. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 271–88.

74. Such marks were made by builders or craftsmen at Dura Europos. See R. N. Frye, J. F. Gillam, H. Inhold, and C. B. Welles, “Inscriptions from Dura-Europos,” *Yale Classical Studies* 14 (1955): 123–213. For the *tau-rho* ligature denoting the third year of King Herod’s reign on coins see Baruch Kanael, “The Coins of King Herod of the Third Year,” *JQR* 62 (1951–52): 261–64; idem, “Ancient Jewish Coins and Their Historical Importance,” *BA* 26 (1963): 38–62. It also functioned as an abbreviation for  $\tau\rho(\sigma\pi\omicron\varsigma)$ ,  $\tau\rho(\iota\alpha\kappa\alpha\varsigma)$ , and  $\tau\rho(\omicron\kappa\omicron\nu\delta\alpha\varsigma)$ ; see Michael Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions (The Near East, 200 B.C.–A.D. 180)* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1940; reprinted in *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions, Papyri Manuscripts and Early Printed Books*; ed. Al. N. Oikonomides; Chicago: Ares, 1974), 105, and Kathleen McNamee, *Abbreviations in Greek Literary Papyri and Ostraca (BASP-Sup 3; Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1981)*, 119.

proposed by Hurtado, it seems to function primarily as a visual representation of the crucified Jesus within the word for “cross.”<sup>75</sup>

What distinguishes the staurogram in *Gos. Thom.* 55 from those appearing in other early Christian manuscripts is the lack of a horizontal overstroke, a mark regularly applied to indicate the status of a word as a *nomen sacrum*. It is difficult to account for this omission, except that it could have been a scribal oversight. The *tau-rho* figure does appear elsewhere as a free-standing device in Christian inscriptions beginning in the fourth to sixth centuries.<sup>76</sup> But the function of the staurogram within the *text* of Coptic *Thomas*, however, must be understood as corresponding to its function in other early Christian manuscripts—marking as sacred the words “cross” and “to crucify.”<sup>77</sup>

Since I address more broadly the relationship of the cross saying to the staurogram in Chapter Eight, I here make a final comment regarding its appearance in the *Gospel of Thomas*. Given the location of the Nag Hammadi cache, one could surmise that the appeal of utilizing the staurogram derived from its similarity to the symbol of the *ankh* (⚡). Christian groups did eventually adapt this pagan Egyptian symbol for their inscriptions and manuscripts, apparently retaining its basic meaning of “life,” except understood now in the context of their Christian faith. One piece of evidence for this can be found on a Christian inscription from Armant, Egypt, where a *tau-rho* and an *ankh* appear between two *chi-rho* figures.<sup>78</sup>

In his analysis of the inscription at Armant, and by offering additional evidence found in an *ankh*-like figure on the last page of the Jung Codex *Gospel of Truth*, Jean de Saignac proposed that Christians eventually incorporated the

75. E.g., the *chi-rho* appears as a stand-alone monogram in reference to Jesus, but at first the *tau-rho* only appeared in the midst of the words *σταυρός* (“cross”) and *σταυρώω* (“to crucify”); see Hurtado, “Earliest Evidence,” 279–82. Kurt Aland has noted that the appearance of the staurogram in the two early manuscripts  $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$  and  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  seems to indicate that the noun form (*σταυρός*) may have preceded the verb form (*σταυρώω*) in being treated as a *nomen sacrum*. See Aland, “Neue Neutestamentliche Papyri II,” *NTS* 11:2. See also the discussion of early Christograms in Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (rev. ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 352–55.

76. See Finegan, *Archaeology*, 387–88.

77. See Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 136.

78. See the photograph of this in Finegan, *Archaeology*, 387–88.

*tau-rho* because of its similarity to the *ankh*.<sup>79</sup> He went on to suggest that Christians who were part of Valentinian groups might have been amenable to an appropriation of a pagan symbol, given their ‘gnostic’ orientation. With respect to the *Gospel of Thomas*, I shall note in the next section that there is little evidence that this work expresses an expressly “Valentinian” perspective—and thus the use of the *tau-rho* in saying 55 cannot be justified by assuming that the text reflects some gnostic receptivity to pagan imagery. About Savignac’s main argument, however, Hurtado offers this corrective:

First, his core thesis does not adequately reflect the respective dates of the evidence. In fact, the earliest verifiable Christian uses of the *ankh* symbol are considerably *later* than the uses of the *tau-rho* device in  $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ ,  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ , and  $\mathfrak{P}^{45}$ . It is simply not sound historical method, therefore, to attribute the clearly attested Christian use of the *tau-rho* to a supposedly prior Christian use of the *ankh*. It is always a better approach to develop a theory that is shaped by the evidence! If there was any *causative* relationship between the Christian appropriation of the *ankh* and the *tau-rho* (and it is not entirely clear that there was), the chronological data make it more likely that Savignac’s proposal should be stood on its head. The appropriation of the *ankh* may have resulted from its visual resemblance to the *tau-rho* device, which appears to have been appropriated first.<sup>80</sup>

So, even though the Coptic version of the *Gospel of Thomas* was found in Egypt as part of a larger corpus of texts, some of which seem to evidence gnostic ideology, the *manuscripts* were likely produced and kept by Christian ascetics whose theology cannot necessarily be described as ‘gnostic.’<sup>81</sup> The evidence seems to point in this direction: the use of the *tau-rho* within a *nomen sacrum* in saying 55 continued an already centuries-old tradition practiced by Christian scribes, as opposed to originating from a supposed visual connection

79. Jean de Savignac, “ $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ : Les papyrus Bodmer XIV et XV,” *Scriptorium* 17 (1963): 50–55; cf. Aland, “Neue Neutestamentliche Papyri II,” *NTS* 11:2–3.

80. Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 144–145. Hurtado continues by arguing that, “It is a mistake to presume that the Christian appropriation of the various Jesus monograms must have involved one initial monogram from which subsequent Christian appropriation of the others then developed.”

81. I further develop this claim in the discussion which follows. See, though, James M. Robinson, “Introduction,” in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. J. Robinson, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 10–22; also, the work of Michael Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 29–53, remains an essential cautionary critique for hastily categorizing texts as gnostic.

with the Egyptian *ankh*. But why is this meaningful for an understanding of the cross saying in *Thomas*? The use of **ⲉⲡⲟⲥ** in this context means that it can be asserted with relative certainty that, for the Christians using this manuscript of the *Gospel of Thomas*, the cross of Jesus retained some significance, even if only as an historical referent of the type of asceticism advocated therein.<sup>82</sup>

## The Meaning of the Cross Saying in the Gospel of Thomas

Having examined the relevant background issues, as well as the specific grammatical issues concerning saying 55, I now offer a few possibilities for the meaning of the cross saying within the broader literary context of the *Gospel of Thomas*. By describing the content of this gospel as “the secret/hidden sayings which the living Jesus spoke,” the incipit accentuates the esoteric nature of the entire sayings collection.<sup>83</sup> The consequences of ignorance or misunderstanding are made clear immediately in saying 1, where the reader is informed that discovering the correct interpretation of these sayings will result in nothing less than an escape from death. Moreover, saying 2 describes the challenge facing the reader: he must “continue seeking until he finds.” But in “finding” he will become “troubled,” and then “astonished.” Finally, if the

82. Both Michael Grondin and Rick Hubbard, discussing this issue online in a *Gospel of Thomas* forum (the March 2001 discussion can be found at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gthomas/messages>), disagree with me that the cross of Jesus had any significance for *Thomas*' original composers. Rick Hubbard writes, “[Michael Grondin's] observation that the supralinear stroke is absent from the word in the Coptic manuscript should be accepted as additional evidence that the cross had no particular significance to the last copyist of the document. I would argue that the reference to bearing the cross in *GTh* is nothing more than a secular metaphor for suffering. It has no reference to the crucifixion [of Jesus],” (quoted with permission). I trust that my above analysis of the origin and function of the staurogram reveals what is wrong with this argument. Also, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven, I find little evidence that “take up your cross” existed as a ‘secular’ call to insubordination and the suffering which normally followed such activity for those under Roman rule.

83. Both Greek and Coptic versions contain this phrase. See Marvin Meyer, “The Beginning of the *Gospel of Thomas*,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 161–173.

reader perseveres, he will eventually “rule over the all.” Thus the composers of *Thomas* indicate from their opening words that “proper insight does not come by normal rational reflection, but only through a quest that involved being troubled and bewildered,” and that to enable such a journey towards enlightenment, “it may well be that the staccato listing of sayings with no discernable logical or thematic progression in them was deemed most appropriate.”<sup>84</sup>

By calling for the rejection of family members and acceptance of a brutal form of punishment, the cross saying in *Thomas* initially disturbs and unsettles the reader. Its provocative suggestions have the goal of prompting further contemplation about its meaning. But how might this teaching of Jesus to hate one’s family members and “take up the cross as I do” comport with the larger theological agenda found in *Thomas*? A few possibilities come to mind. Clearly the requirements of saying 55 fit well with the overall calls to radical asceticism found throughout the gospel, especially in terms of withdrawing from family into ‘singleness’ and of the frequent expressions concerning the repudiation of one’s physical body. The cross saying also outlines the potential negative consequences of joining the caste of the spiritually elite; for, when understood correctly and applied diligently, the revisionist viewpoints expressed in *Thomas* enable participation in a privileged sect of enlightened individuals who may face rejection and persecution from uninitiated, ‘average’ Christians. I shall now explore these possible meanings for the cross saying, with the awareness that some qualities of asceticism and persecution often overlap in the spirituality advocated in *Thomas*.

It has been noticed that the *Gospel of Thomas* shares an orientation towards personal asceticism with other Syriac writings from the second and third centuries.<sup>85</sup> Determining the degree to which these texts reflected gnostic influence versus (or in addition to) an ascetical perspective, however, remains a point of debate. While the relationship of gnosticism and asceticism has

84. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 458. Also, see Richard Valantasis, “Is the *Gospel of Thomas* Ascetical? Revisiting an Old Problem with a New Theory,” *J ECS* 7:1 (1999): 79.

85. For a summary and evaluation of the scholarship see Alexei Siverstev, “The *Gospel of Thomas* and Early Stages in the Development of the Christian Wisdom Literature,” *J ECS* 8:3 (2000): 319–40.

received much attention—especially among scholars who assumed a late second century date for this gospel—no single theory for the categorization of *Thomas* has sufficiently accounted for the complexities found in the text.<sup>86</sup> Yet, despite any gnostic influence one might discern in *Thomas*, “The Gospel of Thomas clearly promulgates a refashioned self. . . . The orientation of the gospel toward refashioning the self, regardless of the particular categories under which it has been analyzed, stands generally acknowledged.”<sup>87</sup> Certainly, none of *Thomas*’ sayings reflects the kind of gnostic thinking which only developed in the latter half of the second century C.E.<sup>88</sup> Unquestionably, however, the gospel ‘corrects’ what its composers viewed as popular (but unsatisfactory) interpretations of several of Jesus’ teachings, calling for “a complete ascetical recreation of human subjectivity in every dimension of its existence.”<sup>89</sup>

Thus, part of the spirituality of the ‘new self’ advocated by *Thomas* requires the restructuring of family relationships, as presented in the first part of the cross saying. This does not mean that the disciple is left without ‘family’ of

86. Valantasis, “Is the *Gospel of Thomas* Ascetical?” 56–61, provides a helpful summary of how various scholars have attempted to account for the asceticism found in *Thomas*, concluding that, “In the end, explaining the gospel by its origins in a specific geographical and theological environment does not sufficiently address the issues,” (p. 60). For example, Gilles Quispel understands gnosticism and asceticism as mutually exclusive categories, and consequently argues that *Thomas* presents an encratite tradition, in “L’Évangile selon Thomas et les origines de l’ascèse chrétienne,” in *Aspects de Judéo-Christianisme (Colloque de Strasbourg 23–25 avril 1964)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 35–52; cf. Cyril Richardson, who does not view gnosticism and asceticism as necessarily bifurcated categories, but understands *Thomas* as basically encratite on its way towards gnosticism, in “The Gospel of Thomas: Gnostic or Encratite?” in *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Georges Florovsky*, (eds. David Neiman and Margaret Slatkin; *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, vol. 195; Rome: Pontif. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), 71; cf. also Jean-Daniel Kaestli, “L’Évangile de Thomas: Son importance pour l’étude des paroles de Jésus et du gnosticisme Chrétien,” *Études théologiques et religieuses* 54 (1979): 375–96, who argues that in *Thomas* asceticism exists as the consequence of an individual’s gnostic enlightenment.

87. Valantasis, “Is the *Gospel of Thomas* Ascetical?” 62. Additionally, it seems correct to assume that the asceticism found in this gospel likely resonated with the Pachomian monks dwelling near the location where the Coptic manuscript of *Thomas* was discovered.

88. See the discussion in Davies, “Christology and Protology,” 663–82, esp. 665–74.

89. Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, 92. See also the discussion on *Thomas*’ “revisionist” character in Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 459–62.

any kind, since Jesus redefines the structure of the ‘family’ category in saying 99:

The disciples said to him, “Your brother and your mother are standing outside.” He said to them, “Those here who do the will of my father are my brothers and my mother. It is they who will enter the kingdom of my father.”<sup>90</sup>

This new category of family, dependant not upon one’s biological relatives but on obedience to “the will of my father,” means that disciples imitate Jesus’ own method of identifying his ‘family’ members. That Jesus provides such a model becomes even clearer in saying 101:

Jesus said, “Whoever does not hate his [father] and his mother *as I do* will not be able to be a [disciple] of mine. And whoever does [not] love his [father and] his mother as I do will not be able to be a [disciple] of mine. For my mother [...], but my true [mother] gave me life.”<sup>91</sup>

And so the cross saying in *Thomas* begins by calling a disciple away from traditional social constructions which could interfere with the realization of his new subjective identity. This theme of breaking family bonds occurs repeatedly in *Thomas*, such as in saying 16, where Jesus declares:

... “Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace on the earth. But they do not know that I have come to cast dissension upon the earth: fire, sword, war. For there will be five in one house: there will be three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father. And they will stand as solitary ones.”<sup>92</sup>

Furthermore, given the elitist stance featured in several sayings (e.g., 16, 23, 30, 50, etc.), the intra-family conflict mentioned in saying 16 could refer

90. This translation, and those which follow, are taken from Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 29, 30.

91. The emphasis here is mine. The lacuna has been reconstructed as: “For my mother, who has [given birth to me, has destroyed me],” or, “For my mother has [deceived me].” See Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 30. Concerning the identity of the “true mother” mentioned here, Marvin Meyers, “Gospel of Thomas,” 105, suggests that this is “. . . perhaps the Holy Spirit, who may be described as the mother of Jesus in such texts as the *Secret Book of James*, the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, and the *Gospel of Philip*. Thus the conundrum presented in the saying (hate parents and love parents) is resolved by positing two orders of family and two mothers of Jesus.”

92. Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 11.

to the separation from other Christian groups anticipated by the composer(s) of *Thomas*.<sup>93</sup> Concerning the term *monachos* (“singular/solitary ones,” occurring in sayings 16, 23, and 49), Hurtado observes:

Note that the “solitary one” (*monachos*, another Greek loanword taken over in Coptic *Gos. Thom.*) praised in saying 16 comes in for a benediction in 49, where, as a group, the “solitary” are also the “elect.” They (alone) “find the kingdom” for they are “from it,” and to it, thus, they “will return.” That is, they (as distinguished from other Christians) are the *chosen ones*; only they know their divine origin and destiny. They are those who are told in *Gos. Thom.* 50 to declare their special status to those who ask them about their religious identity: “We are the *elect* [chosen ones] of the living Father.”<sup>94</sup>

Accordingly, Hurtado and others have noted that the significance of such an emphasis on singularity “amounts to a rejection of the notion that Jesus’ divine presence is linked to the gathered communities of ordinary Christians. Instead, the saying restricts Jesus’ true presence to individuals who share the special knowledge of those reflected in *Gos. Thom.*”<sup>95</sup> That *Thomas* advocates such a view seems probable, especially in light of the Greek version of saying 30:

Jesus says: “Where there are three, they are goddess; and where there is only one, I say, I am with that one.”<sup>96</sup>

Thus the cross saying in *Thomas*, like its parallels in Matthew 10:34–35 and Luke 12:51–53, begins with a call to reconfigure one’s relationship to ‘family.’ Yet, unlike the versions found in the Synoptics, in its Thomasine context the ‘family’ worthy of hatred likely extends beyond biological connections to include one’s previous ‘Christian family,’ who may not welcome the insights offered by the living Jesus of this gospel. In such a circumstance, unenlightened Christians must be “hated,” and true disciples must willingly embrace

93. See Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 466–67.

94. *Ibid.*, 466, emphasis Hurtado.

95. *Ibid.*, 467; see also Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, 43–44.

96. See Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 15, where the editors view the Coptic text, “Jesus says: ‘Where there are three gods, they are gods. Where there are two or one, I am with them,’” as corrupt, turning to POxy 1.23 for what seems a more plausible version of this saying.

the life of “singleness”—all in imitation of Jesus. This type of action becomes necessary so that nothing may threaten the ongoing process of attaining spiritual enlightenment and the development of individual subjectivity, which are ultimately the goals of all ascetic practice.<sup>97</sup>

Part of the asceticism advocated in the *Gospel of Thomas* involves bodily transformation—that is, treating the human body in such a way as befits one who possesses divine wisdom. This prominent theme appears, for example, in saying 37:

His disciples said: “When will you appear to us, and when will we see you?” Jesus said: “When you undress without being ashamed and take your clothes (and) put them under your feet like little children (and) trample on them, then [you] will see the son of the Living One, and you will not be afraid.”<sup>98</sup>

Jonathan Smith, in his study on occurrences of the terminology of the “undressing” or “stripping down” of the body found in Tatian and other Syrian texts, has suggested that such ideas originated in the ritual of baptism.<sup>99</sup> Yet, as Alexei Siverstev has rightly observed, “It seems, however, that the baptismal application of this image presupposed some deeper theological explanation.”<sup>100</sup> In other words, by requiring seekers to “strip off” the body, the authors of *Thomas* seem to be doing more than simply echoing a metaphor from a baptismal setting for purposes of recommitment.

There is in *Thomas* the negative idea that the mundane world exists as a “corpse,”<sup>101</sup> and therefore should be treated accordingly: *Thomas* similarly

97. See Valantasis, “Is the *Gospel of Thomas* Ascetical?” 64–81, esp. 71, where, commenting on the type of subjectivity promulgated in *Thomas*, he states, “Saying 22 provides the starting point for describing the content of this new identity.”

98. Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 16.

99. Jonathan Smith, “The Garments of Shame,” in *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 1–23. Upon conversion, Tatian speaks of disrobing in his treatise *Oratio ad Graecos*: “Now that I have apprehended these things I wish to strip myself just as children,” (*or.* 30:16–17); cf. Tatian’s description with that found in sapiential literature from Qumran: 4Q417 2 i 6–12.

100. Siverstev, “*Thomas* and Christian Wisdom Literature,” 325–26.

101. E.g., saying 56: “Jesus says: ‘Whoever has come to know the world has found a corpse. And whoever has found (this) corpse, of him the world is not worthy,’” (Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 20); on this see Valantasis, “Is the *Gospel of Thomas* Ascetic?” 70, who writes: “The discovery and understanding that characterized the identity of the

views the human body negatively and in need of transformation. Such a notion appears, for example, in the first section of saying 21:

Mary said to Jesus: “Whom are your disciples like?” He said: “They are like little children who have settled in a field that is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say: ‘Let us have back our field.’ They undress in their presence in order to let them have back their field and to give it back to them.”<sup>102</sup>

The conflict between the “children,” (the true followers of Jesus) and the “owners of the field,” (worldly authorities) in this saying makes clear “that disrobing here means giving away the regular human body to the one to whom it belongs, i.e., to the rulers of this world.”<sup>103</sup>

In a context where the body is viewed negatively, therefore, the summons to “take up the cross as I do” seems to involve practicing whatever forms of asceticism individuals find needful to further the process of spiritual transformation.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, in the end, it signals a final “stripping off” of the body at death. In so doing, a disciple ultimately renounces his physical body, a form that exists as part of the old, mundane world.<sup>105</sup> Confined by limitations

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seeker includes a discovery that the world remains a lifeless enclosure, and such a discovery provides the seeker a status superior to the world.”

102. I have not used Bethge’s translation at this point because it omits the reference to “little children,” replacing this translation with “servants.” Here the translators reveal their lack of knowledge of this phrase in Syriac literature by stating, “The usual (literal) translation of šēre šēm as ‘little children’ makes little sense in this passage; the translation given here takes šēre šēm to be a rendering of *pais* (meaning *doulos*, cf. Matt 14:2 and 2 Kings 11:24 LXX) in the Coptic translator’s Greek copy,” (Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 12). I have used Siverstev’s translation instead (p. 327).

103. Siverstev, “*Thomas and Christian Wisdom Literature*,” 327.

104. See Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 468, who writes, “In light of the rather negative view of the body, ‘flesh,’ and other features of normal mortal life in *Gos. Thom.*, it is probable that taking up one’s cross means a readiness to negate the world. That is, Jesus’ ‘cross’ comprises his negation of, and deliverance from, the confines of the flesh and the world. One takes up one’s cross after Jesus’ example, therefore, by ascetic practices now, and consummates it eventually in death, which brings permanent freedom from the world.” See also Valantasis, *Gospel of Thomas*, 32; Fieger, *Das Thomasevangelium*, 167, both of whom propose a similar meaning for this saying.

105. For an insightful exploration of this topic generally, see M. Williams, “Hatred of the Body? or the Perfection of the Human,” in *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 116–138.

GOS. THOM. 77	<p>ⲡⲉⲭⲉ·ⲓⲮ̅ⲭⲉ ⲁⲛⲟ·ⲕⲡⲉ ⲡ·ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ  ⲉⲧ·Ⲓⲓⲭⲱ·ⲟⲩⲧⲏⲣ·ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲟ·ⲕⲡⲉ  ⲡ·ⲧⲏⲣ·ⲓⲛⲧⲁ·ⲡ·ⲧⲏⲣ·ⲓⲛⲧⲁ·ⲉⲓⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅·Ⲓⲏⲧ  ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲧⲁ·ⲡ·ⲧⲏⲣ·ⲓⲛⲧⲁ·ⲉⲓ  ⲡⲱⲒ ⲛ̅·ⲛ̅·ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲉ ⲁⲛⲟ·ⲕⲧ̅·ⲙ̅·ⲙⲁⲩ</p>	<p>Jesus says this: “I am the light, the one  that is over all of them. I am  the all. The all has come out of me.  And to me the all has split (open).  Split (open) a timber: I am there.</p>
	<p>ⲓⲛⲧⲁ·ⲉⲓⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉ·Ⲓⲣⲁⲓ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁ·Ⲓⲉ  ⲉⲣⲟ·ⲉⲓⲛⲧⲁ·ⲉⲓⲉⲃⲟⲗ</p>	<p>Take up the stone up, and you will fall  upon me there.”</p>

TABLE 21. Saying 77 in the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*.

found in both one’s body and the everyday world, those who willingly embrace death see beyond these ‘prisons’ to a level of existence more befitting the new and enlightened self. With Jesus’ own repudiation of both the world and his own body as an example, those now listening to the living Jesus of *Thomas’* gospel are called to be “worthy” followers and do the same.

## Saying 77: Lumberjack Spirituality—Finding Jesus by Splitting Wood

Finally, to account for what might be an additional reference to the cross in the *Gospel of Thomas*, I turn briefly to one of the most enigmatic statements therein made by Jesus: saying 77. While this *logion* does not formally qualify as a cross saying according to the parameters established in Chapter One, I examine it here for two reasons. First, since this saying occurs in (and is actually unique to) the *Gospel of Thomas* it seems not inappropriate to include it in this chapter. Second, it provides a segue to my analysis of the various cognate versions of the cross saying found in early Christian literature—the subject of the next chapter.

I am indebted to Prof. Larry Hurtado for pointing out to me the curious nature of saying 77 early in my doctoral work.<sup>106</sup> An interesting discrepancy, detected when making a comparison of the Coptic version of this saying with that found in the Greek POxy 1 version, could hint that a shift in the saying’s

106. See Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 465, where this idea is explored in a footnote.

meaning occurred at some stage of its transmission. In other words, the saying may once have functioned as a cryptic reference to the cross of Jesus and his resurrection.

The Coptic version of saying 77, seen in Table 21,<sup>107</sup> describes Jesus identifying himself as “the all,” and going on to say, “from me did the all come forth, and to me does the all extend.” Following this, Jesus issues a riddle that seems to have been attracted as an appendage to the first section of this saying because of the catchword **ⲡⲱⲗ** (“split open/expand/extend”)<sup>108</sup>—a feature not readily discernible in more polished English translations:

... And to me does the all extend.  
Split a piece of wood—I am there.  
Lift the stone, and you will find me there.<sup>109</sup>

We cannot know for certain whether the wood and stone section of this saying was part of the earlier Greek text of saying 77. It does, however, appear in POxy 1 as part of saying 30 (see Table 22), which likely indicates its original position within the *Gospel of Thomas*. As already mentioned, the catchword **ⲡⲱⲗ** offers one possible reason for alternative placement in the Coptic translation. The ideas expressed here—Jesus being “the all,” and how to find him under rocks and trees—have a verisimilitude to pantheism, and this may also explain the reason they were eventually linked together.<sup>110</sup> Yet, the difference of location of the wood/stone saying in POxy 1 should caution viewing this text only in a pantheistic light. As Hurtado observes, “This probably confirms that the linkage of the cryptic reference to the wood and stone with Jesus’ self-declaration as ‘light’ and ‘all’ in saying 77 does not go back earlier than the Coptic translation (i.e. late third or fourth century).”<sup>111</sup>

107. I have intentionally left my translation unpolished in order to make evident the wordplay between the first and second sections of this saying.

108. **ⲡⲱⲗ** appears in *Thomas* as a verb in sayings 21, 47, 77, 97, and as a noun near the end of saying 47.

109. Patterson and Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel*, 25.

110. See, e.g., Robert Walter Funk, *The Five Gospels: What did Jesus Really Say? The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (reprint, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 515.

111. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 465.

GOS.	[λἔγ]ει [Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς: ὅπ]ου ἐὰν ὦσιν	[Jesus says], “Where there are [three,
THOM.	[τρ]ε[ἰς], ἐ[ἰσι]ν ἄθεοι: καὶ [ὄ]που	they are without] God, and where there
30/77	ε[ἰς] ἐστὶν μόνος, [λέ]γω, ἐγὼ εἶμι μετ’ αὐτ[οῦ]. ἔγει[ρ]ον τὸν λίθον(ν) κάκει εὐρήσεις με: σχίσον τὸν ξύλον καγὼ ἐκεῖ εἶμι.	is only [one], I say, I am with that one. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there. Split the piece of wood, and I am there.”

TABLE 22. Saying 30/77 from POxy 1.

That Christian groups living at different times, and at geographical distance, saw alternative meanings in this saying seems justified by this reconfiguration of it. But there are other differences between the Greek and Coptic versions, in particular the presence of the definite article (τὸν) before λίθον and ξύλον, as well as in the reversal of their order in the text.<sup>112</sup> As I explore in Chapter Eight, the term ξύλον (“tree, wood”) came to refer to the cross of Jesus in various early Christian texts—even in the New Testament itself (Acts 13:29; 1 Pet 2:24).<sup>113</sup> Here, the presence of the definite article may indicate that this term, even when it appears in such a cryptic context as *Thomas*, retained its specific historical referent: the cross of Jesus.

At most, we can only say that these observations about the wood/stone saying in *Thomas* remain possibilities to consider. Stating that the composers of *Thomas* somehow viewed the death and resurrection of Jesus as theologically significant would be going beyond the evidence found in this sayings collection. But, given the possible reference to Jesus’ execution and resurrection in what is now the final part of saying 77, along with the presence of the staurogram in saying 55, it seems entirely plausible that the historical event of Jesus’ crucifixion retained *some* kind of meaning for the composers and users of the *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>114</sup>

112. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 465.

113. See G. Q. Reijnders, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1965), 11–18; J. Schneider, “ξύλον” in *TNDT* (vol. 5; G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, and G. Bromiley eds.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 37–41.

114. As I propose above, Jesus’ crucifixion may have served as a model for individual ascetic renunciation of the world and the body.

## Summary

In this chapter I have explored the significance of the cross saying in its context within the *Gospel of Thomas*. In presuming a Syrian provenance and a date of composition sometime around the beginning of the second century, I have asserted that *Thomas* seems to evidence a revisionist agenda with regard to Jesus' teachings. The composer(s) of this gospel react against traditional versions of the Christian faith, presenting Jesus as a teacher of divine wisdom who offers seekers a means of inner transformation and deliverance from a distorted world. By discerning the meaning of the living Jesus' teachings, along with practicing certain types of asceticism, true disciples have the opportunity to "enter the kingdom."<sup>115</sup>

In this context, the cross saying (55) functions as a call to a disciple to hate his "family" (which probably included his old 'Christian family' who might have rejected the wisdom on offer in *Thomas*' gospel). It also requires disciples to renounce the mundane world, but, by making reference to a form of execution, the saying also requires the relinquishment of their own physical bodies. This repudiation of the body, expressed in *Thomas* and other Syriac literature as "stripping off" one's garments, likely involved ascetic practices in the present—but ultimately meant embracing death as a means of freedom from the corruption of the world. Jesus himself provided the model of family rejection, as well as a complete repudiation of the world and his body. Thus, he now commands his followers to "take up the cross *as I do*" in *Thomas*.

When Jesus points to wood and stone as a means of finding him in saying 30/77, the possibility exists that the Greek text of *Thomas* encrypts a reference to the historical cross of Jesus and to his resurrection. However, this is not the only occurrence of a saying that, although it relates to the cross, does not fit exactly the definition of a cross saying as established in Chapter One of this study. Cognate versions of the cross saying surely existed, and in the next chapter I shall argue that, even within the New Testament, one witnesses in Pauline literature applications of the idea of 'bearing the cross' which differ still from those found in either the Synoptics or the *Gospel of Thomas*.

115. While I did not address the eschatological perspective of *Thomas* in this chapter, for discussion on the matter see Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 460–61.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# COGNATE VERSIONS OF THE CROSS SAYING

THE idea of participating in a death like Jesus', namely crucifixion, stands at the heart of what the cross saying meant to the early Christians. The application of this saying, as demonstrated in preceding chapters, could take forms both literal and metaphorical in nature. A call to "take up the cross" gave followers the opportunity to involve themselves in the very form of execution which Jesus suffered—in every case evoking their willingness to 'die' in some sense. Apparently this notion also struck the apostle Paul as spiritually and theologically significant, as I now explore by way of his writings found in the New Testament.

The essential evidence for the assertion that Paul found cross-bearing a meaningful metaphor to express his theology is based on four essential statements: three passages in Galatians and one in the book of Romans. To the Galatians, he introduces this concept by writing about his own experience of having been *Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι* ("crucified together with Christ," Gal 2:20).<sup>1</sup> He then expands this notion to include the practice of all Spirit-led Christians, whom he describes as having *τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ στοιξῶμεν* ("crucified their flesh together with the passions and desires," Gal 5:24). He continues by claiming that it is Jesus' cross *δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ* ("through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world," Gal 6:14). And some years later, ad-

1. There are other instances where Paul writes of 'dying' in a spiritual sense, but this chapter examines only those texts which specifically reference the cross or crucifixion as the means of such a death. Cf. Rom 7:6, 12:1–2; Phil 2:1–8, 3:10; Col 2:20, 3:3, 5, etc.

dressing a Roman audience, Paul declares that *τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ* (“We know that our old self was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin,” Rom 6:6). These are the only occurrences in the New Testament where an author applies the verbal form of *σταυρός* to himself and to others (i.e., not only to Jesus, or to those crucified with him). And thus, for the reasons which occupy the balance of these introductory remarks, the above texts fall within the scope of my current examination.

This chapter, therefore, examines those texts where Paul makes explicit the correlation between the cross of Jesus and the life of believers. Continuing with a diachronic approach, I first examine Galatians 2:20, where Paul points to his past spiritual “death” on a cross in order to confront his opponents, who apparently promote justification by way of Torah-obedience. As I show later, scholarship on this text has repeatedly failed to present interpretations which keep this statement in the context of Paul’s wider argument concerning justification by faith.

Following this, I turn to his subsequent comments in Galatians which relate crucifixion to various aspects of Christian spiritual experience (Gal 5:24; 6:14), arguing that these statements constitute metaphorical developments of more literal notions of self-annihilation by crucifixion already found in early Christian thought. Last, this chapter contains an analysis of the apostle’s statement about the believer’s ‘spiritual death,’ found in Paul’s later dispatch to the Christian community in Rome. Here the apostle offers theological instruction which explicitly associates crucifixion with the rite of baptism (Rom 6:6).

Throughout this chapter I contend that each proposal Paul makes linking crucifixion and the Christian life emerges as a particular application of the more general notion of “taking up the cross,” which presumably existed as part of the Jesus tradition. Accordingly, my classification of these epistolical texts as cognate versions of the cross saying is a move which requires justification prior to their exegesis.

## Paul and the Cross Saying: Cognates or Coincidence?

Linking Paul's statement to the cross saying is not a straightforward task for one reason: he never actually cites the cross saying directly. That Paul's writings feature cognate versions of the aphoristic tradition attributed to Jesus is a claim that simply cannot be verified by means of literary comparison. In all probability the apostle had no access to the Synoptic manuscripts (I take it that all of these gospel texts were written subsequently to the composition of the entire Pauline corpus).<sup>2</sup> Likewise, it cannot be verified beyond doubt that Paul, during his life, ever heard a spoken version of the cross saying. Indeed, he never specifically mentions how he learned and incorporated into his thinking *any* of the Jesus tradition (beyond his mysterious claim, found in Galatians 1:16, that God had been his instructor).

On the other hand, it is conceivable that Paul did hear or know of the cross saying, but found its literalness somehow disquieting or even reprehensible to him as a Jew who had endured Roman occupation. Perhaps he decided to develop alternate, spiritual ways to "take up the cross" which accorded with his own Christian experience more directly than with a brutal martyrdom. Maybe Paul found that the "spiritualized versions" of cross-bearing also resonated better with his audiences when he taught or preached.

The truth is that one simply cannot know with certainty whether the notions of cross-bearing found in Paul's theology were developments he himself made, or whether these ideas had already established themselves within early Christian thinking by the time he heard them. What is certain is that the data, consisting of the aforementioned canonical texts, contain statements about cross-bearing which Paul *universally applies in spiritual ways*—and which appear to be extensions or theological developments of the same notions of self-denial and death expressed in the cross saying (i.e., no other extant saying of

2. See my comments in Chapter Four as to the dating and provenance of the Synoptics. As addressed in more detail later, it seems to me that Paul composed Galatians some time in the early- to mid-50s C.E., and the letter to the Romans around 64 C.E.—thus, the texts examined in this chapter were composed in a time period after the writing of Q and before the composition of Mark.

Jesus requires the crucifixion of his followers). As noted in Chapter Three, Luke 9:23 provides further evidence that first-century Christians were applying the cross saying in non-literal ways. So, when faced with no explicit literary connection to explore, one must determine what circumstance best explains the similarity between the Synoptic aphorisms and Paul's statements about cross-bearing. I shall state what I consider the more unlikely case first.

On one hand, we could postulate that the apostle's rhetoric eventually gives rise to the cross saying as found in the Synoptics. Like the gospel authors, Paul views the death of Jesus as significant not only in terms of the redemption it achieves for believers; he also understands it as archetypal for Christian discipleship.<sup>3</sup> Yet, is one to believe that composers of the Synoptic texts express Paul's thoughts on the matter in epigraphic forms—to wit, the sayings on “taking up the cross” which they attribute to Jesus? According to the criterion that the more difficult or demanding statement should be considered more authentic, it seems less probable that the Synoptic authors would have created *more* stringent and severe aphorisms out of Paul's spiritualized notions of cross-bearing. In fact, it seems to me that the opposite case is the more likely scenario: Paul's language presupposes a teaching which he either applies or develops for use in his own mission, and which functions as a rhetoric for his own spirituality.<sup>4</sup>

Is there any justification for the assertion that Paul's expressions of being “crucified with Christ” can be understood as cognate versions of a previously known saying of Jesus? In my thinking, two reasons point towards the likelihood that such is the case: (1) The cross saying appears in Q, a text with a composition date possibly concurrent but most likely earlier than Galatians; and (2) the striking similarity of logic found in both the cross saying and the apostle's statements in Galatians and Romans, a phenomenon

3. For a broad exploration of this notion within the NT see Larry W. Hurtado, “Jesus' death as paradigmatic in the New Testament,” *SJT* 57/4 (2004): 413–433.

4. Whether the sayings are actually dominical is not a critical feature of this argument. Rather, the validity of my reasoning depends on their prior transmission in the Jesus tradition, which Paul undoubtedly encountered at his conversion (and subsequently). Thereafter he presumably drew upon and developed this older teaching material as a basis for his own thoughts.

analogous to other instances where Paul applies the Jesus tradition he has encountered.

According to (1), the occurrence of the cross saying in Q provides evidence that the notion of ‘bearing the cross’ existed within Christian oral tradition before Paul’s ministry. Given a composition date of around 50 C.E. for Q, even the earliest statements about crucifixion in the Pauline corpus—those found in Galatians—appear to have been composed somewhat later (if we accept what most scholars presume as a composition date for Galatians in the early to mid-50s C.E.).<sup>5</sup> This suggests that, if there were any relationship between the cross saying and the apostle’s statements about crucifixion, it is Paul who bases his thinking on the teaching featured in a pre-existing tradition.

In my view (2) proposes even stronger evidence that Paul drew from an idea already present and circulating in Christian circles: namely, the general way in which the apostle expounds established Christian teaching for his own situation and that of his audience. Scholars have argued convincingly that such applications of the Jesus tradition appear at various points throughout the Pauline corpus.<sup>6</sup> What would have prompted a Jewish Christian convert

5. For justification for dating Q to circa 50 C.E. see Chapter Two. I consider the date of Galatians below.

6. See David Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul: The Use of the Synoptic Tradition in the Regulation of Early Church Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). One example of such pastoral activity consists of those texts where he offers instruction concerning divorce, instances which I claim should be understood as analogous to Paul’s use of the cross saying tradition. It seems that Paul relies and expands upon a more primitive Christian teaching which presumably goes back to something Jesus said on the matter. See the rigorous work of Dale Martin, who has concluded that such was the case in his 2006 publication *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 125–147. Martin’s chapter, “The Hermeneutics of Divorce,” explores how pastoral concerns affected the early application of what appears to have been a very difficult teaching on divorce, issued by the historical Jesus. As I mentioned previously, Paul’s comments regarding divorce represent a more nuanced version of the more primitive sayings about divorce found in Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels. The Synoptic sayings present a harsher, unbending view of divorce and remarriage, which suggests that they represent an earlier version of the Jesus tradition (e.g., one yet to account for pastoral situations in the lives of Gentiles, such as those Paul must address). As Martin argues, it seems entirely possible that all of these texts on divorce could have derived from a

of Paul's stature to express his own spiritual experience and theology in terms of cross-bearing? Nothing that is known about Paul's own experience points to any personal connection with crucifixion, *per se*. Furthermore, not once when speaking about his own sufferings for Christ (or in the theology about suffering which he develops) does he ever mention crucifixion as a model. Thus, it seems more likely that Paul takes existing tradition about cross-bearing and adapts it to his own purposes.

With regard to the texts under consideration in this chapter, it therefore cannot be doubted that a critical nexus of meaning emerges when comparing the Synoptic cross sayings with those texts in which the apostle advocates "co-crucifixion." Paul, in both Galatians and Romans, offers an assortment of expositions on this essential link between the Christian life and cross-bearing—a connection previously made in an aphorism found in Q, and thus possibly uttered by the historical Jesus.

Thus postulating that there is continuity between Jesus' statement and Paul's thinking seems a more plausible explanation for their similarity than to deny that there is any relationship between them. In short, I am claiming that the instances where Paul integrates spiritual experience and crucifixion seem to be an adaptation of a connection already made in Christian tradition before the apostle's conversion. It is probable that Paul learned about the historical events of Jesus' life, as well as instructional material concerning Christian living, from oral tradition. As far as can be discerned, within this earlier body of teaching the cross saying is unique in emphasizing Jesus' death by crucifixion as paradigmatic for discipleship. It therefore seems logical to conclude that Paul, upon hearing this tradition, made it his own and applied it in fresh ways which elucidated spiritual realities in his life and the lives of those to whom he had pastoral duty. Thus, for the two reasons offered here, I determine these Pauline texts as cognate versions of the cross saying under wider investigation in this thesis.

I turn now to those passages in Galatians which commend crucifixion, metaphorically speaking, as a means of 'dying' to the "works of the law" (*ἔργα νόμου*), "the flesh"/"sinful nature" (*τὴν σάρκα*), and the "world" (*κόσμος*),

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common dominical source, as I am persuaded is the case with the cross saying and Paul's application of crucifixion to Christian life in his letters.

respectively. First, however, I offer introductory comments on the background of the letter and the nature of the problem Paul sought to address among the Christian converts living in Galatia.

## Paul's Audience and Opponents in Galatia

The mountain of scholarship attempting to identify both the original recipients of the epistle to the Galatians, and Paul's opponents active there, reveals the difficulties faced in making decisive statements about such background issues. Space does not permit a full treatment of these problems, as considering the relevant historical questions could easily fill an entire volume. While I find the arguments for the South Galatian hypothesis more convincing,<sup>7</sup> particularly for their basis in historical geography, the conclusion one makes about the audience of the letter has little material impact on the exegesis of the texts under consideration. What seems beyond debate is that Paul's letter to the Galatians functioned as an encyclical, addressing a heresy that appears to have threatened a cluster of churches which he founded.

Students of Galatians have noted that there is very little within the text itself which offers any help in pinpointing the date of its composition. Scholars who accept the North Galatian hypothesis commonly advocate a *terminus a quo* for the writing of the letter corresponding to a time no earlier than Paul's third missionary journey (i.e., during or after his sojourn in Ephesus; cf. Acts 18:23).<sup>8</sup> Taking the South Galatian hypothesis as the more plausible historical

7. For important arguments along this line see, e.g., F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems: 2. North or South Galatians?" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 52 (1969–1970): 243–266; John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 55; Colin J. Hemer, "Acts and Galatians Reconsidered," *Themelios* 2:3 (May 1977): 82–85; Ronald Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 1–3; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (4th ed.; Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 450–57.

8. In this view, the τὸ πρότερον of Gal 4:13 is taken to mean that Paul had visited this area at least twice (... εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον; "I preached the gospel to you on the former of two occasions"). I find this translation a stretch, as it surmises what Paul implies based on assumptions about the dating and audience of the letter. James Moffatt also proposed this view, as seen in the 2005 reprint of his 1921 publication, *An Introduction to the*

scenario, as I advocate above, the letter could have been written at any point in time following the apostle's first missionary journey (see Acts 14:21).<sup>9</sup> The strongest arguments along this line place the date of Galatians in the early- to mid-50s C.E., making it one of the earliest of Paul's extant letters and written concurrently or a little later than Q.<sup>10</sup>

#### WHO WERE THE GALATIAN AGITATORS?

A question that does have an impact on the exegesis of the texts under consideration in this chapter must now be asked: Who were Paul's opponents in these churches? As was the case with the identity of the letter's recipients, the scholarly literature attempting to answer this question is voluminous.<sup>11</sup> Clearly, the letter reveals the ethnic identity of the Galatian Christians as Gentile (cf. Gal 4:8; 5:2; 6:12), a fact recognized by most commentators. Paul, however, never directly addresses his opponents within the letter, requiring that scholars reconstruct their identities and teachings based only on their characterization within the epistle itself. Not surprisingly, that unfortunate methodology offers only a partial glimpse into who Paul's antagonists were,

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*Literature of the New Testament* (Kila, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 90–94. See also W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (17th ed.; trans. P. Feine and J. Behm; Nashville/New York: Abingdon Press, 1975), 272–74; W. Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to its Problems* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1980), 46; H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 3–5; R. M. Grant, *Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 185.

9. In this view, the *τὸ πρότερον* of Gal 4:13 is taken simply to mean “original” or “first,” a more natural translation in my opinion (. . . *εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῶν τὸ πρότερον*; “I preached the gospel to you originally”). Perhaps Paul here refers to the fact that he retraced his steps through these cities after his first journey (see Acts 14:21), or to the second visit mentioned in Acts 16:6. For a detailed exploration of the scholarship on this issue, see Fung, *Galatians*, 9–28.

10. See the arguments of Bruce, “Galatian Problems: 2,” 3–56, as well as further details in his Rylands Lectures (the “Galatian Problems” series).

11. For a helpful summary of the scholarship see Walt Russell, “Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?” *BSac* 147 (1990): 329–50.

and what they were teaching.<sup>12</sup> Yet, upon examining the letter as a whole, especially the *peroratio* (6:12–17, where Paul confronts his opponents' teaching most vociferously), some observations can be made about them.

The first claim against the Galatian agitators is that they were preaching "another gospel," (1:7) that has "bewitched" the Galatian Christians (3:1) into accepting a perverted form of Paul's message about Jesus Christ. Throughout the letter the apostle takes issue with various aspects of this departure from the true gospel which he preaches (e.g., 2:4–5; 4:8, 17; 5:10, 12; 6:12–13). At the forefront of Paul's concern is the return to any dependence upon Torah-obedience for righteousness, and he mentions specifically the observance of holy days and circumcision. According to the apostle's way of thinking, the Galatian Christians are at risk of committing a form of spiritual adultery—by augmenting their singular faith in Christ with additional methods of attaining righteousness based on conformity to the law (5:2–5).

Scholars have taken the above indicators and proposed possibilities for the identity of Paul's opponents which vary dramatically, categorized broadly as follows: Jewish Christians wishing to augment faith in Jesus with Torah-obedience (i.e., Judaizers);<sup>13</sup> Jews attempting to convert the Galatian Chris-

12. For criticism of the methodology behind recent attempts to redefine Paul's opponents see John M. G. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case," *JSNT* 31 (1988): 73–93.

13. The traditional view that Paul confronts "Judaizers" in Galatians has an ancient pedigree, with the Marcionite text *Prologues to Galatians* (a second-century work) stating that this was the case. Both John Calvin and Martin Luther accepted this view: see John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul and the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* (Calvin's New Testament Commentaries 11; trans. T. H. L. Parker; ed. David W. Torrence and Thomas F. Torrence; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 4–7; Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (trans. Erasmus Middleton; ed. John P. Fallowes; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel Pub. 1979), 2.

Ferdinand C. Baur argued in the nineteenth century that Paul confronted Jewish Christians who were associated with the Jerusalem Church in *Ausgewahlte Werke in Einzelausgaben* (5 vols.; ed. K. Scholder; reprint, Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog], 1963), 1:49. Johannes Munck, while agreeing that these people were Judaizers, argued that they were actually Gentile Christians rather than Jewish Christians in *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Richmond, Vir.; John Knox Press, 1959), 87–134; similarly, the claims of A. E. Harvey differ only slightly in "The Opposition to Paul," *Studia Evangelica* 4 (1968): 319–32.

