JESUS, PAUL, AND THE TEMPLE: AN EXPLORATION OF SOME PATTERNS OF CONTINUITY

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The relationship between Jesus and Paul has been vigorously debated in critical scholarship for more than two centuries, with the critical consensus generally viewing it in terms of discontinuity rather than continuity. This highly questionable model has unfavorable implications for biblical, NT, and systematic theology. This essay will investigate the Jesus–Paul relationship relative to the apostle’s teaching that believers, both corporately and individually, are the temple of God indwelt by the Spirit (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19).\(^1\) It will be argued that Paul’s teaching coheres with the implications of prominent strands of Jesus’ teachings preserved in the Gospels. A plausible explanation for this coherence is that there is continuity between Jesus and Paul regarding this theme.

I. THE DEBATED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS AND PAUL

1. Two distinct approaches to the question. Questions abound with respect to the relationship between the historical Jesus and the apostle Paul. How much did Paul know about Jesus? How indebted were Paul’s teachings to Jesus? What were the sources of his information?

As mentioned previously, two basic approaches have been discernable from the time of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) to the present.\(^2\) To varying degrees, scholars have either emphasized a basic continuity between Jesus and Paul or they have stressed discontinuity.\(^3\) Two prominent scholars

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\(^1\) Other relevant passages that could receive focus in a fuller study of this theme include 2 Cor 5:1–10; 6:14–7:1; and Eph 2:11–22.


\(^3\) For an overview of research on this theme, see V. P. Furnish, “The Jesus Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann,” in *Paul and Jesus: Collected Essays* (ed. A. J. M. Wedderburn; JSNTMS 37; Sheffield, JSOT, 1989) 17–50; and S. G. Wilson, “From Jesus to Paul: The Contours and Consequences of a Debate,” in *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare* (ed. P. Richardson and J. C. Hurd; Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1984) 1–21. For more recent studies of the issue from perspectives that see continuity between Jesus and Paul, though differing as to the nature and degree of continuity involved, see J. M. G. Barclay, *Jesus and Paul,* *DPL* 492–503; D. Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); *idem, Paul and Jesus: The True Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002);
who wrote on Paul in the early twentieth century may be taken as paradigmatic of these two conceptions. William Wrede (1859–1906) stressed discontinuity in his brief but influential history-of-religions approach to Paul. He contended that Paul was “the second founder of Christianity.” Wrede did not use this description in a particularly favorable sense. For him, “This second founder of Christianity has even, compared with the first, exercised beyond all doubt the stronger—not the better—influence.” Wrede’s influence on mainstream critical scholarship remains to the present. Conversely, J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937), in his important work, The Origin of Paul’s Religion, exemplified an alternative approach (continuity). He contended against predominant strands of classical liberalism and the history-of-religions school that the “religion of Paul... was founded upon the historical Jesus.” On analogy to N. T. Wright’s employment of Wrede and Albert Schweitzer typologically as representing, respectively, two Bahnen: the pathway of the radical historical skepticism of the Wredebahn (resulting in a non-eschatological Jesus) versus the eschatological orientation of the Schweitzerbahn (interpreting Jesus against a backdrop of Jewish eschatology), in what follows we shall employ Wrede and Machen paradigmatically

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5 Wrede, Paul 179 (his italics).

6 Ibid. 180 (my italics).

7 Wedderburn credits Wrede with “setting the agenda for the theological discussion this century” (Introduction, Paul and Jesus 11). By “this century” Wedderburn was referring to the twentieth century. For a recent twenty-first century presentation of the “Paul as founder of Christianity,” written at a semi-popular level along Wrede-like lines, though in some ways even more radical than Wrede, see G. Lüdemann, Paul: The Founder of Christianity (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2002).

8 On Machen, see N. B. Stonehouse, J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); cf. also D. G. Hart, Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995).

9 J. G. Machen, The Origin of Paul’s Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1925; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 317. By “the historical Jesus” Machen meant something quite different from the way in which the phrase was then (and is still now) customarily employed in critical study of the NT and of Christian origins. As typically used then (as now) it refers to Jesus as he can be reconstructed by way of modern (typically naturalistic) historiographic methods. Machen, by contrast, used the phrase to designate the Jesus who is presented to us in the Gospels—a supernatural person; a heavenly Redeemer come to earth for the salvation of men” (p. 153; cf. p. 317).

10 N. T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God, vol. 2: Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 28–124. Wright maintains that the original quest, R. Bultmann, the
as representing respectively two Bahnen of another sort—namely, the models of discontinuity and continuity between Jesus and Paul.

2. The importance of the question. In the opening lines of the introduction to a collection of essays on Paul and Jesus, editor Alexander J. M. Wedderburn acknowledges that the importance and centrality of the relationship between Jesus and Paul to the study of the NT and early Christianity should be readily apparent. Given the influence that the apostle Paul has exerted on the subsequent history of Christianity and the development of its thought, Wedderburn suggests that their relationship “might reasonably be claimed to be the central question for all Christian theology.”

Wedderburn cites some practical reasons for this:

If Paul has parted from, and even falsified, the message of Jesus, then the claim of Paul to be a Christian witness who must be listened to today is seriously undermined. And, on the other hand, if Paul and his contemporaries had so lost touch of Jesus and what he proclaimed and stood for, what realistic hope is there that we may be able to remain in any sort of continuity with that message, and thus to claim that our faith and our actions are in any way Christian?

As Wedderburn’s comments correctly imply, the relationship between Jesus and Paul lies at the very heart of the nature of historic Christianity.

II. PAUL AND FIRST CORINTHIANS: THE CORINTHIANS
AS THE TEMPLE OF GOD INDWELT BY THE SPIRIT

The temple by all accounts was one of the key pillars of Second Temple Judaism. Contemporary scholars of widely diverse backgrounds rightly

11 Wedderburn, Paul and Jesus 11.
12 Ibid. 15. Cf. B. Witherington III, who contends that the historical Jesus and the historical Paul “arguably had more to do with the shape of early Christianity, and indeed with Christianity since the first century, than any other two people” (The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998] 12). Hence if “we cannot trust Paul’s witness [to Jesus], our prospects of getting at the historical Jesus are considerably dimmed” (p. 13).

recognize its central role as a political, economic, and religious center in the Judea of the first century AD. Not only was the centrality of the temple deeply imbedded in Israel's scriptural traditions, the Jewish (Maccabean) reaction to pagan threats to the temple in the second century BC and its aftermath were additionally influential in shaping the attitude of subsequent Jewish adherents toward the temple.  

In light of this, a point that does not often receive the attention it deserves is that the entirety of Paul's ministry, on anyone's reckoning of Pauline chronology, was carried out while the Jerusalem temple was still standing.  

In this regard it is perhaps not surprising that Paul alludes to the Jerusalem temple at points in his letters, sometimes almost in an incidental fashion. While Paul ministered during a period when the temple was still standing and while he alludes to it occasionally in his letters, however, it is nonetheless somewhat curious from a religio-historical perspective, particularly given Paul's self-professed Jewish pedigree (Gal 1:13–14; 2:15; 2 Cor 11:22; Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5–6), that the temple does not figure more prominently as a religious symbol in his writings.  


16 To cite two examples: (1) Rom 9:4, where ἡ λατερία likely refers to “the temple service” (so NASH, NASB update) or “the temple worship” (NIV), renderings that are preferable to vaguer translation “the worship of” in RSV, NAB, and NRSV. See J. D. G. Dunn, Romans 9–16 (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988) 527–28; and D. J. Moo, The Epistle to the Romans (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 564 and n. 1. (2) 1 Cor 9:13, “Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service [οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ έργαζόμενοι] get their food from the temple [ἐκ τοῦ ιεροῦ ἐσκόπων], and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar?” (NRSV). G. D. Fee suggests the imagery is undoubtedly drawn from Paul’s Jewish background, but further concedes that the Corinthians would have surely heard it in terms of their own pagan context (The First Epistle to the Corinthians [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987] 412, n. 82; idem, God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994] 114–15). A. C. Thielson, however, observes that most commentators “give weight to all three contexts”—i.e. OT background, first-century Temple Judaism, and Greco-Roman (The First Epistle to the Corinthians [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000] 691–92).  

