

**JESUS AND THE GALILEAN CRISIS:
INTERPRETATION, RECEPTION, AND HISTORY**

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19th-century attempts to reconstruct the historical Jesus often featured the theory of a “Galilean crisis.” The crisis theory held, in general, that Jesus’ public career passed through sequential stages of friendly and hostile reception, and further contended that growing opposition to Jesus led to certain changes in his theology, outlook, or rhetorical tone. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the origins of this idea, its interpretive logic in the Gospels, and the historical value of the hypothesis (if any) for contemporary study of the historical Jesus.

The three main contributions of the project are as follows. First, the study fills a lacuna in the history of scholarship, since the crisis theory is typically treated briefly, if at all, in surveys of Jesus research. What is more, when mention is made of it, descriptions of its background and origin are often rife with misunderstanding. This dissertation will challenge conventional periodizations of Jesus scholarship, and significantly widen the scope of research in pre-modern sources, by arguing that the crisis theory is in many ways a historical “solution” to preexisting interpretive “problems” in the reading of the Gospels.

Second, it will be argued that the interpretive and even historical logic of the crisis theory is still very much a part of current scholarship. The notion that we posit a change in historical context to resolve certain theological tensions in the Gospel tradition—and particularly that we periodize or stratify those tensions in our sources—parallels numerous projects in New

Testament studies in remarkable ways. This discussion will enable one to see continuity where histories of research have tended to stress discontinuity.

Thirdly, the project will contend that, although the crisis theory is in many ways a failed hypothesis in the macro, it raises questions that current Jesus research has largely been content to ignore. The final chapters will reflect on the question of the consistency of Jesus throughout his ministry, the notion of a “Galilean spring,” and the suggestion that the tradition is marked by a struggle to respond to growing opposition and the rejection of his message.

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CHAPTER 1.0: INTRODUCTION

“History may not repeat itself. But it often rhymes.”

--Mark Twain

In Barcelona on July 20, 21, and 22, 1263 CE, the Jewish convert to Catholicism, Pablo Christiani, debated the Jewish philosopher Moses ben Nachman (better known as Nachmanides). In front of a sympathetic audience—the debate was organized by the Church—Christiani aimed to show from not only the Torah but also the Talmud that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah.¹ Nachmanides disputed the argument with a number of counterclaims, one of which was this: if Jesus had been the Messiah, there would have been a mass Jewish following. As it was, however, Jesus was rejected by most of those who heard of him.

Nachmanides was not, of course, the first to highlight the rejection of Jesus as a theological problem for Christianity. We see already in the 50s of the first century the Apostle Paul wrestling with it in Romans 9-11 and elsewhere (e.g. 2 Cor 3:15-18). The topic emerges in Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, as well as in the 2nd and 3rd-century *Adversos* literature.² Mass

¹ For an overview of the Disputation of Barcelona see Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

² Cf. Ora Limor and Guy Strumza, eds., *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996).

rejection is clearly the subtext of b. Sanh. 43a, which claims that for forty days prior to his execution there was an invitation for “anyone who can say anything in his favor...(to) come forth.” No one came.³

In light of this material and much else that could be mentioned, it is not surprising that historians have expressed interest in the topic of how Christians responded to the rejection of the Gospel.⁴ What is infrequently noted in recent criticism, however, is that such inquiry has not always been so focused on the post-Easter Church. Indeed, it was once common to assume that *Jesus himself* had grappled with the failure of his mission to Israel. Jesus himself had recognized, and was forced to explain, the meaning of the sower’s wasted seed. This idea emerged most forcefully in the theory of a “Galilean crisis,” which had its heyday in the 19th-century Quest for Jesus. The development of the crisis theory, its interpretation of the Gospels, historical logic, and value for contemporary research (or lack thereof), constitute the focus of this study.

To speak of a “Galilean crisis” is not to speak of a uniform reconstruction of the historical Jesus. There was much diversity in terms of what exactly the “crisis” was thought to be, and how it played out in the ministry. Nonetheless, the studies described in this project as proponents of “the crisis theory” (as it will be called) share a number of important characteristics, or have a certain family resemblance. Of particular importance are these features:

³ See Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 63-74.

⁴ The issue emerges frequently in the essays compiled by Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner, eds., *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), as well as in the work of Miriam S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* (Leiden; Boston: Brill: 1995); James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians and Antiquity* (WUNT 251; Tübingen: Mohr, 2010); Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (2nd ed.; London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2016).

(i) Jesus started his ministry with great success and popularity; (ii) there was an increase in opposition to him; (iii) opposition led to certain developments and/or changes in Jesus' theology, outlook, or rhetorical tone; (iv) at some point Jesus experienced mass defection in the Galilee; (v) one could say that, when Jesus left for his final Passover in Jerusalem, he had had an "unsuccessful" ministry in the Galilee. These five characteristics constitute not a checklist but rather a typology.