Early in the twentieth century, Wilhelm Lütgert proposed that Paul confronted two

tians to Judaism; a radical Jewish-Christian gnostic group; Gentile converts of Paul who wished to pattern their faith after the Jerusalem Church; Jewish-Christian syncretists; and even politically motivated Christians with nomistic tendencies. I cannot offer an evaluation of all of these scholarly opinions here, a task that has already been pursued in various publications. In my estimation, the traditional view, still espoused by many scholars, seems most likely to be the correct one: in Galatians Paul confronts Judaizers—who taught that by

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groups in Galatians: (1) traditional Judaizers and (2) a pneumatic antinomian contingency, in *Gesetz und Geist: Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes* (BFCT 22, 6; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1919). Making this argument again with only small adaptations was James H. Ropes, *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* (HTS 14; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929).

The argument that the Galatian agitators were actually Jews (not Christians) was made by Kirsopp Lake, “Paul’s Controversies,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity* (5 vols.; eds. F. J. Jackson and Kirsopp Lake; London: Macmillan, 1922–33), 5:215, but, as seen below in later scholarship, this view has been refuted and can hardly be true given the description of Paul’s opponents in the text.

It was Walter Schmithals who argued that Paul confronted only one group of opponents, rather than splitting them into two groups as proposed by Lütgert and Ropes. For Schmithals, however, Galatians did not address two distinct groups of Judaizers and antinomian pneumatics; it actually confronted one group holding parts of both views—Gnostics present in the Galatia-area churches. This view looks to some of Paul’s other epistles (Corinthians in particular) to extrapolate a clearer picture of his opponents in Galatia. Schmithals argues thusly in *Paul and James*, *SBT* 46 (trans. Dorothea M. Barton; Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1965), 103–117; idem, *Paul and the Gnostics* (trans. John E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 13–64; and idem, “Judaisten in Galatien?” *ZNW* 74 (1983): 27–58. Others have suggested similar positions, in particular that Galatians addresses ideas pertinent to syncretistic Jewish Christians—a phenomenon analogous to that of Jewish apocalyptic writings found at Qumran. See Frederic R. Crownfield, “The Singular Problem of the Dual Galatians,” *JBL* 64 (1945): 491–500; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (5th ed.; *KEK* 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 21–24; and the less than careful work of Bernard H. Brinsmead, *Galatians—Dialogical Response to Opponents* (SBLDS 65; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 10.

Finally, I mention the work of Richard B. Cook, “Paul and the Victims of His Persecution: The Opponents in Galatia,” *BTB* 32.4 (2002): 182–191. Cook proposes that Galatians is Paul’s attempt to acquit himself of his previous persecution of Jewish Christians by stating that he was under the “law” when he did so, but after he became a Christian himself any retributive penalty found in the “law” no longer applied to him. I find Cook’s arguments bordering on the absurd, as he offers no evidence that the Jewish Christians in Galatia were those he had previously assailed near Jerusalem. It would seem that proposals work best when they proceed from the available evidence.

keeping aspects of the Mosaic law their Gentile brethren could achieve salvation, or at least the highest form of Christian spirituality.<sup>14</sup> The activities of these people, referred to literally as οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι (“the circumcised,” 6:13), prompted Paul’s outrage and, consequently, the penning of the letter.

With this background in mind, I now examine the first instance in Galatians where Paul evokes the image of crucifixion to express his theology.

## Galatians 2:20—Crucifixion Ends Dependency on the Law

*Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι: ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.*<sup>15</sup>

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Brusquely, and without warning that he means to introduce the topic of execution, in the second chapter of Galatians Paul states that he has experi-

14. More generally, see Robert Jewett, “Agitators and the Galatian Congregation,” *NTS* 17 (1971): 198–212; J. Louis Martyn, “A Law-Observant Mission to the Gentiles: The Background of Galatians,” *SJT* 38 (1988): 73–93. For a refutation of Ropes’ argument see Douglas K. Fletcher, *The Singular Argument of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1982), 42. Against Brinsmead, see David E. Aune, “Review of *Galatians—Dialogical Response to Opponents*,” *CBQ* 46 (1984): 145–147; E. A. Russell, “Convincing or Merely Curious? A Look at Some Recent Writings on Galatians,” *IBS* 6 (1984): 156–176; Barclay, “Mirror-Reading,” 81–83. Contrary to the idea that Paul’s opponents were Gnostics, see R. McL. Wilson, “Gnostics—in Galatia?” *Studia Evangelica* (1968): 358–67; Jewett, “Agitators,” 199–200. Further, Joseph B. Tyson, “Paul’s Opponents in Galatia,” *NovT* 10 (1968): 252–54; David T. Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” *Int* 41 (1987): 32–43; John M. G. Barclay, “Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul’s Ethics in Galatians,” in *Studies of the New Testament and Its World* (ed. John Riches; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 36–74.

15. Only a few minor textual variations occur in the manuscripts: υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ appears in ⋈ A C D<sup>2</sup> Ψ ℳ lat sy co; C<sub>1</sub>, but appears as θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ in ℞<sup>46</sup> B D\* F G (b) MVict; ἀγαπήσαντός is replaced by αγορασάντός (“took in/gathered”) in Mcion. Some debate continues as to whether Paul originally wrote “son of God” or “God and Christ” as the object of his faith; e.g., see Andrew Wilson’s comments in the *New Directions in New Testament Textual Criticism* forum (<http://nttext.com/forum/index.php?topic=58.0>).

enced crucifixion. Whereas the Nestle–Ahland 27 and United Bible Society 4 Greek versions of the New Testament attach this statement to v. 19, in this chapter I shall follow the convention of most modern English translations which retain it as part of 2:20. The passage under consideration, regardless of its versification, appears above.

Establishing the context of v. 20, and how this somewhat abstruse saying relates to Paul's overall argument, requires a brief examination of both the wider literary unit containing it (1:10–2:21), and the smaller unit of thought in which it appears (2:15–21).<sup>16</sup> Given the evocative language employed here, care must be taken to avoid treating the verse as if it can somehow be read in isolation, as if expressing some greater Pauline theme that has little connection to the apostle's immediate argument concerning justification by faith. Admittedly, the words may contain a profundity which extends beyond its immediate context, offering multiple layers of meaning for the reader's apprehension. It is not surprising then, as noted below, that many scholars have rendered interpretations of this text which view it foremost as an expression of Paul's mysticism. And while such observations might be justified on theological grounds, my central purpose here remains to explore the meaning of this passage as it fits into the apostle's wider argument and the more immediate concerns expressed in the epistle.<sup>17</sup>

16. Scholars begin the earlier section at various locations (1:6; 1:10; 1:11; 1:12). I take Paul's remarks in v. 10 as introducing (and thus connecting to) the section concerning his apostolic career which immediately follows. As noted below, most scholars view the section of 2:15–21 as a continuation of Paul's statements to Peter. However, William F. Arndt, "On Gal. 2:17–19," *CTM* 27 (1956): 128–132 thinks that Paul's address ends at v. 16. A handful of scholars argue that Paul's remarks to Peter end at v. 14, with v. 15 marking the point where he returns to addressing his Galatian audience; see Udo Borse, *Der Brief an die Galater* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1984), 112; J. A. Ziesler, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Epworth, 1992), 21.

17. Other scholars have issued similar cautionary remarks. See Charles B. Cousar, *Galatians* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 60–62; Robert A. Bryant, *The Risen Crucified Christ in Galatians* (Atlanta: SBL, 2001), 170.

REJECTING CHRISTIAN LEGALISM  
AND HYPOCRISY

To understand why Paul interjects the claim that he has been “co-crucified with Christ”—especially in how he intends for it to further his argument against the Judaizers—requires some familiarity with the verses which precede it. Thus, before specifically analyzing Gal 2:20, I turn briefly to the task of outlining the flow of Paul’s logic in the epistle to that point. Also, given that many scholars have so frequently excised this text from its context in their interpretations of it, I give careful attention here to exploring the literary setting of this statement.

In confronting those who preached “another gospel,” (1:6–9)—which included observance of at least some aspects of the Mosaic Law—Paul presents some of his thinking on the issue of justification in Christ in the second chapter of Galatians.<sup>18</sup> Before entering into an expressly theological argument, however, he maintains and insists that both the source of his gospel and his apostleship derive directly from God. That his opponents drew into question Paul’s legitimacy as an apostle might be inferred by his recounting of certain events which validated his official ministry (1:10–24). Notably, and without apology, Paul draws upon his personal experience here—and, indeed, throughout the letter—as confirmation of the truth of his gospel (dramatically so in 2:20), for the potency of his arguments crucially depends upon the establishment of his spiritual authority.

Thus, as “Christ’s slave,” (1:10) Paul preaches a gospel “not deriving from humans,” (1:11) which requires him to confront any entity—even “an angel from heaven”—who proclaims any message that differs “from the one which we preached to you,” (1:8). By establishing his authority in this manner, Paul not only prepares to assail the teachings of his Galatian opponents; he readies his readers for an astonishing conflict story meant to illustrate the depth of his determination to protect the integrity of the gospel. As seen in the text which

18. 1 Thes, likely Paul’s earliest extant letter, contains no mention of justification. Consequently, Galatians possibly exhibits Paul’s first attempt to address in writing the topic of justification by faith. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 246; also, Martinus C. de Boer, “Paul’s Use and Interpretation of a Justification Tradition in Galatians 2:15–21,” *JSNT* 28 (2005): 190.

follows, when pushed, Paul has no hesitation clashing even with a preeminent Jerusalem apostle. In contrast to the vacillation of the Galatian Christians (against whom he employs shaming rhetoric: 1:6; 3:1, etc.), the point of the apostle's fearlessness in the face of false teaching—no matter its source—could not be made more clearly.

Paul's diplomacy regarding the issue of circumcision had assuaged the concerns of the Christian leaders in Jerusalem (2:1–10), but that success stood in contrast to the later 'Antioch incident' involving Peter (2:11–14).<sup>19</sup> The behaviour which Paul here criticizes happened when "certain men came from James" to visit Antioch (2:12), whereupon Peter withdrew from the table fellowship he had previously enjoyed with Gentile Christians. It was not that Peter and his Jewish entourage had failed to treat ritual food laws as inconsequential; rather, at stake for Paul in this episode was Peter's acquiescence to pressure from his peers in retaining a measure of separation between Jews and Gentiles—even after "living like a Gentile," (2:14).

This withdrawal prompts Paul to accuse the entire group of Jewish Christians, which included his colleague Barnabas, of hypocrisy (*ὑποκρίσις*),<sup>20</sup> as they were more concerned to satisfy the elitist sensibilities of their guests

19. Much attention has been given to the so-called 'Antioch incident' in recent scholarship. See esp. James G. D. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 72, who perhaps somewhat overstates the consequences of this event when he envisions that "... it is likely that Paul lost out in his confrontation with Peter at Antioch, and that the result was a breach with Antioch, with the Jerusalem leadership and even with his precious colleague Barnabas. The incident at Antioch therefore marks the emergence of Paul's distinct emphases—the theological emphases which occasioned both the confrontation itself (2:11, 14) and Paul's consequent isolation. That is to say, the Antioch incident marks the beginning of the explicitly distinctive features of Paul's theology."

Also noting the significance of this passage, Mark D. Nanos, "Peter's Hypocrisy in the Light of Paul's Anxiety" in *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 339, states, "In this letter, Paul presented a reconstruction of 'the Antioch incident' to function, arguably, as the hermeneutical center of his message to the churches in Galatia with the result that Paul's description of this incident has figured significantly over the centuries in the interpretation of Paul's theology."

20. Diaspora Jews used this word (and others within the same semantic domain) almost always in a negative manner. See U. Wilckens, "*ὑποκρίνομαι, κτλ*," *TDNT* (10 vols.; eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–76), 8:559–71.

from Jerusalem than to be motivated by “the truth of the gospel,” (2:14). Attempting to clarify the situation, Mark Nanos observes:

It is thus Peter’s *withdrawal*, not food, that is at issue in Antioch; what was eaten or how it was eaten was not the reason for Peter’s withdrawal. The issue entirely concerned those with *whom* he had been eating and then withdrawn; his exclusion of gentiles was because they were gentiles, not because they ate offensive food or in offensive ways. The issue was status. . . . They were gentiles; Peter was a Jew. Peter’s actions implied that the community of Christ was a Jewish community only, at least in terms of status; thus gentiles could only be equals in Christ if they became Jews.<sup>21</sup>

In the face of such duplicity Paul confronts Peter, as representative of the entire group of misguided Jewish Christians, for acting according to the worldly criterion of ethnicity.<sup>22</sup> By retaining an attitude of Jewish priority even in Christ, the Gentiles were implicitly shamed by Peter’s actions. In this instance, his failure to live by the spiritual principles already agreed upon in Jerusalem threatened not only to divide the Christian community in Antioch, but additionally communicated falsehoods about the spiritual status of Gen-

21. Nanos, “Peter’s Hypocrisy,” 348–49 (emphasis his); see also Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Convert* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 230–33 for a discussion of the fact that Jews did eat with Gentiles; and George Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia* (SNTSMS 35; 2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xix–xx, who states: “The issue presented here is about Jewish Christians eating with Gentiles, not about *what* they ate when they ate with Gentiles. . . . The exact wording of the charge is particularly interesting. Gal. 2:14b reads: ‘If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how is it then that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’ The present tense, ‘live like a Gentile’ (ἐθνικῶς . . . ζῆς), suggests that even after Peter had withdrawn from the Gentiles he was accused of living like a Gentile. This shows that Peter’s withdrawal from the Gentiles was not a withdrawal back into the Jewish way of life, but in fact was only a lateral move within an overall Hellenistic position. Support for this is the fact that his actions are described as ‘hypocrisy.’”

22. Dunn, *Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 73–79, observes, “It is the Antioch incident which shows just how little clarity had been achieved at the Jerusalem consultation. Those who came from James, that is, claiming explicitly or implicitly, the authority of James, had obviously been distressed by the free association between Christian Jews (including Peter) and Gentiles at Antioch (2:12). . . . Despite the Jerusalem agreements the consequences of Gentile acceptance of the Gospel for Jewish claims to a distinctive relation with God had been neither thought through nor agreed. . . . [They exhibited] a concern to maintain Israel’s covenant obligation and distinctiveness, with the corollary, unavoidable so far as Peter and the others could see, that they must maintain separate tables from the Gentiles.”

tiles who had become Christians.<sup>23</sup> As a result, Paul viewed this conduct as nothing less than an assault upon the very gospel he preached.

The description of the confrontation ends at 2:14, after which Paul includes, starting at v. 14b, part of the lecture he delivered to Peter. Most scholars agree that the speech extends beyond vv. 11–14 to include vv. 15–21, as noted above.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, concerning the broader function of this section within Galatians, “. . . it is widely agreed that the passage serves the more important purpose of introducing the topics that will occupy Paul for the remainder of the letter.”<sup>25</sup> Even so, while there is a general consensus among interpreters that Paul’s essential concern here focuses on justification through Christ rather than Torah-obedience, navigating the details of the apostle’s argumentation in these verses remains a challenging endeavour.

It seems likely that Paul expects his readers to take no exception to his statements in vv. 15–16:

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Yet knowing that a person is not made righteous by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be made righteous by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because no flesh can be made righteous by works of the law.<sup>26</sup>

23. Clarifying Paul’s condemnation of Peter in this story, Nanos, “Peter’s Hypocrisy,” 356, observes, “Christ does not make Jews into gentiles or gentiles into Jews. He makes both into one family as equals: by faith in Christ they both live to God. The distinction remains; however, discrimination does not. Peter’s actions have jeopardized this truth and so he stands condemned.”

24. This does not mean, however, that there is universal agreement on the overall theme of this section. Charles H. Cosgrove, for example, believes that Paul takes up a different theme in vv. 19–20 (‘eschatological life’), only to return to the topic of righteousness in v. 21. See his comments in *The Cross and the Spirit* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University, 1988), 131–146. I shall explain my reasons for rejecting his proposition below.

25. Scott Schauf, “Galatians 2:20 in Context,” *NTS* 52 (2006): 88.

26. Translation mine. Some complications accompany any attempt to translate this text. In many places *ἐὰν μὴ* translates as “except,” although I have here retained the more frequent manner in which it is translated in English versions: “but.” On how this impacts the interpretation of v. 16, see Chinedu Adolphus Amadi-Azuogo, *Paul and the Law in the Arguments of Galatians* (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1996), 77–78; William O. Walker, “Translation and Interpretation of *ἐὰν μὴ* in Galatians 2:16,” *JBL* 116 (1997): 515–20.

Also, I bypass here any engagement in the debate over whether *πίστεως Ἰησοῦς Χριστοῦ* functions as an objective genitive (“faith in Jesus Christ”) or a subjective genitive (“the

In these verses the apostle articulates the standard Jewish outlook with regard to the Gentiles,<sup>27</sup> but challenges this very distinction in v. 17 by stating:

But if while endeavouring to be made righteous in Christ, we ourselves were discovered to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not!

Scholars have proposed various ways of understanding what Paul means when he states in v. 17 that *εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ* (lit., “we were found also ourselves to be sinners”).<sup>28</sup> Bultmann, Betz, and Cosgrove, among other interpreters of note, have proposed that in this clause the apostle actually presents an *irrealis*; in their view, the apostle could not seriously have meant to categorize Jews in such a manner.<sup>29</sup> I am in agreement, however,

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faith of Jesus Christ”). I tend to agree with François Vouga, *An die Galater* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1998), 59, who argues that Christ and the law are the primary terms of opposition here, not “faith in/of Christ” versus a faith augmented by works. For my own part, I take Paul’s meaning here, and in other places where this construction appears in his letters, as most naturally understood as an objective genitive—while recognizing that disputations over the past decades have given rise to much literature on the topic. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 87; Richard B. Hays and James D. G. Dunn, *Pauline Theology IV: Looking Back, Pressing On* (eds. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 35–81.

I must also note that a few scholars have tried to argue that Paul’s audience may have rejected the assumed truth of the statements found in vv. 15–16. See Sabbas Agourides, “Peter and Paul in Antioch (Galatians 2, 11–21),” in *The Truth of the Gospel (Galatians 1:1–4:11)* (ed. Jan Lambrecht; Rome: Benedictine, 1993), 59–90; Stephen A. Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 192. Yet, given the style of Paul’s further argument in v. 17, I see no compelling reason to view vv. 15–16 as an attempt at irony.

27. On this, see Betz, *Galatians*, 115; Dunn, *Galatians*, 132–134.

28. Clearly, Paul uses “we” here to refer to himself and Peter. I disagree with E. H.-S. Kok, ‘*The Truth of the Gospel: A Study of Galatians 2:15–21*, (PhD diss., Durham University, 1993), 63, who states that Paul addresses Jewish Christians in general in vv. 15–21. See W. J. Dalton, “The Meaning of ‘We’ in Galatians,” *ABR* 38 (1990): 40–44.

29. For an exploration of the exegetical issues here see Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ*, 206–12; Rudolf Bultmann, “Zur Auslegung von Galater 2, 15–18,” in *Exegetica: Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments* (ed. Erich Dinkler; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1967), 394–97; Betz, *Galatians*, 119–120; Cosgrove, *Cross and the Spirit*, 137–138; René Kieffer, *Foi et justification à Antioche: Interprétation d’un conflit (Ga 2, 14–21)* (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 55–60, 62–66. Jan Lambrecht has argued that Paul refers here only to the “pre-conversion” sin of Jews in “The Line of Thought in Gal. 2:14b–21,” *NTS* 24 (1978): 484–95; “Once Again Gal 2, 17–18 and 3, 21,” *ETL* 62 (1987): 148–53; “Transgressor by Nulli-

with scholars such as Tannehill, Bruce, Borse, Longenecker, and others, who view this statement as a *realis*:<sup>30</sup> that Paul “is actually referring to the fact that when Jews seek justification in Christ, they find themselves on equal footing with Gentiles (despite the law) and hence ‘sinners’ in the same sense as the reference to Gentiles as ‘sinners’ in v. 15.”<sup>31</sup> With Peter’s serious mistake of maintaining distinctions between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Antioch as the context of this clause, it is difficult to imagine that Paul speaks with any sense of irony in v. 17.

In v. 18, Paul asserts what he views as the true issue: not that upon conversion to Christ a Jewish person discovers he too is a sinner, but more critically εἰ γὰρ ἂ κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω, (“For if I establish again that which I tore down, I prove myself a transgressor”).<sup>32</sup> There is much scholarly agreement that Paul is here refer-

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fying God’s Grace: A Study of Gal 2,18–21,” *Bib* 72 (1991): 217–36; “Paul’s Reasoning in Galatians 2:11–21,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 53–74. Cf. John M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 79. As others have noted, Lambrecht’s view seems to ignore the significance of Paul’s question about Jewish converts to Christianity: “is Christ then an agent of sin?”

30. Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (BZNW 32; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967), 56; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 140–141; Borse, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 115; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 89; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 95.

31. Shauf, “Galatians 2:20 in Context,” 90.

32. Paul’s use of γὰρ here likely functions in explaining why Paul rejects the notion that “Christ is an agent of sin” as stated in v. 17. See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 117; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 90; Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 79–80; Martyn, *Galatians*, 255; Matera, *Galatians*, 95. Against this view, see Lambrecht, “Line of Thought,” 495, who sees a gap in the logic of Paul’s argument between v. 17 and v. 18, and thus states that Paul begins a “new train of thought” in v. 18. Lambrecht also presents this view in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, 58, where he argues, “It appears that after v. 17 there is a kind of break, a caesura. The γὰρ [sic] at the beginning of v. 18 comes close to meaning ‘but’ . . . So one may conjecture that Paul, after v. 17 and before writing v. 18, thought: ‘Not Christ is an agent of sin, but we may become promoters of sin, for if I build up again . . .’” (emphasis his). As Shauf, “Galatians 2:20 in Context,” 91, points out against Lambrecht, “. . . this alleged logical gap is far easier to leap than the break in the argument created by taking γὰρ in the sense for which he argues.” See also Fung, *Galatians*, 122.

I note here the aorist tense of κατέλυσα, meaning that Paul views the cessation of dependence upon the Torah as a terminal act, completed in the past. For further details on

ring to the law (or at least to the issue of open table fellowship with Gentiles) in terms of being “established” again after having once been “torn down” in an individual’s life.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, Paul has moved to the first person singular to make this point, generalizing his imprecation so as to not directly attack either Peter or his Galatian audience.<sup>34</sup> Even so, the apostle confirms that re-establishing the law in one’s life makes one a “transgressor,” in the sense that what was once repudiated has been reclaimed—a clear admission that a mistake of judgement was made regarding the law and its appropriation in one’s life.<sup>35</sup>

The manner in which *γὰρ* functions as a connector between v. 18 and v. 19 has also been the subject of debate. In v. 19a Paul asserts *ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω* (“For through the law I died to the law, in order that I might live to God”). Some interpreters have argued that this statement simply presents another response to Paul’s question in v. 17 concerning Christ as an agent of sin.<sup>36</sup> And, taken as a unit, vv. 18–19 can be understood as pertinent to the main idea introduced in v. 17. Yet, I agree with other scholars making the argument that syntactically v. 19a seems more naturally to offer a further rationale for not “building again” that which was previously

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Paul’s use of the word for “building up/strengthening/establishing” the law see O. Michel, “οἰκοδομέω,” *TDNT* 5:136–44.

33. Cf. Arndt, “On Gal. 2:17–19,” 129–130, who views *ἡ κατέλυσα* as applying to sin in general. Most modern commentators understand that Paul here refers specifically to the law. See Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 56; Fung, *Galatians*, 120; David E. Garland, “Paul’s Defence of the Truth of the Gospel Regarding Gentiles (Galatians 2:15–3:22),” *RevExp* 91 (1994): 165–181; Vouga, *An die Galater*, 60. On issues surrounding *παραβάτης* see Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ*, 212–13.

34. Many interpreters have made this observation. See esp. Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, 80; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 90; Brian Dodd, *Paul’s Paradigmatic ‘I’: Personal Example as Literary Strategy* (JSNTSup 177; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 155–157.

35. Fung, in *Galatians*, 120–121, presents various options for interpretation. Bruce, *Galatians*, 142, summarizes the notion in this way: “One way or another, someone who builds up what he formerly demolished acknowledges his fault, explicitly in his former demolition or implicitly in his present rebuilding. If the one activity was right, the other must be wrong.”

36. See Bultmann, “Zur Auslegung von Galater 2,15–18,” 397; Victor Hasler, “Glaube und Existenz: Hermeneutische Erwägungen zu Gal. 2,15–21,” *TZ* 25 (1969): 245–47; Fung, *Galatians*, 122; Matera, *Galatians*, 95.

“torn down”—the specific topic of v. 18.<sup>37</sup> The direction of Paul’s logic can be summarized thus: I cannot re-establish my dependence on obeying the law in order to be righteous—because I have died to the law.

Adjusting his language from the “we” statements of vv. 15–17, Paul uses the first person singular suffix to make his point three times in v. 18 (as well as the reflexive *ἑμουτόν*, “myself”), with an emphatic *ἐγὼ* (“I”) beginning v. 19. This rhetorical move not only “allows Paul to make his point in a more diplomatic fashion”<sup>38</sup>—it also presses home the fact that the apostle wants the Galatian Christians to recall and take seriously their own personal religious experiences. Throughout the remainder of the chapter Paul allows his audience to ‘overhear’ an interpretation of his conversion to Christ with a view to explaining how this affected his relationship with the law. When he gained faith in Christ, Paul “died to the law.”<sup>39</sup> And, given the recent activities of the Judaizers in their midst, the apostle hopes that the Galatian Christians can recognize the truth of his claims within their own religious experience.

Having established the context of Paul’s reference to his own ‘crucifixion,’ I now turn to the main event: the analysis, specifically, of v. 20. Earlier in this chapter I proposed that this saying functions as a cognate version of Jesus’

37. Lambrecht, “Transgressor by Nullifying God’s Grace,” 220; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91; Martyn, *Galatians*, 256; Vouga, *An die Galater*, 61; Schaaf, “Context of Galatians 2:20,” 92.

38. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 90.

39. I cannot here address the issues surrounding Paul’s statement that he “died to the law, *through* the law.” On this, see Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ*, 217–218; Kieffer, *Foi et justification à Antioche*, 67–69. Fung, making comparisons to Paul’s later theological development of this idea in Romans, offers some helpful insights in *Galatians*, 122–123: “A person’s death to the law means that the person ceases to have any relation to the law, so that the law has no further claim or control over that person. This death is accomplished ‘through the law’; this is more specifically expressed in the clause ‘I have been crucified with Christ,’ which refers not in an ethical sense to a subjective experience in Christian consciousness, but to the believer’s objective position in Christ. By virtue of his incorporation into Christ (cf. v. 17) and participation in Christ’s death, Paul has undergone a death whereby his relation to the law has been decisively severed and the law has ceased to have any claim on him (cf. Rom. 7:4, 6). . . . This death ‘through the law . . . to the law’ means not only that the law as a false way of righteousness has been set aside, but also that the believer is set free from the domination of the law (under which there is transgression, Rom. 4:15) for a life of consecration to God (cf. Rom. 7:6).”

imperative that his disciples “bear the cross.” I endeavour now to clarify how Paul reinforces his present argument against Christian reliance on the law by examining his citation of an imagined participation in the historical execution of Jesus.

VERSE 20—

PAUL’S POST-CRUCIFIXION IDENTITY

The autobiographical account of Paul’s relationship to the law in vv. 18–19, which he manifestly presents as a paradigm for all Christians, depicts primarily his radical separation from the law.<sup>40</sup> I have already presented a brief overview of how Paul proceeds to make his case against the dangers of returning to dependence upon the Torah as a means of attaining justification. Next in the text, following the declaration that he has “died to the law” in order that he might “live to God,” Paul asserts that he has been *Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι* (“crucified together with Christ”). It is this statement which I shall now investigate, particularly because it functions in extending Paul’s argument about justification by faith. Doing so, however, requires that I address a recurrent problem often found in modern interpretations of this text.

The difficulty centres on the broad acceptance of Hans Dieter Betz’s rhetorical analysis of Galatians, with the result that subsequent interpreters view 2:20 as part of the *propositio* of the letter. Betz understood that the section 2:15–21 “sums up the legal content of the *narratio*,” which he identified as 1:11–2:14, while simultaneously establishing the topics which Paul intended to address in chapters three and four (the *probatio*).<sup>41</sup> As I explain later, identifying v. 20 as part of the *propositio*—a view still popular in modern scholarship—has the unfortunate effect of inserting a partition between v. 18 and v. 19, and again between v. 20 and v. 21.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, as I shall argue, this makes it particularly difficult to interpret v. 20 in its proper context.

40. See B. Gaventa, “Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm,” *NovT* 28 (1986): 309–26.

41. Betz, *Galatians*, 114.

42. See Fung, *Galatians*, 112; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 80–83; Vincent M. Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 103–105; Ben With-

The importance of Betz's rhetorical analysis of Galatians cannot be denied, both for its contribution to New Testament scholarship on the letter, and for its impact on his later commentary.<sup>43</sup> As mentioned, Betz classifies 2:15–21 as the *propositio* of Paul's Galatian correspondence, meaning that he viewed this section as establishing the foundation of arguments later addressed in the *probatio* (3:1–5:1).<sup>44</sup> Betz then breaks down the *propositio* into smaller subsections: vv. 15–16 (statements upon which all should agree); vv. 17–18 (statements of contention); vv. 19–20 (the *expositio*, where Paul presents four "theses"); and finally v. 21 (the *refutatio*, supposedly where Paul denies charges levelled against him by his opponents).<sup>45</sup> Not everyone has accepted Betz's proposal that 2:15–21 functions as the *propositio* of the letter, and scholarly critiques of his broader outline of Galatians (especially the sections found in chapters three through six) have been made by Aune, Meeks, Longenecker, and others.<sup>46</sup>

Some of the problems involved in accepting Betz's categorization of 2:15–21 as the *propositio* have been identified and well-articulated by Scott Shauf in his 2006 article "Galatians 2:20 in Context." For that reason, and since I am in broad agreement with his observations, I quote his critique here at some length:

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erington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 169–170.

43. H. D. Betz's initial analysis of the structure of Galatians appeared in "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 21 (1975): 353–79, with a more detailed outline appearing in his later commentary, *Galatians*, 14–23. On pages 122–125 of his commentary he states that 2:20 receives exposition in these subsequent passages:

Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι	3:26–28
ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός	3:2–5; 4:6; 5:5–6:8
ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί. . .	3:1–5:10.

44. Betz, *Galatians*, 114.

45. As Shauf observes in "Galatians 2.20 in Context," 93, the *enumeratio*, which typically precedes the *expositio*, are absent presumably because Paul has only one main point to make in this section.

46. David E. Aune, "Review of Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*," *RSR* 7 (1981): 323–28; Wayne A. Meeks, "Review of H. D. Betz, *Galatians*," *JBL* 100 (1981): 304–307; Longenecker, *Galatians*, cix–cxiii.

When the passage is read this way, it ultimately contributes to the difficulty of reading Gal 2.20 in its context, especially from fitting it into the structure of the *propositio*. First, the context of 2.11–14 is lost. When 2.15–21 is emphasized as a separate section of the letter, it is easy to forget that it is formally a part of Paul’s address to Peter (Betz, indeed, held that it was not). The loss of this setting makes vv. 7–18 especially hard to decipher, since the Antioch debate is an important part of their context. The loss also contributes to the misunderstanding of v. 21. . . . Second, the connection between vv. 17–18 and v. 19 is removed. This result of Betz’s structural analysis removes the topic of justification, which is central in v. 17, from the context of v. 19, and thus also from v. 20. Third, the relationship of v. 20 to the rest of the letter is skewed. The *propositio* is supposed to set up all the arguments of the letter, but since 2.15–21 contains little having to do with either the Spirit or the paranetical portions of the letter, v. 20 tends to bear the weight of these. Thus the spiritual and existential aspects of v. 20 are emphasized, rather than its place in Paul’s discussion of justification. Fourth, the connection between v. 20 and v. 21 is lost. This results from the identification of v. 21 as the *refutatio*. . . . Finally, the context with 3.1–5 is de-emphasized. When different parts of 2.15–21 are forced to cover the rest of the letter in piecemeal fashion, the immediate connection between 2.20 (and the rest of 2.15–21) and 3.1–5 is easy to miss.<sup>47</sup>

So, analyses of the second chapter of Galatians which insert a structural seam between v. 18 and v. 19, amid v. 19 and v. 20, or again between v. 20 and v. 21, often fail to recognize and maintain the interconnectedness of the argument made in that section. Conversely, it is my view that any exegesis concerned to retain the integrity of this passage requires that interpreters resist the temptation to inject artificial segmentations in 2:15–21, especially those which isolate these statements from Paul’s continuing argument. Examples of scholarly attempts to disjoin these verses, only then to offer interpretations of them as primarily oriented towards mysticism (or the “spiritual and existential”) can be seen in the older work of Deissmann, Davies, Schweitzer, Bultmann, Sanders, as well as in some recent scholarship.<sup>48</sup> Again, I am not suggesting that such views on this text are always or intrinsically mistaken;

47. Shauf, “Galatians 2.20 in Context,” 94–95.

48. Adolf Deissmann, *Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History* (2d ed.; New York: Doran, 1926); W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; London: SPCK, 1948), 87–91; Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (2d ed.; London: A. & C. Black, 1953); E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 463–72; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1951–55), 1.345–348; Betz, *Galatians*, 124; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92–93.

rather, they simply risk the failure of making evident the significance of these verses as they contribute to Paul's larger concern of justification by faith.

So, in what way does Paul's claim to have been "crucified with Christ" fit with what he previously stated in this passage? In order to answer this question, it is important to note that, for Paul, establishing a right relationship with God through "faith in Christ" requires that a person "die" to any dependency on worldly schemes or entities through which he might seek justification.<sup>49</sup> In Paul's thinking, these dependencies actually interpose themselves between an individual and God.<sup>50</sup> Thus, in the case of Jews, faith in Christ will almost universally obligate them to "die" to observance of the law as a means of justification. But for all Christians—and here Paul seeks to incorporate the Gentile experience of justification—it will require dying to any dependency upon the self.<sup>51</sup> In Galatians 2:15–21, therefore, Paul argues from the specific experience of Jews to the general experience of all believers, finally concluding in v. 21: "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justi-

49. Boer, "Paul's Use and Interpretation," 214–15, makes this observation: "To die to something' (v. 19b) is metaphorical and means to become separated from it (cf. Rom. 6.2, 10, 11; 7:6): Paul became separated from the Mosaic Law. With respect to this Law, Paul's 'I' (ἐγώ) has ceased to exist; it is thus his nomistic 'I'—the 'I' that finds its identity and its hope of justification (5.5) in (the observance of) the Law—that has died. This same 'I' has been 'crucified with Christ' (v. 19b). Paul's language is metaphorical and hyperbolic, yet also realistic and serious (cf. 5.24; 6.14); it is not just a figure of speech, but a vivid interpretation of a truly painful and real experience. His dying, like Christ's dying, was also a painful crucifixion (cf. 3.1) whereby the nomistic 'I' was put to death. This 'I' therefore 'no longer lives' (v. 20a)."

50. Accordingly, Ernest D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (reprint, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1964), 134, comments on Paul's phrase "that I might live to God" in v. 19: "This clause expressing the purpose of the apostle's death to law is in effect also an argument in defence of it. It is implied that subjection to the law in reality prevented the unreserved devotion of the life to God—this is one vice of legalism, that it comes between the soul and God, interposing law in place of God—and that it had to be abandoned if the life was really to be given to God. This is a most important element of Paul's anti-legalism, showing the basis of his opposition to legalism in its failure religiously, as in Rom. 7:7–25 he sets forth its ethical failure."

51. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92, states: "Crucifixion with Christ implies not only death to the jurisdiction of the Mosaic law (v. 19), but also death to the jurisdiction of one's own ego. The 'I' here is the 'flesh' (σάρξ) of 5:13–24, which is antagonistic to the Spirit's jurisdiction. So in identifying with Christ's death, both the law and the human ego have ceased to be controlling factors for the direction of the Christian life."

fication came through the law, then Christ died to no purpose.” I suspect that failing to comprehend Paul’s theological perspective in this instance—specifically the role of death as it relates to justification—has led some interpreters to arbitrarily partition the argument in a way that obfuscates its meaning.

To clarify the sweep of Paul’s logic concerning justification, and specifically how v. 20 fits into it, I offer a brief review of the section. By disassociating justification from Torah-obedience in v. 16, Paul makes the theological assertion that the basis for justification now exists by means of “faith in Christ.” Obviously, this kind of rhetoric targets Jewish persons, particularly those concerned with their relationship to the law after becoming Christians. Anticipating a possible objection to the theological affirmation of v. 16, Paul then asks the question of whether Christ is consequently an “agent of sin” in v. 17. Responding to this charge, the apostle cites his personal experience of “dying to the law” in vv. 18–19, while simultaneously presenting this as a general experience required of all Jewish Christians. Hence, “dying to the law” occurred as an essential part of Paul’s justification by faith in Christ, as indeed it will for all Jews.<sup>52</sup> Continuing in v. 20, Paul explains *how* he died to the law and to himself—by being “crucified with Christ”—a more general experience available to Jewish and Gentile Christians alike. He concludes v. 20 by recounting the meaning of Christ “giving himself” up for Paul (“the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”), implying that Christ’s death functions as the real source of justification.<sup>53</sup> Finally, v. 21 connects Paul’s previous statements about justifi-

52. Cf. Rom 7:1–6; Col 2:14.

53. Paul develops this theme to a far greater extent in Romans, especially in his discussion on baptism in chapter six. Because of this, some scholars have been guilty of reading Romans into Galatians, thereby proposing interpretations with a much greater sacramental orientation than that which can actually be found in the text of Galatians. For examples of this, see Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul*, 3; Eduard Schweizer, “Die ‘Mystik’ des Sterbens und Auferstehens mit Christus bei Paulus,” in *Beiträge zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Zurich: Zwingli, 1970), 183–203; Josef Blank, *Paulus und Jesus: eine theologische Grundlegung* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1968), 298–300; Betz, *Galatians*, 123–124; and Brinsmead, *Galatians*, who declares categorically that 2:19–20 functions as a “baptismal statement,” and that “Paul expounds the meaning of baptism in 2:19–20 to counter the opponents’ teaching of justification by works. He usually uses baptism to clarify the meaning of the new life in Christ. Here he uses it to clarify justification,” (pp. 74–75).

cation and his later statements about Christ's death in a succinct manner, leading in to his subsequent comments on this theme in 3:1–5.

What becomes clear is that the trajectory of Paul's argument provides clarification for understanding v. 20. Shauf's observations are critical in this regard:

Paul's response to the charge of v. 17 moves outward from the narrow issue that defines the charge to a consideration of what it means for anyone to be justified in Christ. Verse 20 is the capstone of the process of justification. Hence Paul can then conclude with the general claim of v. 21. I refer to v. 20 as a 'general' depiction of justification because its claims are removed from the debate over the law and hence not tied to the distinctions between Jews and Gentiles that is the context of the debate at Antioch. This is the key difference in the references to death in v. 19 and v. 20.<sup>54</sup>

Notably, Paul's statement in v. 19 that he has "died to the law through the law" explains why he can no longer "build up" what he once "tore down," as stated in v. 18. Consequently, the death he speaks of in v. 19 refers only to his experience as a Jewish person coming to faith in Christ. Moving forward, however, Paul envisions how it is that all persons—both Jews and Gentiles—have a fundamental death experience which marks their justification. This is what he describes in v. 20:

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

To state it another way, v. 20 primarily expresses the *means* of justification for all people. The death to self (ἐγώ) occurs through participating in a co-crucifixion (συνεσταύρωμαι) with Christ,<sup>55</sup> and describes the process of justification apart from any reference to the law or issues of Jewish/Gentile identity. Furthermore, "The 'I' of v. 19 can only be a Jewish Christian. The 'I' of

54. Shauf, "Galatians 2.20 in Context," 97–98.

55. The prefix σύν denotes the language of participation and identification; the believer is not crucified "like" Christ, but "with" Christ. As seen below, this is identical to Paul's language in Romans. The perfect tense of the verb communicates that this occurred once-for-all, with effects still felt in the present. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92. I also note that this word appears in no literature prior to its usage here by Paul; he may actually have coined this word to describe the idea of co-crucifixion.

v. 20, however, can refer to any Christian, to Jew and Gentile alike. . . . ‘Dying to the law’ would not be a meaningful phrase to Gentile Christians, but ‘crucifixion with Christ’ is.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, in v. 20 Paul collapses the individual experiences of justification by faith into one common to all people, regardless of status afforded by ethnicity or privileged access to the Torah.

Overall, it is the correlation between death and justification which Paul seeks to accentuate in this passage, but v. 20 specifically identifies death by crucifixion as *the* shared justifying experience of all believers.<sup>57</sup> As with the notion found in the Synoptic versions of the cross saying, Paul describes a situation where a person’s death is required to participate fully in a life with Jesus. Emphasizing Christ’s love and sacrifice of himself in v. 20, Paul conveys the idea that “This dying for others is the extreme expression of living for others.”<sup>58</sup> For Paul, at its heart, justification consists of uniting oneself so thoroughly to Christ that both the events of his death and the ongoing presence of his resurrected life constitute one’s own identity.

Whereas the cross saying found in the Synoptics gives expression to a measure of devotion needed for a person to qualify for discipleship, Paul offers a metaphorical version of this statement in Galatians 2:20 meant to clarify the process of justification. In doing so, the apostle expresses a profound transformation of identity resulting from this crucifixion—one that has freed him from any worldly dependence for justification, whether that is the law or the self. Identifying himself so thoroughly with Christ—to such a degree that he claims he and Christ experienced simultaneous deaths, and even share a present life—means that Paul views justification not in terms of legal categories, but as the consequence of a powerful religious experience. He speaks twice more of such experiences in Galatians. I now turn to the next occasion in the letter where the apostle employs the image of crucifixion to express his theology and to lead his converts away from the Judaizers.

56. Shauf, “Galatians 2.20 in Context,” 98.

57. Gerhard Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians* (trans. David Green; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 138, nuances this by stating: “It is not dying per se that is under discussion, but the fact that dying is made relevant in a particular relationship.”

58. *Ibid.*, 139.

## Galatians 5:24— Crucifying the Flesh

*οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.<sup>59</sup>*

And those who belong to the Christ, Jesus, have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The above text contains Paul’s second mention in Galatians of the believer’s experience of crucifixion, and is the subject of investigation in this section. I shall briefly outline Paul’s immediate argument here in chapter five of Galatians, following that with a closer examination of the apostle’s crucifixion language in v. 24. The purpose of this analysis is to show how Paul utilizes crucifixion as a metaphor to explain aspects of his religious experience and theology; specifically, how the idea of crucifixion can be viewed as the means by which followers separate themselves from the law and the desires of the flesh.

In this instance, Paul does not reference his personal experience of crucifixion as he does in chapter two. Rather, he writes about what he views as the general experience of all believers—they have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” As I demonstrate later, throughout his ministry Paul constantly feared that Christian converts might succumb to dangerous *ἐπιθυμία* (“desires”)—inclinations widely viewed as bodily diseases in the ancient world, and (more ominously) as pathways to sin, according to the apostle. The Galatian correspondence reveals that Paul had a pressing concern that the believers there were in danger of returning to life “in the flesh.” He therefore presents them with his remedy for these conditions, calling for the extermination of bodily passions and desires via the cross.

Throughout Galatians, Paul repeatedly contrasts what he views as mutually exclusive states of being: living according to *σάρξ* (“the flesh”), as opposed to

59. The following manuscripts contain the Greek text as it appears here, which includes the name *Ἰησοῦ*:  $\mathfrak{B}^{46}$  D F G  $\circ_{122}^c$   $\mathfrak{M}$  latt sy, whereas *Ἰησοῦ* is omitted in  $\mathfrak{K}$  A B C P  $\Psi$   $\circ_{122}^*$ . 33. 104\*. 1175. 1241<sup>s</sup>. 1739. (1881) *pc co*. As seen in my translation, I take the post-positive particle *δὲ* as continuative rather than adversative or contrastive. Other aspects of the Greek text of v. 24 are explored later.

life ἐν πνεύματι (“in the Spirit”).<sup>60</sup> Indeed, based on the sheer number of occurrences of the word σάρξ in the letter, it appears that one of Paul’s primary worries for his audience was reliance on σάρξ.<sup>61</sup> Notably, and for his part, the apostle did not consult “flesh” for confirmation of his Torah-free gospel (1:16), nor was the life he then lived “in the flesh” truly his own (2:20). Furthermore, in the text presented above, he claims that those who “belong to the Christ have crucified the flesh,” a phrase that functions as the pithy conclusion of the foregoing passage wherein Paul dramatically contrasts τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός (“the works of the flesh”) with ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος (“the fruit of the Spirit”) in Galatians 5:13–26.

The first question of importance regarding 5:13–26 considers the matter of its categorization: In what way does this particular section fit into Paul’s wider argument in the letter? I agree with Frank Matera’s conclusion, made several years ago, that the fifth and sixth chapters of Galatians actually present the culmination of the apostle’s argument in the letter, rather than represent-

60. Over the years interpreters have presented several options regarding the theological meaning of σάρξ in Paul’s letters. George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 469, remains a helpful starting point for discussion of these options. In older writings, σάρξ referred to human physicality, or the ‘lower’ character of humans—a view found in the dualism of Hellenistic philosophy. Examples of advocates of this understanding of σάρξ include Otto Pfeleiderer, *Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Christian Theology* (2d ed.; London/Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1891), 47–67; George B. Stevens, *The Pauline Theology* (rev. ed.; New York: Scribner, 1897), 139–150. Offering a slightly different perspective, Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 233–38, understood σάρξ as principally a reference to temporal bodily existence. Subsequently, scholars viewed the Pauline opposition of σάρξ and πνεύμα as representing a conflict between human ‘sinful nature’ versus a ‘spiritual nature’ which prompted good inclinations (a view held in Rabbinic Judaism). On this approach see Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 17–35; J. L. Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *NTS* 31 (1985): 415–16; Joel Markus, “The Evil Inclination in the Letters of Paul,” *IBS* 8 (1986): 8–20. As Ladd catalogues in *Theology of the New Testament*, 472–73, however, contemporary scholarship commonly understands σάρξ as that part of human nature which remains in an unregenerate state, but does not retain its complete power over Christians. This view seems to fit well with Paul’s overall use of the word throughout his letters. For a slightly nuanced version of this perspective, one which reconsiders aspects of temporality and ethics as they relate to the use of σάρξ in the context of Galatians, see Walt Russell, “The Apostle Paul’s Redemptive-Historical Argument in Galatians 5:13–26,” *WJT* 57 (1995): 347–49.

61. See, e.g., 1:6; 2:16, 20; 3:3, 5; 4:13, 14, 23, 29; 5:4–5, 16–24; 6:8, 12, 13.

ing some kind of afterthought.<sup>62</sup> Because scholars have encountered difficulty in pinpointing the exact starting point of the paraenesis, some have proceeded on the assumption that Paul had finished the entirety of his theological argumentation by the opening of ch. 5.<sup>63</sup> Yet, as Matera cautions, searching in Galatians “for a starting point of a purely paraenetic section is ill-advised,”<sup>64</sup> as Paul tends to intermix both theological and ethical exhortation throughout the entire letter. In other words, he does not constrain himself to maintain pure rhetorical categories.<sup>65</sup> So, distinguishing chapters five and six from the supposed ‘theological heart’ of the letter (presumably located in previous chapters, chiefly three and four) leads to a view of these latter chapters as less than integral to Paul’s argument. This kind of move only complicates their exegesis, for they clearly address key issues facing the Galatian Christians.