17 The book of Acts indicates that Paul remained in some measure of contact with the Jerusalem temple at various points in his ministry (see Acts 21:26–30; 22:17; 24:12, 18; 25:8; 26:21). While the relation between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of his letters is beyond the scope of our study, the way in which the two are alleged to be at odds has been greatly exaggerated. P. Vielhauer
infrequent attention. James D. G. Dunn is an exception. He observes: “If there is any pillar of his traditional religion which Paul can be said to have abandoned wholly or almost completely it is this one.” Dunn acknowledges that the traditional categories of temple, priesthood, holiness, and purity have been reworked by Paul but is somewhat vague as to why. His suggested explanation is that the aforementioned cultic categories have been “replaced by the image of the body of Christ.” But why, given Paul’s Jewish frame of reference, as Dunn plausibly views it, has Paul replaced these categories in this way? Let us first turn our attention to one of Paul’s letters to the Corinthians.


18 Dunn, Theology of the Apostle 721.
19 Ibid. 721–22 (quote p. 721) and 533–64, esp. pp. 543–48 (sec. 20.3: Community without cult).
20 Cf. 1 Cor 1:10: “I appeal [Παρακωλουθητε] to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another [νω τω αληθεις εν ενωσεσ].” What prompted Paul’s appeal was a report about troubles at Corinth that he received from “some from Chloe’s household” (see 1 Cor 1:11).
21 For a full bibliography on 1 Cor 3:5–17, see Thiselton, First Corinthians 287–99.
22 R. F. Collins calls attention to the specifically Christological orientation of the statement and astutely observes, “No other foundation can be laid because the one foundation has ultimately been laid by God” (First Corinthians [SP 7; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999] 149). An allusion to Isa 28:16 is typically and rightly acknowledged. We will treat the Isaianic passage in connection with Rom 9:33 below.
taken, therefore, in building upon this foundation, for the eschatological day (ἡ…ἡμίρα [sc. of judgment]) will reveal the quality of one’s work (vv. 12–15). Paul next employs another architectural metaphor, one that helps narrows his focus: “Do you not know that you are a temple of God [ναὸς θεοῦ] and that the Spirit of God dwells in you [ἐν ὑμῖν]? If anyone destroys [φθείρει] the temple of God [τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ], God will destroy him [φθείρετ], for the temple of God [ὁ…ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ] is holy, and that is what you are” (1 Cor 3:16–17; my translation). The use of the second person plural in these sentences (οἵζατε…ἐστε…ὑμῖν…ἐστε ὑμεῖς) indicates that Paul is here speaking of the believing community in Corinth as a corporate dwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul’s admonition in verse 17, moreover, is grave. Thielson observes, “Paul warns the addressees that seriously to undo the work of authentic building thereby brings destruction upon the person in question, and thereby also invites the corroborative verdict of the judgment of God. That person’s plight is dreadful indeed.” At the same time, however, Paul’s apostolic admonition is a pastoral exhortation for the Corinthians to become in practice (de facto) what they have been called to be (de jure) by God’s grace: “God’s holy temple in Corinth.”

2. First Corinthians 6:19. In the next major section of the letter (1 Cor 5–6), Paul deals with several concrete ethical challenges that were besetting the believing community. In 1 Cor 6:12–20 he addresses the issue of extra-marital sexual unions. A favorite Corinthian slogan, “Everything is permissible for me” (niv; cf. nab; πάντα μόν Εξουσί, 6:12 [bis]; cf. 10:23), it would seem, served as a kind of rationale for dismissing the seriousness of engaging in illicit sexual unions. Paul spells out why sexual encounters with illicit part-
ners have serious consequences.30 Employing the same rhetorical question we noted already in 3:16, Paul asks, "Do you not know that [οὐκ οὖν οἴκητε ὅτι] your bodies [τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν] are members of Christ himself [μέλη Χριστοῦ]? Shall I then take the members of Christ [τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ] and unite them with a prostitute [ποιήμα πόρνης μέλη]? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said,31 ‘The two will become one flesh.’ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit’ (1 Cor 6:15–17 NIV). Lest they miss his point, Paul presses his argument in verse 18: ‘Shun immorality [Φευγέτε τὴν πορνείαν]. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man [ὁ . . . πορνεόν] sins against his own body.” Paul then returns again to the same rhetorical question we noted in both 3:16 and 6:15–16, “Or do you not know that [η δὲ θεός καὶ τὰ τούτα καὶ τὰ πάντα καταργήσει (“and God will do away with the one and the other”); Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” NTS 24 (1978) 516–17; idem, First Corinthians 462–63; Collins, First Corinthians 239, 244–45. Fee limits it to the first portion of v. 13a (First Corinthians 253–55).

30 The logic of Paul’s argument is as follows: 6:15: [a] Your bodies are members of Christ. As a result, [b] do not unite Christ to a prostitute (πάρνην), which is what one effectively does, if he does unite himself to one; 6:16: For [c] he who unites himself to a prostitute becomes one flesh (with scriptural substantiation provided from Gen 2:24) while [d] he who unites himself to Christ is one with him in spirit. Consequently, illicit sexual unions are ruled out because of a prior relational commitment to Christ. On the subject of immorality in Corinth, see J. McRay, Archaeology and the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991) 315–17.

31 Most English translations supply “it” (sc. η γρηγορία) as the subject of the verb φησίν, a verb frequently employed of oral speech in both the LXX and the NT. It is probably for this reason that the NASB and NASH update supply “He,” implying that God (ὁ θεός) is the intended subject. The quotation is taken verbatim from Gen 2:24b LXX (ἐξονησὰσθαι δὸς εἶς σάρξ σου) with Paul’s γὰρ, φησίν supplied between ἐξονησα and οἱ. Paul employs φησίν elsewhere only in 2 Cor 10:10, in a citation of his opponents’ criticism of his weak physical appearance and his being “rhetorically challenged.”

32 In 1 Cor 6:19, the singular of the phrase τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν functions in a distributive fashion. See R. H. Gundry, Sōma in Biblical Theology (SNTSMS 29; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 75–78; Fee, First Corinthians 263, n. 65; idem, God’s Empowering Presence 134, n. 179. Collins argues somewhat differently, but still recognizes that 6:19 is applied to individual believers (First Corinthians 160).

33 Thiselton, First Corinthians 474. Cf. Fee: “Paul adopted the imagery that first of all belongs to the church as a whole . . . and applied it to the individual believer” (God’s Empowering Presence 135–36). See similarly Collins, First Corinthians 249.

34 BDAG 983.2b takes the prepositional phrase in v. 20 in an instrumental sense with ethical implications: “glorify God through your body, i.e. by leading an upright life.”
the argument is clear: illicit sexual unions are prohibited because they belong to Christ and are indwelt by the Spirit.

The question that naturally comes to mind as we examine these passages is how is it that Paul, given his self-professed Jewish pedigree (Gal 1:13–14; 2:15; 2 Cor 11:22; Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5–6), could apply a term (namely, ναὸς) to believers—both corporately and individually—that was used to describe the sanctuary (Holy Place) of the temple in Jerusalem. Commentators typically do not seek an answer to this question in connection to Jesus. Fee is a notable exception in suggesting that one of the sources for Paul’s usage is a tradition that goes back to Jesus. There are a number of prominent strands of Jesus’ own teachings preserved for us in the Gospels that point plausibly in this direction.