As Matera recognized, the paraenetic section of 5:13–6:10 falls between two sections of text in which Paul warns against the acceptance of circumcision by the Galatian Christians:<sup>66</sup>

62. Frank J. Matera, “The Culmination of Paul’s Argument to the Galatians: Gal. 5.1–6.17,” *JSTT* 32 (1988): 79–91, notes, “. . . it is precisely in chs. 5–6 that Paul explicitly takes up the question of circumcision for the first time (5.1–12; 6.11–17). Although the issue is presupposed earlier in the letter, and Paul refers to the circumcision of Titus in 2.3–5, it is not until chs. 5–6 that he actually warns the Galatians of the dangers involved if they accept circumcision. Gal. 5.1–6.17 forms the culmination of Paul’s argument to the Galatians, the point he has intended to make from the beginning of the letter: the Galatians must not submit to circumcision. Thus, although these chapters contain a great deal of moral exhortation, they should not be viewed exclusively as paraenesis. They are the climax of Paul’s deliberative argument aimed at persuading the Galatians not to be circumcised,” (pp. 79–80).

63. See Otto Merk, “Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief,” *ZNW* 60 (1969): 83–104, who noted the six different points in Galatians which scholars have suggested as the beginning of the paraenetic material: 4:12; 4:21; 5:1; 5:2; 5:7; 5:13. He finds the last option most likely, as do I.

64. Matera, “Culmination of Paul’s Argument,” 81.

65. Paul’s stylistic signals serving to introduce paraenetic material are clearer in some of his other letters: cf. Rom 12:1; 1 Thes 4:1.

66. Matera, “Culmination of Paul’s Argument,” 83. He also notes some important literary parallels between 5:3/6:13a; 5:6/6:15; 5:11/6:12.

5.1–12	reasons for not accepting circumcision
5.13–6.10	paraenetic material
6.11–17	reasons for not accepting circumcision.

This structure has the effect of bracketing off a segment of mainly paraenetic material (5:13–6:10) where Paul momentarily ceases his argument against circumcision, and instead explores the Christian means of ethical living—by way of the Spirit. The vivid contrasts presented between flesh and Spirit in 5:13–6:10 should not be understood as detached from the apostle’s broader warnings against following the law (circumcision functioning here as a concrete example of such adherence).<sup>67</sup> Rather, in this section he expresses the argument in terms of principles of power which he believes are at work within people: looking to the law for justification essentially means dependency on *σάρξ*; proceeding by faith in Christ requires ongoing reliance on *πνεύμα*.<sup>68</sup> Thus, contrary to some commentators who see a radical break in Paul’s thought in this section (they suppose that he has left behind his previous emphases on freedom from the law and upright living), this passage functions as “Paul’s attempt to show the Galatians that life according to the Spirit results *both* in freedom and in a good moral life.”<sup>69</sup>

In chapter five, Paul prefaces the section contrasting the behaviours linked to *σάρξ* with those associated to *πνεύμα* by stating categorically that *ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται* (“these are opposed to each other,” v. 17). Pointedly, Paul declares in v. 18: “But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.” This direct assertion sharpens the decision that confronts his Galatian

67. Against this view, Joop Smit, “Redactie in de brief aan de galaten: Retorische analyse van Gal. 4.12–6.18,” *TvT* 26 (1986): 113–144, has argued that the paraenetic section 5:13–6:10 of Galatians was a later addition, and not originally in the text.

68. I take it that Paul’s description of those living according to *σάρξ* refers to pagans, or perhaps Jews who are not Christians. See Peder Borgen, “Catalogues of Vices, The Apostolic Decree, and the Jerusalem Meeting,” in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* (ed. Jacob Neusner et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 131.

69. Matera, “Culmination of Paul’s Argument,” 85 (emphasis his).

audience: they must choose to live by either the law or the Spirit—not both. For Paul, attempting to live by amalgamating the two is simply impossible.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, for readers of this passage Paul strongly correlates life “in the flesh” and their current temptation to depend on Torah-obedience for justification. Walt Russell describes the interplay between *σάρξ* and *νόμος* in this section:

The simultaneous description of the *Christian* Judaizers and the *non-Christian* sarkic practitioners in Gal 5:19–21 is easily understood from Paul’s previous identity of the community of the *σάρξ* in Gal 4:21–31. Especially in 4:23–25 Paul identifies the *σάρξ* community as the Jewish community still under the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant (4:25). Again, *σάρξ* and *νόμος* are seen by Paul as an inextricable tandem. Therefore, while the identity of those who practice the deeds of the *σάρξ* in Gal 5:19–21 would normally refer to pagans in most of the proselyte literature of Paul’s day, Paul now ironically includes Israel and all those who are attached to her (i.e., the Judaizing communities). Israel and the Judaizing communities are seen by Paul as a homogeneous whole still being under the Torah, and thereby still “in the flesh” along with all pagans. . . . Specifically, the Judaizers want to attach the Galatians to a community that is “in the flesh” and is thereby not indwelt with God’s Spirit.<sup>71</sup>

After establishing the flesh/law connection, in vv. 19–21a Paul offers a vice list comprised of behaviours which unmistakably identify those living accord-

70. Notably, the diametrical opposition of *σάρξ* and *πνεύμα* here has led M. Martínez Peque, “Unidad de forma y contenido en Gal 5.16–26,” *EstBib* 45 (1987): 109–113, to structure this passage in terms of Paul’s supposed effort to employ antithesis:

- A . . . πνευματικῶν v. 16
- B . . . . σαρκός v. 16b
- C . . . . . νόμον v. 18
- D . . . . . τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός vv. 19–21a
- E . . . . . βασιλείαν θεοῦ v. 21b
- Δ . . . . . ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος vv. 22–23a
- ς . . . . . νόμος v. 23b
- β . . . . . σάρκα v. 24
- Α . . . πνεύματι v. 25.

71. Russell, “Redemptive-Historical Argumentation in Galatians 5:13–26,” 351 (emphasis his). Perhaps the Galatians were looking to the law to overcome the power of the flesh, in which case Paul vehemently denounces that strategy. See David J. Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul’s Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), 123.

ing to *σάρξ*.<sup>72</sup> The fifteen vices<sup>73</sup>—a list he signals is not exhaustive by the phrase *καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις* (“and things like these”)—are followed by a stern admonition: “I warn you, as I warned you before: those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” (v. 21b). To provide a contrast to the vices, he offers a virtue list in vv. 22–23a which highlights those qualities of character found in a person influenced by God’s *πνεῦμα*.<sup>74</sup> These he designates as *ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός* (“the fruit of the Spirit”), adding that *κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος* (“against such things there is no law”) in v. 23b.<sup>75</sup> In making this evaluation, Paul clarifies how these Spirit-produced virtues relate to the law, and, as Betz explains:

72. Concerning the function of this section, J. Scott Duvall, “‘Identity-Performance-Result’: Tracing Paul’s Argument in Galatians 5 and 6,” *SWJT* 37.1 (1994): 34, states: “Paul uses the vice–virtue lists in 5:19–24 to enforce his previous exhortation in two main ways. First, the lists enforce by illustrating the specific behavior that he has in mind. If the Galatians were unclear about the particular behaviour associated with each alternative, they should wonder no more. The lists of the ‘works of the flesh’ (5:19–21a) and the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (5:22–23a) demonstrate that each performance produces specific qualities of character. . . . Second, using a condition-result pattern (with the lists themselves functioning as conditionals), Paul tries once again to persuade the shortsighted Galatians to continue in the right choice by helping them see the distant future. The result of the flesh life is devastating (5:21b). . . . The result of the Spirit life is fulfilment of the law without submitting to the legal requirement of circumcision. . . .” Also, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 249–52, for further explanation on the function of vice/virtue lists.

73. The following manuscripts include *φονοι* (“murder”) after *φθόοι* (“envy”): A C D F G Ψ ο122 ℳ lat sy<sup>(P)</sup> bo.

74. For extensive citations which refer to the background of the words appearing in this virtue list, see Betz, *Galatians*, 285–87.

75. Several commentators have noticed that Paul’s phrase parallels Aristotle’s remark, made in the fourth century B.C.E. in reference to people he viewed as intrinsically virtuous: *κατὰ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος* (“against such people there is no law”; *Pol.* 3.13.1284A). See J.D. Robb, “Galatians v. 23. An Explanation,” *ET* 56 (1944–45): 279–280. Also, Longenecker, *Galatians*, 264, who suggests that this maxim was “common coinage in Paul’s day,” although he offers no proof for such an assertion. A similar view is held by Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 413. Traditionally, translations of Aristotle’s *τῶν τοιούτων* have been masculine, as above. Arguing that Paul’s similar expression in Gal 5:23b should also be treated as masculine, and therefore translated as “people,” rather than referring to the virtues just mentioned, is R.A. Campbell, “‘Against such things there is no law’? Galatians 5:23b again,” *ET* 107/9 (1996): 271–72. Against this view, see J. Barclay, “Obeying the Truth,” 119–125; Bruce, *Galatians*, 255–56; and most other commentators on the passage.

Two things are implied: (1) the “list of virtues” is not itself “law”; (2) the virtues do not violate any law; they are all “lawful.” . . . How do we have to understand this concluding remark? It corresponds to v. 19: as one does not need to transgress a law in order to do evil, one can “do good” (cf. 6:10), that is, one can be ethically responsible without “obeying the law.” In view of the situation which the Galatians have to face, Paul suggests that it is more important to be enabled to act with ethical responsibility than to introduce a code of law which remains a mere demand. In other words, the introduction of the Torah into the Galatian churches would not lead to ethical responsibility, so long as the people were not motivated and enabled ethically. If they were motivated and enabled, however, the Torah is superfluous.<sup>76</sup>

All this leads Paul to explain finally why *σάρξ* no longer has a dominating influence or established place in the life of the believer. In my view, it is at this point that Paul makes his most fervent disavowal of “the flesh,” rejecting it so vehemently that he employs the violent imagery of nailing it to a cross. As in 2:20–21, here in 5:24 the apostle articulates the context of this freedom from the flesh in relational terms rather than legal categories: *οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ]* (“those who belong to the Christ, Jesus”).<sup>77</sup> Continuing, v. 24 clarifies why Christians no longer exhibit the behaviours detailed in the vice list (vv. 19–21): *τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαις* (“they have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”). The statement serves to underscore why ethical living is possible through faith in Christ—the demise of *σάρξ* ensuing from that religious experience. Consequently, “‘Crucifixion’ of the flesh results in its neutralization: having lost its life it is no longer capable of producing the ‘works of the flesh.’”<sup>78</sup>

The aorist tense of *ἐσταύρωσαν* recalls the event of crucifixion as a completed action in the past. Yet, in order to convey that this past event has implications for the present, many English versions translate the verb as a perfect (“they have crucified”). This surely reflects Paul’s implied meaning in this text. Commenting on this, Walt Russell notes:

Central to this understanding of the crucifixion of the *σάρξ* is the assumption that it has an ongoing presence in the life of the Christian. Therefore, the death of *τὴν σάρκα* in 5:24 has supposedly been merely “commanded and introduced,” and thereby has set in motion the life-long process of flesh-death. . . . Paul is again appeal-

76. Betz, *Galatians*, 288–89.

77. See Duvall, “‘Identity-Performance-Result’,” 35.

78. Betz, *Galatians*, 290.

ing to the eschatological (or redemptive-historical) significance of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. This crucifixion has decisively changed the identity of the people of God.<sup>79</sup>

How does Paul's use of the graphic imagery of flesh nailed to a cross convey his remedy for the problems facing the Galatians? Paul's metaphorical reference to crucifixion presents it as a positive experience, relieving people of the burden imposed by the flesh—namely the twin corrupting forces of *παθήμασιν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαις* (“passions and desires”). Mentioning these compulsions serves a double purpose in clarifying Paul's meaning. By drawing attention to those forces, as opposed to the entire physical body, he indicates the non-literalness of the statement: he obviously does not mean that a person's flesh undergoes actual destruction by crucifixion upon coming to faith in Jesus. Even more importantly, the apostle's diagnosis of the human condition implicates these cravings as the inherent and underlying problem with *σάρξ*. Consequently, “passions and desires” must be put to death to permit authentic, Spirit-derived morality, which Paul advocates in vv. 25–26.

According to Paul, Christians must learn to control *πάθημα* and *ἐπιθυμία*, due to their power to introduce chaos and evil into the lives of believers. In most of his letters Paul exhorts his readers to eradicate these dispositions from their Christian lives.<sup>80</sup> The apostle has adapted these terms for his own theology and anthropology, but they originate from ancient medical views of the body which equated passion and desire as particular diseases.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Paul's pronouncement of their demise in Galatians comes as no surprise, given his acceptance of the idea that *πάθημα* and *ἐπιθυμία* are compulsions which lead to corrupting behaviour. In fact, his aversion towards “des-

79. Russell, “Redemptive-Historical Argumentation in Galatians 5:13–26,” 355.

80. These terms *can* have a morally neutral sense, but in Paul's letters they frequently refer to sexual temptations and other sins associated with the body. See, e.g., Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 7:9, 10:7.

81. I reference two ancient medical sources which present this view, although several others could be cited: Oribasilus, *Oeuvres* (trans. and ed. C. Daremberg and U. C. Bussemaker; Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1858); Soranus, *Gynecology* (trans. Owsei Temkin; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956). See also the work of Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); and especially Dale Martin, “Paul without Passion: On Paul's Rejection of Desire in Sex and Marriage,” in *Sex and the Single Savior*, 65–76.

ire” leads him later to prescribe marriage as a prophylaxis against the incursion of ἐπιθυμία (1 Cor 7).<sup>82</sup> What appears in Galatians represents Paul’s certainty that faith in Christ severs the believer from domination by these dispositions. That he feels he must evoke crucifixion language to make his case demonstrates the force with which the apostle rejects the influence of “passions and desires” in the Christian life, and his own belief of their detrimental effect on ethical living.

So, in essence, v. 24 employs the crucifixion metaphor to explain *how* Christians make a definitive break with σάρξ. The goal, in Paul’s thinking, is for believers no longer to live controlled by its impulses; nor can they rely on Torah-obedience to guarantee a moral existence, since the law as a system is also bound up with the elements of the world (cf. 4:9). Thus, Paul can encourage the Galatian Christians to “walk by the Spirit,” (v. 25) because life ἐν σαρκί has ended, in Christ, as a result of their spiritual participation in crucifixion. In giving themselves to Christ, believers “died” to the once-normative behaviours described in 5:19–21 as ἔργα τῆς σαρκός (“the works of the flesh”), and in their place the καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος (“fruit of the Spirit”) was produced.

In effect, the second mention of crucifixion in Galatians functions to clarify a critical decision required of them—the choice between depending on flesh/law, or on God’s Spirit. To summarize: In setting up his overall argument in Galatians 5:13–26, Paul exhorts his readers to rely upon the Holy Spirit rather than be ruled by the flesh. He reminds them that domination by σάρξ has ended, cancelling its power and influence in the lives of believers in Christ through a metaphorical execution. Continuing with the same hyperbolae he uses in 2:20, where the image of crucifixion is used to describe his “death to the law,” Paul employs a crucifixion metaphor in 5:24 to describe a believer’s “death to the flesh”—two powers working in tandem against the indwelling power of the Spirit and the path of justification that comes only through faith in Christ. Having examined 5:24 in context, I now turn to the final reference to crucifixion in Galatians which remains unexplored—it appears in Paul’s closing remarks in chapter six.

82. See Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 198–228.

## Galatians 6:14— Crucifying the World

*Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ.*<sup>83</sup>

But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

As outlined above, Paul addresses the specific issue of circumcision in Galatians 5:1–12, presents the dichotomy between flesh and Spirit in 5:13–6:10, and returns to the topic of circumcision in 6:11–18. Within this final passage of the letter, specifically in v. 14, is found the apostle's last mention of the cross and crucifixion as they relate to Christian life. By looking briefly at the literary context of this verse, and then the statement itself, I shall conclude my examination of Paul's metaphorical use of crucifixion in Galatians.

Earlier I articulated the apostle's principal concerns in the letter—centrally, that the Galatians not permit themselves to be persuaded by the Judaizers to rely upon the law or the flesh for justification—so I shall not repeat those arguments here. Yet, recalling those issues which sufficiently distressed the apostle to actually write the letter allows readers an appreciation of the pathos embedded in the postscript of 6:11–18.<sup>84</sup> Using polemical language, Paul concludes the letter by drawing a stark contrast between himself and the Judaizers.<sup>85</sup> And, as I argue here, the critical point of distinction between Paul and his opponents lies in his attitude towards the cross of Jesus and to his own spiritual experience of crucifixion. I will therefore show that it is the

83. Nestle–Aland reports no manuscript discrepancies for 6:14.

84. Betz, *Galatians*, 313, despite giving far greater weight to other sections of the letter, claims that 6:11–18 “contains the interpretive clues to the understanding of Paul's major concerns in the letter as a whole.” See also J.D. Weima, “Gal. 6:11–18: A Hermeneutical Key to the Galatian Letter,” *CTJ* 28 (1993): 90–107.

85. H. Van Dyke Parunak categorizes what he views as Paul's “four-way opposition” (a set including Paul, other teachers, the true gospel, and the false gospel) by comparing the similarities between Gal 1:1–10 and 6:12–18 in “Dimensions of Discourse Structure: A Multidimensional Analysis of the Components and Transitions of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians,” in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 219–21.

cross and crucifixion which, for Paul, uniquely characterizes the Christian approach to justification: namely, that the believer's life is separated from 'the world' in a fundamental way.

Scholars have noticed that the ending of Galatians differs from most of Paul's other letters in the absence of his usual prayer, thanksgiving, and unconditional benediction.<sup>86</sup> Paul emphatically seeks to engage the Galatians, demonstrated by the abruptness with which he seizes his scribe's stylus so that he might pen the *peroratio* of the letter himself. Attempting to rivet his audience's attention on what comes next, he declares in v. 11: Ἴδετε πηλίκοις ὑμῶν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ ("Look with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand"). Whether the size of the writing stemmed from poor eyesight, or from an unsteady hand due to the abuse he endured under persecution, or simply for particular effect, the appearance of Paul's signature script dramatically personalizes the last words of his correspondence.<sup>87</sup> Of note for this investigation, the main statement under consideration (v. 14) falls within this segment of Paul's own handwriting, thereby certifying that it reflects his own direct thinking (not a paraphrase of his amanuensis), and that it functions as part of the letter's piercing conclusion.

He proceeds to expose the true motivations of the Judaizers, accusing in v. 12 that Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπήσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ διώκωνται ("It is those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh who urge you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ"). The ignoble reasons for compelling the Galatians to be circumcised are, in part, revealed in their unwillingness to completely identify

86. Indeed, the recapitulation of his argument here "is more forceful than in any other Pauline conclusion"—Duvall, "Identity-Performance-Result," 36.

87. The text seems to imply that only one copy of this letter circulated throughout the churches in Galatia—the one with Paul's writing on it. See Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 441. Scholars have debated why the letters were so large, some suggesting that the apostle's difficulty in seeing seems a reasonable explanation: see J. S. Clemens, "St. Paul's Handwriting," *ET* 24 (1912–13): 380; W. K. L. Clark, "St. Paul's Large Letters," *ET* 24 (1912–13): 285. In contrast, others, such as C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985), 84, actually find this view amusing. In the end, the reason for the large letters is an issue of relative unimportance; what remains significant is that Paul is the one doing the writing.

themselves with Christ, especially with the shame of his cross. Rather, by continuing to promote circumcision, they concern themselves more with their acceptability, on the basis of law-related criteria, to other Jews.<sup>88</sup> Imagining what motivated the Judaizers, Charles Cousar suggests:

... they advocate circumcision, he says, in order “to make a good showing.” They are far more interested in what can accrue to their own account by virtue of successful proselytizing than what happens to their proselytes. . . . Being able to report progress in their work lessens the pressure and removes the harassment they would otherwise be experiencing. One can only guess that the pressure on those Jewish Christian opponents comes from militant, nationalistic Jews who resent the biracial character of the Christian community and thus promote a missionary zeal for circumcision. If the Jewish Christians can show that they are making Jewish proselytes from among the Gentile converts to Christianity, then they need no longer fear their more ardent and exclusivistic compatriots.<sup>89</sup>

In other words, Paul believes that the message of the cross of Jesus makes circumcision superfluous, a notion that many Jews—apparently even some Jewish Christians—found scandalous. But instead of relinquishing circumcision as a special mark of covenantal participation, the Judaizers sought to avoid dishonour by retaining it as an outward indicator of spiritual status—thereby, according to Paul, betraying the gospel.

Yet, as damning as this first indictment might appear for his opponents, Paul points to a second disgraceful motivation in v. 13. Here he claims *οὐδὲ γὰρ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῶνται*, (“For even those who belong to the circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised, in order that they might boast in your flesh”).<sup>90</sup>

88. See Gordon Fee, “Freedom and the Life of Obedience (Galatians 5:1–6:18),” *RevExp* 91 (1994): 201–217, esp. 203–204; James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 120–123, 144–147; Betz, *Galatians*, 6–7.

89. Cousar, *Galatians*, 149.

90. I agree with Longenecker, who discredits the claim of Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Richmond, Vir.: John Knox Press, 1959), 87–90, that the present substantial participle *οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι* should be understood as a permissive middle (“those who receive circumcision”; i.e., Gentile Christians in Galatia) rather than a passive (“those who belong to the circumcision”; i.e., Jewish Christians from Jerusalem). Longenecker,

Paul previously observed that “every person who receives circumcision . . . is bound to keep the whole law,” (5:3). What he refers to by stating in 6:13 that those advocating circumcision “do not themselves keep the law” is not entirely clear. Whatever the particular infractions Paul may have envisioned, and in light of the Judaizers’ assertions of the benefits of Torah-obedience, he levels a strong critique aimed at exposing the hypocrisy and inadequacy of their own observance. Longenecker sees a similar meaning for this verse:

Elsewhere in Galatians Paul deals with his opponents in terms of the errors of their teaching and principles, not the shortcomings of their practice. Nonetheless, the fact that in 5:3 he points out to his converts that “every man who lets himself be circumcised . . . is obligated to obey the whole law” suggests that Paul would not have been averse to citing shortcomings of practice as a supplementary argument against any message that advocated “keeping the law” as a means of attainment for the Christian. Probably, therefore, what Paul means here in 6:13 is that despite the loftiness of their assertion and their rigid theology, the Judaizers, at least in Paul’s eyes, fell short of keeping all the law scrupulously themselves.<sup>91</sup>

In the second part of v. 13, Paul’s polemic contrasts the Judaizers with himself, for here he accuses them before the Galatians of wanting to ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσονται (“boast in your flesh”). Following this, in v. 14 (which I examine below), the apostle emphasizes his dissimilarity from them since he reserves any such “boasting” for the cross of Christ alone.<sup>92</sup> Nonetheless, by “boasting in the flesh” of their Galatian brethren (i.e., these Gentile Christians had willingly undergone circumcision at the behest of their Jewish colleagues), his opponents likely wanted to shield themselves from

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*Galatians*, 292, argues: “Taken on their own, the subjects of both v 12 and v 13 could be understood as Gentile ‘Judaizers’ who had no connections with Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. In the overall context of the Galatian letter, however, it is very difficult to believe that this is so, particularly in light of the polemic against Jerusalem influence that permeates the narration from 1:17–2:10 and the parallel Antioch episode recounted in 2:11–14. Furthermore, on such an understanding no explanation seems possible for why Gentile ‘Judaizers’ feared persecution (evidently from Jews) when they themselves had no connection with Jerusalem. . . .”

91. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 293. In Rom 1:8–3:20; 7:7–25, etc., Paul asserts that no person has the ability to perfectly keep the law.

92. Paul mentions this kind of appropriate Christian “boasting” elsewhere: e.g., 1 Cor 1:13; 2 Cor 10:17.

being persecuted by non-Christian Jews. Hence, to some degree, the Judaizers in Galatia sought to present themselves before their fellow Jews as ‘missionaries’ to the Gentiles, in order to prevent being discriminated against for their faith as Christians. The “boasting” Paul mentions likely indicates that circumcision constituted the evidence of successful proselytization for the Judaizers.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, among the Galatian church, this activity fostered the illusion that circumcision somehow affected a person’s spiritual standing in Christ—a notion which Paul roundly discredits in v. 15: “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.”

By way of contrast, Paul disavows any such grandiloquence regarding matters of the flesh.<sup>94</sup> He rejects it outright, flatly stating in v. 14 *Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (“But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”). The apostle distinguishes himself from his opponents by using *δὲ* (“but”) as an adversative, followed by *μὴ γένοιτο* (“may it never be”), the optative expression which he employs somewhat frequently in his later writings to reject false assertions about his teaching, or as a general term indicating his abhorrence at the thought just expressed in his writing.<sup>95</sup>

Paul’s expression in this verse indicates that, for him, no room exists in the Christian life for “boasting” in anything other than the achievement of Christ through the cross—for no human achievement can have any bearing on one’s spiritual standing. Christ’s cross stands as the antithesis of legalistic endeavours and human efforts of attaining justification; moreover, it makes Jewish Christian boasting about their evangelistic prowess—based principally on the elimination of Gentile Christian foreskins—a contemptuous act.<sup>96</sup> For the apostle, the spiritual significance of Christ’s crucifixion invalidates (and thus causes him to find disgraceful) every other route by which people seek justifi-

93. Judaism held that making a proselyte had meritorious value, indicated in the NT by Paul’s assumptions about such boasting in Rom 2:17, 23; 5:3, etc. See Rudolf Bultmann, “*καυχᾶσθαι*,” *TDNT* 3:649.

94. Cf. 2 Cor 11:21–29, and esp. v. 30: “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness”; also Phil 3:4–6. See also Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, 88.

95. E.g., Rom 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1; 1 Cor 6:15; Gal 2:17; 3:21.

96. As seen in 6:17, Paul bears the *στίγματα* of Jesus on his body, the only marks in the flesh which he ascribes as important to Christian identity.

cation, and its centrality in Paul's thinking reveals how it is a symbol of honour to him, while remaining a symbol of shame to his adversaries.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, in contrast to them, the apostle reserves his "boasting" for what Christ achieved by means of his crucifixion.<sup>98</sup>

What does Paul mean when he thereafter claims *δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ* ("by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world," v. 14)? Examining the grammatical construction of this phrase is the starting point in forming a response. Acting as a genitive of agency, the preposition *διὰ* points to the cross as the instrument effecting these metaphorical executions. Scholars have debated whether the relative pronoun *οὗ*, here a genitive, should be understood as neuter (and thus referring to "the cross") or as masculine (and thus referring to "our Lord Jesus Christ").<sup>99</sup> The likely referent, as indicated in most English translations of the text, is the cross—especially since Paul has recently centred his readers' attention on it in the immediately preceding statements (i.e., vv. 12, 14).

As I have previously shown, in Galatians Paul employs crucifixion imagery to convey the idea of a believer's "death to" (meaning radical separation from) the two forces of the law and the flesh (at 2:20 and 5:24, respectively). In 6:14, however, Paul abridges all such forces which work against the Spirit by evoking the term *κόσμος* as the object of crucifixion. *Κόσμος* and *κόσμῳ*

97. See Fung, *Galatians*, 306; cf. 1 Cor 1:18. C.H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 78, stated, "... pride in the Law has been displaced by pride in the Cross; pride in 'righteousness' as an achievement, by pride in what empties him of pride." I address the notions of honour and shame, as they relate to how early Christians viewed the crucifixion of Jesus, in Chapter Six.

98. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 294, accounts for Paul's focus on the cross: "By metonymy, such associated terms as 'cross' and 'death' were used by him to represent the basic Christian *κήρυγμα* (cf. 1 Cor 1:17–18; 15:3; Phil 2:8; 3:18; Col 1:20; 3:14–15). Thus, as noted at 3:1, the gospel of Christ crucified so completely rules out any other supposed means of being righteous before God that Paul found it utterly incomprehensible for anyone who has once embraced such a gospel to ever think of supplementing it in any way. For to hold before one's eyes 'Jesus Christ having been crucified' is to put an end to all forms of legalism. When, in fact, Paul speaks of the work of Christ in Galatians his focus is entirely on 'the cross' and 'Christ crucified'..."

99. On this see Betz, *Galatians*, 318, who concludes, "Whether *δι' οὗ* refers to the cross of Christ, or to the person of Christ, is of no consequence, since for Paul 'Christ' is always the crucified redeemer Christ."

both lack an article here, denoting their qualitative meaning in this instance. This means that Paul does not have the physical universe in mind as the object of crucifixion; rather, the terms refer to the system of values wherein striving for achievement and gaining advantage over others feature as the highest values of human existence. E. Burton refers to this as “the mode of life which is characterized by earthly advantages, viewed as obstacles to righteousness.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, when Paul states that through the cross the “world has been crucified to me,” he again relies on graphic and violent execution imagery to express the degree of separation he now feels towards “the world.”<sup>101</sup> The world was crucified (presumably by Jesus?), and Paul could no more access that way of living than he could establish meaningful relations with a person executed and now dead.

Similarly, Paul has experienced his own death in this regard: *καὶ γὰρ κόσμῳ* (“and I [have been crucified] to the world”). The second reference to *κόσμῳ*, functioning here as a dative of relation, inverts the preceding image of a crucified world so that Paul’s own crucified self comes into view. This transition depicts two entities completely unable to touch or influence one another, because each exists in a state of mutual crucifixion. Barred by nothing less than the preventative power of death, they may make no connection.<sup>102</sup> As a consequence, Paul and the world now exist completely apart from one another—a state brought about by the apostle’s belief in Christ and his cross. By dying on a cross, like Jesus, Paul has been set free from the *κόσμος*.

Ragnar Bring, who recognized that in Paul’s thinking generally “the cross of Christ was the boundary between the rule of the old and that of the new,” has articulated Paul’s vision in this passage:

100. Burton, *Galatians*, 354. *Κόσμος* is used in this sense elsewhere in the NT; e.g., Mt 16:26; Jas 1:27, 4:4; and 1 Jn 2:15.

101. The verb *ἐσταύρωται* here appears as a perfect indicative passive, emphasizing that the past experience of crucifixion has results that continue to have implications for the present.

102. Fung, *Galatians*, 307, states, “The connection between him and that former world of his has been completely severed through the crucifixion of Christ. . . . Paul is saying also that the cross now forms a permanent wall between the world and him and between him and the world.”

His only glorying is in the cross of Christ. Through the cross he has been crucified to the world, and the world to him. What to the world was the greatest shame, the execution of Jesus on the cross, was to him the greatest glory. . . . Through the cross of Christ the world was dead to Paul. He was not bound by it, nor by the desire for recognition and honor connected with it. He had seen the life of God revealed through the cross, which to the world was the greatest shame. Circumcision, the pride of being a Jew, belonging to the chosen people, and being righteous through the law—all this was of the world. Paul had found the center of his life in a new life, and he was now dead to all the rest. He did not simply relinquish it. He was as separated from it as if he had died.<sup>103</sup>

So Paul ends his letter to the Galatians—reminding them of what the cross means for those who have placed their faith in Christ. By adapting Jesus’ imperative to “take up the cross,” and applying it metaphorically, the apostle attempts to persuade his readers to recall that their own religious experience as Christians began when they placed their faith in a crucified Christ. He goes on to argue that their “co-crucifixion” with Christ terminates any reliance on the law for justification (2:20), on placing any confidence in the flesh (5:24), or on living according to the standards of the world (6:14). In order that his converts might not regress into dependency on anything but the Spirit, Paul required a graphic image to convey how faith in Christ had created a radical separation from these things. He turned to the idea of undergoing a violent death on a cross to express this separation, a notion that also identified his readers with the experience of Jesus rather than with their own attempts at justification.

Having examined each passage in Galatians where Paul used crucifixion metaphors, I now turn to the only other passage in the Pauline corpus (or the New Testament, for that matter) where this imagery also appears—the sixth chapter of Romans.

103. Ragnar Bring, *Commentary on Galatians* (trans. Eric Wahlstrom; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 284–85.

## Romans 6:6— Crucifying the Old Self

τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ.<sup>104</sup>

We know that our old self was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

Concluding my overall analysis of the cognate versions of the cross saying, I now examine the final one, located in the sixth chapter of Paul's Roman correspondence. Although the traditional order of books in the New Testament canon situates Romans before Galatians, almost all scholars date the former to the late 50s or early 60s C.E.<sup>105</sup> Since I have employed a diachronic approach to the analysis of all crucifixion-related passages under consideration in this study, I have therefore placed the examination of Romans 6:6 at the conclusion of this chapter.

Any exegete is bound to distort the meaning of the above passage should he fail to consider its broader function in Paul's overall argument. Yet, upon commencing an examination of its literary context, one is instantly confronted with a large number of grammatical and exegetical dilemmas, accompanied by a vast body of divergent scholarship seeking to address those issues. Therefore, for the sake of presenting a succinct investigation of 6:6, I start the section with a brief outline of Paul's logic in chapter six of Romans, following this with a focused assessment of the statement's immediate literary context, and reserve a detailed analysis of v. 6 for the end.

Using the above approach, I endeavour to show that Paul's reference to crucifying the "old self" has less to do with participation in the rite of baptism (as argued by some commentators),<sup>106</sup> and more to do with answering

104. The verse begins with a *καὶ* in B; otherwise there are no manuscript discrepancies for this text.

105. The arguments made by Witherington that the likely date of composition for Romans is circa 57 C.E. seem reasonable to me. See Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 5–7.

106. Examples of these views can be found in the work of W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; 5th ed.; New York: Scribner, 1899), 156; C. K.

possible objections to his law-free gospel. Rather than an exposé on baptism, I contend that the questions which begin this chapter—“Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound?” and “How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (vv. 1–2)—establish the actual topics under consideration in the literary unit of 6:1–11. Thus, I argue that Paul’s statement about crucifixion in this instance functions principally in answering questions about *how* believers have, apart from the law, genuinely “died to sin.”

It appears that Paul addressed mainly a Gentile Christian audience in the letter to the Romans, “although he is happy for Jewish Christians to overhear this conversation.”<sup>107</sup> The makeup of the congregations in Rome at this time has been debated, but the internal evidence suggests that the majority of his readers were not Jews (cf. 1:13; 9:3; 10:1–2; “to you Gentiles” in 11:13; 15:15, etc.)—although, given the amount of effort he makes to reconcile Jews and Gentiles in chapters fifteen and sixteen, some Jewish Christians almost certainly were present.<sup>108</sup> Where these people stood in the social structure of first-century Roman society at the time has received much attention, but remains outside the scope of deliberation here.<sup>109</sup>

As Paul advances his arguments in Romans, he eventually contrasts those aspects of human existence which replicate the story of Adam against those which have the potential of replicating the story of Christ. He begins his com-

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Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle of Romans* (New York: Harper & Row Pub., 1957), 123–124; Otto Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* (2d ed.; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 1:302; Matthew Black, *Romans* (NCB; Greenwood, S.C.: Attic Press, 1973), 93–94; H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (HThKNT 6; Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1987), 195–196. I shall interact with other scholars on this issue later.

107. See Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 6.

108. See R. E. Brown, “Further Reflections on the Origins of the Church of Rome,” in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in John and Paul* (ed. R. T. Fortuna and B. R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 98–115; W. L. Lane, “Roman Christianity during the Formative Years from Nero to Nerva,” in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (ed. K. P. Donfried and P. Richardson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 214.

109. It seems that the majority of Jews and Christians operated at a similar social level in Rome in the first century, that being the lower classes of society (freedmen, freedwomen, slaves, and the like). See J. C. Walters, “Romans, Jews, and Christians,” in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (ed. K. P. Donfried and P. Richardson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 175–195; A. D. Clarke, “Jew and Greek, Slave and Free, Male and Female,” in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (ed. P. Oakes; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 103–125.

parison with the most striking difference between life in Adam and life in Christ: the undoing of death as the ultimate penalty for sin. In the section found immediately before 6:1, the apostle speaks of the reversal of the consequences of the 'Adamic epoch' in light of the coming of Jesus, arguing that "Law came in to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," (5:20–21).<sup>110</sup> Thus, beginning in 5:12–21 and continuing through 8:39, the Adam/Christ comparison frames the entire discussion contained in the intervening chapters.<sup>111</sup> And, regarding his salient presentation of the meaning of the Christ-event for humanity in the latter part of chapter five, Paul forestalls any possible objections to his theological statements made there, waiting to address those for the first time in 6:1–14.<sup>112</sup>

Chapter six of Romans begins with two hypothetical objections to Paul's preceding declarations concerning the annulment of death "in Adam" by means of an acquittal granted to those people "in Christ"—quite apart from the law. Anticipating that his statements could be viewed as a form of anti-nomianism, Paul raises two related questions in vv. 1–2: "What shall we say then, Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"<sup>113</sup> His immediate response consists of yet another question in v. 3: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

Although Paul's argument incorporates the subject of baptism at this point, his aim is not to present a detailed explanation of his theology of the ritual.<sup>114</sup>

110. I am indebted to J. D. G. Dunn for the phrase 'Adamic epoch'; see J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988), 307–308.

111. See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.

112. Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 154.

113. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1993), 430 ff.

114. This was recognized long ago by C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 87; see also Herman N. Ridderbos, *Aan de Romeinen*, Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1959), 135; Hendrikus Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14," *CBQ* 63 (2001): 667, who references the 1971 *Colloquio Ecumenico Paolino* held at the *Abbazi di san Paolo fuori le mura* in Rome, which focused on issues concerning interpretations of Romans 6. The

Rather, he makes reference to it in an effort to question his audience's understanding of its spiritual and theological importance in view of the rhetorical questions he asked immediately prior in vv. 1–2. While the possibility remains that Paul's language creates a resonance between Christian baptism and rites associated with mystery religions (with which his Gentile readers would presumably be familiar), I cannot explore that notion here.<sup>115</sup> Phrases describing baptism such as “all of us who have been baptized into Christ were baptized into his death,” (v. 3) and “We were buried with him by baptism into death,” (v. 4) serve to remind the Roman Christians of the spiritual dimension accompanying the ritual—aspects of which Paul presumes they have themselves experienced in the past. Thus, Witherington observes:

The emphasis in both Rom 6:3 and I Cor 12:13 is on the spiritual reality which water baptism depicts. When one is joined to Christ, one is buried with him or, one might say, plunged into his death. A spiritual transaction happens in the life of the person who is uniting himself with Christ such that he is freed from the reign of sin, in particular the tyranny of passions and desires. . . . Death is not seen here as an event, as we might speak of the time of death, but rather as a state which one enters.<sup>116</sup>

Many scholars have noted that Paul elsewhere speaks of the believer's experience of ‘dying’ and ‘rising’ with Christ, but only here in Romans 6 does he overtly associate this idea with baptism.<sup>117</sup> Debate continues as to Paul's understanding of what exactly happens at the point of baptism, with a com-

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papers presented at this conference by Rudolf Schnackenburg, “Die Adam—Christus-Typologie (Röm 5,12–21) als Voraussetzung für das Taufverständnis in Röm 6,1–14,” and Erich Dinkler, “Römer 6,1–14 und das Verhältnis von Taufe und Rechtfertigung bei Paulus,” were unavailable to me for consultation when writing this chapter.

115. On this issue see Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 308–11, who suggests that Paul deliberately uses language echoing that of the mystery religions, but “without thereby identifying the two, or calling into question the distinctive claims of each.” See also Gert M. M. Pelsler, “Could the ‘formulas’ *dying* and *rising with Christ* be expressions of Pauline mysticism?” *Neot* 32(1) (1998): 115–134.

116. Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 158.

117. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery-religions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 226; Betz, *Galatians*, 187; idem, “Transferring a Ritual: Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6,” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (ed. T. Engberg-Pedersen; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 84–118; W. Schmithals, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums: eine problemgeschichtliche Darstellung* (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1994), 194; C. E. B. Cranfield, “Romans 6:1–14 Revisited,” *ET* 106 (1994): 41.

mentator's ecclesiastical background frequently determining his view of its sacramental efficacy or lack thereof.<sup>118</sup> It does seem that Paul viewed the occasion of baptism as the moment of a believer's "dying with Christ," whereas "rising with Christ" refers to a future resurrection (indicated by the future tense of the verbs associated with this idea: *περιπατήσωμεν*, v. 4; *ἐσόμεθα*, v. 5; *συζήσομεν*, v. 8)—although G. M. M. Pelsler suggests that Paul here implies that an element of "rising with Christ" is experienced in the baptized person's new life as a Christian.<sup>119</sup> Regardless, the apostle speaks elsewhere of Christian participation in 'dying and rising with Christ' (e.g., Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 4:10–11, 5:14; Phil 3:10–11), but only here does he connect that idea with baptism. Consequently, the possibility exists "that the notion of dying and rising with Christ was initially not linked to the practice of baptism."<sup>120</sup>

I am indebted to Hendrikus Boers for rightly noticing the chiasmic structure in 6:4–11.<sup>121</sup> I present his findings in Table 23 (over) to chart the full extent of Paul's reasoning, with specific concern as to how v. 6 contributes to the broader argument and answers the questions posed in vv. 1–2 (again, the agenda of the entire unit of vv. 1–14). Boers cautions that "the structure does

118. E.g., I find specious the arguments of D. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 366, inasmuch as they depend on the frequency with which Paul happens to mention baptism in Romans rather than exegeting what he actually says about it in the text of ch. 6. On p. 366 of his commentary Moo states, "... we must assume from the fact that faith is emblazoned in every chapter of Romans, while baptism is mentioned in only two verses that genuine faith, even if it has not been 'sealed' in baptism, is sufficient for salvation." Similarly, Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 157.

In my view, both authors are guilty of eisegesis, imposing aspects of their own background in Reformation Theology onto the text of Rom 6. Essentially, this has the effect of accusing Paul of not really meaning what he says here about the identity-changing function of baptism, which indubitably associates a believer with what he considers the quintessential salvific event: Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

119. Pelsler, "Could the 'formulas' *dying* and *rising with Christ*," 127–131.

120. *Ibid.*, 126. For more on the significance of the structural features of Rom 6 and the parallels between the "baptismal event and the Christ event," see G. Bornkamm, "Taufe und neues Leben bei Paulus," in *Das Ende des Gesetzes: Paulusstudien*, *Gesammelte Aufsätze* 1 (BEvT 16; 4th ed.; Munich: Kaiser, 1963), 34–50.

121. Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14," 676.

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A	<p>ἡγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, (6:4cd)</p> <p>οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν. (6:4e)</p>
B	<p>εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόαμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, (6:5a)</p> <p>ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα. (6:5b)</p>
C	<p>Τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος</p> <p>συνεσταυρώθη, (6:6ab)</p> <p>ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, (6:6c)</p>
D	<p>τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ. (6:6d)</p>
C'	<p>ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν (6:7a)</p> <p>δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας. (6:7b)</p>
B'	<p>εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, (6:8a)</p> <p>πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ, εἰδότες ὅτι (6:8b–9a)</p>
A'	<p>Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκετι ἀποθνήσκει, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκετι</p> <p>κυριεύει. ὁ γὰρ ἀπεθανεν, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν ἐγάπαξ. ὁ δὲ ζῆ,</p> <p>ζῆ τῷ θεῷ. (6:9b–10)</p> <p>οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ</p> <p>ζώτας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (6:11).</p>

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TABLE 23. The chiasmic structure of Romans 6:4c–11.

not seem to be the product of design, but to be the result of the process of Paul's thought."<sup>122</sup>

Whether the apostle consciously outlined his reasoning here makes little difference; the repetition of similar ideas as they expand away from the central answer to the questions asked in vv. 1–2 is incontrovertibly chiasmic. Paul's main thesis appears in 6:6d: *τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ* ("and we might no longer be enslaved to sin"). He frames this core affirmation with comments about the believer's death to sin (v. 6abc/v. 7ab), further bracketing these verses with Christological statements (v. 5ab/vv. 8ab, 9a), and enclosing the entire chiasm with the admonition that believers must be united with Christ in his death (v. 4cde/v. 9b–11).<sup>123</sup> I note the above chiasmic struc-

<sup>122</sup> Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14," 678.

<sup>123</sup> Hence Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14," 679: "With the focus on dying to sin, Paul returns to the central issue that he raised in the rhetorical ques-

ture for one reason: Paul's assertion in v. 6 that ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας ("our old selves were crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed") works in tandem with his declaration in v. 7 ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ("For he who has died is freed from sin") to inform his readers *how* it is that Christians τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτία ("might no longer be enslaved to sin").

Looking more closely at v. 6, Paul begins the verse with τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι (lit., "this we know that"), which establishes his next idea as the obvious deduction from the argument made in v. 5.<sup>124</sup> As R. Jewett observes:

The first person plural participle γινώσκοντες ("knowing") is employed to indicate that both Paul and his audience already share or should share the knowledge of what death with Christ implies. Although the material that follows was probably not fully understood by Roman believers, Paul presents it as a matter of shared understanding drawn from the conversion experience of believers, which leads to the translation "knowing this."<sup>125</sup>

The content of that shared knowledge is specified in the next phrase of v. 6: ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα

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tion in vv. 1–2, living in sin or dying to it. With the central statement in v. 6d he is back at the heart of the matter, his negation of the erroneous suggestion "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" (v. 1bc) by means of the second rhetorical question, "How can we who have died to sin still live in it?" (v. 2bc). Now, however, the negation is no longer in the form of a rhetorical question but in that of a resolute affirmation."

124. Τοῦτο has ὅτι as its antecedent clause; thus, as Moo, *Romans*, 372, observes: "What Paul describes in this verse, then, is not 'known' through experience . . . or reflection on that experience . . . but through Paul's own words that follow." Similarly, John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (vol. 1; NIC, 1959; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 219, "It seems rather that it is Paul's way of introducing another element of truth . . . directly relevant to his argument and which his readers ought to know and acknowledge to be the truth, even though the implications were not perspicuous to them, and therefore needed explanation."

125. Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 402, explains further: "A translation of the participle γινώσκοντες that subordinates it to the preceding verb ἐσόμεθα ("we shall be") at the end of v. 5 is rejected . . . because a future verb cannot logically be followed by a subordinate present participle. In addition, the content of v. 6 connects more closely with v. 4 than with v. 5. These considerations lead all recent commentators and the Nestle–Aland text to understand v. 6 as an independent sentence."

τῆς ἁμαρτίας (“our old selves were crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed”). Here Paul repudiates “our old selves” (sometimes translated “our obsolete selves”),<sup>126</sup> an image derived from his Adam/Christ dichotomy under wider consideration in chapters five through eight. As Moo, Jewett, and others point out, the reference to “our old selves” should not be applied individually—as if Paul were speaking of a Adamic ‘sinful nature’ now in tension with a ‘regenerated nature’—but should be taken more generally as that which “belongs to the old aeon, the self dominated by sin and exposed to wrath.”<sup>127</sup>

Similarly, Paul’s reference to τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας (“the body of sin”) does not refer to the body of individuals, but, as Tannehill notes:

Paul is not speaking of the death of individual believers one by one. He is speaking of the destruction of the dominion of sin, of which all believers were a part. . . . When Paul speaks of dying and rising with Christ, and associates it, as he does here, with the end of the old dominion and the foundation of the new, it is clear that he is thinking of the death and resurrection as eschatological events. And because they are eschatological events, affecting the old dominion as a whole, they are also inclusive events.<sup>128</sup>

Thus the common experience which the apostle draws upon to authenticate his assertion that Christians need not “go on sinning”—the one with which all of his converted readers can identify—is the *συνεσταυρώθη* (lit., “co-crucifixion”)<sup>129</sup> of “our old self” whose passions and desires resided in “the body of sin.” The metaphorical execution of the body results in *καταργηθῆναι*, a verb which can mean either “rendered powerless” (cf. 3:3, 31; 4:14; 1 Cor 1:28; Gal 3:17) or “destroyed” (1 Cor 6:13; 15:24, 26; 2 Thes 2:8), but in this

126. Robert Jewett, *Romans*, 402–403.

127. Moo, *Romans*, 373–75; Jewett, *Romans*, 403. Also, J. R. W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5–8* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1966), 45, elaborates: “. . . what was crucified with Christ was not a part of me called my old nature, but the whole of me as I was before I was converted.”

128. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 30.

129. *συνεσταυρώθη* is an aorist passive, indicating that the crucifixion Paul mentions occurred in the past. See Egon Brandenburger, “*Σταυρός*, Kreuzigung Jesu und Kreuzestheologie,” *WD* 10 (1969): 40, for an explanation of this notion emphasizing its possible sacramental dimension.

instance Paul probably signals its abolishment rather than “simply left to one side without power.”<sup>130</sup>

Thus, in v. 6 Paul has described the process by which all believers have been set free from the confines of living “in Adam”—being “crucified with him [Christ],” with the effect that *τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ* (“we might no longer be enslaved to sin,” v. 6).<sup>131</sup> By identifying the actual means by which Christians are no longer required to “go on sinning,” namely the death of their old selves by crucifixion with Christ, Paul refutes any objections that his law-free gospel promotes antinomianism and therefore sin. This symbolic execution prevents believers from continuing to live under the prevailing influences of the ‘Adamic epoch,’ and dominated as they were by the sinful passions of the body.

Employing the notion of “taking up the cross” and adapting it for his current argument in Romans, Paul conveys with strong imagery that the past sinful lives of believers have been decidedly ended. Having endured “co-crucifixion” with Christ, the forces present in the body which were present as a result of Adam’s disobedience were finally nullified. Even though Paul preached a gospel free from the requirements of Torah-obedience, converts could be sure that he did not promote licentiousness.

The sixth chapter of Romans contains Paul’s answers to objections raised against his gospel. He assures his readers in Rome that through being “buried with Christ” in baptism they also identified themselves with his death, and that by means of “co-crucifixion” they also terminated their life of sin.

## Crucifixion, Death, and Paul’s Theology

I make here a brief, final observation about Paul’s crucifixion imagery in Galatians and Romans and its relationship to his broader theology. Whereas the versions of the cross saying found in the Synoptics seem to require that disciples *imitate* Jesus’ crucifixion, Paul explains how it is that believers may

130. See N. T. Wright, *Romans* (NIB; vol. 10; Nashville: Abington, 2002), 539.

131. I translate the infinitive *δουλεύειν* as a gerund here; likewise, Jewett, *Romans*, 404.

actually *participate* in it. It is this union with the death of Jesus (as well as with his resurrection) that stands at the core of the Apostle's understanding of how it becomes salvific for believers: his arguments in Romans 5:12–7:4 articulate this perspective most clearly. Terrance Callan summarizes thus:

Paul's most basic understanding of the way Jesus' death and resurrection save the human race from sin is that the one who believes in Jesus is united with him in his death and resurrection. Through this union, the believer dies with Jesus to the power of sin and rises with him to a new life of freedom. . . . The idea that Christians die and rise with Christ not only explains how they have been freed from sin but also implies that by means of this they have entered into a new life in union with Jesus.<sup>132</sup>

A comparable thought is expressed by Morna Hooker, who refers to this idea as one of "interchange," where "Christ has become what we are in order that we might become what he is. . . ." <sup>133</sup> Similarly, David Brondons refers to Jesus as an "incorporative" figure, alluding to the joining of believers' lives with the very means of their salvation—Jesus' cross and empty tomb.<sup>134</sup>

What I note here as significant, however, is that Paul never refers to crucifixion when developing his more general theology of suffering. The Apostle has much to say about the role of suffering in the lives of Christians, but he simply does not link this suffering in any way with the cross or crucifixion. Paul can (astonishingly!) say that he "completes what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church," (Col 1:24)<sup>135</sup> and even that he *Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω* ("bears the marks of Jesus on my body," Gal 6:17)—but not once does he reference the crucifixion of Jesus

132. Terrance Callan, *Dying and Rising With Christ: The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (New York/Mahawah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2006), 91–93. See also R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; trans. Kendrick Grobel; New York: Scribner, 1951–1955), 1.289–300; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising With Christ*; H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (trans. J. R. de Witt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463–68.

133. Morna Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 23; see also p. 44.

134. David A. Brondos, *Paul on the Cross: Reconstructing the Apostle's Story of Redemption* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 174–183.

135. For a detailed exploration of this text see my previous work, "Colossians 1:24: Suffering and Ministry," (MDiv thesis, Emmanuel School of Religion, 1995).

when speaking directly of his own present sufferings for the sake of the gospel.

Effectively, Paul has thoroughly spiritualized the notion of cross-bearing in his theology as a means of portraying the Christian's union with Jesus' death—with the purpose of pointing believers to the new life they now possess. And even though he expresses that he is prepared to suffer and die for his faith, he does not presume to envision the end of his bodily life—at least in his writings found in the New Testament—in a manner that directly imitates the crucifixion of Jesus. It seems that Paul's desire to "take up the cross" meant that he could not wait for martyrdom, inspiring him to find ways of participating in and uniting himself with the cross of Christ based on his own spiritual experience.

## Summary

This chapter investigated the crucifixion metaphors used by Paul in Galatians and Romans, which I have argued were adaptations of an earlier saying of Jesus which called followers to "take up the cross." Given the presence of this saying in Q, it appears that the apostle encountered this idea circulating in the oral tradition of earliest Christianity and found it meaningful as a way of expressing his own religious experience, and of explaining his theology to his readers.

In Galatians, one of Paul's earliest letters, he employs crucifixion imagery three times in an effort to demonstrate that believers have radically separated themselves from dependence on the law (2:20), the passions and desires of the flesh (5:24), and the values of the world (6:14). In each case, he evokes the idea of a violent death by crucifixion to irrevocably delimit Christians from associating themselves with forces which would diminish their dependence on the Spirit. Reminding the Galatian Christians that justification comes through faith in Christ, Paul points to the cross of Christ to debunk the teachings of the Judaizers. He reminds his readers of their own experience of "co-crucifixion" with Christ, and the way in which this incident fundamentally altered their spiritual identities.

In Romans, Paul once again uses a crucifixion metaphor to explain the means by which Christians have died to the “old self,” affected as it was by the passions residing in “the body of sin.” Contrasting the human condition “in Adam” with life “in Christ,” the apostle argues that, despite his gospel’s law-free approach, a believer’s baptismal experience identifies him with Jesus’ death and burial, while his spiritual ‘crucifixion with Christ’ ends the reign of sin in his life.

Each of the cognate versions of the cross saying is found in a letter written by Paul, with no other instances of such a notion appearing in other New Testament texts. The apostle plainly found that the idea of “taking up the cross” functioned—on a metaphorical level—to account for believers’ separation from the destructive forces of the law, sin, the flesh, and the world—that they had, in fact, “died” to these influences so that their post-crucifixion lives consisted of Christ living in them (Gal 2:20). Thus, Paul perpetuates the notion of cross-bearing for a later generation of the followers of Jesus, applying its meaning on a figurative level, with the goal of clarifying their collective spiritual identity as one no longer controlled by powers present in the world.

Having completed my analysis of the cognate versions of the cross saying, I now turn, in the final three chapters of this thesis, to broader questions concerning its potential social ramifications for Jesus’ earliest followers, whether this saying of Jesus contained any overtly political overtones, and, last, the impact that a cross-centered view of discipleship had on the material culture of early Christianity.

## CHAPTER SIX

# HONOUR AND SHAME: ANCIENT VIEWS OF CRUCIFIXION

UNTIL now this thesis has focused chiefly on textual matters, scrutinizing the various permutations of the cross saying and its cognates from early Christian literature. In the last three chapters, however, I shall turn to historical issues, asking questions about how the cross saying might have impacted the lives of early Christians adhering to it. In this chapter, therefore, I shall investigate the possible social consequences involved in “taking up the cross,” primarily asking: What kind of people underwent crucifixion in the ancient world? Besides the death of the person crucified, what kind of social impact did this form of execution have on societies generally? And, most informative for understanding the Synoptics’ emphasis that disciples must “take up the cross,” thereby accepting the shame inherent in following Jesus, I ask: Could a person be crucified and still retain an honourable status?

Because of its prominence within the textual and theological traditions of early Christianity, crucifixion has, over the years, been the focus of research in various disciplines, including archaeology, medicine, history, and biblical academics.<sup>1</sup> The level of scholarly interest in the past few decades highlights a continuation in modern times of a focus on the cross and crucifixion which

1. Martin Hengel has provided a broad survey of textual references from antiquity relevant to this study in “Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross,” in *The Cross of the Son of God* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1977; London: Xpress Reprints, 1997), 91–185, originally published in 1977 as a separate monograph of the same title. I interact later in this chapter with the archaeological, medical, and historical works on crucifixion.

occurred throughout the history of the church—an interest likely stemming from the gospel accounts which record the death of Jesus. In fact, the New Testament itself confirms that the cross was part of the message and symbolism of the Jesus movement from a very early period.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the crucifixion of Jesus has solid independent attestation, making it one of the most historically certain elements of the gospels.<sup>3</sup>

Several recent scholarly works have also sought to theorize on the cause of Jesus' death from a socio-political perspective, but they frame Jesus' crucifixion with an eye to interpreting it with a higher level of historicity than the theologically-motivated narratives preserved in the gospels.<sup>4</sup> These newer works attempt to deduce why Jesus actually got himself crucified in the first place, and therefore focus on Roman law, with its provisions for the swift and public shaming (and possible removal) of any perceived opposition to Roman authority. The approaches taken by John Dominic Crossan, Richard Horsley, and Paula Fredricksen, to mention a few examples, form a picture of Jesus' trial and crucifixion which accentuates the political dimensions of the event (usually arguing that his entire ministry should be viewed in such a light).<sup>5</sup>

2. I state this despite the efforts of some scholars who argue otherwise. See my comments in Chapter Two on the ramifications of the cross saying appearing in Q.

3. Comprehensive treatment of the non-Christian references to Jesus' crucifixion can be found in Robert E. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 20–23, 39–64, 81–104, 149–155.

4. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, A Commentary on the Passion Narratives of the Four Gospels* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994); Bart Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Robert Funk, *Honest To Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 219–56; Gerhard Sloyan, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: History, Myth, Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); and Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (trans. John Bowden; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 440–73 for a presentation of the historical difficulties present within the canonical gospels and how they have been approached in recent scholarship.

5. John Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995); Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987; reprint, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); Paula Fredricksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Christ* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999); idem, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

Thus, I address their work across the span of this and the next chapter, focusing here on how the early Christians viewed the crucifixion of Jesus, and on the political climate of Galilee during the time of Jesus in Chapter Seven. I do so with the goal of understanding how the cross saying might have impacted Jesus' first followers in these dimensions of their lives.

This chapter begins with a survey of the historical background of crucifixion. I consider the provisions made in Roman law for crucifixion, along with the Jewish experience of it and their infrequent adoption of this form of execution. I then report on archaeological remains discovered in the twentieth century which shed new light on the social aspect of crucifixion, ending with an observation of their significance in understanding how issues of honour and shame relating to crucifixion were turned on their head in early Christianity. Following this examination of honour/shame issues surrounding crucifixion in the ancient world, I conclude the chapter by connecting these findings with the goals of the wider thesis—positing how these social realities might have impacted Jesus' followers and their understanding of the cross saying.

## Crucifixion Before the Common Era

Crucifixion was rarely practiced in ancient Palestine prior to Roman occupation. The eventual absorption of this land by Rome, however, saw a definite increase in the use of this deterrent.<sup>6</sup> Textual evidence describes the first known encounter between the Romans and Jewish people in 164 B.C.E.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, as the Greek Hasmonean dynasty gave way to Roman control fol-

6. There is certainly attestation of its use in cases of treason under the Hasmonean dynasty. See the section *Jewish Accounts of Crucifixion* below for a discussion of Alexander Jannaeus' crucifixion of eight hundred traitorous Jews, along with possible references to this event in Qumranic literature. For examples of crucifixion during the Hellenistic period see: 1 Macc 7:16 and Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.396, both of which describe the crucifixion of sixty *hasidim* ("pious ones") in 162 B.C.E. by the high priest Alcimos.

7. In 2 Macc 11:34–38 there is an account of a letter delivered by Roman envoys to the Jewish people at a diplomatic conference in the Seleucid capital. There was an identifiable Jewish presence in Rome by the second century B.C.E. Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.414–19, 13.163–170, 14.24, 15.15–24.

lowing the victory of Pompey at Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E., this territory became one of several client states.<sup>8</sup> The Jewish people were subjugated first by the military might and then the political sovereignty of the Romans, who, as a matter of preferred policy, used crucifixion against any non-Roman deserving such punishment.

The Romans, however, were not the first ancient people to use crucifixion against their enemies. Historically, this form of execution was found in both cultic and legal settings (since religion and politics were inseparable in the ancient worldview). It had its primordial beginnings in the *arbor infelix* (“barren tree”), the ancient practice of exposing a person on a tree as a sacrifice to the gods of the underworld.<sup>9</sup> The victim would often be a criminal, and at least in the case of the Romans, the condemned would often have been guilty of some form of treason.<sup>10</sup> By the second or third century B.C.E. the archaic

8. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.66–67, 70–73, 77–78 and Tacitus, *Histories* 5.10 for accounts of Pompey’s taking of Jerusalem and the establishment of Herod as a client-king (who kept Jewish polity free from Roman interference for some time). The *Psalms of Solomon*, the only extant Jerusalem-based text collection from the first century B.C.E., are an attempt to develop what A. Momigliano calls a “theology of defeat” in response to Pompey’s siege of Jerusalem; Arnaldo Momigliano, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 80–81.

9. The *arbor infelix* (also known as *infelicis stipitis*) was a somewhat ‘technical’ term applied to trees which were, as noted in *Octavius*: “thorny, uncultivated (e.g., tamarisk, wild pear), or which bear dark fruit, the color of the infernal gods (e.g., black fig), or which have been struck by lightning. The wood of such trees was, notoriously, used for executions. . . .” in G. W. Clark, trans., *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix* (New York: Newman Press, 1974), 297. Cf. Livy, *History of Rome* 1.26.11 and Cicero, *Contra Celsus* 8.31, where demons are said to be responsible for barren trees; also Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 3.20.2–3 for a listing of the various kinds of *arbor infelix*.

10. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.10.3 illustrates this crossover, referencing the ancient practice as justification for Roman legal process (all texts are taken from the LCL): “For both patrons and clients it was wrong and unlawful to make accusations against each other in law-suits or to testify or to vote against each other or to side with the others’ enemies; and whoever was convicted of doing any of these things was guilty of treason according to the law sanctioned by Romulus, and could lawfully be put to death by any man who wished as a victim devoted to the god of the infernal regions. For it was the tradition of the Romans, if they wanted to put someone to death without being penalized, to devote their person to some god or other, and particularly the gods of the infernal regions; and this was the custom which Romulus adopted.”

form of punishment that once took place on the *arbor infelix* was fully re-invented as the manner of crucifixion read about in the New Testament.<sup>11</sup>

The Romans were not alone in finding crucifixion helpful in quashing rebellion—its use is documented among the Persians, Assyrians, Greeks, Indians, Celts, and especially the Carthaginians (from whom the Romans supposedly ‘learned’ this practice).<sup>12</sup> The Romans considered themselves culturally superior to the Carthaginians in their use of crucifixion, however, since they typically reserved this undignified *summa supplicium* (“extreme punishment”) for non-citizens.<sup>13</sup>

#### ROMAN LAW AND THE DEATH PENALTY

After Sicily became the first Roman province in 227 B.C.E., the Republic’s conquest eventually absorbed all the surrounding territories, including ancient Palestine. To achieve this kind of expansion, Roman law provided for both government officials and military leaders a means of maximum control, for complete domination required a flexible legal system with the ability to swiftly and forcefully stamp out local uprisings. What follows sketches the evolution of the legal framework around crucifixion, and especially its use in the ancient Roman provinces.

The use of capital punishment for crimes against Rome had its origin in the mythological history of the state itself.<sup>14</sup> Romulus, the legendary founding

11. Allusions to this can be found in Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 101.14, and the early church father Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 24.6.

12. See Hengel, “Crucifixion in the Ancient World,” 114–124 for extensive references.

13. See Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.5.168 where crucifixion is identified as the *summo supplicio*. Livy, *History of Rome* 38.48.12 states that among the Carthaginians non-victorious military leaders were crucified, a practice the Romans found unsettling and “barbaric.” For the Romans, the *honestiores* (“upper classes”) punishment might take the form of *decollatio* (“beheading”), or another swift means of death. More aggravated forms of execution such as *crematio* (“burning”), *damnatio ad bestias* (“condemnation to the beasts”), and the *crux* (“cross”) were typically reserved for the *humiliores* (“lower classes”), which included foreigners and slaves. See G. Cardascia, “L’apparition dans le droit classes d’«honestiores» et d’«humiliores»,” *RHD* 28 (1950): 305–36, 461–85.

14. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.10.3.

king, is described as wielding his immense power over life and death against any person whose opposition was directed against him or those ruling with him.<sup>15</sup> During the Monarchical period, these crimes fell into either the category of *perduellio* (lit. “bad warrior” or “enemy”) or *crimen laesae maiestatis* (lit. “criminal lessening of majesty”).<sup>16</sup> These were crimes of treason and rebellion against the state, for which the sentence was usually death. The king himself tried the most serious accusations of *perduellio* (assigning lesser crimes to other judges) and exercised unlimited power in his judicial powers over military personnel and citizens alike.<sup>17</sup>

During the Monarchy, Roman citizens had little judicial power and could only make an *appellatio* (i.e., an entreaty for intercession by the tribunal) in extreme cases. Eventually the law of *provocatio* was introduced, which gave a citizen the right to appeal against a sentence pronounced by a magistrate, thereby bringing the case before the public.<sup>18</sup> The judgement of the magistrate was examined by an “assembly of the people,” who decided how fair the judgement had been. Between 509–508 B.C.E., the *Lex Valeria* (“law of Valerius”) made it obligatory for judges to follow the law of *provocatio*.<sup>19</sup>

15. See, e.g., Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 14; Cicero, *De Re Publica* 2.17; Livy, *History of Rome* 1.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.29 all of whom describe the power of Romulus, who was surrounded by twelve *lictors* (bodyguards to the Magisterium) carrying pole-axes—ready to behead anyone at the king’s command.

16. Pandias M. Schisas, *Offences Against the State in Roman Law and the Courts Which Were Competent to Take Cognisance of Them* (London: University of London Press, 1926), 3–15 discusses the origin and meanings of these terms. *Crimen laesae maiestatis* was essentially the abuse of authority resulting in a ‘diminished majesty’ for the emperor, tantamount to a crime against the state.

17. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.14, 29; 4.25.

18. Cicero describes this in *De Legibus* 3.3: “The magistrate is to act forcibly upon a disobedient or guilty citizen by means of fines, imprisonment, or beatings, and unless an equal or greater authority or the people prohibit it, the citizen cannot appeal to them. After the magistrate gives a sentence of death or fine, there is to be a trial before the people for final determination of the penalty. No appeal can be made against orders given by a military commander in the field, and while a magistrate is participating in war his judgement is final.”

19. Cicero, *De Re Publica* 2.31.54: “Lucius Valerius Potitius and Marcus Horatius Barbatius, men who were wise in their favouring popular causes, were consuls who proposed a law stating that no magistrate is to be elected who cannot be subject to appeal. Nor indeed did the laws of Porcian, which numbered three and were created by three members of the Porcean household, add anything new to the previous laws except specific penalties for vio-

The law of *provocatio* retained a similar structure from its inception in the Monarchy through the Republic and into the Empire.<sup>20</sup> At first this law only applied to those citizens living within Rome; but its range was later extended outward to a mile radius around the city,<sup>21</sup> which meant that during the last years of the Republic the application of *provocatio* also applied to Roman citizens living beyond the protective walls of the city. For legal purposes a distinction was made between the land in and around Rome (*domi*) and all other territories (*militiae*).<sup>22</sup> In the *militiae*, the governing consul had absolute and unquestionable authority—similar to the degree of power afforded Roman military commanders during times of war in foreign areas.

Legislation passed in Rome during the reign of Emperor Tiberius (22 C.E.) stated that no execution was permitted to occur until a time-period of ten days had elapsed following a sentence handed down by the Consular Senatorial Court.<sup>23</sup> This was not to allow space for further evidence to present itself

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lations.” Livy, *History of Rome* 10.9.4–5 states that not only were citizens protected by the Valerian Law, but magistrates who ignored it were guilty of a crime: “The Porcian law was the only one passed to protect citizens, imposing a heavy penalty on anyone who beat or executed a Roman citizen. The Valerian Law prohibited beating or beheading a person who had appealed and also stated that disregarding this command would be considered an evil act.”

20. The “assembly of the people” was, however, eventually overridden in the constitution of Augustus: Dion Cassius, *Historia Romana* 56.40.

21. Livy, *History of Rome* 3.20.7: “There was no appeal for anyone more than a mile from the city.”

22. See Cicero, *De Legibus* 3.3.6. The Licinian Law (367–366 B.C.E.) added to the Roman Magistrature a new office, that of *praetor* (Livy, *History of Rome* 6.42, 45.43) and thereafter, around 242 B.C.E., the *praetor peregrinus* (a judge specifically for foreigners) was added. As Roman conquest expanded its territory the number of *praetors* increased exponentially, so that by the time of the first Caesar there were sixteen (Dion Cassius, *Historia Romana* 43.47). And, although inferior to the consuls, the *praetors* had full criminal jurisdiction in the provinces. Cf. Alan Watson, *Law Making in the Later Roman Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 63–87.

23. Tacitus, *The Annals* 3.51: “It was determined that no decree of the Senate could be entered into the Treasury until nine days had passed. Prisoners with the death sentence were given reprieve during that time. The Senate was not able to change its mind, nor was Tiberius softened during the interval.”

The “treasury” referred to in this reference was the *aerarium*, a vault located in the Temple of Saturn on the Capitoline. A Senatorial decree became official only when deposited therein. Cf. Suetonius, *Tiberius* 75: “With the decree of the Senate it was established that

(a sentence decreed by the Senate could not be retracted), but instead made room for the possibility of a rare expression of grace from Tiberius to the condemned. In contrast, the provincial courts required no such ‘grace period,’ meaning that punishment was usually enacted immediately.

The law of *provocatio* was overridden by certain crimes, classes of persons, or in special circumstances such as the case of the above-mentioned military commanders. And there were many situations in which *provocatio* was simply not permissible: slaves and foreigners, for instance, were explicitly denied this right of appeal.<sup>24</sup> Because those ruling in Rome often viewed the populations in the provinces as mere chattel, Roman citizenship became a prized commodity for anyone living away from the capital.<sup>25</sup> Possession of citizenship enabled a person to make appeal against a sentence, and, if unsuccessful, it at least exempted one from the more torturous, drawn-out versions of punishment reserved for slaves and foreigners.

An indicator of the shame attached to crucifixion may be discerned in the way in which it was often referenced: the *servile supplicium* (“slave’s punishment”).<sup>26</sup> Crucifixion was principally used by the state as a deterrent against crime, and in Rome there was a dedicated location where members of the

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the execution of the condemned should in all cases be postponed for ten days, and it happened that the punishment of some fell on the day when this news came from Tiberius.” The Roman officers received news of his decree on the day some were scheduled for execution, but, rather than waiting to see whether the decree applied to that day’s lot of criminals, Suetonius tells that the officers went ahead and killed the entire allocation for that day.

24. The crimes that were judged without respect to *provocatio* were: a citizen who deserted Rome and joined the enemy force (Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 2.7.15); desertion of a soldier (Livy, *Epit.* 4); failing to respond to a call to military action (Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 6.3.4); and failing to register for military service (Gaius, *Institutiones* 1.160). Persons who were judged without respect to *provocatio* included: women (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 2; Livy, *History of Rome* 25.2, 40:37); foreigners (Cicero, *De Re Publica* 2.31; Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 4.1.1); and slaves (Ulpian, *Regularum* 19.1, *Institutiones* 1.16.4). For further discussion of crimes having no appeal see O. F. Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1995), 74–89.

25. For treatment of Roman citizenship in the New Testament see A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

26. Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 2.7.12 and Cicero, *In Verrem* 5.169 both describe it as “the ultimate penalty for slaves.” Hengel dedicates a chapter to this (ch. 8) in *The Cross of the Son of God*.

servant class were put to death in this fashion.<sup>27</sup> Having no rights whatsoever, The Romans considered them as “not a Person, and therefore capable of no legal control . . . a chattel.”<sup>28</sup> Ulpian states that *Mancipi res sunt . . . servi et quadrupeds* (“*Res Mancipi* are . . . slaves and quadrupeds”).<sup>29</sup> In other words, a slave was a “thing”—Ulpian’s term<sup>30</sup>—in the sense of owned property, and thus subject to inhumane forms of punishment if disobedient.<sup>31</sup> The free use of crucifixion in the provinces sent a clear message to their inhabitants that Rome considered them, essentially, as little more than slave populations.

I have made space to address the association between crucifixion and slavery in order to underscore the profoundly dishonourable nature of this punishment. It is clear that there was a strong social stigma attached to persons subjected to crucifixion in the ancient world, and thus a high level of humility required of his followers in Jesus’ demand to “take up the cross.” Yet, Jesus was also a Jew, and a religious figure for the people to whom he ministered: I therefore now examine Roman punishment for people found guilty of promoting illicit religions.

#### ROMAN PUNISHMENT FOR PRACTICING NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

It would be an artificial distinction to separate the legal and religious aspects of Rome’s approach towards foreign peoples,<sup>32</sup> for the ancients made

27. Tacitus, *The Annals* 15.60.1.

28. Schisas, *Offences Against the State in Roman Law*, 168.

29. Ulpian, *Institutiones* 1.16.4.

30. The law made reference to slaves as “living property,” but also recognized their humanity (i.e., there were theoretical limits as to what a slave owner could actually do to a slave). It was unlawful to abuse slaves, but it is highly doubtful that this law was ever enforced. See Alan Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 46–66; also Raymond Memier, *Vocabulaire de droit Romain* (Paris: Domat Montchrestien, 1949).

31. The first textual evidence of the Roman use of crucifixion comes from Plautus (a playwright of ancient Rome) in *Miles Gloriosus* (circa 205 B.C.E.), a story about deceitful slaves which includes the most graphic depiction of crucifixion by any extant Latin author.

32. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 15, states, “Everything in Rome depended on right or jurisdiction. The magistrates had *imperium*, or complete power. *Ius* (the ordinary Latin word for force, ‘civil law’) and *fas* (‘re-

little separation between these categories. As with most imperial regimes, religion was subject to both the agenda of the state and to the function of the legal system.<sup>33</sup> Because of its military prowess, Rome imagined itself culturally and religiously superior to all of its neighbours, and this superiority expressed itself in matters of worship in the Roman suspicion and condemnation of *superstitio* (“foreign superstitions”).<sup>34</sup>

By the time of Julius Caesar and his imperial successors, the Roman state religion had degraded in vitality.<sup>35</sup> There was a vestigial belief in the old gods, and continuity remained in the tradition and rituals practiced in the daily affairs of state. A decline in the prioritizing of religion during this time derived from preoccupation with legal matters, since the imposition of law was needed for proper governmental control of Roman-dominated territories. Thus, when Rome encountered foreign religions it was prepared to make room for new gods only when it was convinced that such beliefs were congenial to Roman rule.<sup>36</sup> Where this was not the case, the foreign religion was condemned as a *superstitio*.

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ligious law, that had a divine sanction apart from the state) were combined in the ruling bodies. Rome might look like a theocracy, but it was not, for all was legal. If for Greece the measure of all things was man, for Rome the measure of all things was law.”

33. Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, 95, observes, “The Romans needed, for the health of their society, the Roman gods worshipped in the traditional ways in the temples in Rome but, beyond that, religious practice was normally a matter of indifference. The Romans were not guardians of their gods; both Cicero and Tiberius tell us that the gods can avenge themselves. However, toleration was not always the case.”

34. Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.67 calls Jewish religion a *barbarae superstitioni* (“barbaric superstition”). Tacitus, *Histories* 5 preserves a shocking appraisal of the Jews, summing up their traditions in this way: “Jewish customs are absurd and filthy.”

35. See Alan Watson, *The State, Law and Religion: Pagan Rome* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 30–38, 73–86, where he points out how Roman “folk religion” was not allowed to influence the state religion, which became progressively formalized. Momigliano, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, 74–91, traces the Roman use of the word *fides* (“faith”), ultimately concluding that *fides*, “being a word of basic inequality, defined the program of Roman imperialism in international relations . . . *fides* was more important to Romans in international relations than in religion,” also pointing out the absence of any form of religious education, i.e., Latin authors of the first century B.C.E. describe the education they received in detail, and there is a noticeable absence of any religious element.

36. Examples of intolerance for *superstitio* can be found in the Roman condemnation of several foreign religions, including Druidism. Suetonius, *Divas Claudius* 25.5: “He totally

The Jews were a continual source of consternation for the Romans, especially in religious matters. Jewish monotheism was something of an inconvenient position to maintain in the ancient world, and required special legal consideration. Rome was willing to make concessions which allowed the Jewish people to follow their ancient customs as long as they did not proselytize or act insubordinately.<sup>37</sup> Even so, Jews were expelled from Rome on several occasions, and were banished even from Jerusalem in 135 B.C.E.<sup>38</sup> Rulers responded with brutality when the Jews were too active in promoting what the Romans perceived as an anti-social and atheistic religion. In the end, how-

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abolished the cruel and uncivilised religion of the Druids among the Gauls, which Augustus had only prohibited for Roman citizens." This condemnation was extended to astrologers, the Isis cult from Egypt, and Jews, as in Tiberius, *Lives of the Caesars* 3.36: "He abolished foreign cults, particularly the Egyptian and the Jewish rituals, forcing the ones addicted to these superstitions to burn their religious garments and all their paraphernalia. Jews who were old enough to marry were assigned to provinces with unhealthy climate, there to serve in the military; others of the same race or belief he expelled from the city, threatening slavery if they did not obey. He banished astrologers also, but forgave the ones who begged for mercy and promised to abandon their art."

Similarly, Tacitus, *The Annals* 2.85 describes Egyptians and Jews as *superstitione infecta* ("infected with superstition"). Their young men were shipped to Sardinia, which was known for its horrible climate (it was considered a "cheap loss" if they died there). See H. Dixon Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking and the Early Imperial Repression of Judaism at Rome* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations* (SJLA vol. 20; 2nd ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 205, who suggests that Roman opposition to the Jews was "religious rather than racial." Roman opposition was based on the strangeness of the foreign rituals rather than theological reasons. See also Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.79, where the priests of Isis are crucified and all ritualistic relics are burned.

37. The Romans not only used military force against the Jews, but also withheld goods and services. Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.67: "In earlier times and during my consulship, the senate forbade the export of gold. Resisting this barbaric superstition was an act of firmness. We defied the crowd of Jews when they were hot with passion in our assemblies, which was for the welfare of the state and an action of the greatest seriousness." The gold mentioned here was used by the Jews in furnishing the Temple in Jerusalem.

38. Details of Roman authorities taking actions against the Jews can be found in Margaret Williams, *The Jews Among the Greeks & Romans: A Diaspora Sourcebook* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1998), 98–106. An enigmatic and famous passage from Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* 25.4 mentions a "Chrestus" who was instigating uprisings, causing the entire Jewish population of Rome to be expelled by Claudius. Some consider this a reference to Christ and an early group of Christians. See Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 29–39.

ever, the problem was ritual rather than racial—aggressive forms of Judaism, not Jews as a race, per se.

Examining the available textual evidence, it is clear that few Roman *honestiores* (“highborn”) attempted to pursue a deep understanding of the Jewish faith.<sup>39</sup> Roman sentiments against the Jewish people were, in the main, based on a caricature (the same could be said of Roman views of the early Christians). This tendency to make artificial appraisals of Jewish and Christian beliefs reveals, to some extent, what can be taken as a general disinterest in religion among the Romans at this time. Interest in religion mattered inso-much as it aided or frustrated compliance to Roman authority.

Where Roman attitudes towards Jewish leaders and to Jesus are described in the canonical gospels, these accounts correspond, in general, with what appears outside the New Testament. In the case of Jesus, he was, to the Roman authorities, simply a figure of no great importance, unless he was a possible affront to them.<sup>40</sup> So, to some degree, it seems reasonable to conclude that Pontius Pilate was indeed convinced that Jesus did pose an actual threat to the peace. Whatever events prompted its cause, Jesus was crucified by a Roman government as a rebellious foreigner, and any interpretation of what happened at Golgotha must take into consideration that reason for his execution. The gospel accounts tend to attribute his death to the manipulations of the Jewish leaders, but perhaps the activities of Jesus which drew the crowds

39. E.g., Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 76.2: “. . . ‘Not even a Jew, my Tiberius, fasts as diligently on the Sabbath as I have today . . .’” reveals a misunderstanding of Sabbath observation on Augustus’ part in that Jews did not typically fast on the Sabbath. Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 108.22: “I was filled with this teaching and started to abstain from meat; after a year it was a pleasant and easy habit. I was starting to feel that my mental faculties were more alert; although I do not know if I would say if that were truly the case. Do you ask how I quit that practice? It was in this way: I was a youth at the beginning of Tiberius Caesar’s reign. At that time certain foreign rites were starting, and abstaining from eating certain kinds of meat was considered proof of interest in superstitions. When my father asked me, who is not afraid of gossip, but hates philosophy, I returned to my previous ways; and it was not difficult to persuade me to eat more comfortably.” The focus here is on ritual with an obvious disregard for preserving any ideology behind vegetarianism.

40. See Ekkehard Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (trans. O. C. Dean; Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1999), 170–186.

in Jerusalem during the Passover were justification enough, from a Roman perspective, for his punishment as a criminal.<sup>41</sup>

In any case, it seems unlikely that the actual message proclaimed by Jesus had offended the Romans in any significant way. Their interest lay in maintaining control of the populations they had conquered, and, as detailed above, they were not known for their interest in foreign religious dogma. While acknowledging the political dimension of Jesus' execution remains important, it does not seem justifiable to view his crucifixion as a direct condemnation of the message he preached. Other aspects of his teaching may have been used against him in a trial, as the gospel accounts affirm (e.g., Mt 26:61), but *the cross saying was not one of them*. I shall further substantiate my reasons for not investing the cross saying with an overtly political meaning, but for now I simply note here that those who opposed Jesus never used this saying against him before the Roman authorities.

Turning from accounts found in the works of Latin authors, I now investigate the use of crucifixion, albeit infrequent, by the Jews themselves.

## Jewish Accounts of Crucifixion

The Jewish people had their own forms of capital punishment. The Mishnah, from the second century C.E., describes the most common forms as stoning, burning, decapitation, and strangulation.<sup>42</sup> Talmudic wisdom specifically outlines the proper modes of execution, and makes death a clear prerequisite to allow a corpse to be hung on a tree.<sup>43</sup> One difficulty with such references is that one cannot know with certainty whether these texts actually describe a practice 'from of old,' or whether they project back into history what was practiced at the time. I shall explore, therefore, the question of whether Jews

41. This is the overall conclusion of Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*; idem, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*.

42. See Mishnah *Sanh.* 7.1 in H. Danby, *The Mishnah Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (London: Oxford, 1933), 391.

43. See Sloyan, *The Crucifixion of Jesus*, 22–23.

ever applied crucifixion to criminals. Such an inquiry requires an examination of archaeological discoveries which took place in the last century. I begin, however, with a disputed account of the matter in Josephus.

Probably the most controversial extra-biblical reference to crucifixion dealt with in recent scholarship is the account of Alexander Jannaeus' crucifixion of eight hundred Jewish traitors.<sup>44</sup> Josephus records this event with obvious disdain for Jannaeus, and I include it here due to its uniqueness as a text describing the Jewish use of crucifixion:

Now as Alexander fled to the mountains, six thousand of the Jews hereupon came together [from Demetrius] to him out of pity at the change of his fortune; upon which Demetrius was afraid, and retired out of the country; after which the Jews fought against Alexander, and being beaten were slain in great numbers in the several battles which they had; and when he had shut up the most powerful of them in the city of Bethome, he besieged them therein; and when he had taken the city, and gotten the men into his power, he brought them to Jerusalem, and did one of the most barbarous actions in the world to them; for as he was feasting with his concubines in the sight of all the city, he ordered about eight hundred of them to be crucified; and while they were living, he ordered the throats of their children and wives to be cut before their eyes. This was indeed by way of revenge for the injuries they had done him; which punishment yet was of an inhumane nature. . . . However, this barbarity seems to have been without necessity on which account he bare the name of a Thracian among the Jews.<sup>45</sup>

It was the discovery of the Qumran separatists' library which opened this account to new questions based on possible references to this event in the

44. Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.13.5–13.14.1, establishes the context of this event. Alexander Jannaeus was an extraordinarily unpopular leader. Many of the Jews hated him so much that when he asked them what he could do to improve relations with them, they cried out, “Kill yourself!” Josephus' story continues by describing how a group of Jews betrayed Alexander Jannaeus to his enemy, Demetrius Eucerus. After Alexander was beaten in battle, Demetrius left the country, leaving Alexander in control once again. He then exacted his revenge on those Jews who had betrayed him, condemning this political crime with a traitor's punishment.

45. Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.14.2; also found in *War* 1.97, 113, in W. Whiston, trans., *The Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981), 285–86. The Greek verb used for crucifixion in this text is *ανασταυροῦν*, which Josephus uses more frequently than any other verb which means “to crucify.” This verb is translated *הלל* in 4QpNah 3–4:17, 9 and 11QTemple in their quotation of Josephus and reference to Deuteronomy 21:22.

Nahum Peshar (4QpNahum), the Temple Scroll, and elsewhere.<sup>46</sup> The 1971 article “Peshar Nahum (4QpNahum) Reconsidered,” by Yigael Yadin examines these important references to crucifixion and proposes a reconstruction of the various lacunae within the commentary on Nahum, suggesting a tradition of the Jewish use of crucifixion. Yadin’s conclusions have been contested, especially by Baumgarten, but remain, in my view, the most solid interpretation of the Essene texts.<sup>47</sup>

So, did the Jews regularly practice crucifixion as a means of execution, or is Jannaeus an isolated case? Clearly, during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., passages such as Genesis 40:19 (the “hanging” of Pharaoh’s baker),<sup>48</sup> Deuteronomy 21:22–24 (“cursed is the one who hangs on a tree”),<sup>49</sup> and Esther 2:23, 5:14 (the “hanging” of two rebellious eunuchs, and Haman’s demise on a *σταυρός* prepared for Mordecai),<sup>50</sup> were being interpreted as references to crucifixion by the Jews. Philo understood Deuteronomy 21:22–23 to refer to crucifixion by his use of the verb *ἀνασκολοπίζω*, which, elsewhere in his writings, is used also to denote crucifixion.<sup>51</sup> In the New Testament, Paul understands the same passage as a reference to crucifixion in Galatians 3:13 by applying *ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλον* (“everyone who hangs upon a tree”) to

46. See Y. Yadin, “Peshar Nahum (4QpNahum) Reconsidered,” *IEJ* 21 (1971): 1–12; Joseph Zias and James Charlesworth, “Crucifixion: Archaeology, Jesus, and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 273–89; L. Díez Merino, “La crucifixion en la antigua literatura judía,” *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 51 (1976): 5–27; and F. García Martínez, “4QpNah y la Crucifixión: Nueva hipótesis de reconstrucción de 4Q 169 3–4 I; 4–8,” *Estudion Bíblicos* 38 (1979–80): 221–35. Only Baumgarten (see next note) offers serious opposition to Y. Yadin’s argument that the Temple Scroll makes reference to crucifixion. However, as Ford points out, Baumgarten’s conclusions become suspect when one examines the wider body of textual evidence available from the period.

47. J. M. Baumgarten, “Does *THL* in the Temple Scroll refer to crucifixion?” *JBL* (1972): 472–81; J. Massyngberde Ford, “‘Crucify him, crucify him’ and the Temple Scroll,” *ET* 87 (1976): 275–78.

48. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.73 where the verb *ἀνασταυρῶ* (“to impale, to crucify”), is used.

49. Philo, *De Spec. Leg.* 3.152.

50. Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.208; Josephus uses the same word for “cross” as does the LXX.

51. See Philo, *De Spec. Leg.* 3.152, *De Somniis* 2.213, *De Posteritate Caini* 61. In Herodotus (*Histories* 9.78) *ἀνασταυροῦν* and *ἀνασκολοπίζειν* seem to function as synonyms.

Jesus' execution.<sup>52</sup> But does this interpretation reflect the original intent of these passages, or is this simply Jewish eisegesis in light of their experience of Roman occupation over several centuries?

The original sense of Deuteronomy 21:22: תְּמוּדוֹ תִּלְתּוֹ וְתָא לֵעַ אֵעַ (“and he shall be put to death, [and then] you shall hang him on a tree”) undoubtedly refers to the post-mortem exposure of a body as a means of public shaming. There is no evidence that the text of Deuteronomy, or any other passages relating to “hanging” or “impalement on a stake” in the Hebrew Scriptures, were understood as crucifixion prior to the Hellenistic period.<sup>53</sup> Due to their experience of the Roman form of punishment, however, it seems that certain sects of the Jews began not only to understand such textual references to “hanging” as meaning crucifixion, but also to employ this means of execution for themselves.<sup>54</sup>

The analysis of Peshar Nahum (4QpNahum)—in conjunction with the Temple Scroll—provides evidence that the Essenes also viewed the Deuteronomy passage as a reference to crucifixion. Both 4QpNahum and the passages in the Temple Scroll refer to the encounter between Alexander Jannaeus and Demetrius, and to the subsequent crucifixion of the Jewish traitors, with a specific reference to Deuteronomy in the interpretation of this event. The variant text of Deuteronomy 21:22, found in col. 64. 10–11 of the Temple Scroll, states: הַמְתִּילְתּוֹ מִן הַתְּמִדָּה לֵעַ אֵעַ תּוּמִי (“you shall hang him also on the tree and he shall die”).<sup>55</sup> The reversal of word order from the original text of Deuteronomy is most significant, and indicates that at this time the “hanging” was done while the person was alive, so that the “hanging” itself became the means of execution.

52. By the first century C.E. the term *ξύλον* (“tree”) came to have the additional meaning of “cross,” and was used in early Christian literature with reference to the cross of Jesus. Cf. G. Q. Reijnders, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross In Early Christian Literature* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van De Vegt, 1965), 16 f. I address this matter further in Chapter Eight.

53. See Joseph Fitzmyer, “Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978): 493–513.

54. Josephus, *War* 4.5.2 indicates that Alexander Jannaeus was not the only person crucifying people at that time in ancient Palestine.

55. Yadin, “Peshar Nahum,” 7.

Even so, it remains improbable that crucifixion was practiced widely among the Jews in this period, and it seems that alternative forms of capital punishment were preferred by Jews living between 100 B.C.E. and 100 C.E.<sup>56</sup> Yet, as presented above, Jewish literature from this period, such as the writings of Josephus, Philo, the Essene scrolls, and Galatians,<sup>57</sup> indicated that occasionally certain groups of Jews did crucify people, or at least interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures which refer to “hanging on a tree” as a reference to crucifixion. Apparently, the Jews did not regularly inflict this form of execution on one another—despite that it was regularly used against them—but this does not mean that crucifixion was completely unknown as a form of execution among some Jewish sects.

Galatians 3:1, 13 contains the earliest extant reference to Jesus’ crucifixion in the New Testament if scholars are correct in assuming that this letter predates the other Pauline writings as well as the gospel accounts.<sup>58</sup> Very little was written about the specific events of Jesus’ crucifixion outside of the gospels and the Pauline corpus in early Christian literature. Paul’s references to the cross assume the historical event of Jesus’ crucifixion, but his writings show that he is more concerned with its theological ramifications than with the actual event itself. Thus, in terms of early Christian texts, knowledge of the historical events of Jesus’ crucifixion is restricted to the records preserved in the four gospels.<sup>59</sup>

Each gospel makes an attempt to both exonerate the Romans of responsibility for Jesus’ crucifixion, and to put the blame squarely on the Jewish people.<sup>60</sup> The Jews specifically demand crucifixion for Jesus (Lk 23:24–25). “We have a law,” they are reported as saying, “and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God,” (Jn 19:7). Pontius Pilate makes

56. See Anthony Phillips, *Ancient Israel’s Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 24–32.

57. See M. Wilcox, “Upon the Tree—Deut 21:22–23 in the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 85–99.

58. See Chapter Five for comments on the dating and provenance of this letter.

59. Although Fredricksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*, 220–34, finds these accounts ahistorical because of the theological agendas of the authors.

60. Pilate’s attempt to avert Jesus’ crucifixion: Mt 27:23, Mk 15:14, Lk 23:23, Jn 19:15. The Jewish people’s demand for Jesus’ crucifixion: Mt 27:22, Mk 15:13, Lk 23:21, Jn 19:6.

the statements, “Take him and judge him according to your law,” (Jn 18:31) and, “Take him yourselves, and crucify him,” (Jn 19:6) speaking directly to the Jewish leaders. Was Deuteronomy 21:22 the law under consideration in these statements about punishment, similar to the reference in the Temple Scroll made by their contemporaries at Qumran?<sup>61</sup> These statements from the Jews and from Pilate assume that crucifixion was an option for use by the Jews, so such a conclusion remains a possibility.

It seems clear from the gospel accounts that it was the Romans who carried out the actual process of Jesus’ crucifixion, but only in Acts 13:27–28 are they thereafter considered culprits in his death. Everywhere else in the New Testament the guilt for Jesus’ death is directed emphatically at the Jewish leaders. Crucifixions had been initiated by Jews in the past, and thus the consent given by the Jewish leaders and crowds in the gospel accounts falls within the realm of historic possibility.

In my thinking the questionable elements of Jesus’ Passion narrative are Pontius Pilate’s depiction as, basically, a pawn of the Jewish leaders, and the release of an insurrectionist named Barabbas. What is known of Pilate outside of the New Testament depicts a Roman official much more ruthless and decisive in nature than the somewhat vacillating Pilate portrayed in the gospel narratives.<sup>62</sup> And, while there may be some historic precedent for releasing a prisoner from custody in order to bolster public opinions of Rome, the idea of a Roman governor freeing a known insurrectionist would have been, as Fredriksen observes, “astoundingly incompetent” of Pilate.<sup>63</sup> Apart from this, the accounts of Jesus’ trial and execution in the first four books of the New Testament accord with the historical reality of Roman-occupied Jerusalem of the first century.

I have thus far observed who practiced crucifixion, and the kinds of transgressions which called for this extreme form of punishment. I address now an important purpose fulfilled by crucifixion: the public shaming of an individual.

61. Commentators often point to Lev 24:16 rather than Deut 21:22 as the “law” referred to by the Jews.

62. Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?*, 147–152.

63. Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 222–23.

## Crucifixion as Public Shaming

Prior to the discovery of the skeletal remains of a crucified man at Giv'at ha-Mivtar in 1968, there was no available physical evidence of the ancient practice of crucifixion.<sup>64</sup> Most of the items involved in a crucifixion are biodegradable, which likely accounts for why no remnants have been found until recently. Giv'at ha-Mivtar is situated just north of Jerusalem, and the four cave-tombs explored at this location contained fifteen Jewish ossuaries, all but two of which were completely filled with human remains.<sup>65</sup> Ossuary i:4 contained the bones of a three-to-four year-old child, as well as the battered skeleton of a young man who had been crucified.