III. JESUS AND THE TEMPLE

Jesus’ attitude toward the Jerusalem temple is variously characterized in contemporary scholarship along a continuum that ranges from that of being overtly hostile (anti-temple) to being highly sympathetic (pro-temple). The reason for such differing characterizations is in part due to a number of complex strands of Jesus tradition preserved in the canonical Gospels that may be interpreted as indicating either a favorable or unfavorable attitude on his part. How one comes to a final estimation of this question, moreover, is largely contingent on one’s overall estimation of Jesus himself and of his intentions in ministry.

On the one hand, there are passages that appear to indicate that Jesus held a favorable view of the temple. This viewpoint is particularly conspicuous in the Gospel of Matthew. In Matt 12:4 Jesus characterizes the pre-Solomonic tabernacle dwelling in Nob that is mentioned in 1 Sam 21:1–6 as “the house of God” (τον οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ). In Matt 23:17 he states that the temple is what sanctifies the gold, and not vice versa. This argument im-

35 Paul employs the term ναὸς in the passages surveyed (1 Cor 3:16, 17 [bis]; 6:19). Marshall renders ναὸς as “shrine” in his translation of both passages (“Church and Temple” 212–13). ναὸς is typically used of the Sanctuary (Holy Place) in contradistinction to the temple complex (τὸ ἱερὸν) in the Gospels. This distinction, noted by D. Juel with respect to Mark, generally holds true in the other Gospels as well (Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark [SBLDS 31; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977] 127–28). There are, it would seem, two possible exceptions: Matt 27:5 (of Judas’s actions) and John 2:20 (the Jewish response to Jesus’ statement in 2:17). In both instances ναὸς seems to be used of the larger temple complex (cf. W. D. Davies, The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974; reprinted, BS 25; Sheffield: JSOT, 1994] 350, n. 46; and O. Michel, TDNT 3.884).

36 Fee, First Corinthians 147 and n. 10; idem, God’s Empowering Presence 114 and n. 107. Marshall, by contrast, explains Paul’s usage of this motif in 1 Corinthians on the basis of the OT, specifically Lev 26:11–12 (cited in 2 Cor 6:16); Ps 114:2; and Ezek 37:26–27 (“Church and Temple” 213).

37 Nob (22) was a town just to the north of Jerusalem. For an overview of a wide range of suggested identifications, see J. M. Hamilton, “Nob,” ABD 4.1133.

38 While Matthew 23 is frequently alleged to reflect “anti-Semitic” or “anti-Jewish” sentiments (generally with minimal, if any, argument), J. Gnilka has recently conceded that it at least contains “trace elements” of Jesus’ teaching (Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History [trans. S. S. Schatz-
plies that Jesus viewed the temple as a holy place. Further on in the same context, Jesus states, “whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by him who dwells within it” (Matt 23:21). This latter argument implies that Jesus viewed the temple as the dwelling place of the living God.39 One of Jesus’ scriptural citations in connection with the temple clearing further indicates a high view of the temple, declaring it to be, in the words of Isa 56:7, “a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17 parr.).40 Jesus’ actions in John 2:12–16 prompted a scriptural reflection by his disciples of his zealousness (ζηλοτής) for the temple (2:17).41 The evangelist likely intends his readers to view the disciples’ estimation of Jesus’ zealosity in a favorable light, for in Jesus’ setting such zealosity would surely have been viewed by many Jews as a laudable expression on behalf of the temple, one characteristic of biblical and post-biblical figures that are lauded in the sources for their zealous actions on God’s behalf.42

39 Compare Pss 43:3; 74:7; 76:2; 132:5; cf. Tob 1:4; Sir 36:18; 1 Esdr 1:50; and Josephus, J.W. 5.219.
41 The scriptural reflection is based on Ps 69:9 (MT: 69:10; LXX: 68:10). The Evangelist does not state explicitly whether this remembrance was a post-resurrection reflection as he does elsewhere (see 2:22; 12:16; cf. too Matt 27:63; Luke 24:8). This may indicate that the initial reflection was contemporaneous with the event. See D. J. Moo, The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives (Sheffield: Almond, 1983) 233, n. 2.
While the foregoing passages indicate that Jesus shared with his contemporaries a favorable estimation of the temple, there are a number of additional examples in the Gospels that indicate that he also viewed the pre-70 Jerusalem temple to be inadequate to meet the new stage of redemptive reality that he was introducing in his own person and ministry. Here we will limit ourselves to a sketch of six strands of Jesus tradition that collectively provide a theological background as to why Paul could refer to believers, both corporately and individually, as the temple of God indwelt by the Spirit while the Jerusalem temple was still standing.

1. Jesus’ choice of the twelve. Contemporary critical scholars increasingly recognize that Jesus chose an inner and identifiable group of twelve disciples (see Mark 3:16–19/Matt 10:1–2/Luke 6:13–16; cf. Acts 1:13, 21–26) in the context of his earthly ministry. Jesus’ naming of them as “apostles” in the context of his ministry (Luke 6:13) is a more contentious point, but a case can be made for this as well. The Synoptic Gospels are clear that Jesus’ choice of the twelve was intentional on his part. The Lukan narrative recounts that Jesus chose the twelve from a wider group of disciples after a night of prayer (Luke 6:13–14), while the Markan account stresses their closeness to Jesus and his purpose in choosing them: “. . . that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:14–15).

A broad range of scholars acknowledge that Jesus’ choice of a group bearing so strongly a symbolic number was intended to be allusive of the twelve

43 The Qumran community likewise appears to have looked beyond the Jerusalem (Herodian) temple as well. 11Q19 29:8–10 indicates that they looked for a new temple. While it is more debatable, passages like 1Q8 6:5 and 4Q174 5–7 (applying 2 Sam 7:11) may further indicate that the covenanters viewed themselves in some sense as a temple (see Juel, Messiah and Temple 159–68). M. O. Wise, however, doubts that the covenanters viewed themselves as a temple: “Claims that the so-called Qumran community, for example, had deserted the Temple and that its members considered themselves a new, spiritual Temple, are problematic. These claims mainly depend on certain passages in the Manual of Discipline (the view that 4Q1Flor, with its reference to a miqdaš ’idām, means a spiritual rather than physical Temple must be rejected)” (“Temple,” DJG 815). For a balanced discussion on the question of whether the Qumran community viewed itself as a spiritual temple, see Marshall, “Church and Temple” 215–17.


45 Jesus’ naming the twelve as “apostles” (απόστολοι) is mentioned only by Luke 6:13 (προσφέρθησαν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκλέξατον ἐκ αὐτῶν δώδεκα, αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀπόστολοι δύομαι). Some important MSS of Mark 3:14 (א B Θא) also contain the clause ὅς καὶ ἀπόστολοι ὑνήματες (“whom he also named apostles,” a portion retained in the text of NIV, NRSV, NAB), but it may be a secondary expansion on the basis of the Lukan passage (and hence it is omitted in the text of ESV, NJR, NASB update). In support of Jesus’ naming the twelve as apostles in the context of his ministry (Luke 6:13), see D. L. Bock, Luke 1:1–9:50 (BECT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 538 and 541–42, n. 4.
tribes of Israel. In this regard it is significant that Jesus did not identify himself as one of the twelve. The main focus of their mission during Jesus' earthly ministry was to Israel (Mark 3:14b–15; 6:7–13/Matt 10:5–42/Luke 9:1–6), even as Jesus himself had been sent to the “lost sheep” of Israel (cf. Matt 15:24). It is more debated, however, whether Jesus' choice of the twelve was meant to evoke images of restoration or reconstitution. Yet Jesus' choice of the twelve, the principal focus of their ministry at this stage on Israel, and particularly given the fact that Jesus did not identify himself as one of the twelve, all imply that Jesus viewed himself at the helm of a new stage in redemptive history. Such an understanding is further implied in passages such as Matt 19:28 (“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’” [ESV]) and Luke 22:28–30 (“You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” [ESV]). It is clear from 1 Cor 15:5, moreover, that Paul was familiar with the tradition of this group.