Two inscriptions had been carved on the external surface of this ossuary: the top reading יְהוֹחָנָן (“Yehohanan”), and the lower, written in a different hand, reading וְנַחֲוֵהוּ/יָב לְיוֹקָנָח (“son of יוֹקָנָח”).<sup>66</sup> The upper inscription most likely indicated the name of the victim who was crucified. The lower lines make reference to either a highly unusual name in Hebrew or, as argued by Y. Yadin, could give a clue to the manner of his crucifixion if the last word is translated “the one hanged with his knees apart.”<sup>67</sup> Regardless, this discovery allowed for archaeologists to reconstruct the process by which a person was crucified in the ancient world.

The remains showed that the feet of the man were not nailed directly to a cross. Instead, those who crucified him pressed his heels into a small wooden frame, after which a nail was hammered through the right side of the box into the calcanei bones and through to the left side, where the free end emerged from the outer surface of the wood. The protruding end of the nail was then bent down with a hammer blow to secure the frame to the feet, thus preventing any means of escape.

64. See V. Tzaferis, “Jewish Tombs at and near Giv'at ha-Mivtar, Jerusalem,” *IEJ* 20 (1970): 28.

65. N. Haas, “Anthropological Observations on the Skeletal Remains from Giv'at ha-Mivtar,” *IEJ* 20, no. 2 (1970): 38–59.

66. Y. Yadin, “Epigraphy and Crucifixion,” *IEJ* 23 (1973): 18–22.

67. Yadin, “Epigraphy and Crucifixion,” 19.

The answers to more questions about Yehohanan's crucifixion were sought: were his arms affixed to the crossbar, or was he instead hung upside down with his legs looped around the top of the vertical beam?<sup>68</sup> The outer inscription reveals little, as the knees could have been splayed in either one of these forms of crucifixion. The condition of the other bones in the ossuary, however, suggests that he was nailed through the forearms to the crossbar, his legs broken to hasten death, and his feet severed when it became difficult to dislodge him from the cross.<sup>69</sup>

Questions about the remains of the crucified man at Giv'at ha-Mivtar serve as a reminder that this sort of execution could take any number of forms. Hengel summarizes thus:

The form of execution could vary considerably: crucifixion was a punishment in which the caprice and sadism of the executioners were given full rein. All attempts to give a perfect description of *the* crucifixion in archaeological terms are therefore in vain; there were too many different possibilities for the executioner.<sup>70</sup>

Likewise, Josephus recalls his personal witness of the capture of Jerusalem, an account which illustrates that various methods of crucifixion could be employed by Roman soldiers:

When they were going to be taken (by the Romans), they were forced to defend themselves, and after they had fought they thought it too late to make any supplications for mercy: so they were first whipped and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died and were then crucified before the wall of the city. Titus felt pity for them, but as their number—given as up to five hundred a day—was too great for him to risk either letting them go or putting them under guard, he allowed his soldiers to have their way, especially as he hoped the gruesome sight of the countless crosses might move the besieged to surrender: So the soldiers, out of rage and hatred they bore the prisoners, nailed those they caught, in different postures, to the crosses, by way of jest and their number was so great that there was not enough room for the crosses and not enough crosses for the bodies.<sup>71</sup>

68. Cf. V. Møller-Christensen, "Skeletal Remains from Giv'at Ha-Mivtar," *IEJ* 26, no. 1 (1976): 35–38.

69. Haas, "Anthropological Observations," 58–59.

70. Hengel, "Crucifixion in the Ancient World," 117.

71. Josephus, *War* 5.11.1. Seneca speaks similarly in *Dialogue* 6 (*De consolatione ad Marciam*): "I see crosses there, not only of one make but of all kinds; some place their victims

In order to understand the degree of shame involved in such an execution, I now address what actually happened to a person who underwent crucifixion. Certainly, as seen above, there were a variety of ways that a body could be treated. There are few detailed accounts of crucifixion from antiquity, plainly indicating the distaste ancient writers had for the subject. The New Testament gospels actually contain one of the most comprehensive descriptions available of the entire process. Even so, the gospel writers were not interested in exploring the physical aspects of Jesus' crucifixion, evidencing the same kind of reluctance found in the works of other ancient authors when writing about such an obscene topic. For the biblical writers, and their contemporaries, it was sufficient to underscore the humiliation involved in this kind of death.

Each step of the process of crucifixion was intended to utterly shame the individual.<sup>72</sup> After receiving a sentence of condemnation, a person was usually flogged before being crucified. At times, the beating was so extreme that some people did not survive even this process.<sup>73</sup> It may be that those guilty of *perduellio* received a more severe flagellation that left the victim near expiration, and this may account for the relatively early death of Jesus when compared to the thieves crucified with him.<sup>74</sup>

After being whipped, the victim was forced to carry the *patibulum* (crossbar) to the place of the execution.<sup>75</sup> The location of the execution was often done where the crime had been committed, at a crossroads with heavy traffic, or at a dedicated place which was situated respectably away from the dwellings of important people (but public enough to make an impression). The New Testament gospels mention that Golgotha, near the walls of Jerusalem, satisfied the requirements of this last sort. The purpose of crucifixion was

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with head down to the ground; some impale their genitals; some stretch out their arms on the gallows."

72. The whole process is called a "Degradation Ritual" by Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 272–73.

73. See Hengel, "Crucifixion in the Ancient World," 121.

74. J. H. Charlesworth, "Jesus and Jehohanan: An Archaeological Note on Crucifixion," *Expository Times* 84 (1973): 147–150.

75. Plautus, *Carbonaria* 2.

seen not only as a punishment for a crime committed but, more importantly, it served as a public deterrent against opposition to Rome's authority.

Some debate has occurred as to whether persons were nailed through their hands, wrists, or forearms.<sup>76</sup> The right radial bone of the crucified man at Giv'at ha-Mivtar evidenced a scratch caused by a nail that had pierced his forearm. This was the most probable point at which the arms would be affixed to the *patibulum*, since there would be complications in piercing any other area of the arm. Twice, the gospel accounts mention the *χεῖρας* ("hands") of the crucified Jesus,<sup>77</sup> the meaning of which can include any part of the arm from the elbow to the tips of the fingers.<sup>78</sup> Piercing a victim through the hands or wrists would have caused major haemorrhaging (thus speeding death, an unwanted side-effect), and would not have maintained the weight of the torso. Since death by crucifixion was meant to last as long as possible, the Romans nailed a victim through the forearms so as to avoid disrupting major blood vessels while at the same time eliminating traction on the wrists or hands.

The victim's back was placed against the *simplex* (also called the *stipes crucis*), the upright beam which was embedded into the ground. Part of the way down this stake the *sedile* (or *sedecula*) was positioned for the purpose of supporting the victim's buttocks. It could have been in the form of a thin plank nailed to the *simplex*, or a wooden peg that could be straddled to prolong the torture, but it is not clear whether this supportive device was always used. In some graphic renderings of the crucifixion of Jesus a *suppedaneum* (foot rest) is visible below the *sedile* on the cross, but this is purely the invention of medieval artists.<sup>79</sup>

In the end, how did a victim of crucifixion ultimately die? In the late 1960s two French physicians named J. Bréhant and P. Barbet experimented on cadav-

76. See, e.g., J. W. Hewitt, "The Use of Nails in Crucifixion," *Harvard Theological Review* 25 (1932): 29–45.

77. Lk 24:39–40; Jn 20:20, 25, 27.

78. J. Louw and E. Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (vol. 1; 2d ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 98.

79. There is no reference by any ancient author to the *suppedaneum*; cf. John Wilkinson, "The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ," *ET* (1971): 104–107. Cf. Hewitt, "The Use of Nails in Crucifixion," 29–45. The conclusion of this article, that nails were not used to secure a victim's feet to the *simplex*, was refuted by the find at Giv'at ha-Mivtar.

ers and sought testimony from victims of crucifixion-like experiences in concentration camps in an attempt to learn more about the body's response to crucifixion.<sup>80</sup> Following the publication of their work, a renewed debate concerning the medical reasons for Jesus' death ensued, and at least five theories were given consideration—including the theological possibility that he simply willed his death (cf. Jn 10:18) and there was thus no physical cause at all.<sup>81</sup>

Most likely, death from crucifixion occurred as the culmination of various traumas upon the body. Blood loss from flogging, dehydration from exposure, pain from both feeding insects and having been riveted to the cross, as well as eventual collapse from muscle strain—these usually meant that victims survived only a day or two.<sup>82</sup> In cases where a more speedy death was required, *crurifragium* (lit. “painful break,” but specifically the shattering of the victim's legs) with a battle-axe produced further trauma, blood loss, and possibly asphyxiation.<sup>83</sup>

80. J. Bréhant, “What was the Medical Cause of Christ's Death?” *Medical World News* 27 (Oct. 1966): 154–159.

81. These theories include: (1) death from a ruptured heart—first posited by William Stroud in *A Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* (London: Hamilton and Adams, 1871); (2) embolism: Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1957), 552; (3) asphyxia: Pierre Barbet, *A Doctor at Calvary* (New York: Doubleday, 1963); (4) acute dilatation of the stomach: R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John* (TNTC; London: Tyndale Press, 1960), 212–13; (5) wilful abandonment of life: Wilkinson, “Physical Cause,” 106. The least reliable source of data for the work of Bréhant and Barbet was the Shroud of Turin. Yet their work, and the discovery of Yehohanan, were responsible for several inquiries about the physical cause of death by crucifixion in *Expository Times* and other publications in the early 1970s.

82. The gradual and tortured death by crucifixion is described in two texts: Seneca, *Dialogue* 3 (*De Ira* 1) 2.2: “Can a person be found who would prefer withering away in pain and dying limb by limb, or letting out his life drop by drop, rather than expiring once and for all? Can a man be found willing to be fastened to the cursed tree, lengthy ill, already deformed, swelling with ugly wheals on shoulders and chest, and drawing the breath of life in the midst of long-drawn-out agony? He would have many excuses for dying even before mounting the cross”; and Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 6.32.1: “. . . and the torture of the gibbet, where dogs and vultures will drag out her innermost entrails.” Cf. Pseudo-Manetho, *Apotelesmatica* 4.198 for a third century C.E. description of crucifixion nearly identical to that of Apuleius.

83. Note Pilate's surprise at the rapidity of Jesus' death: Mk 15:44. There were cases where people were crucified, taken down, and lived through the experience: e.g., Josephus, *Life of Flavius Josephus*, 420–21.

Following death, the body of the crucified victim endured further shame as vultures and crows were allowed to tear it to pieces while it remained suspended on the cross. The corpse was left as carrion, as Juvenal describes: “The vulture hastens from dead cattle and dogs and crosses to bring some of the carrion to her offspring.”<sup>84</sup> Whatever was left was then usually thrown into a pit that served as a mass grave for criminals and slaves, although some bodies were claimed by relatives and given a ritual burial.<sup>85</sup> Caring for the body of Jesus was the action taken by his followers, as mentioned in the gospel accounts, and that such honour could be bestowed on a crucified person in antiquity is confirmed by the ossuary burial of the man at Giv’at ha-Mivtar.

The final insult, of leaving the body of the cross, was particularly shocking when one considers the importance of proper burial in antiquity. There was much diversity between the various cultures of the Mediterranean world concerning the connection between soul and body. In most of them, however, improper burial doomed the soul to some kind of restless existence.<sup>86</sup> For the Jews, who practiced interment almost exclusively, treating the body as carrion had horrific implications for the fate of the victim beyond his or her bodily existence. The later Christian view of the importance of burial had congruencies with pagan and Jewish thought,<sup>87</sup> as exemplified by Lactantius’s comment: “We will not allow the image and workmanship of God to lie as prey for beasts and birds, but we will return it to the earth where it originated.”<sup>88</sup> For, in the ancient mind, once deprived of proper burial the soul was doomed to wander as a spectre over the face of the earth.<sup>89</sup>

84. Juvenal, *Satires* 14.77.

85. Cf. Horace, *Sermones* 1.8.8–11, 14–16.

86. For a treatment of the similarities and differences between Jewish, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman views of death and burial in ancient cultures, cf. Alfred Rush, *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1941).

87. Cicero, *De Legibus* 2.22.56: “In my opinion the oldest form of burial was the one described by Xenophon as utilised by Cyrus. The body is restored to the earth and placed and laid to rest as if its mother’s covering were drawn over it. The tradition belongs to our King Numa who was buried with these rites in the tomb that is not far from the altar of Fontis.”

88. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 6.12.30.

89. Rush, *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity*, 241.

The ancients clearly found crucifixion a disgusting and barbaric practice.<sup>90</sup> There are instances where it served as popular entertainment, like battles between humans and wild animals in larger cities,<sup>91</sup> but more often than not Rome relied on the revulsion that crucifixion produced to further its cause. Fredriksen rightly calls crucifixion “a Roman form of public service announcement: Do not engage in sedition as this person has, or your fate will be similar. . . . Crucifixion first and foremost is addressed to an audience.”<sup>92</sup> Thus its primary purpose was to shame the defiant and warn onlookers of Rome’s ability to enforce its will.

The Roman elite made allowance for its use against criminals,<sup>93</sup> however, considering it a necessary evil. Hengel explains:

Even the educated in the world of antiquity (endured) a schizophrenia similar to that which we encounter in connection with the use of the death penalty in large areas of modern society. It is certainly the case that the Roman world was largely unanimous that crucifixion was a horrific, disgusting business. There is therefore hardly any mention of it in inscriptions. . . . That means, however, that the relative scarcity of references to crucifixion in antiquity, and their fortuitousness, are less a historical problem than an aesthetic one, connected with the sociology of literature. Crucifixion was widespread and frequent, above all in Roman times, but the cultured literary world wanted to have nothing to do with it, and as a rule kept quiet about it.<sup>94</sup>

I conclude my investigation of the details of crucifixion here, and move to one final consideration in this chapter. Given that persons who had been crucified could still be given the burial reserved for a person of honour (as opposed to the shame of being thrown in a mass grave of criminals), how does this impact our understanding of Jesus’ own death and burial, and how his followers thereafter viewed their own fate of cross-bearing?

90. Cicero, *Philippicae* 13.21: “A horrible enemy is threatening all good men with crucifixion and torture.”

91. Flaccus crucified Jews in Alexandria in this manner: Philo, *In Flaccum* 72.84f.

92. Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 233–34.

93. Seneca, *Dialogue* 5 (*De Ira* 3) 3.6 and *De Clementia* 1.23, both of which illustrate his distaste—and yet his allowance—for crucifixion as a form of capital punishment.

94. Hengel, “Crucifixion in the Ancient World,” 129–130.

## Honour, Shame, and the Cross Saying

The previous section described the way in which almost all ancient peoples would have viewed crucifixion—as the fate of someone utterly shamed. Yet this perspective was not only rejected by the Jesus movement; it was radically reversed. As I elaborate further in Chapter Eight, the cross (and crucifixion) became an object of devotion and reverence very quickly in earliest Christianity. Because it had been endured by *Jesus himself*, crucifixion was no longer viewed in terms of shame within the social system of the early church.

Equally, in the cross saying, Jesus calls his disciples to embrace what others consider abjectly shameful—going so far as to make the stipulation that crucifixion is the path to true life with him. Thus, by seeking to honour Jesus above their very lives, his followers could rid themselves of concerns about their own honour which might interfere with discipleship. And, though the consequences of their association with Jesus might be immense, disciples are free from the shame associated with *any* kind of penalty (Jesus cites the worst kind); they are thereby liberated and empowered to concentrate without fear on his most frequently issued command: “Follow me.”

New Testament scholarship, accessing the contributions of the social sciences over the past few decades, has taken seriously the dimension of honour and shame in the social lives of the ancients, and has allowed its proper influence in the interpretation of early Christian literature.<sup>95</sup> Honour and shame were “pivotal values in antiquity that structured the daily lives of peoples around the Mediterranean, including Jesus and his disciples.”<sup>96</sup> The degree to which these values influenced daily life can hardly be overestimated since matters of social status were the direct result of the perceived honour (τιμῆ) of the individual. As Malina and Neyrey define it, the ancient view of honour consisted of:

95. See esp. John J. Pilch and Bruce Malina, eds., *Biblical Social Values and Their Meanings: A Handbook* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993), 28–62. Here Malina adapts the work of various anthropologists for use by those interpreting the New Testament.

96. Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 3–4.

... the positive value of a person in his or her eyes plus the positive appreciation of that person in the eyes of his or her social group. In this perspective honor is a claim to a positive worth along with the social acknowledgement of that worth by others. Honor is linked with “face” (“saving face”) and “respect.” At stake is how others see us, and so, how we see ourselves. . . . The worst fate is to be called “Fool!” and to be treated as having no value or worth. . . . Honor, then serves as a register of social rating which entitles a person to interact in specific ways with equals, superiors, and subordinates, according to the prescribed cultural cues of the society.<sup>97</sup>

Even though the desire to maintain honour was a universal feature of Mediterranean life, what actually constituted honourable behaviour could vary tremendously; indeed, what was considered honourable in one society might be unimportant or even shameful in another. A pertinent example of this, argued by John Davis, can be seen in Jesus’ statement about discipleship directly preceding the cross saying: “. . . unless he hates his own father and mother he cannot be my disciple,” (Lk 14:26).<sup>98</sup> Whereas prior Jewish tradition had taught only to “Honour your father and mother,” (cf. Lk 18:20), Jesus completely inverts this value, defining an honourable disciple of his as living according to a quite different value system. In fact, the early Jesus movement, as described in the gospels and Acts, created for itself an entirely new and radically distinct system of honourable behaviour.

In terms of the “symbolic universe” in which the earliest followers of Jesus operated, I turn again to Malina and Neyrey for their concise observation that,

... there is much truth in the charge that ‘they turn the world upside down,’ for if we consider Jesus or the Twelve or Paul from the perspective of the social lines of power, gender, and precedence operative in their world, we see that *all acted outside of their inherited social roles and ranks*. Such activity would be clearly dishonourable and shameful if assessed from an elite point of view. But, for group members this activity was worthy of moral affirmation: it was honourable. Honor, then, depends on the vantage point of the actors and perceivers.<sup>99</sup>

97. Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, “Honor and Shame in Luke–Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World,” in *The Social World of Luke–Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 25–66.

98. John Davis, “Family and State in the Mediterranean,” in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (American Anthropological Association special publication No. 22; Washington: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 22–34.

99. Malina and Neyrey, “Honor and Shame in Luke–Acts,” 27 (emphasis theirs).

In other words, it was the prerogative of Jesus to re-define what behaviours were to be considered honourable within the community of his followers. This kind of reorientation of values extended, it appears, even to the kind of death he ultimately suffered.

## Summary

The ancient sources point to crucifixion as, for most writers, an unspeakable terror that was reserved as a means of execution for the lower classes of society in order to control those populations through fear. It is associated primarily with the Romans due to its widespread use during their conquest and subsequent governance of foreign provinces. Crucifixion was a punishment associated particularly with slaves and the seditious, and was so revolting to civilized persons that accounts of it from antiquity avoid prolonged descriptions or graphic details.

Crucifixion had two primary purposes: to completely shame its victim, and to broadcast a message of zero-tolerance from Rome. The crucified were shamed even after death; their corpses were treated as carrion and denied proper burial. Some, however, were spared this final desecration and given a ritual burial, as witnessed by the only extant piece of archaeological evidence for crucifixion found at Giv'at ha-Mivtar. The burial of this individual in an ossuary (rather than in a mass grave for criminals) confirms that a crucified person could retain a position of honour amongst those outside of the process of execution.

It appears, even though Jesus endured public shaming by crucifixion, that he retained his esteemed position among his early followers. I have suggested that the cross saying would have required Jesus' disciples to re-evaluate their own appraisal of dying and what it meant to give up their lives for him. For the first disciples of Jesus, the transformation of the shameful Roman cross into a symbol of glory made their own requirement to "take up the cross" a matter of honouring the way of Jesus.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# CROSS-BEARING IN ANCIENT GALILEE

WHAT kind of political overtones did the cross saying have if it was, as recorded in the Synoptic gospels, spoken by Jesus in a Galilean context sometime around 27–30 C.E.? Who were the Galileans at this time—and were they prepared to resist their Roman oppressors to the point of death by crucifixion? Did Jesus issue the cross saying to rally insurrectionists from among a population that was on the verge of revolting against Rome, or even against corrupt Jewish leaders in Jerusalem? Without knowing the political climate of Galilee during the time of Jesus, one cannot reach a clear answer to any of these questions based only on a reading of the New Testament. The overall aim of this chapter, therefore, is to identify what the phrase “take up the cross” as spoken by Jesus would have initially meant in the *political context* of ancient Galilee.

I will thus draw heavily upon the scholarly work of the past twenty years of Galilee studies in an attempt to discern whether the archaeological and literary evidence allow the conclusion that Galilee was indeed a hotbed of political revolution during the time of Jesus. This question has been vigorously debated in Galilee studies, and its importance for positioning the cross saying (and other teachings) of Jesus in their initial socio-political framework is obvious. Depending on how one answers the question, the political and social ramifications of Jesus’ ministry and teaching can be understood from widely divergent perspectives.<sup>1</sup>

1. The contrast is most sharply visible when comparing the revolutionary Jesus in S. F. G. Brandon’s *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manches-

Scholarly investigation into first century Galilee over the past two decades has gained a momentum that has yet to reach its climax. Detailed examination of the social history of Galilee in the time of Jesus had been initiated prior to the late 1970s and early 1980s, but new archaeological investigations—as well as a radical re-evaluation and re-interpretation of the literary evidence by past generations of scholars—has directly impacted both Historical Jesus research and New Testament studies over the last twenty years.<sup>2</sup> No longer is there an exclusive focus on the texts themselves: rather, the social histories of Galilee and the first Christian communities are reconstructed using cross-disciplinary methods, and therefore provide a more comprehensive context for interpretation.

Too often the analyses of Galilee have utilized a deductive methodology, attempting to fit the available data into a social model or framework, thereby skewing the resultant picture of first century life in this rural area. This chapter, on the other hand, will begin by defining the terms “Galilee” and “Galilean” by examining the material culture evidenced in the archaeological finds. An inductive analysis of these data will establish a more solid position for the interpretation of the literary evidence, the latter task being unquestionably the point of greatest conflict within scholarly studies of Galilee.

In the second section of this chapter I shall evaluate the various interpretations of the literary evidence in modern scholarship, most notably the work of Richard Horsley. Horsley’s description of the social setting of Galilee, which includes “social bandits” and other popular revolutionary factions, will be contrasted with other scholars’ readings of the literary sources. Each mention of relevant revolutionary activity in Galilee contained in the contemporaneous

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ter: Manchester University Press, 1967) with J.H. Yoder’s pacifist Jesus in *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); see also Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (1987; reprint, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), especially chs. 8 and 9, where Horsley re-examines traditional interpretations of sections of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7) in light of his understanding of the “political-economic-religious” situation in early Roman Galilee.

2. A concise survey of the studies of Galilee prior to the last two decades of the twentieth century can be found in Jonathan Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 4–8.

writings of Josephus will be accounted for and scrutinized to determine the general political atmosphere prior to the First Revolt.

Finally, I will posit the likely social context in which the bandits mentioned by Josephus operated, with the determination that Galilee, by the best estimates of modern scholarship, was a place of relative political stability during the ministry of Jesus. The last section will point to the implications of these findings of Galilee for understanding the function of the cross saying for Jesus' disciples.

## The Physiography of Ancient Galilee

The name given to the region of ancient Palestine under consideration derives from *הגליל* (“the circle”),<sup>3</sup> with the later addition of the descriptor *הגויים* (“the nations”), which probably indicated Israel's experience of being surrounded by Canaanite city-states from the earliest times.<sup>4</sup> While “the circle” found in the first literary references to this region likely had ethnographic meaning, there may have been an earlier geographic connotation which becomes apparent on examination of the physiography of Galilee.<sup>5</sup> A land surrounded by mountains to the north, the Kinneret and Jordan River to the east, fertile plains and foothills to the south, and seashore to the west, Galilee was home to a people influenced by the convergence of surprisingly diverse natural environments.

Both Josephus and the Mishnah refer to an “Upper” and a “Lower” Galilee, distinguished by their geographic features.<sup>6</sup> The interior region of Galilee

3. It first appears in Josh 20:7 where it denotes the portion of land (belonging to Naphtali) which contained Kadesh, one of the cities of refuge. Cf. 1 Kgs 9:11.

4. Isa 9:1 contains the phrase “the circle of the nations” (“Galilee of the Gentiles” in many translations), and is quoted in Mt 4:14–16 in its LXX form. This designation for Galilee must have remained popular over time for it is referred to similarly in 1 Macc 5:15 as *Γαλιλαία ἀλλοφυλῶν* (“Galilee of the foreigners/heathen”) in the second century B.C.E.

5. Seân Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (1980; reprint, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 3, 15–16.

6. Josephus, *War* 3.38–40; *m. Sev.* 9:2 recognizes a third area in Galilee: “upper Galilee, lower Galilee and the valley, from Kefar Hanania upwards, wherever sycamores do not

contains at least three features which contribute to its distinctiveness in ancient Palestine. First, the mountains of Upper Galilee are taller than the foothills of the south, increasing in height as they ascend towards the Hermon range.<sup>7</sup> This northern section of the land is rugged, replete with gorges, exposed ridges, and isolated peaks. Lower Galilee, on the other hand, has no peak higher than Mount Tabor (1,929 ft.) and can be divided into two sections based on the texture of the rock formations, which changes from east to west. In the east are the basalt-covered plateaux, which jut against and overlook the shores of the lake. To the west are the softer limestone ranges whose erosion has formed pockets of isolated territory. The entire area of Galilee is a karst region, explaining the presence of both the fertile soil and numerous caves.<sup>8</sup>

The second geophysical feature that marks out Galilee from its surrounding territories is the amount of annual rainfall. The supply of water for the region surpasses that of Judea (the deserts of the south could experience a low of just over 1 inch per year, contrasted with up to 44 inches in Upper Galilee).<sup>9</sup> This kind of watering has a two-fold effect: superior irrigation throughout the entire region enabling the growth of rich vegetation,<sup>10</sup> juxtaposed with the constant problem of soil erosion and marshy, unusable areas in the lowlands.

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grow is upper Galilee, from Kefar Hanania downwards, wherever sycamores grow is lower Galilee; the region of Tiberias is the valley.” Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Quotations of Josephus’ *War* are taken from Gaalaya Cornfeld, ed., *Josephus, The Jewish War, Newly Translated with Extensive Commentary and Archaeological Background Illustrations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

7. The peaks of Upper Galilee range from approximately 2,000–4,000 ft., with Mount Meiron the highest at 3,963 ft.

8. For a discussion on caves in the area and their use during the Roman period see James Anderson, “The Impact of Rome on the Periphery: The Case of Palestina—Roman Period (63 B.C.E.—324 C.E.),” in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas Levy; New York: Facts On File, 1995), 453.

9. These figures for ancient Palestine have been estimated by D. Ashbel, “Climate,” in *The Geography of Palestine* (rev. ed.; ed. Denis Baly; Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1974), 98–104.

10. B. Golomb and Y. Kedar, “Ancient Agriculture in the Galilee Mountains,” *IEJ* 21 (1971): 136–140.

Josephus' description of the area's lush agriculture may have been exaggerated, but it certainly confers some truth about the region.<sup>11</sup>

The final distinction worthy of mention is the series of valleys running in an east–west direction throughout the hills of the south (see Figure 1). The narrow passages and treacherous gullies of the east near the Kinneret give way to the broader and more easily traversed valleys of the western region near the coast. The rugged terrain of the east may have had the effect of cutting off Lower Galilee from the influence of cities such as Tiberias. It certainly was used as a haven for those seeking to escape from enemies, as noted in the literary sources describing ancient Galilee.

The topographical data concerning Galilee, briefly sketched here, prompt the question: How did the conditions and physical features of the land affect the everyday lives of the people living in ancient Galilee? Some preliminary conclusions may be drawn from the preceding observations. Galilee was predominantly a rural area well-suited to agrarian pursuits despite the ruggedness of the terrain. This had two consequences. First, those who settled there survived and traded principally because of their connection to the land. Second, the inaccessibility of the interior made urbanization a feature more common in the Transjordan, the coast, or the foothills to the south.<sup>12</sup> The fishing trade of the lake area and the abundant wheat, olive oil, and vineyards

11. *War* 3.42–44: “The land is everywhere so rich in soil and pasturage and produces such varieties of trees, that even the most indolent are tempted by these facilities to devote themselves to agriculture. In fact, every inch of the soil has been cultivated by the inhabitants; there is not a parcel of waste land. The towns, too, are thickly distributed, and even the villages, thanks to the fertility of the soil, are all so densely populated that the smallest of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants.” Despite the enormously exaggerated population figures (according to Josephus' estimates this would have meant over three million people living in the region if the number of people is multiplied by the 204 villages he attributes to Galilee; cf. *Life* 234), the point of the passage is the clearly agrarian nature of Galilee. For a study of the more probable size of the populations of cities and villages in Galilee during the early Roman period see Anthony Byatt, “Josephus and Population Numbers in First Century Palestine,” *PEQ* 105 (1973): 51–60.

12. Richard Horsley, “Archaeology and the Villages of Upper Galilee: A Dialogue with Archaeologists,” *BASOR* 297 (1995): 5–16, 27–28; Eric Meyers, “An Archaeological Response to a New Testament Scholar,” *BASOR* 297 (1995): 17–28.

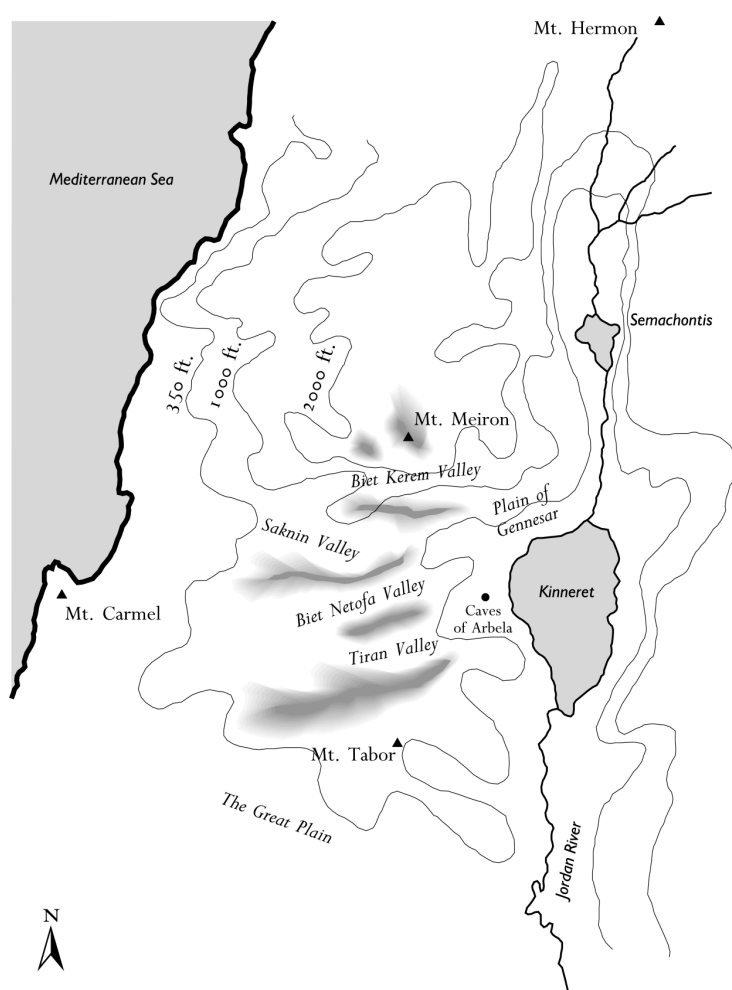


FIGURE 1. Topography of Galilee.

of the Galilean interior prompted trade with urban areas, possibly affecting rural–urban relations.<sup>13</sup>

Communication was likely made difficult by the remoteness of parts of this region, especially Upper Galilee. Even though this area was a border region for Israel, in which some of the larger towns implemented the protective measures that this situation required,<sup>14</sup> the physical features of the area nevertheless fostered isolation. As Freyne observes:

13. Reed, *Archaeology*, 62–99, explores the impact of the growth of urban centres such as Sepphoris and Tiberias on the agricultural supplies of rural Galilee.

14. Kadesh and Gishcala were fortified, according to Josephus, *War* 4. 108.

The possibilities offered by being the natural hinterland for such a busy and thriving center as Tyre would always have to be balanced with the ancestral values that differed from those of the larger cosmopolitan world either of Phoenician or Hellenistic times. Yet peasants, precisely because their outlook is essentially bound by the village and the loyalties that that engenders, are much less susceptible to such influences even when living in close proximity to them. So far as we can judge, the Upper Galilean peasant was no exception in this regard. When called to defend Gishcala, their local center, they were more interested in agriculture than war.<sup>15</sup>

The geophysical features separating both the eastern coastal area and the western rift valley from the interior of Galilee can, in part, account for the cultural and economic differences between their respective populations. Migration from the west to the interior of Galilee would likely have caused greater cultural tension because of the increased possibility of foreign incursion. This was indeed the case during several periods of Galilean history.<sup>16</sup> However, as evidenced in the archaeological analysis which follows, urbanization and re-culturalization were never able to control completely the peasant way of life in Galilee, with its small settlements and close-knit kin groups.

## Who Were the Galileans During the Time of Jesus?

Procedurally, the fundamental answer to the above question will be derived from observing two aspects of Galilean material culture. First, I will examine the evidence obtained from stratigraphic excavations of Galilean cities and villages. Second, I will note the particular household items and features of these villages and cities: together, these will provide an unambiguous answer to the identity of the Galileans prior to consulting the literary evidence, the focus of the second section of this chapter.

Identifying the Galileans of the early Roman era is of critical importance to New Testament studies, since the relationship between Galileans and Jerusa-

15. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian*, 13.

16. M. Avi-Yonah, "The Missing Fortress of Flavius Josephus," *IEJ* 3 (1953): 94–98, discusses the tactical advantage gained by taking this approach into Galilee. Cf. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian*, 11.

lem determines the significance both of Jesus' interaction with the Temple, and of his execution. The sheer variety of scholarly opinions regarding the identity of the Galileans illustrates the problem of using the literary evidence as the starting point for this investigation. Four basic possibilities have been suggested:

(1) The term "Galilean" did not refer to the people of a geographic area at all; rather, it was a term synonymous with the revolutionary 'Zealot' group.<sup>17</sup>

(2) The Galileans were a remnant of the Jews of the Northern Kingdom, having survived deportation by the Assyrians of the eighth century B.C.E., and were therefore bearers of the northern prophetic tradition.<sup>18</sup>

(3) The Galileans were primarily Jews from Judea who had re-colonized the land following Hasmonean annexation of the area.<sup>19</sup>

(4) The Galileans were primarily Gentile, likely Itureans who had migrated south and had converted to Judaism.<sup>20</sup>

17. There is, admittedly, an inconsistency in the way Josephus uses the term "Galilean" in his writings, and not once does he elaborate on their ethnicity. This has caused some scholars to argue that the term "Galilean" never had a geographic connotation. Martin Hengel makes the term "Galilean" nearly synonymous with revolutionaries in *The Zealots: Investigations Into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period From Herod I to 70 A.D.* (1976; reprint, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 57–61. See S. Zeitlin, "Who Were the Galileans? New Light On Josephus' Activities in Galilee," *JQR* 64 (1974): 189–203; Francis Loftus, "A Note on *συνταγμα των Γαλιλαιων* B. J. iv 558," *JQR* 65 (1974): 182–183; cf. Seân Freyne, "The Galileans in the Light of Josephus' *Vita*," *NTS* 26 (1980): 397–413; Joseph Armenti, "The Use of the Term 'Galileans' in the Writings of Josephus Flavius: A Brief Note," *JQR* 69 (1981): 41–49. This position, abandoned in more recent works on Galilee, will not be explored here because it is not concerned with the ethnic origins of the inhabitants of early Roman Galilee, the focus of this section.

18. This is the position of Richard Horsley in *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1995) and in *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996). Cf. Francis Loftus, "The Anti-Roman Revolts of the Jews and the Galileans," *JQR* 68 (1977): 78–98.

19. Seân Freyne, "Galilee–Jerusalem Relations According to Josephus' *Life*," *NTS* 33 (1987): 600–609; also "Bandits in Galilee: A Contribution to the Study of Social Conditions in First-Century Palestine," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (eds. Jacob Neusner et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 50–68; also Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian*, 259–304.

20. Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 1–111 (rev. ed.; eds. G. Vermes et al.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973–87), 1.142, 216–18, 561–73; Burton

Stratigraphic excavations in Galilee have helped to clarify the debate over the identity of its first-century inhabitants. In order to assess accurately the above possibilities for Galilean identity it is essential to determine the impact of the Assyrian conquest (733–32 B.C.E.), led by Tiglath-pileser III, on the population of Galilee.<sup>21</sup> Were Jews the inhabitants of first-century Galilee who had occupied the land from earlier periods of Israel's history, preserving the tradition of the northern prophets? This is the position of Richard Horsley, who argues for an unbroken line of Jewish occupation in Galilee from the time of the Northern Kingdom.<sup>22</sup> However, as seen in the following evidence, this is an assertion which falls apart when the actual material evidence is examined.

Over the last decade, the archaeological surveys and stratigraphic excavations made by Zvi Gal in Galilee have presented two important facts.<sup>23</sup> First, none of the sherds collected from sites in Upper or Lower Galilee is datable to a period as far back as the seventh or eighth century B.C.E. Moreover, pottery and other evidence of Assyrian inhabitation from this era have been found in abundance in Samaria and the regions around Galilee—making their absence conspicuous in Galilee and indicative of an area left unoccupied.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, Gal's stratigraphic excavations have produced no habitations datable to the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. in either Upper or Lower Galilee. The occupational evidence therefore points to a depopulated region following the Assyrian conquest. As Reed points out, resettlement of Galilee took place only sparsely during the Persian period, with the Hellenistic period seeing the

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Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 51–68.

21. The textual evidence for this consists of 2 Kgs 15:29 and inscriptions regarding Tiglath-pileser III. See Bustenay Oded, "The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III," *IEJ* 47 (1997): 104–108; also *Mass Deportation in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Weisbaden: Reichert, 1979), 6–16.

22. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 25–29; idem, *Archaeology, History and Society*, 21–24.

23. The work of Zvi Gal is summarized in Reed, *Archaeology*, 29–34.

24. For a listing of the sherds found at Beersheba, Yodefat, and Gishcala see Eric Meyers et al., "The Meiron Excavation Project: Archaeological Survey in Galilee and Golan, 1976," *BASOR* 230 (1978): 1–24.

more significant increase.<sup>25</sup> It is therefore a mistake to identify the Galileans as a surviving remnant of Jews from the Northern Kingdom.

Were the Galileans of Jesus' time instead converted Gentiles who had settled there following the earlier deportation of the Jews? The possibility of Iturean settlement and re-population of Galilee after a Jewish deportation is not likely based on the two criteria used above: neither the distinctive bulky, brownish-pink Iturean pottery found in their homeland of southern Lebanon, nor the pastoral-style settlements traditionally associated with these people can be found in the stratigraphic excavations of Upper or Lower Galilee.<sup>26</sup> While the Itureans did push south following the collapse of the Seleucid Empire in the second century B.C.E. (as far as the Golan and Hermon areas) there are no data which situate these people in Galilee in the late Hellenistic or early Roman periods.

This leaves us with the possibility that the inhabitants of Galilee during the time of Jesus were Jews from Judea who had resettled the area during the late Hellenistic period. The ceramic and numismatic profiles of Galilee during this era show a strong connection with Hasmonean rule.<sup>27</sup> Coins from this period, found in Sepphoris and throughout Galilee, are predominantly Hasmonian, revealing an economic orientation towards Judea. Similarly, pottery exists in abundance from the late Hellenistic/early Roman period, pointing to Hasmonean expansion into the area.<sup>28</sup>

25. Reed, *Archaeology*, 30.

26. Shimon Dar, "The History of the Hermon Settlements," *PEQ* 120 (1988): 24–44; Shimon Dar and Nikos Kokkinos, "The Greek Inscriptions from Senaim on Mount Hermon," *PEQ* 124 (1992): 9–25; Reed, *Archaeology*, 34–39.

27. The smallest denomination (prutach), used in daily purchases of foodstuffs or the like, was Hasmonean. Larger denominations (tetradrachmas, didrachmas), used mostly by the wealthy or in less frequent exchanges, were Tyrian in origin. See Richard Hanson, *Tyrian Influence in the Upper Galilee: Meiron Excavation Project 2* (Cambridge, Mass.: ASOR, 1980); Joyce Raynor and Yaakov Meshorer, *The Coins of Ancient Meiron* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1988).

28. Eric Meyers et al., "Preliminary Report on the 1980 Excavations at en-Nabratein, Israel," *BASOR* 244 (1981): 1–26; idem, "Second Preliminary Report on the 1980 Excavations at en-Nabratein, Israel," *BASOR* 246 (1982): 35–54.

Jonathan Reed has gathered four pieces of evidence from the archaeological studies of Galilee, from both city excavations and private spaces, which help identify its inhabitants during this time-span:<sup>29</sup>

(1) Secondary burial using ossuaries deposited in *kokhim* was practiced around cities such as Sepphoris. This was a custom peculiar to the Jews at the end of the Second Temple Period.<sup>30</sup>

(2) Chalk or limestone vessels (bowls, cups, basins, etc.) associated with priestly or pharisaic purity rituals have been found in strata up to the first century C.E.<sup>31</sup>

(3) *Miqwaoth* (ritual bathing pools) located both in private houses and near synagogues attest to a concern for ritual purity, and thus indicate a Jewish presence.<sup>32</sup>

(4) The zooarchaeological profile contains no pork bones, a further indication of the population's Jewish identity, as pig avoidance was a clear religious boundary during this period.<sup>33</sup>

The ethnic indicators in the archaeological evidence suggest that the inhabitants of Galilee during the time of Jesus were Jewish, had re-settled there from Judea near a time corresponding to Hasmonean annexation of the region, and had maintained religious concerns for purity similar to their fellow countrymen in Judea (see Figure 2). There is, on the other hand, no evidence

29. Reed, *Archaeology*, 39–61.

30. See Rachel Hachlili and Ann Killebrew, "Jewish Funerary Customs During the Second-Temple Period, in the Light of the Excavations at the Jericho Necropolis," *PEQ* 115 (1983): 129.

31. See also Yizhak Magen, "Jerusalem as a Center of the Stone Vessel Industry During the Second Temple Period," in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed* (ed. Hillel Geva; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1992), 190–274.

32. Ronny Reich, "The Hot Bath-House (*Balneum*), the *Miqweh*, and the Jewish Community in the Second Temple Period," *JJS* 39 (1988): 102–107; "Archaeological Evidences of the Jewish Population at Hasmonean Gezer," *IEJ* 31 (1981): 48–52; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief* 63 B.C.E.–66 C.E. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 222–29; Benjamin Wright III, "Jewish Ritual Baths—Interpreting the Digs and the Texts: Some Issues in the Social History of Second Temple Judaism," in *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present* (*JOTSS* 237; eds. Neil Silberman and David Small; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 190–214.

33. See Brian Hesse and Paula Wapnish, "Can Pig Remains Be Used for Ethnic Diagnosis in the Ancient Near East?" in Silberman and Small, *Archaeology of Israel*, 238–70.



FIGURE 2. Political map of ancient Palestine.

that the Jews of Galilee made any attempt to throw off their traditions, signifying that Jerusalem and the Temple probably remained their religious *axis mundi* despite the periodic corruption of its leaders.

The question “was Galilee a hotbed of revolutionaries during the time of Jesus?” cannot be answered by an analysis of the archaeological material alone. Although the Jews of Galilee shared a common ethnicity with the Judeans—and strove to maintain religious ties with them—this is insufficient evidence to reach a definite conclusion with respect to the form and intensity of any politically subversive activities. We must integrate the literary evidence into this picture for a more comprehensive understanding of society in ancient

Galilee. I now turn to the textual sources to examine the types of revolutionary activities which occurred there during the early Roman period.

## The Real Battlefield: Interpreting the Literary Evidence

The two main literary sources used to reconstruct a social history of Galilee have been Josephus, and later rabbinic writings which refer to the region.<sup>34</sup> The documents of the New Testament have been relegated to secondary status in this endeavour due to the chronological and geographic distance of their authors from Galilee, and also because of their perceived theological agendas. In actuality, Josephus and the rabbinic sources provide little direct evidence in relation to the question of Galilean revolutionaries during the time of Jesus. However, by constructing a broader framework of the political situation of ancient Palestine under Roman occupation, some scholars have argued that the rugged and isolated Galilee was a seedbed for several revolutionary movements. The main proponent of a Galilee containing “social bandits” and insurrectionist groups, based on his interpretation of the literary sources, has been Richard Horsley.<sup>35</sup>

This section first presents Horsley’s definition of “social banditry,” a phenomenon which he suggests was prevalent among Jews who were under Roman domination. Horsley begins by applying this social-scientific theory to the ancient texts, supporting his interpretations with arguments based on the “political-economic-religious” situation of the Galileans (use of this term is an

34. After migrating from Judea to Galilee following the punitive activities of the Romans in 67–70 and 132–135 C.E., the rabbis and priests established schools and recorded traditions which make reference to the social history of Galilee. See Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society*, 176–178.

35. See Richard Horsley, “Josephus and the Bandits,” *JSJ* 10/1 (1979): 37–63; idem, “Popular Messianic Movements Around the Time of Jesus,” *CBQ* 46 (1984): 471–95; idem, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987); and Richard Horsley and John Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985). The views which Horsley lays out in these articles and books reappear in his more recent works on the social history and archaeology of Galilee already mentioned.

attempt to acknowledge that these spheres of life were inseparable categories in the minds of ancient Jews). I will examine each account in Josephus of revolutionary activity in Galilee and the political, economic, and religious environments which supposedly produced these “social bandits,” by comparing Horsley’s analyses with those of Seân Freyne, Jonathan Reed, John Kloppenborg, and other scholars. This is followed by a summary of the evidence for the likely political atmosphere of Galilee during the time of Jesus and a brief statement concerning its importance for New Testament studies.

Practically all that is known of first-century Galilee derives from the writings of Josephus. Given a charge by the Romans to stabilize the area, Josephus, in his role as commander, stayed in this region for one year beginning in 66 C.E. (*Life* 28–29; cf. *War* 2.568–76), and one must be mindful of his apologetic approach in Josephus’ depictions of his magnanimous and skilful dealings with the local inhabitants.<sup>36</sup> From three of his works (*Life*, *War*, and *Antiquities*) can be found only a few actual stories of political upheaval in or around Galilee during the early Roman period (see Table 24).

To these, and other instances of banditry in Judea during the early Roman period, Richard Horsley has applied the model of ‘social banditry’ described in the work of Eric Hobsbawm.<sup>37</sup> The *λησται* (bandits/insurrectionists) of Josephus are understood as a pre-political form of protest by the dispossessed peasantry.<sup>38</sup> They have no other agenda than “righting wrongs” and “sweeping away the machinery of oppression” with the support of the villages and kinship groups from which they came.<sup>39</sup> For Horsley, these “social bandits” were the Robin Hoods of Galilee, siding with the economically disadvantaged

36. See Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 72–75 for an analysis of the self-justifying quality of Josephus’ writings.