2. Jesus as builder of a new community. What is implicit in Jesus' choice of the twelve and their mission to Israel is made much more explicit in his “re-naming” of Simon in Matt 16:13–18:

46 Gnilka calls attention to the broad Jewish awareness of the symbolic significance of the number twelve attested in various sources, including Josephus, Ant. 11.107; Ep. Arist. 47–50; Test. 12 Patr.; IQS 8:1 (cf. IQM 2:2); and Rev 7:4–8 (Jesus of Nazareth 183–84, esp. p. 183). Sanders further observes, “The symbolic meaning of the number would have been obvious to everyone: it represented the twelve tribes of Israel” (The Historical Figure of Jesus [New York: Penguin, 1993] 120).

47 A point rightly stressed by Witherington (Christology of Jesus 129), though we would not support all of the implications he draws from this point.


49 Sanders proposes that through the choice of the twelve “Jesus intended to show that he had in view the full restoration of the people of Israel” (Historical Figure 120), while C. A. Evans suggests that it “in all probability symbolized reconstituted Israel” (“Typology,” DJG 865 [§ 4.1]).


52 See further C. K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (HNTC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968) 341–42; Fee, First Corinthians 728–29; and Thiselton, First Corinthians 1203–5.
Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter (Πέτρος), and on this rock I will build my church (καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν), and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. (NRSV)

The authenticity of Jesus’ promise to build his church (ἐκκλησία) has frequently been viewed with considerable suspicion, particularly given its non-Markan parallel (cf. Mark 8:27–30).53 Yet its authenticity is not as easy to dismiss as some critical scholars allege.54 A related debate concerns the grammatical referent of the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ (“on this rock”). Some scholars argue that πέτρα (“rock”) refers to Peter’s confession rather than Peter himself.55 Yet it is grammatically unlikely that ἐπὶ ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ refers to anything other than the nearer ad sensum antecedent Peter (Πέτρος = Aram. אָרוֹן; cf. John 1:42).56 Here Peter is the recipient of divine revelation and speaks, as elsewhere (Matt 15:15), representatively for the disciples.

Those who favor the historicity not only of the declaration but also of its setting (that is, a Sitz-im-Leben Jesu) nonetheless debate the semantic force that should be given to ἐκκλησία. K. L. Schmidt suggested that the Aramaic term behind ἐκκλησία in Matthew was the late Aramaic term נְבֵית ("community").57 Jeremias, conversely, purposed that הַדֶּדֶד (Heb.; Aram. אָדוֹן = “congregation”) lay behind ἐκκλησία here, on the analogy to the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran (see 4QpPs 37:3–16) whom God established in order to build for himself a congregation.58 While these explanations are not impossible, OT usage renders it unlikely that anything other than לֹאֵל (Heb. 55 Jesus’ promise to Peter concerning the “church” (ἐκκλησία) is commonly regarded as secondary (e.g. F. W. Beare, The Gospel According to Matthew [Oxford: Blackwell, 1981/San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982; reprinted, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987] 350–56) and the “naming” event associated with it is not linked to a post-Easter experience (e.g. R. E. Brown et al., Peter in the New Testament [Minneapolis: Augsburg/New York: Paulist, 1973] 85). Yet such explanations are far from persuasive.


55 For a learned defense of this position, see C. C. Caragounis, Peter and the Rock (BZNW 58; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990).


Such a promise, moreover, indicates something about Jesus that some scholars too often are unwilling to seriously contemplate: namely, that the Jesus who is here confessed as Messiah also intended to found a church that would continue on after the earthly dimension of his ministry. Against this church, no opponent, however fierce, would ultimately prevail. Hence, not only is Peter's confession an affirmation of Jesus' messiahship (v. 16, "You are the Messiah [οι ει ο χριστος], the Son of the Living God [οι ους το θεο το του ζωντος]), Jesus' response is also an affirmation of his messianic status as well (v. 18, "I will build my church" [οικοδομησο μου την εκκλησιαν]).

Paul himself was likely familiar with some form of this "naming" tradition, for he typically refers to Peter not by his Greek name Πετρος (which he used only in Gal 2:7–8), as one would expect from someone writing in Greek, but by his Aramaic name "Cephas" (Aram. αρμανη; in Greek transliteration: Κηφας). This assumes a "naming" event of the type Matthew 16 preserves (cf. John 1:42). Additionally, Peter's leadership role, so prominent in the Gospels and early in Acts, is confirmed in Paul's comments in Gal 2:7,
where he acknowledges that he has been “entrusted with the gospel [πεπίστευμαι τῷ εὐαγγέλιῳ] to the uncircumcised [τῆς ἄκροβοστίας] even as Peter [had been entrusted with the gospel to] the circumcised [καθὸς Πέτρος τῆς περιτομῆς].” It finds further confirmation in Gal 2:9, where Paul refers to Cephas (Peter), James, and John as “pillars” (στῦλοι) of the Jerusalem church. Ulrich Wilckens rightly recognized a connection between Matt 16:18 and Gal 2:9, stating, “The rock on which the Church is to be built holds up the house or temple of the ἐκκλησία and thus has the same function as is denoted by στῦλος in Gal. 2.”

3. Jesus is superior to the temple. Matthew 12:6 is part of a larger controversy pericope involving Jesus, his disciples, and the Pharisees dealing with the question of whether or not Jesus’ disciples had transgressed the Sabbath by picking grain (12:1–8). Jesus responds to the charge that his disciples were “doing what is unlawful [οὐκ ἔξεστιν] on the Sabbath” as follows:

   Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here [λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζων ἑστιν ὅτι] (Matt 12:3–6, NASB update)

The nature of Jesus’ response is clearly qal wahomer (נָפָּת לֶבַנ) —that is, a fortiori—and leads to his authoritative pronouncement in verse 8: “the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” For our purposes, however, it is verse 6 that is intriguing: “But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here” (λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζων ἑστιν ὅτι). The debated issue concerns whether the neuter comparative adjective μείζων is intended as an oblique self-reference on the part of Jesus to himself or more generally to the kingdom message he is proclaiming and demonstrating in his actions. While

65 On this see Wenham, Paul: Follower 202–3. This makes the Jewish leadership’s recognition of the legitimacy of Paul’s own gospel on equal footing with Peter’s (Gal 2:2–7) all the more significant (Gal 2:9).

66 U. Wilckens, “στῦλος,” TDNT 7.735. Wilckens further acknowledged that Paul’s use of στῦλος is “more than simple metaphorical usage” (p. 734) though his unqualified correlation of Galatians 2 with the Jerusalem council is perhaps a debatable point. See also Wenham, Paul: Follower 203.

67 On the historicity of the incident, see Davies and Allison, though they place vv. 5–7 in the category of Matthean reduction on the basis of the parallel in Mark 2:25–28 (Matthew 2.304–5, esp. pp. 312–13).

68 C L Δ 6233 ἡ 4 et al. leave no room for doubt, for these witnesses supply the masculine comparative μείζων, which is clearly an interpretive, secondary variant. On Jesus’ inauguration of kingdom in his own person and ministry, see the use of ἐσθίον in Matt 12:28/Luke 11:29, along with Beasley-Murray, Jesus and the Kingdom of God 75–80. C. C. Caragounis, by contrast, prefers to limit ἐσθίον to being “so imminent that the kingdom of God may be considered as being virtually here” (“Kingdom of God/Heaven,” DJG 423). Yet one must question whether this explanation does
notable scholars may be found on both sides of this interpretation, it is important to note that the two notions should not be too sharply separated. D. A. Carson plausibly suggests that the two notions “merge into one,” though he considers a reference to Jesus “marginally more plausible.” For this reason Eduard Schweizer’s suggestion that 12:6 might be an isolated saying “especially because this obscure statement does not refer directly to Jesus as that which is greater but rather to the Kingdom of God that comes through him” is unhelpful, for he bases his literary decision on a debatable interpretation.