37. Eric Hobsbawm, “The Social Bandits,” in *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 13–29.

38. Horsley, *Spiral of Violence*, 36. This term is used in Mt 27:38 and Mk 15:27 to describe the two criminals crucified alongside Jesus. The same term occurs in Lk 10:30 in reference to the bandits who attacked the man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho in Jesus’ parable. However, the term found in Lk 23:32 for the men crucified with Jesus is *δύο κακοῦργοι* (two evildoers). Jn 18:40 refers to Barabbas as a *ληστής*, and mentions, but does not identify, the two men executed with Jesus (19:18).

39. Horsley, *Spiral of Violence*, 38–39, 49–50.

DATE	INSTIGATOR	ENEMY	REFERENCES
47 B.C.E.	Hezekiah while governor	Herod, of Galilee	<i>War</i> 1.204–11; <i>Ant.</i> 14.160–70
39–37 B.C.E.	Cave bandits near Arbela	Herod, when King	<i>War</i> 1.304–5, 309–13; <i>Ant.</i> 14.415–17, 420–30
4 B.C.E.	Judas, son of Hezekiah	Varus at the city of Sepphoris	<i>War</i> 2.56–59; <i>Ant.</i> 17.271–72
66–67 C.E.	John of Gishcala	Titus at Gishcala, Josephus	<i>War</i> 2.585–94; <i>Life</i> 71–76
66–67 C.E.	Jesus, son of Sapphias	Josephus	<i>War</i> 2.595–607 <i>Life</i> 65–67, 104–11, 126–35;

TABLE 24. Bandits from Galilee in Josephus.

peasant class over against the rulers of Roman Palestine. It is this dividing line—the economic disparity between the classes—that functions as the keystone for Horsley’s theory of social banditry.<sup>40</sup>

In his 1979 article “Josephus and the Bandits,” Horsley describes the four necessary characteristics and conditions of social banditry found in traditional agrarian societies: (1) the ruling class has economically and culturally marginalized the rural proletariat; (2) social bandits in this situation have the support of peasants and peasant groups (villages, etc.); (3) social bandits “right wrongs,” showing magnanimity towards their fellow peasants when they prosper (i.e. “take from the rich and give to the poor”); and (4) social bandits maintain religious perspectives and values identical to those of the peasant society from which they emerged.<sup>41</sup> These conditions, which Horsley believes

40. This has led some scholars to label Horsley’s work as “sociological in the Marxist tradition;” cf. Harold Attridge’s review article, *JBL* 108 (1988): 518–20; Philip Davies, “Jesus’ Attitude to Violence,” *ET* 105 (1993): 55–56.

41. Horsley, “Josephus and the Bandits,” 43–47. He concludes that the instances of “social banditry” during the early Roman period have their cultural equivalents in groups under similar political and economic duress in other locations and at other times (e.g. Pancho Villa, Robin Hood, Angiolillo, Giuliano, etc.).

were met in Galilee and Judea under Roman oppression, and further exacerbated by the people's apocalyptic orientation, eventually snowballed into the catastrophes of the 60s.<sup>42</sup>

These occasions of Galilean banditry have been re-evaluated by Freyne and Kloppenborg using the very model suggested by Horsley, with both concluding that not one of the instances of Galilean banditry described by Josephus qualifies as "social banditry."<sup>43</sup> It would be a mistake to overlook the fact that banditry in Roman Palestine did actually increase due to the worsening economic and political situation,<sup>44</sup> but it was probably not the kind of banditry that Horsley envisions.

## Social Bandits or Standard Bandits? Comparative Interpretations

Some scholars, such as John Crossan, have assimilated Horsley's interpretive framework of social banditry nearly wholesale into their own work.<sup>45</sup> To judge the appropriateness of such adaptations, and to establish a proper understanding of the kind of banditry that existed in Galilee during the century prior to the First Revolt, an assessment of the specific instances is required. Only then can a determination be made as to whether Horsley's re-definition of these accounts of "standard banditry" as "social banditry" is justifiable.

42. Horsley, *Spiral of Violence*, 39.

43. Seân Freyne, "Bandits in Galilee," 50–68; John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 245–55.

44. See *War* 4.406–9 for a description of the situation in the spring of 68 C.E., where "there was insurrection and disorder in the capital city, the villains from around the countryside could plunder without restraint. Each gang would plunder its own village and then retreat into the wilderness. There they joined forces and formed companies—smaller than an army, but bigger than an armed gang—and fell upon sanctuaries and towns. Those attacked suffered as much as if they had lost a war and could not even retaliate, since the raiders, like bandits, fled as soon as they had their booty."

45. See John Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 168–206. Crossan does break from Horsley's interpretation of events in Galilee by stating on p. 191 that "the Galilean peasantry was militant and nationalistic, but not subversive and revolutionary . . . the political revolution never really took hold there."

## HEZEKIAH, 43 B.C.E.

The earliest case of banditry in Galilee mentioned by Josephus occurred under Hyrcanus II, while Herod was still merely the governor of Galilee. Hezekiah had been plundering Syrian villages (*War* 1.204–11; *Ant.* 14.160–70), possibly after losing his position among the Galilean Hasmonean nobility following the decree by Caesar which allowed Syrian and Phoenician encroachment on the lands of Galilee (*Ant.* 14.195–97, 205). There is in Josephus no direct clarification of Hezekiah's identity or his social status in Galilee. However, had Hezekiah been a social bandit supported by the Galilean peasantry then the land-owning Hasmonean aristocracy of Galilee should have been his immediate target, not the Syrian villages.

Significantly, after Herod executed Hezekiah there was no outcry from the Galilean peasantry; rather, the only repercussion occurred in Jerusalem where the Hasmonean court criticized his failure to seek permission for his actions from the Sanhedrin (*War* 1.204–15). In all likelihood this accusation came from a growing fear of Herod's power, which did eventually lead to the purge of the Hasmonean nobles and the removal of Hyrcanus II from leadership (*Ant.* 15.5–6). In *Antiquities* 14.167–68, the later of the two accounts, he describes how the mothers of these men travelled to Jerusalem to lodge this complaint. It is within the realm of possibility that these women were, as Freyne observes, “most vocal against Herod, no doubt because they saw in Hezekiah's fate a threat to their own position, even as supporters of Hyrcanus.”<sup>46</sup>

There is no evidence, contrary to Horsley's suggestion, that Hezekiah and his party were “on good terms with the people in Galilee” or that there was a “substantial outcry from the Galileans” following his execution by Herod.<sup>47</sup> Hezekiah does not bear the marks of a social bandit; his actions instead appear to be an attempt of the local ruling class to maintain its position even as Rome tightened its grip.

46. Seân Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1988), 57.

47. Horsley, *Josephus and the Bandits*, 53, 54.

## CAVE BANDITS NEAR ARBELA, 39–37 B.C.E.

Between the years of 39–37 B.C.E. Herod was again forced to deal with opposition to his rule, this time in the form of brigands entrenched in the caves of Arbela (*War* 1.304–5, 309–13; *Ant.* 14.415–17, 420–30). Horsley suggests that these were peasants motivated to join the forces of Antigonus after enduring heavy taxation, distinguishing them from the garrisons of Antigonus stationed at Sepphoris (*War* 1.303, 314–46).<sup>48</sup> This, according to Horsley, is another instance of social banditry in Galilee.

Horsley distinguishes the rebels (*αποστάντες*, *War* 1.314) in this story from the garrisons of Antigonus based on the fact that Josephus never designates troops by this term. However, given the nature of Josephus' relationship with the Romans while writing the *Jewish War*, defining Herod's opposition in this way is understandable.<sup>49</sup> Kloppenborg, who agrees with Freyne that these rebels should be identified as the partisans of Antigonus, adds, "This is not to say that Josephus' derogatory characterization, 'bandits,' was not somehow appropriate; but . . . these bandits were not examples of grassroots opposition to Herodian rule."<sup>50</sup>

The problem with Horsley's reconstruction of this situation is that it ignores the broader context: that is, Herod's military actions were an attempt to eliminate the partisans of Antigonus. After the garrison of Antigonus had been driven from Sepphoris, Josephus records that these men fled (*War* 1.304; *Ant.* 14.414). The area of land around Arbela, as already discussed, was a rugged landscape filled with caves: a desirable location from which to engage in guerrilla warfare. Herod's intent, as described by Josephus, was to eliminate the "strongholds of Galilee," beginning with the garrisons of Antigonus in Sepphoris (*War* 1.303) and continuing with the assault on Arbela (*War* 1.304). The important question here is this: Why would Herod expend so much energy to oust "Galilean troglodytes"<sup>51</sup> if they were not, in fact, the very enemies he

48. Horsley, *Josephus and the Bandits*, 55.

49. For a discussion of the word *λησταί* see *ibid.*, 37–39, where Horsley concludes that "much of Josephus' use of the nomenclature of banditry evidently refers to actual bandits."

50. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 248.

51. This designation is taken from the article by F. Loftus, "The Martyrdom of the Galilean Troglodytes (*B.J.* 1:312–13)," *JQR* 66 (1976): 212–23.

had been pursuing? If the rebels were “no major threat to the social order of Galilee,”<sup>52</sup> as Horsley assumes, how do we then understand the zeal with which Herod strikes against them? Horsley’s attempt to distinguish the cave brigands at Arbela from the partisans of Antigonos seems like a forced dichotomy. This episode does not qualify, therefore, as an example of a popular resistance movement initiated amongst the peasantry of Galilee.

#### JUDAS, SON OF HEZEKIAH, 4 B.C.E.

One of Horsley’s overarching purposes in his writings has been to discredit the long-held view that the generic label ‘Zealots’ can be applied indiscriminately to the various Jewish resistance movements operating in early Roman Palestine.<sup>53</sup> He has rightfully pointed out that the ‘Zealots’ did not actually exist until the revolts of the 60s, and that popular anti-Roman sentiments prior to this time were expressed in three ways: banditry, messiah-like figures (“popular kingship”), and prophetic movements (usually resulting in non-violent demonstration by the urban peasantry).<sup>54</sup> The only instance in Galilee of a “popular kingship” movement backed by force is that of Judas, son of Hezekiah, in 4 B.C.E.

It is clear from the outset that this is not a case of social banditry: rather, Judas made his move against Sepphoris after the death of Herod the Great in an attempt to establish himself as king (*War* 2.56; *Ant.* 17.271–72). The result, at least as portrayed in the text,<sup>55</sup> was that Varus burned Sepphoris, and its inhabitants were enslaved (*War* 2.68–69; *Ant.* 17.288–89). Josephus records this incident as part of a series of three stories demonstrating attempts at kingship (*War* 2.56, 57–59, 60–65; *Ant.* 17.271–84). Although Josephus does

52. Horsley, *Josephus and the Bandits*, 55.

53. *Ibid.*, 55; also Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs*, xi–xxvi, 170–241. Horsley is quick to point out that, in the majority of cases, Jewish resistance to Rome was non-violent and politically unsophisticated prior to the First Revolt, with the notable exception being that of the *sicarii* (“dagger-men”) of the 50s. This group of assassins, however, operated in Jerusalem against the Jewish aristocracy who had sided with Rome, and not against the Romans themselves.

54. See Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 48–189.

55. The stratigraphic excavations of the city display no evidence that the city was burned, perhaps indicating another exaggeration by Josephus. See Reed, *Archaeology*, 117.

not mention the social class of Judas, the fact that the two other claims to kingship came from commoners (Athronges the shepherd, Simon the court servant—cf. *War* 2.57, 60; *Ant.* 18.273, 278) causes Horsley to interpret Judas also in this light.<sup>56</sup> Summing up this incident, Horsley states, “Here was a mass movement among the Galilean peasants from villages around Sepphoris taking common action under the leadership of a popular figure they recognized as king.”<sup>57</sup>

While there is little doubt that Judas was assuming a royal position, it is another matter to assume that the Galilean peasantry supported his actions. Two aspects of Judas’s story seem to disallow Horsley’s suggestion that this was the case. First, Judas and his men specifically target the stash of weapons located in the royal arsenal at Sepphoris (*War* 2.56; *Ant.* 17.271). As Kloppenborg observes, “Both of Josephus’s accounts indicate that the principal target of Judas’s attack was the royal arsenal rather than, say, the debt archives, the royal stores, or some other institution that would more directly benefit the peasantry. The attack on the arsenal indicates that Judas’s men were professional men of violence who knew how to use weapons—that is, either bandits or mercenaries—rather than peasant farmers.”<sup>58</sup> Second, Horsley elsewhere argues that the rural peasantry of Galilee was holding on to a memory of the pre-monarchical period of tribal independence within a theocratic system.<sup>59</sup> If the Jews of Galilee at this time were part of an unbroken chain of inhabitants characterized by the northern prophetic tradition (an *a priori* assumption by Horsley which the archaeological data do not confirm), then the peasants’ hope for a messiah-king would not seem to correspond to Horsley’s description of the fundamental beliefs of these people. Judas, like his father before him, was most likely attempting to attain the social position he felt was his inheritance right. In any event, the incident does not appear to have the Galilean peasant class as its principal beneficiaries.

56. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 270.

57. *Ibid.*, 271.

58. Kloppenborg, *The Sayings Gospel Q*, 246.

59. Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 5–46; Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 21–33.

## JOHN OF GISHCALA, 66–67 C.E.

Banditry was on the increase in the period leading up to First Revolt, and Josephus explicitly mentions how he dealt with those operating in Galilee, especially his nemesis, John of Gishcala (*Life* 71–76). John is described as a wealthy agriculturalist (*Life* 74; *War* 2.585–89) who had surrounded himself with a band of four-hundred men and who “plundered the whole area of Galilee.”<sup>60</sup> It is obvious that Josephus should depict his rival acting in an independent and self-serving manner. If this is an accurate depiction of John, however, then he is disqualified as a “social bandit” according to Hobsbawm’s definition.

The mercenary army of John was comprised of men who had military experience (*War* 2.588), an important indicator of the “fluid boundary between banditry and military service”<sup>61</sup> in antiquity. Often, men who were expelled or retired from military service turned to banditry in order to survive.<sup>62</sup> This is illustrated above in the account of the battle at the Arbela caves, where men who had been garrisoned previously at Sepphoris were forced into desperate circumstances. To Herod these men were bandits; to Antigonus they had been military troops.

Josephus relates how he assuaged the concerns of the residents of the area of Gishcala by imposing a tax which would require payment from these bandits (*Life* 77–78). In some instances he describes a patron–client arrangement

60. John is not specifically called a bandit in *Life*; Josephus does, however, apply this term to his enemy in *War* 2.585–94.

61. Kloppenborg, *The Sayings Gospel Q*, 251.

62. In *ibid.*, 250, Kloppenborg discusses this phenomenon: “Bandit numbers were enhanced by decommissioned soldiers, and often given inadequate grants of land upon their release from the army. There was, moreover, a constant movement of men of violence in and out of the *auxilia* employed by the Roman army. An even greater problem, Shaw notes, was the ‘enforced desertion’ of soldiers that resulted from the struggles between local potentates, each with his own army. The victory of one meant that the armies of the other were cut off from pay and provision. Unless they wished to become civilians, soldiers were compelled to a life of brigandage. Thus bandits were ‘created’ by ‘the shifting frontiers of the definition of authority within the state itself.’” The reference is to Brent Shaw, “Peasantry as a Political Factor,” *P&P* 105 (1984): 5–52, a description of banditry that seems to more accurately describe the situation in ancient Galilee.

between himself and the bandits of Galilee (*Life* 31, 104–11). Brent Shaw has noted that the *honestiores* and wealthy landowners were, on occasion, actually employing bandits during this time, using them to “police” their lands (a service the government was only able to provide in larger cities).<sup>63</sup> Here is another significant explanation of why John of Gishcala cannot be understood as a social bandit. The fact that Josephus and John were able to employ bandits as mercenary troops in Galilee (*Life* 159, 371; *War* 2.583–84, 588, 4.84, 86) indicates that this was less a case of altruistic banditry and more an attempt at social control. This interpretation is supported by the way in which Titus dealt with the inhabitants of Gishcala after John was expelled: no heavy punishment or destruction ensued. Josephus relates that Titus was welcomed by the locals, who were anxious to resume their farming (*War* 4.84–85, 112–13).

#### JESUS, SON OF SAPPHIAS, 66–67 C.E.

Another instance of bandits functioning as mercenaries for the powers striving for control of Galilee is Jesus, son of Sapphias, who also operated immediately prior to the First Revolt. Again, he is not specifically called a bandit in Josephus’ *Life* (104–11), but he was clearly a brigand leader. In this instance, the inhabitants of Sepphoris promised Jesus and his band of eight-hundred men a large amount of money if they would prevent Josephus from visiting the city, preferably by killing him. Jesus agreed and soon after sought an audience with Josephus under the pretence of showing respect. After being tipped off by a deserter from Jesus’ army, Josephus confronted the brigand-chief alone and exposed his treachery. Following a firm admonishment, Josephus forgave Jesus, who was then set free only after making a pledge of allegiance to Josephus that he would “remain faithful” to him.

The episode is obviously an attempt by Josephus to depict his own moderation and self-restraint in dealing with the Galileans. However, the general attitude of the bandits in this story is clear, revealing that their actions caused them to be “hated by the Galileans at large,” and that they were “showing the fickleness of their motives and the lack of any genuine concern for Galilean

63. Shaw, “Peasantry,” 37–38.

causes, social or religious.” Freyne continues: “Equally significant is the fact that once again they change sides so readily.”<sup>64</sup> The type of patron–client relationship described above seems the best context in which to understand both Sepphoris’ and Josephus’ interaction with Jesus, son of Sapphias. By this point the region of Galilee was in a terrific struggle with Rome, but even in this instance there is no evidence for the kind of “social banditry” proposed by Horsley.

Josephus records a few other instances of his experience with banditry in Galilee, especially in *Life*.<sup>65</sup> As he prepares to leave his office in Galilee the local inhabitants earnestly expressed their fear that his absence would leave them vulnerable to bandit attacks (*Life* 206). This anxiety indicates that the peasantry and the bandit forces which existed in Galilee were not close allies who had identical political and religious purposes. Considering banditry in Galilee more generally, Kloppenborg concludes:

Banditry was endemic in the empire and might reasonably be expected to be a permanent feature of mountainous regions such as the Upper Galilee. . . . Banditry as such was not a symptom of social breakdown; in fact, bandits might operate with a perfectly stable system of patron-client relationships, functioning as the means by which urban elites protect their interests in the hinterland. When the power relationships of the urban elite begin to shift, bandit activity reflects this instability. The establishment of a new aristocratic elite in Galilean society created a new set of potential employers for bandits and new targets of bandit activities. These shifting power arrangements are evident in the conflicts between local landowners and the representatives of the Herodian and Judean aristocracy (including Josephus) in which bandits were employed as enforcers and mercenaries. Doubtless these arrangements worked to the disadvantage of the smallholders and peasants.<sup>66</sup>

The literary evidence depicts bandit activity within Galilee during the early Roman period, some of which may have been politically motivated. There does not, however, seem to be evidence for “social banditry” described by Horsley, or for the marshalling of the peasant masses in revolt against Rome.

64. Freyne, “Bandits in Galilee,” 60.

65. Josephus, *Life* 126–131, where bandits waylay the wife of Ptolemy as she travels through the region with a caravan; *Life* 145–146, where these same bandits turn the local populations of Tiberias and Tarichaeae against Josephus; *Life* 175, where Josephus disguises his feelings about Rome because of the bandits.

66. Kloppenborg, *The Sayings Gospel Q*, 253.

The archaeological and literary evidence does not present a Galilee full of Robin Hoods and an agitated, “ready to revolt” rural proletariat.<sup>67</sup> The Jewish peasant population of Galilee no doubt resented Roman colonization, but any hope of throwing off such oppression did not manifest itself in the support of, or engagement in, violent activity prior to the First Revolt.

## The Nature of Jesus’ ‘Rebellion’

The authors of the Synoptic gospels report that Jesus issued the cross saying during his travels in the regions of Galilee. The above findings clarify that Jesus performed his ministry there in an atmosphere that was not, in general, nearly as politically charged as some scholars have suggested. I do not deny that there was anti-Roman sentiment among the people indigenous to ancient Galilee at that time, or that skirmishes had, in the past, taken place which produced ‘messianic’ figures and even martyrs from among the Jewish people. During Jesus’ ministry, however, the evidence points to a relatively calm environment in Galilee, which requires that scholars who interpret the gospels through a highly-politicized lens have more work to do if their assumptions can be considered justified.<sup>68</sup>

67. See Uriel Rappaport, “How Anti-Roman Was the Galilee?” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. Lee Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 95–102, who likewise concludes on p. 98: “Thus, it is evident that the Galilee was relatively quiet; it seems that any existent tension or conflict was successfully quelled by the local leadership, Herodian or otherwise. These tensions were generally less anti-Roman and more local—ethnic and social—in nature. As we draw nearer to the Great Revolt and to Josephus’ report, the overall picture changes somewhat, but not too much: there was not much warfare against the Romans in Galilee and some of the activity was a product of local circumstances and the dynamics of the situation.” Cf. Eric Meyers, “Galilean Regionalism as a Factor in Historical Reconstruction,” *BASOR* 220/221 (1975–76): 93–101.

68. See, e.g., Richard Horsley and Neil Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1997); Neil Elliot, “The Anti-Imperial Message of the Cross,” in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (ed. Richard Horsley; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 167–183, who argues that Pauline references to “the powers” (1 Cor 2:6; 15:24; Col 1:16, etc.) refer specifically to the Roman government. I cannot allow

The social uprooting caused by Roman domination certainly meant that comparisons can be made in some respects between the early Jesus Movement and both the bandits in Galilee and the revolutionary groups operating further south.<sup>69</sup> Dealing with the realities of debt and economic anxiety (Mt 5:25; 18:25, 30; Mk 12:7; Lk 16:1–13),<sup>70</sup> and fleeing to the mountains to escape “tribulation” (Mk 13:14) were concerns shared by bandits living in the area of Galilee and perhaps some members of the Jesus Movement. The ethical rigor demanded of the freedom fighters in Judea, such as abandoning the duty to bury relatives (cf. *War* 4.381; Mt 8:22), leaving family for the sake of an elevated cause (cf. *Ant.* 18.23; Lk 14:26), and a readiness for martyrdom (cf. *War* 7.417, *Ant.* 18.23; Mt 16:24, Mk 8:34–38) were features which belonged to both resistance and discipleship.

In the end, however, there is scant evidence that Jesus targeted bandits to become his disciples, or that he required those who were his disciples to prepare for resistance against Rome. To “take up the cross,” in its original Galilean setting, would no doubt have brought to mind instances of Roman crucifixion—but the textual and archaeological evidence suggests that Jesus adapted this violent image as a way of describing how he measured their devotion to *himself*, rather than their devotion to the people of Israel under Roman oppression.

Taken as a whole, the gospels present Jesus confronting people with a message about the “Kingdom of God,” where their response to him (and consequent following after him) features centrally in whether they participate in this new eschatological reality. Jesus’ demand to “take up the cross” is of a piece with his wider body of instruction and preaching in this vein, and as such the political dimensions of the saying must be kept in balance with the larger agendas of discipleship. While he unenthusiastically recognizes the rights and powers belonging to Caesar (Lk 20:20–26), for the most part Jesus

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space to interact at length with his arguments, but I point out that nowhere does he attempt to reconcile his assertions with what Paul has to say about government in Rom 13, which seems at odds with what he suggests.

69. See Gerd Theissen, *Social Reality and the Early Christians: Theology, Ethics, and the World of the New Testament* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 76–83.

70. See Martin Goodman, “The First Jewish Revolt: Social Conflict and the Problem of Debt,” *JJS* 33 (1982): 417–27.

seems to avoid violence, and he obliges his followers to do the same (Mt 5:39; Lk 22:49–51).

## Summary

This chapter has focused on the question of understanding the socio-political environment of Galilee at the time of Jesus: identifying first the physical environment and the ethnicity of its population, and then evaluating the reports of violent banditry from within its boundaries. Based on the archaeological evidence and literary sources, it has been established that the inhabitants of Galilee during this time were Jews who had probably migrated north from Judea and resettled the region during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. Galilee during the time of Jesus was a rural and somewhat isolated area, with its large urban populations located on the perimeter. The land was fertile, and the material remains from that time reveal a predominantly peasant class living either by farming, or from the fishing trade at the Kinneret. Roman taxation and corruption of the Jewish aristocracy in Jerusalem notwithstanding, the Galileans were concerned with maintaining their religious identity, and the Temple in Jerusalem remained the primary symbol of that tradition.

The result of my inquiry concerning the political atmosphere of Galilee suggests that Galilee hosted no violent resistance movements during the early part of the first century C.E. Even so, the Galileans likely harboured some feelings of animosity towards both Rome and to those Jews who were perceived as traitorous in their acquiescence to Roman governance. Along with peasant farmers, bandits inhabited this region, utilizing the natural protection offered by the terrain. Two factors—economic stress, and rivalry between power-holders in the region—caused the bandits who operated in Galilee to engage in periodic violence during this time. It is not apparent that the Galilean peasantry had formed these bandit groups, or that they had made any kind of alliance with them against Rome.

While the political and economic strain from Roman oppression certainly weighed heavily on the population of Galilee, the “freedom fighters” who

eventually led the country to revolt in the 60s seem to have originated and operated in Judea more prominently than in Galilee.<sup>71</sup> Josephus' accounts contain no instances of violent revolutionary activity in Galilee between the years of 4 B.C.E. and 66 C.E., the main period of interest for this study. It is all the more understandable, therefore, that concerning these years—the time during and shortly after Jesus' ministry—Tacitus wrote: *sub Tiberio quies* (“things were quiet under Tiberius”).<sup>72</sup>

These findings suggest that the cross saying, if issued by Jesus during a Galilean ministry, did not serve as a call to rebellion against Roman authority as some scholars have suggested. Instead, it appears that Jesus adapts cross-bearing as a measure of a person's commitment to him as his disciple. An agenda calling for the violent overthrow of worldly governments never appeared in the teaching or life of Jesus as preserved in the gospels, and his call to “take up the cross” must therefore not be invested with such political overtones as to actually betray his example of leaving such eschatological objectives in the hands of God.

71. Rappaport, “How Anti-Roman was the Galilee?” 101–102.

72. Tacitus, *Historiae* 5.9.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE CROSS SAYING AND EARLY CHRISTIAN MATERIAL CULTURE

WORLDWIDE, and throughout history, the cross-mark has been the most widely used sign in existence.<sup>1</sup> There is no literate human society where this mark does not take some form and meaning, normally evoking an abstract perception that varies substantially between cultures (see Figure 3).<sup>2</sup> In fact, studies of non-Christian cross-marks have catalogued over four hundred distinct cruciform images, not counting the variations due to ornamentation.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, it is not my purpose here to survey all such permutations; rather, in this chapter I shall investigate how the earliest Christians utilized



FIGURE 3. Some examples of non-Christian crosses.

1. Adrian Frutiger, *Signs and Symbols: Their Design and Meaning* (trans. Andrew Bluhm; London: Ebury Press, 1997), 49–51; see pp. 272–80 for a survey of many types of crosses, both Christian and non-Christian.

2. These cruciform images, from left to right, are: (1) rayed cross (Assyrian); (2) sun-cross (Assyrian); (3) sun-cross (Dakota Indian); (4) purity-cross (China), swastika (India), number 10,000 (Japan), Germanic/Scandinavian cross (Scandinavia). These examples, and many others, can be found in Goblet d'Alviella, "Cross," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (vol. 4; ed. James Hastings; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911), 324–29. A great number of cross-symbols attempt to depict notions of space or radiation.

3. John D. Parsons, *The Non-Christian Cross* (London: Simpkin, Marshal, Hamilton Kent & Co., 1869), 169–213; Henry Ward, *The History of the Cross* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1871), 16–21.

various representations of the cross and crucifixion to express symbolically their religious devotion to Jesus, tying this to his teaching which required followers to “take up the cross.” In other words, I seek to address how a cross-centred view of discipleship informed early Christian literary and artistic development.

## The Domestication of “Taking up the Cross”

There can be little doubt that both oral tradition and the texts of the New Testament provided the impetus for the wide proliferation of the cross as a symbol for the earliest Christians. Not only for the part it played in Jesus’ critical and dramatic last days, the cross became central to the preaching and theology of those who went on to lead the disciple communities in their initial formation.

As I discussed in Chapter Six, the cross was an implement of torture and death, a symbol of shame in the wider culture of the ancient Mediterranean world—born anew as a symbol of foundational theological importance for the followers of Jesus. Indeed, I argued in Chapter Three that the cross saying itself forces disciples to reconsider the cross as honourable, and crucifixion on it as a worthy fate, especially since was their master’s own form of execution and the culmination of his God-ordained mission. Consequently, I turn in this chapter to a remaining and important question for our understanding of the cross saying and its application: How did the earliest Christians actually express a cross-centred view of discipleship in their ongoing experience and daily lives?

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

To answer this question I must ultimately move beyond literary sources. I do, however, begin by briefly examining how the cross-mark was utilized by the Jews *prior* to its adaptation by the followers of Jesus. Since the background of the cross-mark within Judaism lays a foundation for its use by the first Jew-

ish Christians, this chapter will commence with an examination of ancient Palestinian archaeological finds which feature cross-marks presumably made by Jews near the time of the birth of Christianity. As I shall observe, some of these markings have been assessed incorrectly as the “earliest records of Christianity” due to the fact of their dating and that they merely exhibit a cross-mark. I shall offer an evaluation as to their probable function for Jews who were not necessarily Christians living at that time.

This chapter then presents a chronological survey of the utilization of the cross in the Jewish literary and cultural context in which the first Christians lived, then examines its meaning in the New Testament, and follows with a review of its treatment in Patristic literature. I specifically note how the authors of the New Testament and the Church Fathers developed an evolving and complex system of terminology with which they referenced the cross. Certainly, the process of attributing various symbolic meanings to Jesus’ cross began with the authors of the New Testament (or before), but was advanced considerably by the Patristic writers. For that reason, the second part of this essay catalogues the various ideological symbols for the cross found in early Christian texts.

Last, I present a survey of the material/visual cross-marks which are most likely Christian in origin, beginning with those visual symbols pertaining to the body (e.g., the ‘sign of the cross,’ and the orant posture of prayer). Depictions of the cross within the *nomina sacra* are then examined, with a particular focus on the staurogram and its origin. Following this will be a categorization of the earliest cruciform images and their appearance on walls, jewellery, tombs, and other locations. I also study some of the more questionable archaeological finds to which some scholars would ascribe Christian origins.

Finally, based on the foregoing evidence, I offer my conclusion that the cross was so central to Christian identity from a very early period that an assortment of symbolic ways were conceived in which a person could “take up the cross” during this time. These developments, as I shall argue at the conclusion of this chapter, effectively domesticated the demands of the cross saying: making crucifixion—by and large only endured by a few select martyrs during the first century—something in which Christians living in less ex-

treme circumstances could participate symbolically and yet still find spiritual meaning.

So, as stated, I begin by establishing the Christian cross in its broader Jewish context, since its use pre-dated Jesus and his followers by centuries.

## Identifying the Supposed “Earliest Records of Christianity”

As archaeological discoveries have shown, the use of the cross-mark in Palestine as an apotropaic symbol can be traced to the late Chalcolithic era/early Bronze Age (4000–3000 B.C.E.), as seen on the painted stones at Abu Matar, but its existence as simply a generic marker of possession likely pre-dates even this usage.<sup>4</sup> Palestinian orthographies integrated the cross-mark as a phonetic character very early on, taking the shape of ✕ or ⚭ in paleo-Hebrew script and eventually ט in later (post-exilic) Hebrew.<sup>5</sup> Cross-marks used by the populations of Palestine had numerous functions, and the immediacy with which some artefacts from ancient Palestine have been assigned a Christian origin reveals a lack of familiarity with this fact.

Tau, the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, had the more specific meaning of “mark.” This is evident in the Hebrew Bible in such passages as:

(1) 1 Samuel 21:14: ויתו על דלתות (“he put a mark on the doors of the gate”). A verbal form of Tau is used in this text: David was literally “Tau-ing on the doors of the gate,” seeking escape from Achish while under the pretence of insanity. David’s scribble-marks may only have been an indecipherable scrawl, but the “Tau-ing” referred to in the text might imply an apotropaic

4. The painted pebbles discovered between the years of 1952–54 at Tell Abu Matar contained cross-marks (see nos. 19–25, 27, 28), and in one instance were arranged in a cruciform design (house 135). The sign was applied by finger using red ochre paint and could possibly have had an apotropaic function of warding the area from evil. The culture of Abu Matar was related to the Ghassul culture of the Northern Negev, and also had some ties with Egypt (being the first known people group to settle in this area of Palestine). Because some of the other artefacts were bird-like images, it is also possible that the signs on the pebbles represented a pelican or some other Palestinian bird in flight. J. Perrot, “The Excavations at Tell Abu Matar, Near Beersheba,” *IEJ* 5 (1955): 167–189, esp. 179, 172.

5. See Appendix C, “The Cross-Mark in Palestinian Orthographies: A Brief Sketch.”

(protective) function. (The LXX, on the other hand, presents David as simply *ἔπιπτεν*—“falling” or “grovelling”—at the gate, with no mention of any marking).

(2) Ezekiel 9:4–6 gives a clearer example of the usage of Tau as a ward against destruction: והתוית תו על מצותות . . . אשר עליו התו . . . do not touch any man on whom is the mark”).<sup>6</sup> The definite article reveals that the Tau did actually serve as a sign of protection in this instance. The LXX translates התו (“the Tau”) as *σημείον* (“mark”) in this case. Both the tracing on the forehead and the word *σημείον* were later adopted by Christianity as references to the cross of Jesus, and the use of Tau as a mark of protection within the context of Palestinian Judaism continued into the New Testament period.<sup>7</sup>

(3) Job 31:35 attests to the use of Tau as Job’s signature: הֵן-הוּ (lit., “here is my Tau,” but meaning “here is my mark”). It is likely that this text refers to a simple cross-mark, similar to the way in which an individual can use an X-mark as a legal signature even in the modern period. Regardless, the Tau in this passage represents Job’s autograph, which he is willing to make in order to underscore his conviction of innocence.

6. Tertullian also references this passage in *Adv. Marc.* 3.22.5–6. Ernest Evans, ed., *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 240.

7. See Erich Dinkler, “Comments on the History of the Symbol of the Cross,” *JTC* 1 (1965): 137–145. An echo of Exod 13:9 is possible in this passage, referencing the Passover protection mark (Exod 12:22 ff.) by requiring לאות לידך (“a sign on your hand”) and וְנָךְ לְזִכְרוֹן (“a memorial between your eyes”). These marks were probably indicators that the person was the property of Yahweh, with the consequent obligation of obedience and loyalty to him. In comparison, the practice of anointing was said to include the mark of a Tau on the forehead in a later comment in the Babylonian Talmud, *Horayoth* 12a sBT 47, 86: “Our Rabbis taught, ‘How were the kings anointed?—In the shape of a wreath. And the priests?—In the shape of a Chi. What is meant by “the shape of a Chi?”’ R. Menashya b. Gadda replied: ‘In the shape of a Greek χ,’” from *The Babylonian Talmud* (vol. 7; ed. I. Epstein; London: Soncino Press, 1935), 86.

It is unclear whether this mark was a literal or symbolic gesture. However, the prohibition against sacral marking (Lev 19:28), where tattoos were understood to signal the person as the property of a deity, was disobeyed even in the days of Philo (*De spec. leg.* 1.58): “Some act under an extreme insanity, to the point that they do not leave themselves a way of escape by repentance, but go into slavery to the works of men and make it known by means of contracts not written on parchment, but, like the custom of slaves, brand their bodies with hot irons. These are indelible, for no amount of time can make them fade.”

Thus, from non-literary and literary sources in ancient Palestine at least three purposes for the cross-mark can be readily identified: a magical/religious symbol of protection, a phonetic symbol, or a simple mark or signature. Jack Finegan, exploring the history of the cross in his book, *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*, sees other functions of Tau in Jewish life prior to Christianity, such as a “Sign for the Name of God,” and “The Sign of the Anointed One.”<sup>8</sup> But his arguments for these are less than convincing, as they are based on theological proof-texts from both Talmudic and Christian references which are imposed on data from centuries earlier.

Finegan makes the misguided argument that the presence of ✕-marks on the Isaiah scroll from Qumran (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) illustrates that the Tau was employed to delineate messianic passages; he therefore believes that the cross-mark had messianic associations for Jews prior to its incorporation into Christian symbolism. Finegan’s argument follows closely that of J. L. Teicher,<sup>9</sup> and, for both of these authors, the indication of a messianic link to Tau (and even the *origin* of this scroll for Teicher!) is based heavily on the witness of Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures* (written 392 C.E.), recording the practice of some Christian scribes who, with a cross-mark, labelled prophetic passages in the Hebrew scriptures which they believed were messianic. Finegan argues that “the congruity of what Epiphanius says with the evidence in the Isaiah scroll, therefore, justifies us in taking the Christian signs as a heritage from Jewish scribes.”<sup>10</sup> While observing a Jewish precedent for the use of Tau is in general a correct conclusion, to use 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as proof of its “messianic associations” without including additional contemporary evidence is, in my view, questionable, and makes too much of a simple scribal ear-mark. Rather, that ✕-marks

8. Jack Finegan, “The Cross,” in *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (rev. ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 345–48. I only address his section on the cross-mark representing “The Sign of the Anointed One” above. Another section, “The Sign of the Name of God,” makes comparisons of the Tau with phylacteries, and, again, his argument suffers from proof-texting from later sources without offering substantial evidence of the claim from earlier ones.

9. J. L. Teicher, “Material Evidence of the Christian Origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *JJS* 3 (1952): 128–133, and idem, “The Christian Interpretation of the Sign ✕ in the Isaiah Scroll,” *VT* 5 (1955): 189–198.

10. Finegan, “The Cross,” 348.

appear in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is one of many examples of scribal marginal notations on this and other scrolls from Qumran (some of which have the appearance of Chinese script, but this would not necessarily indicate that they had Far Eastern origin).<sup>11</sup>

Another instance of prematurely (and perhaps artificially) attributing a spurious meaning to Jewish artefacts within Palestine involves ossuaries which were adorned with cross-marks, dating from between the middle part of the first century B.C.E. through the first half of the second century C.E.<sup>12</sup> Again, some scholars have viewed these ossuaries as originating from Christian groups, with examples near Jerusalem including the ossuary storeroom on the Mount of Offence, the tomb of Nicanor on Mount Scopus, Talpioth, and the Dominus Flavit necropolis on the Mount of Olives.<sup>13</sup> Most of the occurrences of the many cross-marks on these ossuaries can be explained as either simple guide-marks for the craftsmen, or, in conjunction with the aforementioned eschatological use of the Tau-mark as a sign of deliverance (i.e. Ezek 9:4–6), in association with the dead.<sup>14</sup>

11. See Isaiah Sonne, "The X-Sign in the Isaiah Scroll," *VT* 4 (1954): 90–94, for a justifiably strong critique of Teicher's proposals; also, Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery: 1 The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary* (New Haven: ASOR, 1950), and Donald Parry and Elisha Qimron, *The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>): A New Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), especially plates on pp. 42, 44, 106.

12. Robert H. Smith, "The Cross Marks on Jewish Ossuaries," *PEQ* (1974), 53–66.

13. *Ibid.*, 53–66, treats all of these in order, as does Finegan, "The Cross," 357–74 (note that the photograph of the *iota-chi-beta* figure from Dominus Flavit ossuary no. 18 was skewed by ninety degrees in the first edition, giving the strong impression that it was a Christian monogram, see p. 373); cf. C. Clermont-Ganneau, "The Gate of Nicanor in the Temple of Jerusalem," *PEFQS* (1903): 125–131; E. Stauffer, "Zu den Kreuzeszeichen von Talpioth," *ZNTW* 43 (1950–51): 262; Duncan Fishwick, "The Talpioth Ossuaries Again," *NTS* 10 (1963–64): 49–61; V. Tzaferis, "Jewish Tombs at and near Giv'at ha-Mivtar, Jerusalem," *IEJ* 20 (1970): 18–32.

14. Smith, "Cross Marks," 65, concludes succinctly: "It is methodologically questionable to attribute any particular religious symbolism to a cross mark unless it either is executed in a distinctive manner which clearly demonstrates its symbolic intent or occurs within a visible context where religious symbolism is evident. The crudely executed cross marks on these ossuaries do not meet these requirements. . . . To avoid drawing unwarranted conclusions from such evidence, one must consider any ambiguous or uncertain marks, including crosses, in the light of the total body of similar marks. If this test is applied to ossuaries, the

In 1947, attempting to identify the origins of Jewish ossuaries which bore charcoal cross-marks at Talpioth, E. Sukenik stated bluntly that “the earliest records of Christianity” had been found.<sup>15</sup> The cross-marks adorned the sides of a bone box bearing two inscriptions: *Ἰησοῦς ἰού* appeared in charcoal graffiti on the face, and *Ἰησοῦς ἀλώθ* was chiselled onto the surface of the lid. Translating the writings as “Jesus, woe!” and “Jesus, alas!” respectively, Sukenik saw the presence of the cross-marks and inscriptions as “representing a lamentation for the crucifixion of Jesus by some of His disciples.”<sup>16</sup> Later scholars corrected both Sukenik’s mistranslation of the inscriptions<sup>17</sup> (messages of a similar nature have no attestation on Jewish ossuaries of this era or provenance) and his misinterpretation of the cross-signs.<sup>18</sup>

The findings described above reveal an additional function of the cross-mark during this era: as a technical guide for carving and aligning stone surfaces. Lessons learned from past archaeological inquiries caution against too quickly seeing Christian symbolic meaning in material evidences from Palestine, even when they date to the beginning of the Christian era. Clearly, the cross-mark was already in wide use by the Jewish people at the beginning of the Jesus movement. Yet, while recognizing the general Jewish background of the Tau-mark in first-century Palestine, the question still remains: How did the cross develop into *the* quintessential Christian symbol?

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interpretation of a few of the marks as religious amid a much larger number of practical marks will be seen to be very questionable.”

15. E. Sukenik, “The Earliest Records of Christianity,” *AJA* 51 (1947), 351–65.

16. *Ibid.*, 365.

17. J. P. Kane, “By No Means ‘The Earliest Records of Christianity’—With an Emended Reading of the Talpioth Inscription *ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΙΟΥ*,” *PEQ* (1971), 103–108, where Kane gives several possibilities of translations which do not require that a Christian origin must be inferred from the cross-marks, such as “Jesus, son of Eias,” and “Jesus, son of Aloth,” both verifiable personal names from the period. Cf. Dinkler, “History of the Symbol of the Cross,” 126–131, 143; cf. C. H. Kraeling, “Christian Burial Urns?” *BA* 9 (1946): 20, who writes, “. . . it would be possible to suppose that the crosses had apotropaic significance being intended to guard the bones against evil demonic powers that might disturb the repose of the deceased.”

18. Cf. Smith, “Cross Marks,” 58–60, who concludes that these crosses are merely guide-marks for designs which were then never executed on the ossuary surface.

## The Cross in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature

For the purpose of analyzing the New Testament and Patristic references to the cross it is important to distinguish between what I shall call ‘ideological symbols’ and ‘material symbols.’ Ideological symbols from early Christian writing consist of typologies of the cross found in the Hebrew scriptures, references to the cross which contain theological meaning, or observations of cross representations of a more universal nature.<sup>19</sup> Because they make reference to the actual cross of Jesus, before categorizing the ideological symbols I will deal briefly with the words for “cross” found in the New Testament. The material symbols, which emerge from and express the ideological symbols, are the subject of the final section of this chapter.

The two koiné-Greek words found in the New Testament which refer to the cross are *σταυρός* and *ξύλον*, and there is a noticeable distinction in how these terms are employed within the canon.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the Passion narratives in all four gospels *σταυρός* is used exclusively for the instrument of Jesus’ execution;<sup>21</sup> likewise, within the Pauline corpus *σταυρός* predominates, and only when Paul is quoting Hebrew scripture does he use *ξύλον*.<sup>22</sup> Else-

19. The distinction between typologies and symbols is blurred at points but necessary for this discussion. Typologies refer to understanding an event or saying in the Hebrew scripture as a pre-figuration (and therefore a ‘type’) of Jesus’ cross/crucifixion. Symbols, on the other hand, represent a larger or abstract meaning contained in verbal or visual ‘short-hand.’ It is necessary to subdivide ideological symbols into those which derive from theological foundations, and those from more universal observations. General symbols differ from material symbols in that they represent only the cross secondarily and, though physical realities, they were not constructed with the primary purpose of picturing the *σταυρός*.

20. G. Q. Reijnders, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1965), 11–18.

21. Mt 27:32, 40, 42; Mk 15:21, 30, 32; Lk 23:26; Jn 19:17, 19, 25, 31. It is also true that the verbal form of this word, *σταυροῦν* (“crucifixion”), is used exclusively within the gospels. Other references to “cross” in the Synoptics also use *σταυρός*: Mt 10:38, 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23, 14:27 (all references to “taking up the cross”); cf. Gal 2:20.

22. In Gal 3:13 *ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου* (“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), Paul alters the LXX text by omitting the reference to God; cf. LXX, Deut

where in the New Testament *ξύλον* is found in decidedly Jewish contexts,<sup>23</sup> a legacy of understanding LXX passages referring to “hanging on a tree” as a form of crucifixion.<sup>24</sup>

In John’s gospel, one encounters a somewhat veiled reference to Jesus’ crucifixion in the phrase *ὑψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν* (“lifted up the serpent”), which occurs in three places.<sup>25</sup> Stating that the cross was “lifted up” seems to view Jesus’ death as the necessary precursor to his resurrection rather than in terms of its shame and humiliation—“crucifixion was called *ὑψωθῆναι* in a sense approximating *δοξασθῆναι*.”<sup>26</sup> Consequently, there is at least an inferential theology of the cross in the gospel of John. It could thus be argued that statements such as “taking up the cross,” and “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so much the Son of Man be lifted up,” set into motion

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21:23 ὅτι κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεός πάς κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλον (“Cursed by God is everyone who hangs on a tree”).

23. Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; 1 Pet 2:24 (this is the only text not obviously referring to or addressing a Jewish situation. The references to and quotations from Isa 53 in the immediate context may have influenced the choice of *ξύλον* over *σταυρός*).

24. I argue in Chapter Seven that the Jews, by the New Testament era, had come to understand references to “hanging” in the LXX (e.g., Deut 21:23) as crucifixion, in light of their experience of Roman rule. Furthermore, the LXX version of Deut 21:23 translates *ἄβ* (“tree”) as *ξύλον* and connects it with the verb *κρεμάζειν*, which is the more usual choice in LXX when referencing the hanging of a body in post-mortem shame on a stake/tree (the only use of *σταυροῦν* in the LXX is Esth 7:9). *ἄβ*, as far as can be determined, never came to stand for “cross,” but maintained its simple meaning as “wood” or “tree.” This was not the case, however, with *ξύλον*. Among Greek-speaking Jews *ξύλον* eventually came to stand for the wood of Jesus’ cross, and was interchangeable with *σταυρός*. This interchange can also be seen in Josephus’ reference to Esth 2:23 in *Ant.* 11.184 ff., where the *ξύλον* referenced in 11.246 is immediately called *σταυρός* in 11.261 and 11.266.

That *ξύλον* was associated with a sense of humiliation and torture comes from its use in signifying an instrument of punishment (e.g., Acts 16:24). Reijners, *Terminology of the Holy Cross*, states, “. . . in profane Greek already the word *ξύλον* contained the shade of meaning: ‘indignity,’ ‘ignominy.’ It was therefore merely a short step (via the Septuagint) to the meaning ‘cross,’ which *ξύλον* can assume in the New Testament. This ‘short step,’ the use of *ξύλον* with this connotation as in the Septuagint in Deut 21:22 f., was, however, of decisive significance for the adoption of *ξύλον* in the meaning of ‘cross’ in the New Testament and in early Patristic literature,” (p. 11).

25. Jn 3:14, 8:28, 12:32–34.

26. Johannes Schneider, “*σταυρός*,” *TDNT* (10 vols.; eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–76), 7:574.

TYPE	TEXT	
<i>redemption/atonement and reconciliation</i>	Col 1:20	“making peace by the blood of his cross”
	Eph 2:16	“united in one Body through the cross”
<i>victory over death/ power of God</i>	1 Cor 1:17	“in order that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power”
	1 Cor 1:18	“the word of the cross . . . is the power of God”
<i>faith in Christ/ discipleship</i>	Gal 6:12	“persecuted on account of the cross of Christ”
	Phil 3:18	“enemies of the cross of Christ”
<i>the wisdom of God</i>	1 Cor 1:23	“we preach Christ crucified . . . the wisdom of God”
	Gal 5:11	“stumbling block of the cross”

TABLE 25. Examples of theological symbolism of the cross in the New Testament.

the proliferation of cross-symbolism and typologies from the Hebrew scriptures in the Christian texts of the second and third centuries C.E.

Johannes Schneider observes that “Paul was the first to establish a theology of the cross. He is not concerned to depict the historical event of the crucifixion of Jesus but rather to show its saving significance.”<sup>27</sup> Yet it is difficult to imagine that Paul was indifferent to the historical reality of the cross, especially considering his statements in Galatians 3:1 (the graphic nature of Jesus’ actual crucifixion seems to be the very point of the passage). Rather, a theology of the cross does indeed appear in the Pauline corpus, where the cross becomes an overt theological symbol for the types shown in Table 25.<sup>28</sup>

27. Schneider, “*σταυρός*,” 575. See also Romano Penna, *Paul the Apostle: Wisdom and Folly of the Cross* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996). It cannot actually be confirmed, as Schneider suggests, that Paul was the “first to establish a theology of the cross.” His extant letters contain such a theology, but how can it be known whether he was the first to “establish” it? Moreover, as I state above, I disagree that Paul had no concern to “depict the historical event of the crucifixion of Jesus”—a claim demonstrably incorrect given Paul’s statement in Gal 3:1.

28. It is not my purpose here, nor in the section concerning early Christian writings, to give comprehensive indices for all references to the cross found within these texts, but instead to differentiate the various categories of cross symbolism found therein.

TYPE	TERMINOLOGY	REFERENCES
horn	κέρας/cornu	Gen 22:13; Deut 33:17; Ps 22:21
rod	ῥάβδος/virga	Gen 30:37 ff.; 32:10; 38:25; Exod 14:16; 17:5 f.; Num 17; Ps 2:9; 22:4; 44:7; 109:2; Isa 11:1; Dan 2:34
sign	σημεῖον/signum	Num 21:4–9
orant posture	–	Exod 17:10; Isa 65:2
Tau	Tau/T	Ezek 9:4
tree of life	ξύλον/lignum	Gen 2:9

TABLE 26. Typology from Hebrew scripture.

Beyond the data presented there, an argument could be made for the cross as a symbol of obedience (cf. Phil 2:8; Heb 12:2)—but Table 25 illustrates that there is a marked fluidity in Paul’s usage of *σταυρός* which does not easily lend itself to categorization. Imbuing the event of Jesus’ crucifixion with salvific and eschatological meaning, the early followers of Jesus subordinated the overwhelming shame surrounding the cross (in the wider culture) to the ‘glory’ of the crucifixion/resurrection event.<sup>29</sup> What remains crucial for consideration here is the noticeable development of ideological symbolism concerning the cross within the New Testament itself.

During the next two centuries a profound interest in the cross can be read in the writings of the post-apostolic Fathers, who discerned a great number of representations of the cross in the world about them, while simultaneously expanding on typologies from the Hebrew scripture (the so-called *testimonia crucis*). Not only was the use of cross-symbolism expanded, but the cross itself

29. The early Christians did not see the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as separate events, a viewpoint most noticeable in John’s gospel, where Jesus appears to be entirely in control of the events surrounding his death (and where crucifixion is pictured as a “lifting up,” i.e., as a means to ultimate glorification). Interestingly, the earliest crucifixion images depict Christ in a ‘living’ state on the cross—with eyes wide open—revealing how the crucifixion and the resurrection were understood as two sides of the same event. Cf. Morna Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 94–111.

becomes an independent entity in the *Gospel of Peter*,<sup>30</sup> and is used by Christians in an apotropaic manner in amulets and other jewellery.<sup>31</sup> The New Testament terms *σταυρός* and *ξύλον* are appropriated (translated *crux* and *lignum* respectively by Latin authors) and their frequency and manner of use mirrors that found in the New Testament.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the literal cross of Jesus, and the theological symbolisms introduced in the New Testament, Patristic literature extends the ideological symbols for the cross from the Hebrew scriptures, shown in Table 26.<sup>33</sup>

Especially significant in Patristic thinking was the association of the paleo-Hebrew letter Tau with the cross of Jesus. The idea of a sacral mark contin-

30. The *Gospel of Peter* (circa 175 C.E. from Syria), the only extant Greek fragment of which was found in 1886 in Egypt, describes the resurrection in 10:38–39. The soldiers report that they saw three men exiting the tomb, two of them bearing the third, and the cross followed them out. David Cartlidge and David Dungan, eds., *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1980), 85.

31. I address this in the following section, “The Cross in Visual/Material Symbolism.”

32. See Reijnders, *Terminology of the Holy Cross*, 18–96 for a comprehensive examination of the texts.

33. *Horn*—For Gen 22:13 see Tertullian, *Adv. Iud.* 13.21; for Deut 33:17 see Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 91.1–3; for Ps 22:21 see Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3.19.5. *Rod*—Justin Martyr is the only Apologist to extensively link *ῥάβδος* with the cross, presumably in connection with *ξύλον*. He covers numerous typologies in *Dial.* 86 (Gen 30:37 ff.; 32:10; 38:25; Exod 14:16; 17:5 f.; Num 17; Ps 22:4; Isa 11:1). Texts mentioned elsewhere: Ps 2:9—1 *Apol.* 40.15; Ps 44:7—*Dial.* 38.4; Ps 109:2—1 *Apol.* 45.3; The Latin translation of Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.28, has an amplification of two texts (Exod 7:14 and Dan 2:34) with reference to the rod (*virga*) of Moses, which became flesh (*incarnata*), in order to defeat and devour the Egyptian rods. Christ is pictured as the incarnation of flesh that overcame evil, the *virga incarnata*. Another interesting reference to the cross as *ῥάβδος* is found in an acrostic (which itself is part of a larger IΞΘΨΥΣ acrostic) from the apocryphal Christian *Sibylline Oracles* 8.248; see E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), 733. *Sign*—*Sap.* 16:6 calls the bronze serpent formed by Moses and erected on a pole (Num 21:8 f.) a *σύμβολον σωτηρίας* (“symbol of salvation”), the ideology behind *Ps. Barn.* 12.5: “Again, when Israel fell, Moses made a type of Jesus, [showing] that he would have to suffer and waken to life, the one they thought killed on a ‘sign.’” *Orant posture*—For Exod 17:10 see Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 4.50; Isa 65:2; Tertullian, *Adv. Iud.* 13.10. Cf. *Odes of Solomon* 27.1; 42.1. See Majella Franzmann, *The Odes of Solomon: An Analysis of the Poetical Structure and Form* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 204, 283. *Tau*—For Ezek 9:4 see Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3.22.5–7. *Tree of life*—For Gen 2:9 see Tertullian, *Adv. Iud.* 13.19; *Dial.* 86.1.

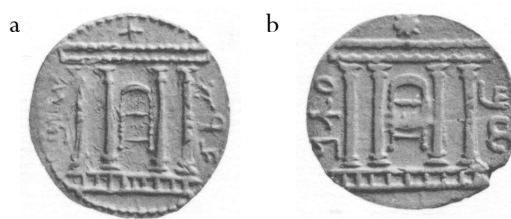


FIGURE 4. Jewish tetradrachmae showing the screen of the Tabernacle with small marks above: (a) cross-mark, and (b) star-mark.

ued into post-exilic times, and for proof of this we can turn to at least two sources. In *Psalms of Solomon* 15:6–9 the Ezekiel imagery is clearly evident:

For the mark of the Lord is on the righteous for their salvation . . . and the ones who do evil will not escape from the judgement of the Lord . . . for the mark of destruction is upon their forehead.

For Jews, the Tau continued to have a protective connotation as the mark of Yahweh into the New Testament era. Evidence for this from later centuries can be seen on coins from the Second Revolt (132–135 C.E.). Each tetradrachma presented in Figure 4 depicts the screen of the Tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant centred within. Interestingly, above the first of these in Figure 4 (a) is a small cross-mark (visible on numerous coins of similar origin) identified as the paleo-Hebrew letter Tau by several numismatians. Its purpose is either that of replicating the “mark of Yahweh” or of designating the coin as “Temple due.”<sup>34</sup> Since the coins were made of bronze and not of silver it is unlikely that the Tau signified a token belonging to the Temple; it is more probable that this is an example of the Tau functioning as the “mark of Yahweh.” This conclusion would appear to be further corroborated by com-

34. E. W. Klimowsky, “Symbols on Ancient Jewish Coins,” in *The Dating and Meaning of Ancient Jewish Coins and Symbols* (Tel-Aviv/Jerusalem: Schohen Publishing House, 1958), 94–95. Klimowski believes that this tetradrachma was to be used as part of the “Temple due” based on the statement in *Mishnah Zeraim, Moaser Sheni* 4.11: “If a man found a vessel and on it was inscribed . . . a tau, it is Terumah (belonging to the Temple),” taken from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford, 1933), 80. That the Tau was also functioning as a phonetic character on coins, see Plate 20, no. 8 in George F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine in the British Museum* (London: Longmans & Co., 1914).

paring the mark with symbols found above the Tabernacle on other coins from the same provenance and time period. An example of this, shown in Figure 4 (b), is the star or solar wheel, whose (magical?) function possibly replicates that of the Tau occupying the same position on other coins.<sup>35</sup>

It is highly probable that the cross-mark featured on the coins of the Second Revolt is again the “mark of Yahweh;” regardless, the mark was fully in use during the Patristic period, and the longevity of this particular symbol among the Jews is firmly established. The early Christians—having emerged from Palestinian Judaism—no doubt readily adapted the Tau mark, imbuing it with further significance of the death of Jesus. But the early Christians did not stop with their reclaiming of the cross in the Hebrew Bible. For them, God had ensured that ‘his mark’ was accessible in more universal ways, found even in the common substance of everyday life: ship’s mast and yard, human figure, trophy/Roman standard, Tau (numeral/Greek letter), plough/other tools, universal cross.<sup>36</sup>

There can be no doubt that a major expansion of ideological symbolism pertaining to the cross occurred within the Christian literature of the second and third centuries C.E. While categorically denying actual worship of the cross

35. See A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins* (3d ed.; Jerusalem: Ruben Mass, 1963), 15, who wonders if the star is actually a wheel or perhaps a solar figure.

36. *Ship’s mast and yard*—Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 29.8; cf. Hippolytus, *De Anti.* 59 for an extended analogy of the seafaring Church. Clement relates Christ to Odysseus tied to the mast of a ship as it passed the Sirens in *Prot.* 12.118.4. *Human figure*—Hippolytus, *De Anti.* 59; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 34.20.5; cf. *Col* 2:15. *Trophy/Roman standard*—See Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 55.3. In connection with this J. Daniélou mentions *arepo* in the ROTAS-SATOR square: “Dans les solutions proposées pour l’interprétation de cette énigme, deux choses semblent acquises. La première est qu’elle figure une croix à la fois par sa disposition générale et par la place des T, figures de la croix. On s’en convaincra en disposant ainsi le carré: Le second point est que le mot bizarre *arepo* semble bien en rapport avec le mot celte *arepennis* qui signifie ‘aprent’ et désigne la charrue.” J. Daniélou, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs* (Paris: Éditions Du Seuil, 1961), 105–106; see also p. 95, “La charrue et la hache.” *Tau (numeral/Greek letter)*—Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 55.4; Tertullian, *Adv. Nat.* 1.12.7. *Plough/other tools*—Also note the extraordinary commentary on *Gen* 14:14, 17:23 in *Ps. Barn.* 9:8–9. See Edgar Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London, Independent Press, 1950), 33. It was thought that Noah’s ark was a symbol of the cross in that it was three hundred cubits in length, made of wood, and a means of salvation; cf. Clement, *Strom.* 6.87.2. *Universal cross*—Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 55.2–3.

(or its use as a secret symbol)<sup>37</sup> the Patristic writers sought to build an extensive Christian vocabulary of cross-related symbols which could be easily referenced and made meaningful to communities of disciples. With the cross found in quite disparate contexts—theological treatises, typological interpretations of the Hebrew scripture, and in unexpected mundane objects—the use of the cross in early Christian culture moved quickly beyond its verbal components. Thus, a foundation was established which led inexorably to non-literary applications, where material expressions of the cross were a natural extension of this process of visualisation and symbolisation.

## The Cross in Visual/Material Symbolism

It is a widely held conviction that “the earliest Christian images appeared somewhere about the year 300 [C.E.]. This means that during roughly a century and a half the Christians did without any figurative representations of a religious character.”<sup>38</sup> The rationale behind this conclusion is usually supported by two explanations: (1) early Christianity, as a derivation of Judaism, ostensibly rejected religious pictorial images,<sup>39</sup> and (2) only after the ‘Peace of the Church’ in 311 C.E. and the conversion of Constantine did Christians enjoy the freedom to openly express religious symbols (thus accounting for the explosion of religious art from the middle of the fourth century C.E. onward).<sup>40</sup> It is simply an overstatement, however, to argue that prior to the fourth century there is no evidence of Christian material culture worth atten-

37. Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 29.6; cf. Tertullian, *1 Apol.* 9.

38. André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 7.

39. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1984), 415. Cf. Paul Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 99–145. Finney asserts that the early Christians were “an invisible group in Greco-Roman society” due to the lack of artefacts from that period. He does not attribute this to Christian opposition to pictorial representation; rather, he believes that it is derived from a lack of external markers to indicate Christian distinctiveness during the first two centuries of the religion (i.e., their lack of imagination).

40. Michael Gough, *The Origins of Christian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 25.

tion. The final section of this chapter surveys material representations of the cross from that era. Under consideration first are forms of movement made by the hand or a particular prayer posture which depict the cross.

### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The earliest visual representation of the cross may have involved movements of the body which replicated a cruciform image. I suggest that this may pre-date other forms of cross-symbolism because of the relative ease with which it can be produced (no materials, obviously, are required other than the body) as well as its early attestation in Patristic literature. If making a cross sign did develop contemporaneously with other material and visual Christian symbols it would be impossible to determine from current data which of the forms came first, or which influenced the other's development. At best it can be said that by the second century 'signing' the cross was practiced in African churches, congregations in Rome, and probably in the lands connecting them.<sup>41</sup>

Tertullian, the first Patristic author to mention this practice, describes its use:

Every time we go out, at every beginning and ending, when we dress, when we put on our shoes, when we take a bath, when we go to the table, when we light our lamps, when going to bed, when sitting down, at any kind of work, we make the sign of the cross on our foreheads.<sup>42</sup>

He presumes this practice when he condemns the intermarriage of Christians and non-Christians: "Will it go unnoticed when you make the sign of the cross over your bed and over your body?"<sup>43</sup> He is clear to point out that this practice came from tradition and not the scriptures.<sup>44</sup>

Why did the early Christians begin making the sign of the cross? No definitive answer is possible, although it might have been a direct application of

41. Tertullian and Cyprian bear witness to its use in Africa; Hippolytus to its use in Rome.

42. Tertullian, *De Cor.* 3.4.

43. Tertullian, *Adv. Ux.* 2.5.2.

44. Tertullian, *De Cor.* 4.1.

Ezekiel 9:4—as echoed in the New Testament Apocalypse<sup>45</sup>—where a person traced a Tau on his forehead and right hand (whether literally with a writing instrument or symbolically with the tip of a finger). J. Daniélou believes that it began as part of the post-baptismal rite.<sup>46</sup> Others interpret the sign as an apotropaic gesture, useful in exorcism and employed to ward off evil.<sup>47</sup> All of these purposes for making the sign of the cross can be found in Patristic literature, and the descriptions given there are of a custom that had been fully established. Whatever the means of its inception, the *signum crucis* introduced a somatic component of great utility into the visual cross-symbolism of early Christianity.<sup>48</sup>

#### THE ORANT POSTURE OF PRAYER

Another cruciform image made with the body occurred in prayer—the orant posture (see Figure 5)—which involved splaying the hands as if affixed

45. Rev 7:1, 14:1, 22:4.

46. See Tertullian, *De Bapt.* 6.1–2. J. Daniélou, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs*, 143, asserts: “Le signe de croix apparaît d’abord dans le rites baptismaux. C’est son usage le plus archaïque.”

47. Hippolytus, *Trad. Apoc.* 20.8; 36.11; and the entirety of 37. In these and other texts within Hippolytus a protective and warding function for the sign of the cross is mentioned. It is to be used at exorcism, and when tempted, as a defence against the devil. For other examples of the apotropaic use of the sign of the cross see: *Acta Thom.* 50 (the Apostles perform the sign of the cross over the Eucharistic bread); 54 (a young man is able to raise the dead by means of the sign); 157 (the Apostles create holy oil); *Acta Joan.* 9 (John neutralizes poison within a chalice by means of the sign); 115 (John made the sign on every part of his body immediately prior to his own death). One might ask: Where is the division between an act of faith that employs religious symbolism and an apotropaic/magical gesture? Part of the answer may depend entirely on the state of mind of the one performing the ritual. After Augustine elevated the sign of the cross to the status of a ritual possessing sacramental efficacy (*In Io.* 118.5), however, its apotropaic use certainly would have *increased*.

48. It is interesting to note that in early Christian literature *σημείον* and *signum* were increasingly reserved to indicate this gesture; see Reijners, *Terminology of the Holy Cross*, 174. The visual symbol established itself as the predominant connotation of these terms. The ambivalence of the terms made it particularly useful for some authors (note the rarity of *σταυρός* in Clement and its total absence from the *Odes*), suggesting that “for some writers the term *σημείον* was a sublimation of the harsh *σταυρός*,” Reijners, *Terminology of the Holy Cross*, 148. The aesthetic preference of non-Christian writers to avoid the use of graphic terms for crucifixion is noted in Chapter Seven.



FIGURE 5. Orant, wall painting in the catacomb of Domitilla, Rome.

to a cross. Tertullian explains its adoption by early Christians: “We not only raise our hands, we even stretch them out and imitate the attitude of the suffering Lord (on the cross) and glorify Christ when we pray.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, the orant posture of prayer was valued because it expressed an individual’s piety in the depiction of the crucifixion of Jesus (cf. 1 Tim 2:8).

The literary background of this stance in the Hebrew scripture, noted above in Table 26, is found in Moses’ cruciform-posture during the battle with Amalek. Justin Martyr asserted that the orant position of Moses as he prayed did not cause Israel to win; rather his posture had its value and power in symbolizing the cross of Jesus.<sup>50</sup> A similar idea is expressed in the *Odes of Solomon* 27:1–2:

I expand my hands and I sanctify them to my Lord, for the expansion of my hands is His sign; and my expansion is the upright wood.<sup>51</sup>

49. Tertullian, *De Orat.* 14; idem, *Adv. Iud.* 13.10; idem, *Dial.* 97.2. I note the Latin *orans* (“one who prays”).

50. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 90.5, where he mentions the “sign of the cross,” does not refer to the *signum crucis* but to the orant form of prayer.

51. See also *Odes* 42:1–2.

For Tertullian it was a matter of “modesty and humility” that Christians refrain from raising their hands too high during prayer; instead, he stressed the symbolism of the cross by suggesting that supplicants extend their hands laterally.<sup>52</sup> As with the *signum crucis*, the orant posture seems to have been part of the wider Christian culture, rather than the practice of an isolated group. Several examples of the orant image can be seen in some of the earliest Christian paintings in the Roman catacombs (circa 200–300 C. E.).<sup>53</sup>

#### ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ AS A NOMEN SACRUM (STAUROGRAM)

Leaving behind the somatic components of cross-symbolism, and turning to written symbols, the *nomina sacra* are part of “the earliest material artefacts of early Christianity and constitute our earliest evidence of what may be thought of as an emerging Christian material culture.”<sup>54</sup> These “sacred names” are normally set apart from the text around them by means of both a horizontal over-stroke and occasional contraction of the word.<sup>55</sup> The list of *nomina sacra*

52. Tertullian, *De Orat.* 17.1.

53. The earliest catacomb art consists of carved images and monograms, while paintings became more popular during the third and especially fourth centuries C.E.

54. Larry Hurtado, “The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the *Nomina Sacra* and the Staurogram,” in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquities: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (eds. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 283.

55. After an initial analysis by Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich: C. H. Beck’sche, 1907), scholarship on the *nomina sacra* developed according to later discoveries by F. G. Kenyon, “*Nomina Sacra* in the Chester Beatty Papyri,” *Aegyptus* 13 (1933): 5–10; also A. H. R. E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.: The Sources and Some Deductions* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Bavata 8; Leiden: Brill, 1959). Since then the views of Traube and Paap have been revised by several scholars and further proposals have been made. See Schuyler Brown, “Concerning the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” *SPap* 9 (1970): 7–19; C. H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 26–48; Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 36–37; Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995), 74–78; Larry Hurtado, “The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 655–73; and especially idem, “The Staurogram in Early Christian Manuscripts: The Earliest Visual Refer-

becomes progressively longer with the passage of time: the first cluster probably included names for God and Jesus, but eventually the religious motivation behind their initial creation spread to other words, including *σταυρός*.<sup>56</sup>

Under consideration in this section are the manifestations of *σταυρός* as a *nomen sacrum*, but in particular I will give attention to the visual distinctiveness of the staurogram symbol. *Σταυρός* appears in the same manner as the other *nomina sacra*: thus  $\overline{\sigma\tau\varsigma}$ , with variations based on inflexion:  $\overline{\sigma\tau\rho\varsigma}$ ,  $\overline{\sigma\tau\rho\omega}$ ,  $\overline{\sigma\tau\nu}$ , and so on. These forms of *σταυρός* can be found in biblical manuscripts and in a wide range of Christian literature from the second century onwards.<sup>57</sup> There is therefore significance in the way in which Christian scribes treated *σταυρός*, but this does not qualify as visual symbolisation of the cross since there is correspondence with the use of other *nomina sacra* in form and function as literary devices of scribal piety.<sup>58</sup> What does qualify as an early depic-

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ences to the Crucified Jesus?" in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Text and Their World* (eds. Thomas J. Krause and Tobias Nicklas; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 207–226; idem, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 135–154.

Most significant for *σταυρός* and the staurogram in the *nomina sacra* have been: Max Sulzberger, "Le symbole de la croix et les monogrammes de Jésus chez les premiers chrétiens," *Byzantion* 2 (1925); Jean de Savignac, "Ⲫ<sup>75</sup>: Les Papyrus Bodmer XIV et XV," *Scriptorium* 17 (1963); Kurt Aland, "Bemerkungen zum alter und zur entstehung des Christogrammes anhand von beobachtungen bei Ⲫ<sup>66</sup> und Ⲫ<sup>75</sup>," *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und Seines Texts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967): 173–179; M. Black, "The Chi-Rho Sign —Christogram or Staurogram?" in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday* (eds. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 319–27; Larry Hurtado, "Earliest Evidence," 271–88.

56. The first *nomina sacra* were most likely *nomina divina*, contracted forms of *Κύριος*, *Θεός*, *Ἰησοῦς*, and *Χριστός*, which Hurtado, "Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 665–66, suggests probably began with special treatment of the name *Ἰησοῦς*, and spread quickly to the other titles attributed to God and Jesus. The later inclusion of terms such as *σταυρός* eventually increased the number of *nomina sacra* to fifteen, listed in Hurtado, "Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 657.

57. Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, 118–120, surveys the manuscript evidence, noting that verbal forms, such as *σταυροῦν*, also exist as *nomina sacra*.

58. See Hurtado, "Earliest Evidence," 277 for a discussion of the *nomina sacra* as a form of Christian scribal piety. The occurrence of the *nomina sacra* is probably an extension of the Jewish scribal tradition surrounding the Tetragram  $\text{יהוה}$  among Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. See George Howard, "The Tetragram and the New Testament," *JBL* 96 (1977):

tion of the cross is the staurogram (usually in the form of  $\text{P}$ , and less frequently as  $\text{†}$ ), found, for example in  $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$  and  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  from the second century C.E.<sup>59</sup>

Matthew Black compares the staurogram (the imposition of a *tau* and a *rho*) to the *chi-rho* figure  $\text{✠}$ , a sign popularised by Constantine and later Christian art. Noting that both monograms pre-date the Constantine *labarum*,<sup>60</sup> Black then asks which of the two forms was first produced (assuming that they were variations of the same form and that one had indeed produced the other). But his question regrettably drives his eventual conclusion: “Was the staurogram sign original and later turned into a Christogram, the *chi-rho*— $\text{Χριστός}$  monogram being the result of an aetiological explanation of the sign after its original meaning of staurogram had been forgotten?”<sup>61</sup> He deduces, after tracing the history of scholarship on the staurogram in Max Sulzberger,<sup>62</sup> Jean de Savignac<sup>63</sup> and Kurt Aland,<sup>64</sup> that there are two possible answers for the transformation of  $\text{P}$  to  $\text{✠}$ :

- (1) The original Christian sign was  $\text{P}$ , a *staurogram*, and this was aetiologically explained as a *Chi-Rho*, and turned into a *christogram*, a monogram of Christ. (2) In the

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63–83; Roberts, “*Manuscript, Society and Belief*,” 28–42; Hurtado “Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 660–65.

59.  $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$  can be viewed in Victor Martin, *Papyrus Bodmer II, Évangile de Jean, Chap. 1–14* (Cologne/Geneva: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1956);  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  can be viewed in Victor Martin and Kasser Rodolphe, *Papyrus Bodmer XIV, Évangile de Luc, Chap. 3–24* (Cologne/Geneva: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1961), also in Finegan, “The Cross,” 381, 383. Finney, *The Invisible God*, 101, mentions the *nomina sacra* in a perfunctory manner, and quickly dismisses their value as artefacts relevant to the study of Christian art.

60. For the two differing accounts from antiquity of the *labarum* in Constantine’s vision see Eusebius, *Vita Cons.* 1.26–31 and Lactantius, *Mort. Pers.* 44.52. Cf. P. C. Finney’s schematics in “*Labarum*,” *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (2d ed.; New York/London: Garland Publishers, 1998), 660.

61. Black, “The Chi-Rho Sign,” 319.

62. Sulzberger, “Le symbole de la croix,” 337–448, whose conclusion, uninformed by further manuscript discoveries, placed both  $\text{P}$  and  $\text{✠}$  as post-Constantinian inventions.

63. Savignac, “Les Papyrus Bodmer XIV et XV,” 50 ff. The argument here centres on the similarity of the Egyptian  $\text{†}$  and the  $\text{P}$ . Black depicts Savignac’s postulation incorrectly in his article, stating that the “historical development” of the “Christ-monogram,” a path mediated through Gnosticism, follows a route of reconstruction thus:  $\text{✠}$ ,  $\text{P}$ ,  $\text{†}$ ,  $\text{✠}$  (see p. 321). This imaginative, yet historically improbable reconstruction, should simply run thus:  $\text{†}$ ,  $\text{P}$ ,  $\text{✠}$ .

64. See Aland, “Christogrammes,” 174.



FIGURE 6. Coin of Herod I featuring a *tau-rho*.

light of the antiquity of the two forms of the Hebrew letter ט, † and ✕, as a sign for Jahweh in Hebrew and Jewish tradition, especially in its messianic and eschatological connotation, the addition of a loop in the first form, † becoming †̣, and a Rho in the second, ✕ becoming ✕̣, turned this Jewish ‘Eigentums und Schutzzeichens Jahweh’ into a Christian *tropaion*, a victory sign of the Passion, designating not simply Christus, but *Christus crucifixus*.<sup>65</sup>

While it may be true that the Christian cross was a *tropaion*—by way of an extension of the Hebrew Tau and the various other ideological symbols which underlay its material representation—neither of Black’s conclusions is necessary (or probable, in my opinion). His original question is flawed in that it assumes that the *tau-rho* was manipulated over time until the *chi-rho* replaced it. Both conclusions—the eventual discarding of the staurogram in favour of the Christogram and the development of a “hooked Tau”—reveal that Black has looked only within the confines of Christian culture for the origin of these symbols. The idea that †̣ underwent metamorphosis into ✕̣ by the hand of Christians is unnecessary since both symbols were demonstrably present in the wider culture before their subsequent co-option.

What Black therefore ignores is that both †̣ and ✕̣ have independent attestation outside of Christian visual culture. For example, on the coin shown in Figure 6 issued by Herod I in Palestine during his reign (37–34 B.C.E.), the *tau-rho* mark accompanies the inscription: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΡΩΔΟΥ (“King Herod”). Unlike its occurrence in P<sup>66</sup>, P<sup>75</sup>, and in some later biblical manuscripts, here the *tau-rho* stands independent of the surrounding text. Its meaning has perplexed numismatians, who have offered several different interpretations for this freestanding ligature. G. Hill excludes two possibilities: “It can hardly be the *crux ansata*—why should Herod use this symbol?—and that it is not a

65. Black, “The Chi-Rho Sign,” 327.

mark of value (for *τριᾶσις* or *τρίχαλκον*) is proved by the fact that it is found on no less than four different denominations of coins, all struck in the same third year of Herod's reign."<sup>66</sup> Hence, M. Narkiss suggests that the monogram  $\text{P}$  should be read as the first two letters of *Τραχωνίτις*, the region granted to Herod by Augustus.<sup>67</sup> B. Kanael, on the other hand, takes issue with the date which Narkiss ascribes to the grant of Trachonitis, suggesting that Herod's defeat of Antigonos in Judea (during the "third year of his reign"), is the event actually commemorated on the coin indicated by the *tau-rho*. According to Kanael, the date on the coin stands to the left of the tripod, making  $\text{P}$  (on the right) a double emphasis of *τρίτω ἔτει*.<sup>68</sup> Regardless of what Herod might have intended by use of the *tau-rho*, it is evident that this monogram could be interpreted with meaning as a figure in itself.

Herod's use of *tau-rho*, described here as but one example, establishes the fact that the symbol was already part of the wider culture of signs used in Palestine. That these ligatures existed as common forms of abbreviation among non-Christians means that Christians did not spontaneously generate either  $\text{P}$  or  $\text{X}$ . Rather, as Larry Hurtado has observed, "early Christians adapted terms and other items from their culture, and the *tau-rho* is another example. But the point is that the new meaning assigned to this monogram in these Christian papyri clearly has to do with the death of Jesus."<sup>69</sup>

Christian scribes utilized  $\text{P}$  as a sign whose form integrated letters already present in *σταυρός*, and thus only the *tau-rho* compendium could have functioned meaningfully in this word. Similarly, the ligature  $\text{X}$  incorporated the initial letters of *Χριστός*, even though it functioned as an abbreviation when appearing outside of Christian texts (e.g., *χιλιάρχης*, *χρήσιμον*, *χρονος*, etc.). Thus, in both cases, these monograms served a particular *literary* function which others simply could not provide. It is important to note that

66. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine*, xcvi.

67. M. Narkiss, "Notes on the Coins of the Herodian Dynasty," *JJPES* 1.4 (1934): 8–14. This event is described in Josephus, *War* 1.398; *Ant.* 16.9, and most likely took place later than Narkiss suggests.

68. Baruch Kanael, "The Coins of King Herod of the Third Year," *JQR* 62 (1951–1952): 261–64.

69. Hurtado, "Earliest Evidence," 280.

the Christian scribal use of these monograms did not equate to abbreviations, but functioned in an altogether different manner.<sup>70</sup>

The first level of meaning of the *tau-rho* was phonetic when it occurred within the script of Christian documents. This is so because *tau* and *rho* already existed as speech-fixing signs in the Greek orthography. The *tau-rho* embedded in the  $\text{P}^{66}$  version of John 19:16 ( $\Sigma \text{—} \text{P} \text{—} \Theta \text{H}$ ), for instance, was utilized as an irregular phonetic character (the very definition of a monogram). The reader would immediately have noted this anomaly, making a quick mental shift to the abstract concept that the monogram was intended to evoke—in this case, presumably, the cross of Jesus.<sup>71</sup> And it is precisely because it behaved as a visual trigger, existing simultaneously as a phonetic representation and a depiction of the cross of Jesus, that Christian scribes used the stauogram.<sup>72</sup>

Hurtado's 2006 publication *The Earliest Christian Artifacts* explores the origin, function, and significance of the stauogram at length. Suggesting some possibilities for its meaning, he observes:

The *tau-rho* device may have been appropriated by Christians originally, not (or not simply) on the basis of numerical symbolism, but because it could function as a *visual reference to the crucified Jesus*. In short, in its earliest Christian usage the *tau-rho* was not simply a "Christogram" but, more precisely, a "stauogram." . . . the *tau-rho* device was appropriated initially because it could serve as a stylized reference to (and visual representation of) Jesus on the cross. In this view, the *tau* is taken in its attested

70. Hurtado, "Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 659, explains why the *nomina sacra* cannot be understood as mere abbreviations. M. Alison Frantz's older article affirms this in "The Provenance of the Open Rho in the Christian Monograms," *AJA* 42 (1927): 111.

71. Hurtado, "Earliest Evidence," 282–84, argues that the stauogram, as an early depiction of the crucified Jesus, would require historians of Christian art to reconsider statements such as: "There is no known depiction of the Crucifixion until after the time of Constantine the Great and at the end of the fourth century or the opening of the fifth century." C. E. Pocknee, *Cross and Crucifix in Christian Worship and Devotion* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1962), 33.

72. Hurtado, "Earliest Evidence," 282, concludes: "Granted, the stauogram is a comparatively simple and highly symbolic reference to Jesus' crucifixion, and not nearly as aesthetically complex or impressive as even the earliest extant Christian paintings from the third century and later. Simple and 'low-tech' as it may be, however, it is directly relevant to the historical question of how and when the early Christians first began to make visual reference to the death of Jesus."

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	NAME	SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	NAME
+	<i>crux quadrata</i>	Greek cross	✠	rayed cross	Maltese cross
†	<i>crux immissa</i>	Latin cross	×	<i>crux decussata</i>	Greek chi/Latin X
⊥	<i>crux commissa</i>	Tau-cross	⋈	<i>crux ansata</i>	Egyptian ankh
卐	<i>crux gammata</i>	swastika	⚓	<i>crux ancora</i>	anchor cross
卐	<i>crux gammata</i>	suavastika			

TABLE 27. The earliest forms of the Christian cross.

SYMBOL	NAME	MEANING
⊥	<i>tau-rho</i>	staurogram
✠	<i>chi-rho</i>	christogram
⋈	<i>chi-rho</i> rotated	christogram
ⱦ	<i>iota-eta</i>	Ἰησοῦς
✠	<i>iota-chi</i>	Ἰησοῦς Χριστός
✠	<i>iota-chi-rho</i> with transverse bar	Ἰησοῦς Χριστός on the cross

TABLE 28. Cruciform monograms and their meanings.

Christian sense as an early symbol of the cross, and the loop of the superimposed *rho* in the *tau-rho* as perhaps intended to suggest the head of a crucified figure.<sup>73</sup>

It is when this monogram was lifted from its textual surroundings and used in isolation that interpretation becomes more challenging (obviously, the same would apply to any monogram).<sup>74</sup> However, because it appears that *tau-rho* was first used by Christians in literary contexts which deal with the death of Jesus, it seems reasonable to assume that its meaning would remain stable when found in other Christian (non-literary) contexts. It is beyond the scope of this investigation to explore whether the *tau-rho* functioned in an apotropaic manner for the early Christians, but this seems highly likely given that the

73. Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 151.

74. One of the most difficult examples of this was the discovery of P. Mur 164 found near the Dead Sea. This tachygraphical fragment contains a *chi-rho* on line 11. This can be seen in P. Benoit, J. T. Milik and R. DeVaux, “Les Grottoes De Murabbaat,” DJD 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 276–78, Plates 103–105. Benoit and Milik can only affirm that it does not indicate a numerical value or the name ‘Jesus Christ’; beyond that they have no suggestions for its meaning.

*nomina sacra* and other monograms appear on Christian amulets dating from the second and third centuries C.E.<sup>75</sup>

#### VARIOUS INSCRIPTIONS OF THE CROSS

What remains to be said about material symbols of the cross pertains to the various inscriptions found on walls, tombs, rings, gems, and papyri. I shall not provide a comprehensive listing of the specific finds due to the sheer volume of space such a report would require. Presented in Tables 27 and 28, however, are the basic types of cross inscriptions and an explanation of their possible meanings.

Most of these cruciform symbols had their origins in the wider pagan culture before their adaptation by Christians for theological, liturgical, or memorial purposes. The earliest of the forms listed would appear to be the rayed cross (discovered in churches excavated in Palmyra and dated to 136 C.E.).<sup>76</sup> Others, in chronological order, include a cross-mark in Dura Europos; a hypogeum from Gabbari near Alexandria from the fourth century; various graffiti excavated on walls under and around the Vatican; and other artefacts from sites in Upper Egypt.

First, I present a brief survey of the various shapes which crosses took in earliest Christianity.<sup>77</sup> The Greek cross (*crux quadrata*) was named for its equi-

75. See Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Roman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 172, 183–185.

76. L. D. Merino, “Influencias judía y cristiana en los signos e inscriptions palmirenas,” *SBF* 21 (1971): 71–148. Also, V. Grossi, “Cross, Crucifix,” *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* (vol. 1; Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1992), 210.

77. These are surveyed in Finegan, “The Cross,” 352–82. Also, Henri Leclercq, “Croix et crucifix,” *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (vol. 3; ed. Fernand Cabroch; Paris: Éditions du la Librairie Letouzey et Ané 1914), 3045–144; Goblet d’Alviella, “Cross,” 324–30; Finney, “Labarum,” 304; John Tyrwhitt, *The Art Teaching of the Primitive Church* (London: SPCK, 1874), 193–200; Margherita Guarducci, *The Tomb of St Peter* (trans. Joseph McLellan; London: George Harrap & Co., 1960), 107–147, esp. Plates 5 and 6; Jocelyn Toynbee and John Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St Peter and the Vatican Excavations* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1956), 204; C. W. King, *Early Christian Numismatics* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1873), 14–17.



FIGURE 7. Ring with Christian symbols (circa 300–400 C.E.).

lateral form and, as would be expected, was used most commonly in Hellenistic Christianity. The Latin cross (*crux immissa*) differs slightly from its Greek counterpart in that the lower vertical arm extends lower than the other arms. As noted in Appendix C, the Tau-cross (*crux commissa*) was the first equivalent of the Hebrew letter Tau made in Greek and Latin script. The *crux gammata* is so named because it appears as four Greek *gammata* joined centrally in a rotary structure. Interestingly, this form is widely attested (e.g., in India this cross symbolises a blessing or the opposite if its arms are turned to the left), and despite the complexity of its form it is one of the most common crosses from antiquity.<sup>78</sup> Most simple in form, the  $\times$ -shaped cross (*crux decussata*) received its name from its numerical value in Latin (ten). The ankh (*crux ansata*) originated in Egypt as a hieroglyphic meaning “life,” but was adapted by Christians, in a similar fashion to the *crux gammata*, as an image of the cross of Jesus (see further comments on this in Chapter Four). Finally, the anchor cross (*crux ancora*) was used within Roman catacombs as part of a nautical theme developed in early Christianity, and used as an analogy for the church (slightly later, the trident was also seen as a form of the cross: cf. Heb 6:19).<sup>79</sup>

The *σταυρός* was directly referenced in these symbols, in a manner similar to that of several monograms used by early Christians. As stated above, however, the most overt cruciform monogram was the staurogram.

#### RINGS AND GEMS

Followers found ways to “take up the cross” by incorporating the *σταυρός* onto accessories from their daily lives. It appears that some of the early Chris-

78. The swastika derives its name from the Sanskrit word for greeting or blessing: *su*, “well,” and *asti*, “it is.”

79. Charles Kennedy, “Early Christians and the Anchor,” *BA* 38 (1975), 115–124.

tians wore rings engraved with the cross, and that these were used as signets when they were in correspondence with each other. The ring pictured in Figure 7 contains several Christian symbols: anchor, cross, lamb, shepherd, dove, and the title *Χριστός* (in monogram form). Clement of Alexandria urged the believers of his time to avoid the use of certain symbols because of their pagan associations.<sup>80</sup> Yet, it is impossible to tell when these rings ceased to function as a seal and came instead to indicate the authority belonging to a bishop.<sup>81</sup>

Other jewellery and gems were also engraved with the symbol of the cross, with one of the oldest depictions of the crucifixion on items of this type being the so-called Constanza gem housed at the British Museum.<sup>82</sup> Overall, however, it is the willingness of people to wear accessories which contained images of the cross which indicates that such symbols were not perceived as shameful by the Christian communities of that time.

#### CONTROVERSIAL CROSSES: ALEXAMENOS, HERCULANEUM AND ROTAS-SATOR

Scholars have sought to identify the oldest extant non-literary representation of the Christian cross, but the conclusions made by some on this matter remain controversial. I therefore conclude this brief survey by mentioning those images which have been viewed as the earliest representations of the cross. These crosses were brought to light by archaeological discovery, and, except for one, their Christian association is disputable.

80. Clement, *Paed.* 3.11, which lists the acceptable symbols for Christians: dove, fish, ship, lyre, anchor, cross. Those images to be avoided included: idols, swords, the bow, drinking bowls, female lovers, and male lovers.

81. M. G. Bianco, "Ring," *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* (vol. 2; Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1992), 737–38; Paul Finney, "Finger Rings," *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* 2nd ed. (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1998), 429–30; idem, "Images on Fine Rings and Early Christian Art," *DOP* 41 (1987): 181–196. For earrings in the shape of the cross found at Palmyra see Merino, "Influencias judía y cristiana," 76–148.

82. A photograph of this gem can be seen in Finney, *The Invisible God*, 304. See also M. Smith, "Old Testament Motifs in the Iconography of the British Museum's Magical Gems," in *Coins, Culture and History in the Ancient World* (2d ed.; ed. L. Casson; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 187–194.

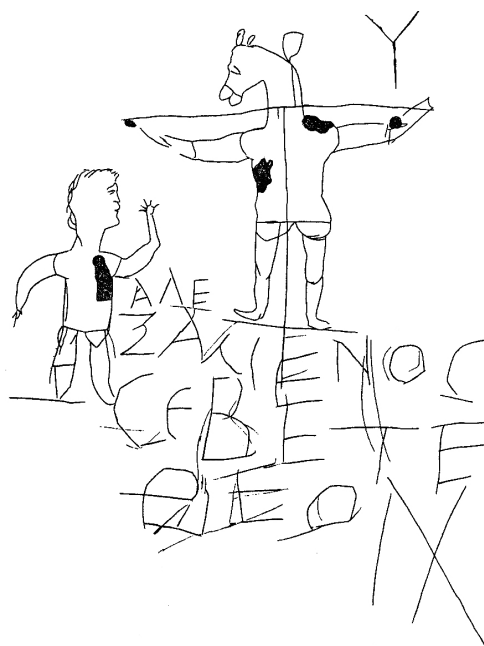


FIGURE 8. The Alexamenos graffito.

The first of these appears on a wall of the Palatine in Rome, where a mocking graffito of a crucified man with the head of an ass was discovered in 1875.<sup>83</sup> Next to the crucified figure stands a man facing the cross, and to the right is the inscription ΑΛΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΣΕΒΕΤΕ ΘΕΟΝ (“Alexamenos worships [‘his’ or ‘the son of’] God”). Archaeologists have dated this graffito to circa 220 C.E. It seems likely that the image mocked a Christian man living in Rome for his devotion to a criminal executed in a backwater province. Tertullian mentions that Christians, like the Jews before them, had been accused of worshipping an ass-headed god.<sup>84</sup> For modern scholarship, however, the novelty of this image of the cross remains its early date. And ironically, of the four crosses mentioned in this section, only this one has a clear and certain connection to early Christianity.

The next cross was discovered in 1938 in the upper room of the Bicentenary House at Herculaneum, located in an indentation in a wall measuring 43

83. The image is available in Leclercq, “Croix et crucifix,” 3050; it is also available at <http://www.utexas.edu/courses/romanciv/Romancivimages18/christparody.jpg>.

84. Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 9.3, 28.7; Tertullian, *1 Apol.* 16.1–5; for Jews being accused of the same thing see Josephus, *Cont. Apio.* 2.7; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.3.2, 5.4.2.

R O T A S  
 O P E R A  
 T E N E T  
 A R E P O  
 S A T O R

FIGURE 9. ROTAS-SATOR square.

centimetres high and appearing in the shape of a Latin cross.<sup>85</sup> In front of this cross was a small table (possibly an altar) featuring an interior cabinet containing two crude lamps, pieces of a wooden pot, and a six-sided die made of bone. Scholars have debated whether the ‘cross’ on the wall was actually the fixture for a cabinet or actually an early Christian shrine dating to a period before the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. William Holladay claimed that this was “a chapel which was in use by Christians scarcely a generation after the crucifixion . . . archaeological confirmation of the power of Paul’s preaching and of the cultic use of the cross at a very early date.”<sup>86</sup> Other scholars, however, view this assertion as wishful thinking.<sup>87</sup>

A true cryptogram of the cross, if it has Christian origins, is the ROTAS-SATOR square (see Figure 9), the earliest example of which was discovered in Pompeii (thus dating it prior to 79 C.E.).<sup>88</sup> This word-square can be seen as an anagram of PATER NOSTER<sup>89</sup> written in a cruciform image, with the additional A and O (alpha and omega) supplementing the arrangement (see Figure 10).

85. A. Maiuri, “La Croce di Ercolano,” *Rendiconti, Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 15 (1939), 193 ff.; cf. Sukenik, “The Earliest Records of Christianity,” 364; Finegan, “The Cross,” 374–75.

86. William Holladay, “The Herculaneum Cross,” *JBR* 19 (1951): 16–19.

87. Dinkler, “History of the Symbol of the Cross,” 134.

88. Other Latin word-squares involving SATOR have been found dating from the second century C.E.: one on a pile of debris from Roman Manchester, the other on the plaster wall of a house in Cirencester. For scholarly investigation on the ROTAS-SATOR square see D. Atkinson, “The Origin and Date of the ‘SATOR’ Word-Square,” *JEH* 2 (1951): 1–18; Duncan Fishwick, “On the Origin of the ROTAS-SATOR Square,” *HTR* 57 (1964): 39–53; William Baines, “The ROTAS-SATOR Square: A New Investigation,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 469–476.

89. PATER NOSTER being the opening words of the prayer taught by Jesus in Mt 6:9 in Latin. The literal meaning of each of the words in the square is: “wheels/carefully/holds/arepo [plough, a personal name?]/the sower.”