It is evident from Rom 9:4–5 that Paul views Jesus the Messiah as the culmination of Israel’s rich spiritual prerogatives, a heritage that included the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law (or legislation), the temple service, the promises, and the fathers (9:4). Hence for Paul, Jesus the Messiah is qualitatively superior to all of Israel’s other prerogatives, including the temple worship (ἡ λατρεία). In keeping with this, Paul can fittingly call him God (θεός). Given this exalted language applied directly to Israel’s Messiah, there can be little doubt that Paul considered Jesus the Messiah to be superior to the temple.

4. Jesus’ temple clearing and predictions of the temple’s destruction. Jesus’ temple action (or actions; Mark 11:15–18 parr.; John 2:13–22) and his predictions of the temple’s destruction also have relevance for the present discussion. The former is conveyed in two versions: Johannine (located early in Jesus’ ministry) and Synoptic (located during the passion week).
Jesus’ prediction of the temple’s destruction, moreover, is conveyed to the surprised disciples in Mark 13:2 (par. Matt 24:2). More difficult to assess are the charges brought against Jesus by adversaries claiming that he predicted the destruction and rebuilding of the temple: Mark 14:57–58 par. (“false” witnesses at his hearing before the council) and 15:29–30 par. (mocking passersby at the cross). A prediction attributed to Jesus concerning the destruction and rebuilding of the temple is found in Gos. Thom. 71 (“Jesus said: ‘I will destroy [this] house, and no one will be able to [re]build it’”), but nowhere in the canonical Gospels do we find Jesus explicitly stating this in the fashion alleged by his accusers (Mark 14:58 par. Matt 26:61) and mockers (Mark 15:29 par. Matt 27:40). A probable source of this charge is a garbled remembrance on the part of Jesus’ antagonists of his earlier response preserved in John 2:19: “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’” (Luvsate τον ναον τουτον και έν τρισιν ημερας έγερω αυτον). Here the aorist imperative λύσατε (“Destroy”) in John 2:19 may function conditionally: “If you destroy . . . [then] I will raise . . . .” More likely, however, it is a prophetic challenge. Few critical scholars today doubt that Jesus cleared the temple. Many, too, acknowledge that he predicted the

57 See the recent discussions of this passage in Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20 293–300; and France, Mark 494–96.
58 Mark 14:58 (“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands’”) is sometimes explained as either a pre-Markan or Markan interpretive addition (e.g. E. E. Ellis, The Making of the New Testament Documents (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 76). Others contend that Mark 14:58 represents something that (or something close to what) Jesus said (e.g. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20 445). We prefer the explanation of Blomberg and Küstenberger; see the next note.
temple's destruction. Moreover, a broad cross-section of scholars from widely diverse backgrounds view the combination of Jesus' temple clearing and/or his words against the temple to be a main cause(s), if not the cause(s), that led to Jesus' death.80

The question that comes to mind is whether Paul was familiar with either or both of these traditions. There are several linguistic features in his letters that may imply that he was familiar with some form of the tradition concerning Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction. In 1 Cor 3:10–17 we find a complex of motifs that are connected with Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction and with the cornerstone image (see III.5 below): temple (ναός), destruction (φθορά), and building (ἐπικοσμοῦμεν). In 2 Cor 5:1, moreover, Paul employs similar imagery: “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house (ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οίκια τοῦ σκήνους; lit. ‘our earthly house of the tent’) is torn down (καταλαλθῇ), we have a building from God (οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ θεοῦ), a house not made with hands (οἰκίων ἄχρηστοι), eternal in the heavens.” Once again we find a reference to temple (here ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οίκια τοῦ σκή-


81 See further Wenham, Paul: Follower 206–7. On 2 Cor 5:1, see also P. Barnett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 257–58, n. 14; and Ellis, Making 77. Wenham further notes the related imagery of building and destroying is found also in Gal 2:18; 2 Cor 13:10; and Rom 14:18–20. In Gal 2:18, recounting an argument with Cephas in Antioch, whether by relating the actual content of the scene or elaborating for his readers on the content quoted in v. 14, Paul says, “if I build up again the very things that I destroyed, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor” (ἐὰν... ἐκαταλαλθῇ τῶν αἰσθησιῶν, τοιαύτῃ τη τιμήσει της συνεργείας). In 2 Cor 13:10 he refers to “the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down” (ἡν... ἀναθερμάζων μοι της οἰκοδομῆς καὶ οὐκ ἔτι τῆς καταλαλθῆς). In Rom 14:19–20a Paul exhorts, “Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding (τῇ οἰκοδομῇ). Do not, for the sake of food, destroy (κατάλαλα) the work of God.”
5. Jesus as the rejected stone and cornerstone. Two related building metaphors that Jesus employed in reference to himself were simultaneously “the stone that the builders rejected” (λίθον ὁν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες) and the “cornerstone” (κεφαλή γονίας; lit. “head of the corner”; Mark 12:10 parr.). The Synoptic Gospels all recount a controversy episode in which the religious leaders challenged Jesus’ authority following his dramatic entry into Jerusalem and the temple clearing that followed. To this challenge Jesus responded with the parable of the tenants (Mark 12:1–12).82 In this parable we find a theme of replacement. The parable introduces a landowner (cf. v. 9, ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελώνος) who had planted the vineyard and leased it to tenant-farmers (v. 1).83 At the time of harvest the owner looked for fruit through numerous emissaries who were met only with violence (vv. 3–5).84 Last of all, he sent his beloved son (υἱὸς θαυματουργός) in the hopeful expectation that the tenants would treat him differently (v. 6). The tenants, however, recognizing in the son the heir of the estate, saw an opportunity to grasp the inheritance for themselves (v. 7), and hence “they took him and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard” (v. 8). This leads to Jesus’ rhetorical query: “What will the owner of the vineyard do?” (v. 9a), to which he gives an immediate answer, “He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’ [λίθον ὁν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενεθή εἰς κεφαλήν γονίας; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?” (vv. 10–11, NRSV).85

82 The Markan narrative contains the following pericopae: Jesus’ dramatic entry (11:1–11); the cursing of the fig tree (11:12–14); the temple clearing (11:15–19); the discovery of the withered fig tree and accompanying teaching (11:20–25); the questioning of Jesus’ authority (11:27–33); and the parable of the tenants (12:1–12). In the Matthæan narrative we find: Jesus’ dramatic entry (21:1–11); the temple clearing (21:12–17); the cursing of the fig tree and lesson (21:18–22); the questioning of Jesus’ authority (21:23–27); the parable of the two sons (21:28–32) (uniquely Matthæan); and the parable of the tenants (21:33–46). In the Lukan narrative we find: Jesus’ dramatic entry (19:28–40); Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem (19:41–44) (uniquely Lukan); the temple clearing (19:45–48); the questioning of Jesus’ authority (20:1–8); and the parable of the tenants (20:9–19). Hence, the four common elements among the Synoptic accounts are as follows: 1. Jesus’ dramatic entry (Mark 11:1–11; parr. Matt 21:1–11; Luke 19:28–40); 2. the temple clearing (Mark 11:15–19; parr. Matt 21:12–17; Luke 19:45–48); 3. Jesus’ authority questioned (Mark 21:23–27; parr. Matt 21:23–27, Luke 20:1–8); and 4. the parable of the tenants (Mark 12:1–12; parr. Matt 21:33–46; Luke 20:9–19).