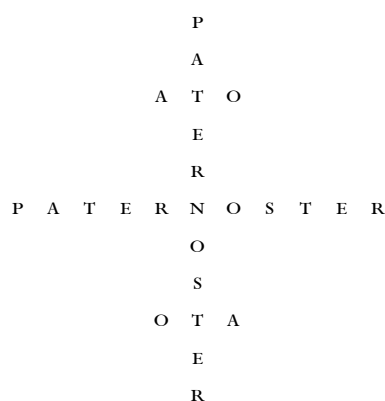


FIGURE 10. PATER NOSTER diagram.

Scholars who would posit a Christian origin for the ROTAS-SATOR word-square suggest that persecution motivated the development of this type of cryptogram. However, further work on the ROTAS-SATOR rebus has offered widely divergent solutions for its meaning and origin (e.g., Mithraic, Orphic, or even local Italian).<sup>90</sup> Those investigating this question wonder whether it is pure chance that the letters of this square can be arranged to form a cruciform PATER NOSTER. William Baines points out that,

... the Latin language, with its relatively short alphabet, its limited vowels and avoidance of consonantal clusters, is ideal for producing word-squares and by the same token such squares are likely to contain material for constructing other works and phrases. Moreover, since such word-squares must, by their nature duplicate all their letters save the central one, their anagrams are likely to appear as duplets: hence the double PATERNOSTER sharing only the central N. The fact that it can be displayed as a cross is a red herring.<sup>91</sup>

Baines, and other scholars, see the PATER NOSTER interpretation of the ROTAS-SATOR configuration as an attempt by others to impose pseudo-Christian meaning onto this word-square. Others have argued that the mathemati-

90. See W. O. Moeller, *The Mithraic Origin and Meanings of the ROTAS-SATOR Square* (Leiden: Brill, 1973). C. D. Gunn has written a PhD dissertation on this but I was unable to obtain a copy of the work: C. D. Gunn, "The Sator-Arepa Palindrome," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1969).

91. Baines, "The ROTAS-SATOR Square," 473.

cal probability of this word-square encoding such a message is too astronomical to deny a Christian origin.<sup>92</sup> I mention it here not because I am convinced that ROTAS-SATOR has an early Christian origin (indeed, its date and the location of its discovery argues against this, in my view), but because it remains within the realm of possibility that such is the case.

FINDING THE CROSS SAYING  
MEANINGFUL IN DAILY  
CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

I present the above survey as evidence for my claim that the earliest Christians understood that the cross played an integral part of their lives as followers of Jesus, their crucified Lord. Indeed, the cross symbol makes an appearance in such a variety of places that it seems unquestionable that it functioned as *the* mark of Christian identity. Likewise, it is difficult to imagine that a saying which required the disciples to “take up the cross” played no important role in fostering the production of cross imagery, cross monograms, cruciform prayer postures, cross-embossed rings and gems, and so on. Their need to identify themselves with the crucified Jesus expressed itself in a wave of creative and innovative ways of “taking up the cross.” Had Jesus not categorically stated that cross-bearing was an axiomatic part of what it meant to follow him, it seems improbable that such great concern to produce and replicate cross-related articles would have occurred in early Christianity. Thus, the above catalogue of how the cross was integrated in various areas of Christian life should be understood as attempts to focus attention and establish a trajectory for a life aimed squarely at the cross of Jesus.

## Summary

Use of the cross-mark is attested in various cultures worldwide and predates Christianity by centuries. For the Jews prior to and including the New Testament era, the evidence points to the cross-mark functioning simply as a

92. See Fishwick, “Origin of the ROTAS-SATOR Square,” 40

“mark” (signature), a phonetic character, an apotropaic sign of protection, or as a technical guide in construction. Consequently, its use among the Jews of ancient Palestine has caused controversy over the identification of supposedly ‘Christian’ artefacts dated to the first century C.E.

The historical event of the crucifixion of Jesus in Roman-occupied Palestine had a profound effect on the lives of those who knew him. The gospel narratives preserve that story, their references to the *σταυρός* centering on the literal instrument used to kill Jesus. Within the Pauline corpus, however, the cross is often referred to in terms of its theological significance, emphasizing its soteriological and eschatological value for both the apostle and his readers. The Patristic literature of the first few centuries builds on the theological symbolism begun in the New Testament, expanding it significantly through typologies from the Hebrew scriptures and universal representations of the cross.

Naturally, the ideological symbols involving the cross were given material and visual expression by early Christian groups. The presence of the *σταυρός* among the *nomina sacra*, the staurogram, and the inscriptions of the cross on surfaces and items constitute the earliest examples of Christian material/visual culture. For these believers, the cross became a symbol involving verbal, somatic, and material components.

This chapter, by surveying the extraordinarily broad application of cross imagery (both textual and material) from early Christianity, reveals that the followers of Jesus of this period maintained a clear focus on crucifixion. Not only was it significant to them for its role in Jesus’ death, but crucifixion also informed how they prayed and wrote, and even determined their choice in jewellery. For the earliest Christians, the ways in which they could “take up the cross” were thereby multiplied exponentially by including symbolic means of expression, further highlighting the centrality of the cross in the life of a disciple.

## EPILOGUE

WHILE reading about the death of Jesus in both popular and academic works, I observed that plenty of space had been dedicated to explaining its atoning or redemptive efficacy, but little had been written on how his crucifixion informed the daily lives of Christians. I noticed in some churches which I attended that Jesus was intentionally left off of the cross (in an attempt to emphasize the resurrection and demonstrate their distinctiveness from Roman Catholicism). Yet it made me wonder, if even Jesus was not daily bearing the cross in these churches, were congregants being encouraged to do so? And if so, what did that entail?

I began to ask this question: In its reaction against the perceived abuses of ‘salvation by works,’ together with a pronounced disdain for what they view in the Roman Catholic tradition as a morbid preoccupation with the crucified Christ, had Protestantism abandoned something central about what it meant to be a disciple? Based on the conclusions about the cross saying reached in this thesis, that question can only be answered with resolute affirmation.

In addition, many of the interpretations of the cross saying which scholars had proposed seemed insubstantial to me, and I can only hope that this work lays to rest the idea that the cross saying refers to suffering endured as a natural part of life in this world (one of the most commonly proffered views, as I discuss in Chapter One). People who claim that their ailments, frustrations, or even spouses are “crosses” which they must bear have unwittingly revealed that they have not, in fact, understood Jesus’ summons—for such statements point only to a resignation to endure the niggling frustrations of life. As shown in this study, such an understanding of cross-bearing is far removed from what

Jesus actually taught on the matter, or how the earliest Christians subsequently arranged their lives in response to this demand.

For disciples, cross-bearing does not consist of simply shouldering those problems irresistibly imposed on them by others, or by the world. Rather, it is something that followers must do willingly for the sake of Jesus. In other words, “taking up the cross” is always a choice, and to speak of it otherwise is to risk speaking of discipleship in terms of resignation or resentment—both unworthy motivations for the followers of Jesus.

In truth, the cross saying ensures that disciples can never place their own comforts, fears, agendas, or selves at the centre of their lives. By requiring his followers to face death by crucifixion—even if only in a spiritual sense—Jesus calls them to consider the lives they lived prior to meeting him as worthy of a shameful death. That does not mean, as some have undoubtedly understood it, that living for God equates to self-deprecation, or throwing one’s life away by developing a ‘martyr complex.’ In fact, quite the opposite is true.

The cross saying forces those seeking to live for God to look beyond what would constitute an insurmountable boundary to people of lesser character—the fear of facing a torturous demise. By making such a statement, the ‘meek and mild’ Jesus who loves all indiscriminately suddenly requires those who take him seriously to forfeit their very lives for him. The level of devotion to Jesus thus mandated by the cross saying makes abandoning all attempts at self-preservation a *minimum* prerequisite for beginning a life of discipleship.

Likewise, the cross saying communicates that following Jesus is of inestimable worth, for he expects his disciples to be willing to pay the highest cost in order to qualify. In fact, in no other way could people outside of the Christian community know the value of belonging to Jesus unless his disciples were willing to give up everything, even their lives, for the chance to do so. Otherwise, when believers do not “take up the cross,” onlookers may well conclude that the Christian life is worthless if Jesus’ followers display no readiness to sacrifice for their faith.

Paul’s views of cross-bearing indicated his own spiritual identification with Jesus, an experience so fundamental to his new identity as a Christian that he considered his previous life as a Pharisee as ‘dead.’ It had, as far as he was concerned, been crucified. Such close identification with Jesus and the cross, and

how it applies to the formation of Christian identity, has, to some extent, become a lost emphasis in modern thinking about Jesus' death. It has been my goal in this work to examine the ways the earliest Christians attempted to do this, in hope that academic work and exploration in this area might continue, and also that some of what cross-bearing meant to Jesus' first followers might re-connect with the wider Christian community today.



APPENDIX A

# TRANSMISSION OF THE CROSS SAYING

Date C.E.	Source	Language	Provenance
30	<b>Dominical Saying of Jesus</b>	Aramaic	Judea/ Galilee
40	<b>Oral Tradition</b>	Aramaic/ Greek	Palestine/ Diaspora
50	<b>Q 14:26–27</b>	Greek	Palestine
60	<b>Gal 2:20</b>	Greek	Galatia
70	<b>Mk 8:34</b>	Greek	Rome
	<b>Lk 14:26–27</b> <b>Mt 10:37–38</b> <b>Lk 9:23</b> <b>Mt 16:24</b>	Greek	Antioch
120	<b>Greek <i>GTh</i> (33b)</b>	Greek	Egypt
300	<b>Coptic <i>GTh</i> (55)</b>	Coptic	Egypt

KEY

- /— Probable route of transmission
- Less probable route of transmission
- Possible Pauline influence

TABLE A1. Transmission of the cross saying highlighting the parallel tradition of Q 14:26–27 and Mark 8:34.



## APPENDIX B

# THE RECIPIENTS OF THE FIRST WRITTEN GOSPELS AND THE CROSS SAYING

AS STATED in Chapter Three, I consider the attempt to posit the specific socio-political reality of each gospel “community” a task fraught with much uncertainty. Yet, given that New Testament scholars have, in fact, endeavoured to define the audience of each respective gospel (including some of the concerns and issues facing those readers), I present here an analysis of how the cross saying might have functioned for the possible recipients of each Synoptic text.

While this exercise is somewhat tangential to the exploration of the cross saying contained in the main text of this thesis, I include the following noting its potential interest to researchers who wish to pursue such speculation. Proceeding diachronically, as in the main body of this work, I shall argue briefly for what I consider to be the most likely audience for each respective gospel, following each with an exposition on how those addressed might have understood Jesus’ command to “take up the cross” given their own particular situation.

## Mark’s Audience and The Cross Saying

I first address Mark’s version of the cross saying: How might this text have functioned for the gospel’s original recipients? Obviously, to answer such a question one must propose a plausible *Sitz im Leben* for Mark’s community. In doing this, the setting of the original recipients presumably functions as a con-

trol on interpretation, while containing enough detail to support meaningful exegesis. A scan of current scholarship attempting to give a definitive reconstruction of a ‘Markan community,’ however, illustrates the difficulties inherent in this task. For example, Dwight Peterson has recently catalogued the three primary (but manifestly different) versions of Markan communities, each of which functions as a separate background for interpretation in modern biblical scholarship.<sup>1</sup> As Peterson pointedly asks, with scholars such as Werner Kelber, Howard Kee, and Ched Myers (among others) in such fundamental disagreement about the original Markan audience, which version does one reference for exegetical purposes?

Admittedly, the natural temptation with a text such as the cross saying is to gravitate towards the view of a Markan community under great duress. In the end, however, such an assumption lacks substantial historical verification by non-canonical sources from the first century.<sup>2</sup> One can surely imagine that the

1. Dwight Peterson, *The Origins of Mark: The Markan Community in Current Debate* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000). Peterson warns interpreters of the danger of relying too heavily on an assumed Markan community, and this caution seems well founded (see pp. 1–22). His reticence in constructing “gospel communities” leads Peterson nearly to dismiss the endeavour completely (pp. 199–202), noting the work of Richard Baukham, *The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), who suggests that the gospels were intended less for discrete, insular ‘communities’ and more for wider Christian reading. Peterson foresees a time when current scholarship might “. . . bring the construction of Gospel communities to a halt,” (p. 200). While this could happen, it seems to me that excessive ambivalence towards the reconstruction of gospel communities threatens to obviate the critical task of detecting the most plausible historical context(s) for correct interpretation.

2. Tacitus’s account (*Annals*, 15.44.2–5) of Nero’s attempt to scapegoat Christians offers the only real textual evidence of their state-sponsored persecution during the first century. To date, there are no data which confirm that an Empire-wide persecution ever occurred during the first century. Eusebius mentions that Christians were crucified in Syria (*E. H.* 3.32.6), but this did not happen until circa 107 C.E. I tend to agree with Larry Hurtado’s hypothesis that “. . . crucifixion of Roman Christians under Nero may have had a strong impact in at least some late first-century Christian circles, the suffering of these believers intended by their tormentors and seen by other Christians as vividly emulating the particular form of Jesus’ death . . . if the Roman Christians who suffered under Nero included key leaders such as Paul and Peter (as seems to be the case), and especially if those crucified included Peter (as claimed in later Christian tradition), could this have been a factor leading the synoptic evangelists to present readiness for crucifixion as the tangible index of Chris-

original community faced (or anticipated facing) *some* kind of threat if the amount of material in Mark's gospel concerned with endurance and suffering indicates anything. But it is simply beyond the scope of this investigation to engage at length the scholarly issues surrounding the Markan community debate. Thus, for the purpose of this analysis I shall engage mainly with Brian Incigneri's 2003 publication *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*.<sup>3</sup> In my view, Incigneri's careful work offers the most convincing current propositions regarding a plausible Markan community. This means that I shall consider Mark's audience as likely situated in Rome at a time shortly after the Neronian persecution of Christians in 64 C.E. (i.e., a composition date sometime in the early- to mid-70s).

There are numerous indications within Mark's gospel that the original readers faced the immediate threat of brutality or suffering for being Christian. One of the more subtle references to such a threat may occur as early as 1:13, where, immediately following his baptism, Jesus faces temptation in the wilderness. Here, Mark enigmatically states that Jesus was *μετὰ τῶν θηρίων* ("with the beasts"). With a backdrop of persecution present throughout this gospel, to a Roman audience such a phrase would have immediately evoked the practice of *damnatio ad bestias* ("condemned to the beasts"), a punishment

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tian commitment?" in "Jesus' Death as Paradigmatic in the New Testament," (p. 418) in *SJT* 57 vol. 4 (2004): 413–33.

3. Brian Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003). After examining the supposed evidence for Eastern provenances (including Syria and Galilee) offered by scholars such as Howard Kee, Gerd Theissen and Joel Marus, Incigneri rightly concludes, "Perhaps the most serious difficulty for a setting during these troubles, and the one that seems always to be ignored by proponents of an Eastern setting, is that the readers of this Gospel are not just harassed, but are threatened by the possibility of crucifixion. Indeed, some advocates for the East ignore all of the references to persecution in the Gospel. Disregarding these threats in a reading of the Gospel disembowels the text, and will certainly result in a very different picture of Mark's readers. The strong motif of persecution in the Gospel has to be explained, not in relation to random attacks by mobs, but to executions by legal authorities for being a Christian, because Mark's text demands this," (p. 90). See also John Donahue, "Windows and Mirrors: The Setting of Mark's Gospel," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 1–26; Donald Senior, "The Gospel of Mark in Context," *TBT* 34 (1996): 215–21.

mentioned by Tacitus (*Annals* 15:44) as the fate of some Christians under Nero.<sup>4</sup> Incigneri argues that:

In Mark's presentation of Jesus' opening scenes, the combination of baptism, Satan, beasts and angels points to the fate of the baptised reader in Rome. The placement of this motif so early in the Gospel reveals not only that fear of martyrdom was a very real concern, but also that it was at the forefront of Mark's purposes in writing this Gospel. It is not enough that a Christian community elsewhere had heard of the executions by Nero. The readers of this Gospel suffered from memories of the loss of other Christians and feared imminent arrest and death at the hands of Roman authorities. For both to be present in these early years, the intended readers of this Gospel had to be in Rome.<sup>5</sup>

There are other warnings in Mark regarding the possibility of martyrdom of Christians by government rulers. Scholars have noted that the most common forms of Roman capital punishment—beheading, burning, crucifixion, facing beasts in the arena—all seem to make an appearance in this gospel.<sup>6</sup> The imprisoned John the Baptist suffers beheading, a form of execution reserved for citizens rather than slaves or criminals. Some commentators have suggested that Jesus' remark in 9:49 ("everyone will be salted with fire") recalls the fate of Christians who had recently been burned to death to illumi-

4. For descriptions of this practice see Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1998), 53–54. In response to state persecution, later first-century Christian thinking identifies Rome and its emperors (with Satan behind the scene) as the "beast," as shown in the book of Revelation. Second-century Christians, such as Ignatius, anticipated martyrdom—specifically, facing the beasts in the arena (*Ign. Rom.* 4:1; *Ign. Smyr.* 4.2). Mention is made in the *Letter to Diognetus* (circa 130 C.E.) of Christians facing this form of execution: "Do you not see that they are thrown to wild beasts to make them deny the Lord, and how they are not vanquished?" (7.7).

5. Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 114–115. Another correlation between Mk 1:12–13 (where Jesus faces temptation and the beasts) and 8:34–38 (where the disciples face trial and crucifixion) is in the presence of angels (see esp. 8:38). Perhaps the angels are present at the disciples' trial in 8:38 for the purpose of "ministering" to them in a manner which recollects Jesus in 1:13.

6. The gladiatorial events were another form of punishment where condemned individuals could be forced to battle one another. Roman officials probably learned early on that Christians refused to fight, and thus turned to other forms of capital punishment for them. See Michael Grant, *Gladiators* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1995), 10, 16.

nate Nero's garden parties.<sup>7</sup> Jesus himself undergoes torture and then crucifixion. And, as already mentioned, a veiled reference to facing wild beasts can possibly be detected in the temptation scene. But, whether Mark intended to make these (at times admittedly oblique) references to Roman methods of execution within the gospel, in 10:30 Jesus plainly informs his disciples that they can expect persecution (*διωγμός*) "now, in this present age."

In what is unquestionably the most explicit reference to persecution, Mark forebodes: "They will hand you over to the courts. . . . You will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. . . . You will be hated by all because of my name," (13:9, 13). In this text, those subject to suffering, trial, and execution are targeted explicitly due to their association with Jesus; it is expressly "because of my name" (i.e., because they are Christians) that the rulers will persecute them. Mark apparently envisions the possibility that the *entire* community could undergo such intolerance and harassment (e.g., in 8:34 Jesus invites the whole crowd to follow and prepare for crucifixion; likewise, in 13:37 he states, "What I say to you I say to all. . ."). Despite attempts by some scholars to frame it otherwise, Mark 13:9, 13 seem best understood as a scene depicting a Christian interrogated by a Roman magistrate.<sup>8</sup>

In the Passion narrative, Mark depicts Jesus as saying almost nothing when faced with his own trial and impending execution (14:61; 15:5). Incigneri has made the suggestion that Roman Christians, threatened with torture and death unless they provided names of others guilty of practicing the faith, might look to Jesus' silence as a model for behaviour in such circumstances.<sup>9</sup> When confronted by the High Priest concerning his identity as the messiah, Jesus answers simply with, "I am," (14:62). Rather than an instance where Jesus

7. E.g., William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 349. Morna Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the Term 'Son of Man' and its Use in St. Mark's Gospel* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 233 suggests that the phrase refers to a metaphorical/spiritual purification, a position which represents the majority of commentators, and probably accounts better for the context of the passage.

8. Ludger Schenke, *Das Markusevangelium* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1988), 40, argues that only Jewish Christians were the targets of such persecution by Gentiles; cf. Marcus, *Way*, 36–37, 201.

9. Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 236–37.

confesses the divine name, how Jesus responds during his trial may be Mark's way of instructing the faithful on how they should reply to questions about their Christian identity.<sup>10</sup> It is reported that Christian martyrs in subsequent centuries were similarly asked but one question ("Are you a Christian?"), to which they would simply respond, "I am."<sup>11</sup> Although the reports of Christians answering in this way come from later centuries, it can be imagined that the practice began very early, and in direct imitation of Jesus. In an additional trial scene, Pilate examines Jesus by asking an unambiguous question: "Are you the king of the Jews?" (15:2). To this, Jesus offers the much debated response, *σὺ λέγεις* ("you say so"), which appears as non-committal an answer as his silence.<sup>12</sup> Taken in its entirety, therefore, in the trial scene Mark seems to present Jesus as an exemplar for his followers who also face the possibility of Roman interrogation.

Furthermore, Mark presents Jesus as enduring the typical fate of those condemned as criminals by the Romans (e.g., 10:34, "they will mock him, and

10. Incigneri notes in *Gospel to the Romans*, 239, "It is striking, then, that in answer to the High Priest's demand that he identify himself, Jesus models the answer for all followers by saying, 'I am,' (14:62). Mark chooses this response to show how a person faithful to the gospel should respond to *that question* about their identity by the authorities. Jesus does not hesitate, and neither should they. For Mark, *these* are the words that the Holy Spirit will empower the Christian to utter (13:11)." See also Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 77, who notes that in 14:62 Jesus unflinchingly identifies himself, but in the scene which follows (14:66–72) Peter lacks the courage to do the same.

11. See Paul Kerezstes, *Imperial Rome and the Christians: From Herod the Great to About 200 AD* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 167–169, 190–197. Kerezstes' work reprints *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, *The Martyrdom of the Holy and Blessed Apostle Apollonius*, and *The Acts of Scillitan Martyrs*. Each of these martyrdom stories contains standard interchanges, where Christians under interrogation respond by saying simply, "I am," or "I am a Christian," presumably with Jesus' own answer—as presented in the Synoptics—as their model. Imitation of Jesus in this way went beyond the trial scene for Christians of later centuries. For example, Ignatius (Ign. *Smyrn.* 1.1) considered crucifixion as the goal of the true disciple: "For I have observed that you are perfected in an immovable faith, as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit. . . ."

12. Helen Bond agrees with the majority of scholars in her survey of this phrase. She notes the difficulty in translating it, but that the phrase seems to be a non-committal or passive acknowledgement of Pilate's statement. See Helen Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 107.

spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him”). Shaming the condemned often preceded crucifixion, and was frequently done in a way that mirrored the nature of the crimes committed.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the mockery of Jesus prior to his execution reflects the charge affixed to his cross: “King of the Jews,” (15:26). It can be safely assumed that by offering an astonishingly brief description of Jesus’ actual crucifixion (15:24, “And they crucified him”), Mark takes for granted that this practice would have been very familiar to his readers.<sup>14</sup> The speed of Mark’s narrative slows considerably at the point of the crucifixion of Jesus, but not so that the reader might witness his physical suffering.<sup>15</sup> Mark instead reports on the insults hurled at Jesus by those surrounding the cross (15:25–36), meaning that it is the *shame* involved in Jesus’ crucifixion which is here mainly in view. The mockers taunt Jesus, suggesting that he “save himself” (15:30–32), a move which Jesus stated previously—immediately following the cross saying—as unworthy of those who now trust God with their lives (8:35, “the one saves his life will lose it”).

It is therefore difficult to imagine that the cross saying would have been understood by Mark’s audience as anything less than a literal call to martyrdom and shame for the sake of Jesus. With the possibility of crucifixion posing a real threat to the community in Rome, these Christians looked to Jesus’ own death as paradigmatic for them on the most literal level. If the details examined here in Mark’s text bear any indication of what distressed the gospel’s original audience, the summons to “deny oneself” and “pick up the cross” categorically defines discipleship as the prerogative of only those who possessed the highest devotion to Jesus: those willing to die for him.

13. See Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 26–28. K.M. Coleman describes this kind of torture in “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments,” *JRS* 80 (1990): 44–73. Paul makes comments about the apostles enduring such public shaming in 1 Cor 4:9.

14. Donald Juel, *The Gospel of Mark* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 217.

15. Stephen H. Smith, *A Lion With Wings: A Narrative-Critical Approach to Mark’s Gospel* (The Biblical Seminar 38; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 41, notes that the narrative “slows” at this point.

## Matthew's Audience and the Cross Saying

The same caveat mentioned earlier with reference to Mark applies also to our consideration of Matthew's original audience: attempting to 'mirror-read' a definitive *Sitz im Leben* for a given gospel community from the surface of a text remains an exceedingly challenging endeavour for exegetes. The tendency of Matthew to address Jewish concerns has led some interpreters to suggest that the original recipients were Christian Jews struggling to retain their identity in the midst of both in-fighting and possible rejection by their Jewish kinsmen. A composition date circa 80–90 C.E. for Matthew is widely accepted by many scholars, with Syria as the most likely provenance of the community originally addressed by the author of this gospel.<sup>16</sup>

Several scholars—including Overman, Sim, Saldarini, and others taking a predominantly social-scientific approach to the reconstruction of the Matthean community—have concluded that it continued to operate within the confines of Judaism in an effort to engage in an “intra-family debate.”<sup>17</sup> This view tends to understand Matthew as a Jewish Christian response to the influence and dominance of Pharisaic Judaism after the Revolt of 70 C.E.—in the years

16. Donald Senior, *What are they Saying About Matthew?* (rev. ed.; New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 7–25. Following Streeter and others, Senior suggests Antioch as a possible location for this group. Mt depends extensively upon Mk, so it appears that the author was probably not an eyewitness of the events described. Likewise, the theological concerns and perspectives seem to reflect those of a second or later generation.

17. See J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). Overman and others see Mt as a direct response to Israel's rejection of Jesus. Thus, Mt's community claims for itself the identity of 'true Israel,' in opposition to the dominant Pharisaic tradition. Thus, Mt's community is viewed as remaining in the synagogue, with the gospel functioning as an “intra-family debate.” Scholars also holding permutations of this view include: Reinhart Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1963), esp. 286; A. J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999); B. Repchinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew: Their Redaction, Form and Relevance for the Relationship Between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism* (FRLANT 189; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

following the fall of Jerusalem, an “atmosphere of consolidation” developed within Judaism (exemplified by the activities at Jamnia), with the result that Christian Jews no longer felt welcome to “remain within the bounds of Judaism.”<sup>18</sup> Likewise, tension was created as Jewish Christians sought ways of incorporating Gentiles into their community.

Paul Foster has challenged the view that Matthew’s community remained within Judaism at the time the gospel was written.<sup>19</sup> By observing the way in which Matthew approaches the Torah and the mission to the Gentiles, Foster concludes that the community behind this gospel no longer retained its ties to Judaism. His findings also expose some of the methodological deficiencies of Overman and others, pointing to how Jesus’ re-interpretation of Torah (and his commission to convert Gentiles) affects the understanding of the Matthean community:

Such creative redefinitions in regard to law and mission are best understood as occurring in a group that had made a recent and decisive break from its synagogue heritage, at the time of the writing of the first gospel. At that point, the animosity between the two groups still ran high, at least as it can be gauged through Matthew’s gospel. . . . the solutions and the vision for the future offered by Matthew do not reflect a group that was still inextricably tied to a Jewish heritage. Having already taken its first steps away from Judaism, Matthew encourages community members to follow this path more actively.<sup>20</sup>

18. See W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 275–76, 286. While the “Council of Jamnia” hypothesis, first suggested in 1871 by Heinrich Graetz, did enjoy scholarly consensus throughout part of the twentieth century, it has increasingly been drawn into question from the 1960s onward by S.Z. Leiman, J.P. Lewis, and other scholars. See Jack P. Lewis, “Council of Jamnia,” (*ABD*, vol. 3, David N. Freedman, ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 634–37. The suggestion that efforts to canonize sections of the Hebrew Scriptures occurred at Jamnia seems unlikely, but the school there undoubtedly served as a focal point for Jewish intellectual life following the destruction of the Temple. For more on the state of Judaism after the Revolt, see Jacob Neusner, *How Important was the Destruction of the Second Temple in the Formation of Rabbinic Judaism?* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); also Frederick J. Murphy, *The Religious World of Jesus: An Introduction to Second Temple Palestinian Judaism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 223–34.

19. Paul Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel* (WUNT 2.177; ed. Jörg Frey; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

20. *Ibid.*, 259–60.

The evidence in Matthew therefore points to a group that has made a decisive break from its religious tradition, with the resulting pain (and anger) detectable at various locations in the text. Moreover, it is very likely that Matthew's community faced the scorn of other Jews who viewed them as a 'deviant' group. The consequential ostracism for these Christians likely meant that they faced rejection and maltreatment from their kinsmen—analogueous to that experienced by Jesus.

The level of conflict in Matthew's gospel between Jesus and the religious leaders escalates throughout the narrative, setting the stage for their orchestration of his trial and execution. Matthew's Jesus, sensing this, knows that the cross awaits him after Passover (20:19; 26:2). Yet, as seen in 10:38 and 16:24, the first mention of crucifixion in Matthew relates to the disciples, not to Jesus. Not only does Jesus predict his own death by crucifixion at the hands of the Jews—he also castigates the Jewish leaders who, he predicts, will apply this method of execution to his followers: "... some of whom you will kill and crucify, and you will scourge in your synagogues..." (23:34).

The first occurrence of the cross saying in Matthew (10:38) therefore functions as an explicit reminder to Christian Jews that devotion to Jesus must exceed family loyalty or kinship ties—to the point that such bonds must be repudiated if they threaten the requirements of discipleship. In an environment where the members of Matthew's community had likely been rejected by their fellow Jews, and no longer retained their association with the synagogue, the pressure to 'come back into the family' must be resisted by Jesus' followers.

In the Mission Discourse (in which appears the first instance of the cross saying) the rejection of the disciples by those they seek to minister to exhibits clear christological overtones. Imitating the very circumstances of Jesus' own life (10:24–25), ostracization from their own kinship group results in poverty and homelessness. Likewise, the disciples are images of Jesus himself as they endure the rupture from family life which leads to their suffering and martyrdom (10:21–22, 34–39).

Notably, the disciples do not leave to preach at the end of the Mission Discourse; rather, they continue to follow Jesus in his own ministry to the Jewish people. Deducing that their refusal to abandon this ministry to the Jews may

have functioned as something of a “manifesto for Jesus’ principles for the Matthean community,”<sup>21</sup> Ulrich Luz writes:

Most striking of all is that Matthew, in his Discourse on Mission, practically never mentions the substance of what Jesus’ disciples are to preach but almost exclusively their behaviour and destiny . . . the reason why Matthew finds it so important to speak of the behaviour and destiny of the disciples is that they are images of Jesus himself. Discipleship means conforming to the life of Christ and emulating his model . . . the defining property for the Church is neither confessions of faith nor its institutional fabric, but rather its conformity to Christ. . . . Far from providing a *doctrine* of the Church, Matthew says that there is no essence of the Church apart from its practice and its destiny, and hence no possibility of being a Church apart from worldly action and suffering in conformity with its sole exemplar, Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

In the setting of ch. 10, Matthew incorporates the Q version of the cross saying as a reminder to Christian Jews that their primary loyalty to Jesus may eventually result in their being completely rejected by the conventional Jewish community (and may even result in the most radical form of rejection: execution). Abandonment of the Jewish ‘family’ for Jesus’ sake will be perceived as criminal—a betrayal worthy of death—and disciples must be prepared for the ensuing hatred and hostility. Faced with such persecution, however, disciples are not free to abandon their responsibility to minister and preach to the very community that is rejecting them. Like Jesus, these Christian Jews must continue to extend their ministry to the wider Jewish community as long as they are able to do so.<sup>23</sup>

The time may come, however, when the messengers of Jesus receive no further toleration from their own people; like him, they too may face the condemnation of religious leaders who oppose them. As in Jesus’ day, this religious conflict could result in violent opposition and loss of life for some in the Matthean community. Regarding this clash, John Carroll notes: “Matthew’s story presents the death of Jesus as the inevitable outcome of a life marked by fidelity to God’s way of justice, the culmination of bitter conflict between

21. Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Book of Matthew* (trans. J. Bradford Robinson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 76.

22. *Ibid.*, 76–80.

23. See David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNT-Sup 31; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 58–60.

Jesus and the leaders of the people.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, the function of the second instance of the cross saying in Matthew is to establish a link between Jesus’ fate and that of his disciples. Matthew incorporates Mark’s version of the cross saying in 16:24 as an overt reference to the possibility of martyrdom for those who follow Jesus, and therefore in (perceived) insubordination to the conventions of Judaism of the late first century.

Jews putting on trials and executing other Jews for their beliefs about Jesus appears to have been a relatively uncommon occurrence during the first century. Yet, if the events contained within Luke–Acts are to be taken as historical, then the activities of men like Saul (later Paul) who targeted Jewish Christians as heretics, and the martyrdom of a few early Christian leaders (for example, Stephen, James), may have been enough to keep fear of Jewish persecution alive for several generations.

I now turn to Luke, the final Synoptic gospel to be examined, to determine how the cross saying might have functioned for his intended audience.

## Luke’s Audience and the Cross Saying

The similar preface appearing at the beginning of both the gospel of Luke (1:1–4) and Acts (1:1–2) has long been viewed as establishing an essential connection between these texts.<sup>25</sup> Much scholarly discussion has taken place about the degree to which Luke and Acts correspond, and the nature of the unity they share; a detailed discussion of the literary relationship between them, however, goes beyond the scope of this work. I concur with Ben Witherington’s conclusion that both documents exhibit the conventions of ancient

24. John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995), 43.

25. An extensive discussion of this unity occurs in Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1986); see also H. J. Cadbury, “Four Features of Lukan Style,” in *Studies in Luke–Acts* (eds. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; London: SPCK, 1968), 87–102; see also L. Alexander, “Luke’s Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing,” *NovT* 28, no. 1 (1986): 48–74.

Greek historiography, and that there is extensive linguistic, thematic, and theological agreement throughout Luke–Acts.<sup>26</sup>

There seems no good reason to postulate that the gospel author had a community in mind when writing this text: Luke identifies Theophilus quite explicitly as his audience (Lk 1:3; Acts 1:1). This Hellenistic name was used by Jews and Gentiles alike at the time,<sup>27</sup> and the accompanying title *κράτιστε* (“most excellent”) indicates the high social status of this individual, and that he probably acted as Luke’s patron for the writing of these volumes.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the Theophilus of Luke–Acts may have had a background in the synagogue, having recently converted to Christianity—the likelihood of which has been convincingly argued by John Nolland.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, if Theophilus had only just left the synagogue, that may explain why,

... Luke is able to assume a shared knowledge of and appreciation for the Hebrew Scriptures. Whether he had been a full proselyte to Judaism, or more likely in view of his higher status as a synagogue adherent, Luke’s continual reference to the gospel going to the Jew and the synagogue first would likely have struck a responsive chord with Theophilus, who may well have first heard the good news in such a setting. Luke’s emphasis on a continual return to the synagogue and to Jews with this message right to the end of Acts, despite significant resistance and rejection, not only shows the universal way in which Luke envisioned the gospel and the salvation it brought, but also would have encouraged Theophilus not to sever all social ties he may have had with Jews and the Diaspora synagogue in the past. Theophilus may well have identified with a Cornelius in Acts, and have taken heart from the repeated efforts of Paul,

26. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Cambridge/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 4–63, esp. 12–20.

27. E.g., a Jew named Theophilus appears in Aristeas, *Ep. ad Philocraten*, 49.

28. Josephus refers to his patron, Epaphroditus, using this same term (*Ap.* 1.1). See H. J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke–Acts* (London: SPCK, 1958), 202–203; also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (1–19): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB, vol. 28; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1981), 299, for further details of why *σοι γράψαι* in Lk 1:3 means more than the author merely dedicating these volumes to Theophilus.

29. John Nolland, *Luke* (WBC, vol. 35a; Dallas: Word Books, 1989). According to Nolland, Theophilus is a recent synagogue convert, explaining why Lk must: (1) give reasons for the rejection of Jesus by most Jews, and (2) give reasons why God seeks now to unite Jew and Gentile “in Christ.”

Apollos, Aquila, Priscilla, and others to announce the message of salvation history in the synagogue.<sup>30</sup>

For Theophilus, the cross saying would therefore function as a reminder of how severe opposition to the message of Christianity could be—that even one’s fellow countrymen could be incited to violence by it. On several occasions in Luke–Acts, the author presents the Jews as ignorant of God’s purposes (explaining their misguided actions without actually exonerating them) and thus, more often than not, in fundamental opposition to Jesus and his followers.<sup>31</sup> All of these instances—the warnings which Jesus issues to his disciples, his death at the hands of the Jews, the martyrdom of Stephen and James, the persecution of the primitive church—serve to remind Theophilus that he too may be required to “bear the cross” for the sake of his association with Jesus.

30. Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 64.

31. *Ibid.*, 64.

## APPENDIX C

# THE CROSS-MARK IN PALESTINIAN ORTHOGRAPHIES: A BRIEF SKETCH

THE development of the cross-mark as a phonetic character among the cultures in and around ancient Palestine gives an insight into its later adaptation by Greek and Latin writers as a symbol for the cross of Jesus. I trace its history here by examining both literary and non-literary sources which contain the mark.

The earliest alphabet used in Palestine, later to be transferred through the Phoenicians to Greek- and Latin-speaking areas, was first ‘invented’ between 1700–1500 B.C.E. in the Sinai Peninsula, the geographical bridge between the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia and Egypt. In 1905 W. Flinders Petrie discovered evidence of a ‘proto-Sinaitic’ script on the walls and monuments of both the temple of Hathor and in the turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadem.<sup>1</sup> Over the next few decades these inscriptions and their translations were debated among scholars, but eventually it was agreed that this find illustrated the first examples of an alphabet based on the model of Egyptian ‘pictograms,’ but which contained characters possessing distinct phonetic meanings.<sup>2</sup> The signs were acrophonic in nature, but they testify to an early Semitic consonantal

1. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (London: John Murray, 1906) contains the preliminary write-up of this find.

2. Alan Gardiner, “The Egyptian Origin of the Semitic Alphabet,” *EJA* 3 (1916): 1–17, especially the diagram on pp. 4–5; cf. W. F. Albright, “The Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from Sinai and Their Decipherment,” *BASOR* 110 (1948): 6–22.

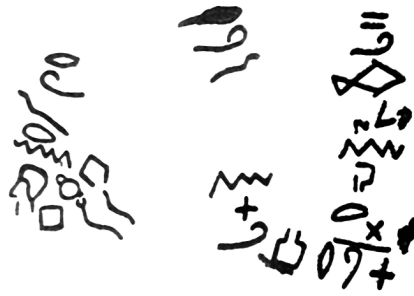


FIGURE C1. Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions from a sandstone sphinx at Serabit el-Khadem.

alphabet (and therefore would have been much easier to master than the intricate cuneiform and hieroglyphic systems already in use).<sup>3</sup>

Outnumbering all other symbols appearing in these inscriptions was the cross-mark, identified in over thirty-five instances. One of the most significant for consideration here is the cross appearing on a sandstone sphinx (no. 346) depicted in Figure C1.<sup>4</sup> The inscription shows the cross-mark in both vertical and horizontal positions (vertical writing was most common throughout the Serabit el-Khadem finds—and more generally—during this period, with the standardization of horizontal text developing over the next few centuries). As F. Cross observes, “In shifting from vertical to horizontal writing, there was a persistent tendency to shift the consonantal symbols (or syllabic symbols if one prefers) ninety degrees, one-quarter turn . . . virtually all of the letters in thirteenth-century horizontally-written inscriptions have shifted from ‘normal’ fifteenth-century forms by one-quarter turn.”<sup>5</sup> What this means is that cross-marks, whether they were horizontal or vertical, retained the same

3. Albright, “The Early Alphabetic Inscriptions,” 14.

4. Romain Butin, “The Protosinaitic Inscriptions,” *HTR* 25 (1932). A frontal picture of this sphinx can be found in Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (rev. ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 341. The text translates: “Beloved of Ba’alat,” a reference to the female deity worshipped as the ‘lady of the turquoise’ within the mines and their vicinity (see inscription no. 345).

5. Frank M. Cross, Jr., “The Evolution of the Proto-Canaanite Alphabet,” *BASOR* 134 (1954): 18.

SOURCE	YEAR (B.C.E.)	FORM
Proto-Sanaïtic characters at Serabit el-Khadem	1500	
Lachish bowl no. 1	1400	
El Kahdar javelin heads	1200	
Byblian bronze spatula	1100	
Yehimilk inscription from Byblos	950	
Samaria ostraca	750-700	
Hasmonean coins	300-100	

TABLE C1. Development of a cross-mark traced on non-literary sources.

SOURCE	YEAR (B.C.E.)	FORM
Murabba'at papyrus	750-650	
Yabneh-Yom letter	625	
Lachish letters	597, 588	
Paleo-Hebrew scripts from Qumran	250-100	
<i>Exodus fragment</i> (4QEX)		
<i>Genesis fragment</i> (6Q1)		
<i>Leviticus fragments</i> (Caves I, II: 1Q3, 2Q5)		

TABLE C2. Development of a cross-mark traced on literary sources.

meaning no matter which direction of the script—and this was true up to the era of the New Testament.

The palaeographical evidence (Table C1)<sup>6</sup> indicates that, as horizontal forms of writing became normative, the rotated characters also were standardized

6. These have been hand-traced from the following sources: Butin, "The Protosinaïtic Inscriptions," 139 ff. for the proto-Sinaïtic inscriptions; J. L. Starkey, "Excavations at Tell el-Duweir, 1934-1935," PEFQS (1935), Plate 16, for the Lachish bowl; J. T. Milik and Frank Cross, "Inscribed Javelin-Heads From the Period of the Judges: A Recent Discovery in Palestine," *BASOR* 134 (1954): 7, for the El Kahdar javelin heads (which prove beyond any doubt the link between the proto-Semitic inscriptions and Phoenician script); W. F. Albright, "The Phoenician Inscriptions of the Tenth Century BC from Byblus," *JAOS* 67 (1947): 153-160 for the bronze spatula; W. F. Albright, "A Votive Stele Erected by Ben-Hadad I of Damascus to the God Melcarth," *BASOR* 87 (1942): 24-35, for the Yehimilk Inscription; Y. Yadin, "Recipients or Owners, A Note on the Samaria Ostraca," *IEJ* 9

SCRIPT	CHARACTER	SCRIPT	CHARACTER
Picture value	<i>life</i>	Phoenician	⊕
Egyptian hieroglyph	⊕	Greek	τ, χ
Hieratic	⊕	Latin	T, X
Cuneiform	𐎗	Hebrew square letter	Ⓣ
Proto-Sinaitic	⊕, ×	Name	<i>tau</i>
Old Hebrew	⊕, ×		

TABLE C3. The cross-mark in various scripts.

(though this did not occur with characters which more closely depicted real-world objects, such as *resh* and *kaph*). Thus the vertical form ⊕ of Tau was interchangeable and was somewhat replaced (approximately around the seventh century B.C.E.) by its rotated counterpart × over time (see Table C2).<sup>7</sup>

The development of the cross-mark through time can be roughly illustrated in the manner shown in Table C3. I note that one cannot find an exact parallel between Egyptian hieroglyphs (a pictographic writing system) and paleo-Canaanite characters (which are phonetic representations, largely based acrophonically on the pictorial prototype): my purpose here is to illustrate the graphic similarity of the cross-mark as it transitioned across linguistic barriers and through time.<sup>8</sup>

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(1959): 184–187, for the Samaria ostraca; and Richard Hanson, “Paleo-Hebrew Scripts In the Hasmonean Age,” *BASOR* 175 (1964): 31 ff., for the Hasmonean coins.

7. These have been hand-traced from the following sources: J. T. Milik, “Les grottes de Murabbaat,” *DJD* 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 93–100, Plate 28 for the Murabbaat papyrus (Milik incorrectly dates this papyrus); J. Naveh, “A Hebrew Letter from the Seventh Century BC,” *IEJ* 10 (1960), 129–139, Plate 17 for the Yabneh-Yom letter; H. Torczyner et al., *Lachish (Tell ed Duweir) Vol. 1: The Lachish Letters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 34 ff. for the Lachish letter example; Patrick Skehan, “Exodus in the Samaritan Recension from Qumran,” *JBL* 74 (1955): 182–187, see fig. opp. 185 for 4QEx; *DJD* 3, pp. 105–6, Plate 20.1 for 6Q1; *DJD* 1, pp. 51–53, Plate 8.3 for 1Q3; *DJD* 3, pp. 56 f., Plate 12.5 for 2Q5. See also Solomon Birnbaum, “The Leviticus Fragments from the Cave,” *BASOR* 118 (1950): 20–27, esp. 26.

8. Johanna Drucker, *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 296, 271 for examples of the above; also Adrian Frutiger, *Signs and Symbols: Their Design and Meaning* (London: Ebury Press, 1997), 123, 154.



FIGURE c2. Summarized progression  
of a cross-mark to Hebrew script.

The conclusion is evident: paleo-Hebraic Tau † or ✕ has a direct derivation from proto-Sinaitic Tau † or ✕. The Phoenician development of Tau from the proto-Sinaitic script occurred in the manner †, 𐤀, 𐤁. The Hebrew script used in the centuries following the Exile and into the New Testament era was dependent on Aramaic (which derived from Phoenician script), and thus the development of Tau in this system occurred in the stages 𐤂, 𐤃, 𐤄.<sup>9</sup> The full progression of the cross-mark from proto-Sinaitic script to the biblical Hebrew Tau is displayed in Figure c2.

9. Joseph Naveh, "Taw," *EncJud* 15 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971), 837.



## SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES 1 and 2. Maps drawn by Christian S. Hoffland.

FIGURE 3. Digital renderings by Christian S. Hoffland based on images in Goblet d'Alviella, "Cross," *Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics* (vol. 4; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911), 324–30.

FIGURE 4. George Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine* (London: Longmans, 1914), Plate 32, (a) no. 5, (b) no. 8.

FIGURE 5. André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), Plate 15.

FIGURE 6. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine*, Plate 23, no. 14.

FIGURE 7. This ring is from the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland. Found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (2d ed.; New York/London: Garland Publishers, 1998), 429.

FIGURE 8. Henri Leclercq, "Croix et crucifix," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (vol. 3; ed. Fernand Cabro; Paris: Éditions du la Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1914), 3050.

FIGURES 9 and 10. Character arrangement by the author.

FIGURE C1. No. 346 located in Cairo, Museum of Egyptian Antiquities. Traced by the author from Romain F. Butin, "The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions," *HTR* 25 (1932): 165, Plate 11.

FIGURE C2. Digital renderings by Christian S. Hoffland.

TABLE C1. James Leslie Starkey, "Excavations at Tell el-Duweir, 1934–1935," *PEFQS* (1935): Plate 16.



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## VITA

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John, while finishing his PhD thesis, taught in New Testament for three years at his *alma mater* on both an undergraduate and graduate level. He intends to pursue professional interests in the exploration of theologies of martyrdom as they developed in earliest Christianity, and the apotropaic use of words attributed to Jesus by Christians living in the second and third centuries. He also plans to contribute to current discussions on gender and sexuality as they impact the study of the New Testament.

THIS work is set in 13/18 Perpetua New OSF, a customized typeface based on Eric Gill's original designs as interpreted by the Monotype Corporation, with titles in Perpetua Titling and Monotype Joanna, also by Eric Gill. The Greek face is Porson, designed for Cambridge University by the English classicist Richard Porson and cut by Richard Austin. Supplementary typefaces include Perpetua New OSF Coptic, Symbols, and Inscriptional Greek (original designs for this work by Christian S. Hoffland) as well as a variety of other symbols and modifications provided by the same designer.