83 Given the context, the points of correspondence are as follows: the vineyard is a reference to Israel (an evident allusion to Isa 5:1–7), while the tenants represent the religious leaders, as Mark 12:12 indicates, “And they [sc. the religious leaders; cf. Mark 11:27] tried to arrest him, but feared the multitude, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them . . . ” Cf. Joel: “It is at least clear . . . that the tenants referred to in the parable are, in Mark, the leaders of the temple establishment” (Messiah and Temple 136).

84 The imagery recalls a similar charge through the prophet Jeremiah (see Jer 7:25–26, albeit without the explicit mention of violence).

85 Scholars debate whether κεφαλή γονίας (lit. “head of the corner”: KJV, RSV) implies a “cornerstone” or “capstone” (cf. BDAG 542.2.b). Standard translations more frequently render the phrase as “cornerstone” (NRSV, NASB, NIV, NET Bible, ESV; cf. NKJV, NAB update: “chief cornerstone”; NEB: “main corner-stone”), though the NIV is an exception in translating it as “capstone.” Evans suggests that κεφαλή γονίας “probably refers to either a capstone that completes an arch or a capital
The scriptural quotation that Jesus employs to substantiate the replacement theme suggested in this parable comes from Ps 118:22–23, and while its original connection with the parable has at times been questioned, more convincing discussion has rightly seen that the Psalm quotation is an authentic part of the parable, particularly given the Semitic play on words between son (שֶׁבֶר) and stone (שָׂבָע) that is so integral to the parable. Moreover, while Klyne Snodgrass doubts a reference to the temple in the building imagery in his prominent study of this parable,87 recent scholars have maintained a plausible allusion to temple replacement in the Ps 118:22–23 reference of the parable. David Wenham writes in this regard:

The picture here is of Jesus, the rejected son of the parable, being the foundation of God’s new building, and it is quite clear from the context of the story in the synoptic Gospels (following the cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the fig tree) that the building concerned is the temple. . . . If it is such, then it is a significant clue suggesting that the supernatural temple that Jesus anticipated was not a building of bricks and mortar but something intimately connected with himself.88

N. T. Wright further suggests that the linking of the stone of Psalm 118 with the new eschatological temple is original to Jesus himself:

The idea of the ‘stone’ is closely linked with the idea of the new eschatological Temple. I am not aware that Psalm 118:22–3 was interpreted in this way by any of the varieties of the Judaism of Jesus’ day, but Jesus’ own varied use of scriptural rock/stone imagery in relation to the building of a new Temple, interpreted apparently as the new community of the people of YHWH, makes it quite likely that this was his intention here as well, even if the linking of this passage into this (widely attested) theme was original to him.89


89 Wright, *Victory of God* 499. It should be observed also that Jeremias had earlier suggested, on the basis of Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:18, that “Jesus Himself was the first to apply the metaphor of the stone to Himself” (“ἱερὸς,” *TDNT* 4.274).
While not referring explicitly to Psalm 118, Paul employs strikingly similar metaphors (cornerstone and rock of offense/stumbling stone) in references to Jesus. The former metaphor is grouped with a series of other building metaphors in Eph 2:20.\(^{90}\) As part of a summary of an argument in which Paul contends that Gentiles in Christ are with believing Jews now part of God’s household (οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ = the church; cf. 1:22), Paul describes this household as

built upon the foundation (ἐπι τῷ θυμελαίῳ) of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone (δῶτος ἄκρογωνιαῖος ἀυτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ), in whom the whole structure (πᾶσα οἰκοδομή) is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord (ἐν τῷ ναῷ ἐν κυρίῳ; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπὲρ σου ἐν πνεύματι) (Eph 2:19–22, RSV).

As with κεφαλή γονίας (“head of the corner”) in Mark 12:10 (parr.), it is debated whether ἄκρογωνιαῖος in Ephesians means either “cornerstone” or “capstone.”\(^{91}\) While the former seems more likely for both, however, important for our purposes is that κεφαλή γονίας and ἄκρογωνιαῖος overlap semantically.\(^{92}\) Here we find a shift in the referents of the metaphor of the “foundation” (θεμέλιον). In 1 Cor 3:11 this image is applied to Christ himself. Here it is used in reference to the apostles and prophets,\(^{93}\) with Christ himself as its cornerstone (ἄκρογωνιαῖος). The Pauline portrait of the edifice culminates in the crowning image of growth (αὐξάνω) into a “holy temple” (ναὸν ἁγίον, 2:21b). In application Paul notes that his predominantly Gentile readers are collectively being built (συνοικοδομῶ) into a habitation of God (ἐν κατοικίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ) in which he lives by the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι, 2:22).\(^{94}\) Paul thus again applies


\(^{91}\) Translations of ἄκρογωνιαῖος as “cornerstone” include KJV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, NAB, NASB update, NET Bible, and ESV (cf. NAB: “foundation-stone”). NAB prefers “capstone.” Lincoln also favors the “keystone” (Ephesians 123, 154–56; cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 306 and n. 154), while other scholars more plausibly contend for “cornerstone” (Krämer, “γωνία,” *EDNT* 1.268–69; O’Brien, *Ephesians* 216–18; and Hoehner, *Ephesians* 397, 404–7). Much of the debate turns on whether Isa 28:16 is part of the allusion, which seems highly likely.

\(^{92}\) Krämer notes that Symmachus uses ἄκρογωνιαῖος in its rendering of Ps 117:22 LXX instead of the κεφαλή γονίας of the LXX (“γωνία,” *EDNT* 1.268).

\(^{93}\) It is at times debated whether one group (apostle-prophets) or two (apostles and prophets) are in view in Eph 2:20. W. Grudem argues for one (“apostle-prophets”—i.e. apostles who are prophets; *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* [Westchester: Crossway, 1988] 45–63), while O’Brien and Hoehner contend that two groups are in view (O’Brien, *Ephesians* 214–16; Hoehner, *Ephesians* 401–3). The parallel language of 1 Cor 12:28 (“God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets . . .”) and Eph 4:11 (“he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists . . .”) makes it far more likely that two groups, not one, are in view, though Eph 2:20 and 3:5 indicate that there is a close connection between the two ministries.

\(^{94}\) On the coherency of the Spirit language here (ἐν πνεύματι) with Paul’s other writings and the trinitarian nature of the language of 2:21–22, see Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 689, n. 106 and 690 respectively.
to his recipients language and imagery he elsewhere (in 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19) applies, both corporately and individually, to the local church.95

The second image—stone of stumbling—is used in reference to Jesus as the Messiah in Rom 9:32–33. In drawing out the implications of his argument in 9:1–29, Paul states:

What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone [προσκόμιστον τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμιστος], as it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling [λίθος προσκόμιστος], and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” (Rom 9:30–33, esv)

To substantiate the observation that Israelites unresponsive to the gospel have “stumbled against the stumbling stone,” Paul quotes a mixture of Isa 8:14 and 28:16 in Rom 9:33, introduced with a customary introductory formula (καθὼς γέγραπται).96 The beginning and end of his quotation reflects Isa 28:16, while the reference to “a stone of stumbling” reflects Isa 8:14, with the common metaphor in both passages being the reference to the “stone” (ἐβάλε).97 The Isaiah 8 passage is part of an oracle delivered in the midst of the troublesome political context of the Syro-Ephraimite war (late 730s BC), when the LORD presents himself to the prophet as “a sanctuary (ἕσυχος) to those who will hallow and fear him. For those unresponsive to his gracious offer, however, rather than being a source of refuge, he will be “a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”98

95 Commentators frequently differ as to whether Paul has in mind here in Eph 2:20–22 the universal church (e.g. Bruce, Ephesians 307), “a heavenly entity” (O’Brien, Ephesians 219–20), or even some combination of the two (as e.g. Lincoln seems to favor, with the Spirit providing the link between the heavenly and earthly dwelling places of God; Ephesians 158). It is important, in any case, to recognize that the application is to Paul’s recipients as God’s people “especially as they are gathered to worship him and instruct one another (as 5:18–20 indicates)” (Fee, God’s Empowering Presence 689).


97 This is the Jewish interpretive technique known as gezera sara (גזרה סרה) in which different scriptural passages are tied together by means of a repetition of a key word or phrase. “According to this rule one passage may be explained by another, if similar words or phrases are present” (B. Chilton and C. A. Evans, “Jesus and Israel’s Scriptures,” in Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research [ed. B. Chilton and C. A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1994] 288–89, quote p. 288).

98 The LXX recasts the sense of this passage substantially (8:13–14): “Sanctify the Lord himself and let he himself be your fear. And if you trust in him, he shall be to you a sanctuary (ἐκς ἁγίωσε) and you shall not meet him as a stone for stumbling or as a rock for falling (ὁ λίθος προσκόμιστος συναντήσαθε αὐτῷ ὡς πέτρα πτώσματι). But the house of Jacob is in a trap and those dwelling in Jerusalem are in a snare (κολάσασαι for ζωσασθείς). Paul’s phraseology appears to be independent of the text form preserved in the LXX at this point and follows the text form attested by MT quite literally.

On the metaphorical use of ἐβάλε (“stone”) as a source of refuge in reference to the LORD see e.g. Deut 32:4; Ps 18:2; 31:2–3.
The other segments of Paul’s quotation, both the beginning and ending, are derived from verse 16 of Isaiah’s woe oracle against Ephraim and Judah (28:1–29). Ephraim is first addressed as proud drunkards primed for divine judgment (vv. 1–4). Despite this bleak prospect, an eschatological promise to the remnant follows, introduced with a common Isaianic phrase “in that day” (הָיְתָה כָלָתָא תְּאֵרָיָה) employed some 40 times between 2:11–31:7. After further warnings of future judgment (vv. 7–13), Isaiah directs his comments, by way of application, to his more immediate audience (the Southern Kingdom) in verses 14–15. His language is highly figurative and ironic, representing the Southern Kingdom’s looking for help from foreign power (probably Egypt, cf. 30:2–3) in the face of Assyrian advancement (pictured as an “overwhelming scourge”) as “a covenant with death” (הֲמָתָא תְּאצָא תַאוֹרָיָה) and an agreement with “the grave” (יָרָא לֶחֶם). Isaiah then announces (v. 16): “So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I lay a stone [בְּאָנְנִית] in Zion, a tested stone [בֶּן כָּנָה], a precious cornerstone [בֶּן כָּנָה נָבְרוֹ] for a sure foundation [בֶּן כָּנָה נָבְרוֹ]; the one who trusts will never be dismayed’” (NIV). It is interesting to note that the LXX apparently understood this passage messianically, for the translators supplied an object of faith (ἐπιστεύω εὐελπίζω) where the Hebrew has no explicit object. It is clear from the context of his argument in Romans 9, in any case, that Paul saw in this prepositional phrase a reference to Jesus the Messiah.

An explicit connection between the words of Psalm 118 (LXX: 117) that Jesus applied to himself in the parable of the tenants and the references to Isa 8:14 and 28:16 that Paul applies to Jesus to Rom 9:33 is found in 1 Pet 2:6–8. Kim further suggests that Paul may have had a similar connection in view in 1 Cor 3:11, 16.
6. Jesus’ promise of divine indwelling. A final theme we shall examine briefly and one that receives little attention relative to Paul’s application of the temple to believers in 1 Corinthians is the promise of divine indwelling that Jesus issues to his disciples in the various places in the Gospels. In Matt 18:15–20, a context related to the procedure of correcting a sinful brother in the church, Jesus closes his directives with a promise: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (v. 20).104 Marshall observes, “This is a functional statement which identifies the church as the temple and which identifies the presence of Jesus as equivalent to the presence of God.”105

The Matthew 18 passage anticipates Jesus’ Galilean post-resurrection appearance recorded in Matt 28:16–20.106 In this dramatic encounter the resurrected Jesus issues his disciples the promise of his living presence to be with them to the end of the age in connection with the upcoming and ongoing challenges of mission. As Davies and Allison observe, “The Jesus who commands difficult obedience is at the same time the ever-graceful divine presence.”107

In the Johannine upper room discourse (John 13–17), moreover, Jesus explicitly promises his disciples the personal presence of the coming Spirit (14:17)108 and the personal abiding presence of the Father and himself (14:23). The relationship between these two promises has been the subject of much discussion.109 D. Bruce Woll suggested that Jesus’ promise of “another

connection linguistically plausible. Note also the verb ῥυόμενον used in 1 Cor 3:11; Rom 9:33; and 1 Pet 2:6, all in reference to Isa 28:16 (Isa 28:16 LXX, by contrast, employs εἰπόθηκεν; MT: ἔστω).

104 For a juridical understanding of the language of this passage, see J. D. M. Derrett, “‘Where two or three are convened in my name . . .’: a sad misunderstanding,” ExpTim 91 (1979–80) 83–86. His interpretation, however, is not without problems (on which, see Davies and Allison, Matthew 2.788). An ecclesiastical setting is clearly presupposed. Carson notes: “Jesus thereby implicitly points forward to a time when, as ‘God with us’ (1:23) he will be spiritually present with the ‘two or three’ and with all his followers; and he presupposes that this time will be of considerable duration” (“Matthew” 404).

105 Marshall, “Church and Temple” 211.

106 Cf. Hagner: “This presence of Jesus [sc. promised in 18:20] should not be understood as a metaphor . . . but is in keeping with the promise to be articulated in 28:20 (cf. 1:23). The community founded by Jesus (16:18) is assured that he will be present in that community until the close of the age” (Matthew 14–28 533).


108 There is a textual question concerning the tenses of μενών and εἰσιν, in the last ἐνθεο clause of 14:17. Most English versions, based on βιβλία τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς Χριστοῦ τῆς Νευταγμένης (157 180 205 579 700 et al., follow the present of μενών (μενῶν rather than μενεῖ) and future of εἰσιν (ἐστιν rather than ἐστιν). The NJB is an exception, rendering both verbs as present: “because he is with you, he is in you.” The USB committee of the fourth edition provided the present-future variants a “C” rating (i.e. the committee had difficulty deciding between variants). Cf. B. M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (2d ed; Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994) 208.

109 Against the tendency of scholars to see in John 14:23 the climax of the reinterpretation of the Parousia hope in terms of the indwelling of the believer by the Father and the Son (through the Spirit) see G. R. Beasley-Murray, John (WBC 36; Waco: Word, 1987) 259–60.
Paraclete” (ἄλλος παράκλητος, 14:16) is fulfilled in his promised return as his own successor.110 This is a doubtful interpretation.111 Rather, as Alan R. Kerr notes, “It is better to see the Paraclete as a functional equivalent to Jesus. The Paraclete serves as the presence of Jesus while Jesus is away. To have the Spirit is to have Jesus (and the Father) dwelling within (14.23; cf. 1 Jn 4.12–16).”112 What should be observed, moreover, is the heavily trinitarian language of these passages.113 Augustine (AD 354–430) earlier recognized a close connection between 14:17 and 14:23 and observed temple imagery in the trinitarian language of these passages. We will take the liberty here to quote his comments on John 14:23 at length:

But further, lest any should imagine that the Father and Son only, without the Holy Spirit, make their abode with those that love Them, let him recall what was said above of the Holy Spirit. “Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye shall know Him; for He shall dwell with you, and shall be in you” ([John 14] ver. 17). Here you see that, along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit also taketh up His abode in the saints; that is to say, within them, as God in His temple. The triune God, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, come to us while we are coming to Them: They come with help, we come with obedience; They come to enlighten, we to behold; They come to fill, we to contain: that our vision of Them may not be external, but inward; and Their abiding in us may not be transitory, but eternal.114

The aforementioned promises of divine presence in various strands of the Gospels (Matt 18:15–20; 28:16–20; and John 14:17, 23), the latter two of which (John 14:17, 23), the latter two of which (John 14:17, 23), bear distinctly trinitarian implications, further cohere remarkably well with the whole rationale reflected behind Paul’s language in 1 Cor 3:16–17 (believers collectively as the temple of God indwelt by the Spirit) and 1 Cor 6:19 (believers’ individual bodies as a temple of the Spirit). It is further interesting to find that Paul’s final recorded words to the Corinthians also bear a distinctively trinitarian stamp (2 Cor 13:13[14]).115


111 A. R. Kerr persuasively responds to Woll’s argument: “The Paraclete/Spirit and Jesus are to be distinguished. Jesus speaks of giving ‘another Paraclete’, that is, one who is other than himself (16.14). Moreover, this new Paraclete glorifies Jesus, implying that Jesus is separate from the Paraclete” (Temple of Jesus’ Body 312).

112 Kerr, Temple of Jesus’ Body 312.

113 On the trinitarian nature of this language, see the following quote by Augustine; cf. also R. G. Gruenler, Trinity in the Gospel of John (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986) 101, 103; and M. J. Erickson, God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 201–2, 207.


115 Barnett observes that the language is personal, not merely functional (Second Corinthians 618–20, esp. p. 619; cf. Fee, God’s Empowering Presence 362–65; and Erickson, God in Three Persons 185, 301, cf. p. 85.)
IV. SUMMARY REFLECTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS AND PAUL

It is now time to summarize briefly our findings. While much of what we have looked at in the preceding study is admittedly indirect in nature, it is nonetheless interesting to see how complementary Jesus and Paul are in their basic patterns of thinking regarding the temple. It is also interesting to note that the Gospels and Paul’s letters provide us with an accurate presentation of the given stages of salvation history from which these patterns of thinking emerge.

The passages in the Gospels that we have examined portray the period of Jesus’ earthly ministry prior to, but leading up to his death and resurrection (with the exception of Matt 28, which is clearly post-resurrection). Here we find a Jesus who has a favorable view of the temple, on the one hand, and yet also predicts its physical destruction (Mark 13:2), on the other, a destruction precipitated by his own ministry (cf. Luke 19:42–44). In this respect, Jesus not only predicts the temple’s destruction, he also makes provision for its functional replacement—a provision reflected in his choice of the twelve, his consciousness of the superior nature of his person and ministry vis-à-vis the physical temple (Matt 12:6), the building of the church (Matt 16:18), his conception of himself as the chief cornerstone of God’s new building (Mark 12:1–10 parr.), his promises of his presence with the church and his disciples (Matt 18:15–20 and 28:16–20 respectively), and his promise of divine indwelling (John 14:17, 23).

Paul appears to be familiar with many, if not all, of these strands of Jesus’ teaching in some form. In contrast to the context of Jesus’ earthly ministry, however, Paul views matters in the light of Jesus’ death and resurrection. As a result, he sees the true locus of God’s presence in the presence of the risen Christ in believers, both corporately and individually (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19). The various themes examined in the foregoing study provide us with a fuller picture as to why Paul was able to refer to believers in the 50s AD, while the Jerusalem temple was still standing, as the temple of God indwelt by the Spirit.

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V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The preceding study suggests that the course of continuity is a fruitful pathway to pursue in seeking to understand the relationship between Jesus and Paul. Hence, in choosing between the two major paradigmatic pathways noted earlier—the Wrede-bahn, in which Paul is viewed as “the second founder of Christianity” (thereby stressing discontinuity), and the Machen-bahn, in which Paul’s religion is viewed to be founded upon Jesus (thereby stressing continuity)—the latter pathway is surely to be preferred to the former, not only theoretically, but also methodologically. In following the latter Bahn, moreover, a fruitful pathway for biblical theology lies open—one that scholars committed to the authority and coherency of Scripture can pursue with both vigor and considerable reward.

VI. A BRIEF AFTERWORD ON THREE IMPORTANT PROPOSALS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS AND PAUL

It should be noted that three prominent studies on Paul, ranging in date from 1995 to late 2001, have set forth important findings on the question of the relationship between Jesus and Paul. David Wenham concluded his thorough study on the question of whether Paul was a follower of Jesus or the founder of Christianity by suggesting that “Paul would have been horrified at the suggestion that he was the founder of Christianity. For him the fountain of theology was Jesus: first, the Jesus whom he met on the Damascus road; second, the Jesus of the Christian tradition. He of course identified the two. Paul saw himself as the slave of Jesus Christ, not the founder of Christianity. He was right to see himself in that way.”

In seeming contrast, Hengel and Schwemer, in their detailed study of Paul’s early years (i.e. AD 33–49), employ the language of the history-of-religions school to describe Paul as “the second founder of Christianity” because as “a theologian and missionary he put it [sc. Christianity] on the way by which it became a world religion—the first.” It must be observed in this instance, however, that these two propositions are much closer than they might at first appear. Wenham’s focus is on the origin of Paul’s message, while Hengel and Schwemer’s focus is on the effect of Pauline mission. Hence Hengel and Schwemer’s view of the relationship between Jesus and Paul is based on very different assumptions than those of the history-of-religions school, for Hengel and Schwemer, like Wenham, acknowledge the formative influence of the Jesus tradition on Paul, but find it difficult to trace it in his letters. They observe, “At the precise point where we necessarily accept the strongest outside influence, in the Jesus tradition, which he [Paul] needed for the preaching with which he founded communities, he unfortunately re-

118 Hengel and Schwemer, Between Damascus and Antioch 309 and 310 (respectively).
mains very taciturn in the letters.” Taciturn, however, even “very taciturn,” does not mean non-existent, as our study has attempted to show.

Another important recent study that should be mentioned is Seyoon Kim’s *Paul and the New Perspective*, a sequel of sorts to his earlier study, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel*. On the basis of his examination of the Jesus tradition in chap. 8 of his most recent study, Kim modifies the fundamental thesis for which he had argued in his earlier study. In his *Origin* he had argued that “the Christophany on the Damascus road constituted both his gospel . . . and his apostolic commission” and that “at the Christophany on the Damascus road Paul received his call to the Gentile mission as well as his gospel.” In his more recent study he proposes that “Paul’s gospel originated from both the Damascus revelation and the Jesus tradition.” Kim goes on to illustrate the double origin of Paul’s gospel by employing the metaphor of a child of two parents: “the Damascus revelation being the father and the Jesus tradition being the mother.” He additionally acknowledges that further, more comprehensive study is needed to determine more precisely how the Damascus revelation, the Jesus tradition, the Scriptures, and the early church kerygma “were brought into an interplay to produce various Pauline theological conceptions.”

What these three studies indicate is that scholarly interest in the relationship between Jesus and Paul remains a fruitful area of historical and theological investigation, one that is at the very heart of the gospel and of the Christian faith.

119 Ibid. 309.
121 Kim, *New Perspective* 239–90. It should be noted, however, that the content of chap. 8 appeared initially as “Jesus, Sayings of,” *DPL* 474–92.
122 Kim, *Origin* 57, 65 (respectively).
123 Kim, *New Perspective* 296 (my italics).
124 Kim continues: “Just as a child resembles both parents, so that from one perspective it looks much like the father while from another perspective very much like the mother, Paul’s gospel appears stamped with the Damascus revelation, while it appears as a reinterpretation and reapplication of Jesus’ gospel in the new salvation-historical and missiological context when viewed from the perspective of the Jesus tradition. To continue the metaphor, we may see the Old Testament as the grandparent of Paul’s theology and the pre-Pauline Christian kerygma as an older sibling” (ibid. 297).
125 Ibid. 296.