1.1. OBJECTIVES

This project is on one level a history of Jesus research and on another an attempt to reconstruct Jesus as a figure in history. These are two very different tasks. It should be stressed at the outset that I do not intend this study to be a simple combination of the two in the manner of Schweitzer's famous *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (in which his survey of scholarship led up to, as a preparation for, his own "solution" at the end). That is to say, the focus of the whole is not my reconstruction of the historical Jesus. The concluding chapters will indeed offer an assessment of the crisis theory as a hypothesis and make a number of historical proposals. But the previous chapters are not mere prelude to that final argument, and the hope is that each chapter stands on its own and makes a unique contribution to the reception history of the Bible and the history of Jesus scholarship.⁵

⁵ I thus hope to avoid the criticisms of histories of research by Bruce Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 93-94. On the one hand, one must grant his point that "it is all too easy to trace a line of development that makes the latest sensibility appear to be a triumph, or at least a climax," and I nowhere wish to claim to have "solved" the interpretive and methodological issues that have inspired the crisis theory; many questions remain. On the other hand, however, if one is to make an argument about anything in dialogue with others, it is more or less inevitable that one put forth a case that is thought to be worth following.

This study, then, is conceived as a kind of critical “commentary” on the crisis idea. As modern critical commentaries of biblical books are interested in linguistic and conceptual background, sympathetic description, and (for some at least) historical explanation, so too our study will engage the crisis theory from these three different angles. On the whole, the objective is to answer three broad questions about the crisis theory in modern research: *where does this idea come from, what forms does it take, and is there anything to it for our knowledge of the historical Jesus?* To this end, the study has been divided into three different sections, each devoted to one of these questions.

1.2. THE NEED FOR THIS STUDY

There are four reasons why this study is important for current research on the Gospels and the historical Jesus. First, the crisis theory is typically treated briefly, if at all, in surveys of Jesus research. This lacuna is striking because of the once-prominent status of the theory, but it is not entirely surprising, since many New Testament scholars have regarded Albert Schweitzer’s discussion and criticism of 19th-century literature to be definitive. Few critics after Schweitzer have thought that there is much left to be learned from these “Lives of Jesus.”⁶ Due in large part to the perceived success of Schweitzer’s project, then, it has been easy for critics ever since to relegate these works to a unique period of scholarship and to ignore them. I make this point

⁶ Cf. here N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 21: “Schweitzer is thus the turning-point in the history of the ‘Quest’. He demolished the old ‘Quest’ so successfully—and provided such a shocking alternative—that for half a century serious scholarship had great difficulty in working its way back to history when dealing with Jesus.” See also Paul Rhodes Eddy and James Beilby, “The Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Introduction,” in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (ed. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009), 9-54 at 20 (Schweitzer marks “the end of the old quest”).

sympathetically. When it is nearly impossible to keep up with contemporary publications in the field, who has time to go back and read the old stuff for themselves?

Moreover, given the incredible amount of material available for the researcher, studies of prior Jesus research *must* be selective. Schweitzer himself lamented in his preface that it “would take almost a whole book to simply list” 19th-century research on Jesus, and he was not exaggerating.⁷ More recently, William Baird has written in one of his masterful studies of New Testament criticism that “a comprehensive survey of all the scholars and all their writings would require several lifetimes with a few generations of purgatory thrown in.”⁸ And in penning this statement he was only thinking of the stretch from the pietists to the 19th century. The upshot is not only that sweeping surveys must leave out a good deal of material; it is also that, simply for management purposes, the particular interests of the scholar must dictate what is included and what is not. In this respect, the interests of the historian tend to function like holes in the bottom of a sieve: of all the material that is put in for sifting, only that which matches the shape and profile of the historian’s interest finds its way out. Schweitzer’s work has endured not least because he was capable of offering rich and poignant discussions of prior literature, such that the reader comes away with a feel for these works as wholes. But even then Schweitzer’s study is

⁷ The preface is included in John Bowden’s edition, which is based on Schweitzer’s second German edition, see *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (trans. W. Montgomery et al.; ed. John Bowden; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001 [orig. 1913]), xxxiii. The remainder of this study will use a 1955 Macmillan edition, which is based on Schweitzer’s first edition (1906). This project will employ both original German editions of 19th-century works and sometimes English translations. That decision was often made on the basis of the accessibility of the German editions.

⁸ William Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen* (vol. 1. of *History of New Testament Research*; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), xix.

really driven by his interest in three issues: ethics and eschatology, John and the Synoptics, the supernatural. His treatments betray that interest.

The point is that prior surveys of Jesus research have, of necessity, focused on particular questions, and there has never been a study that shares our interest: how did the crisis theory come to be and exert such influence on thinking and writing about Jesus?⁹ It should be emphasized here that our task is not simply descriptive—e.g. to summarize what people have said about a Galilean crisis. Rather, the goal is to explain the interpretive and historical logic of the crisis theory, as well as hermeneutical patterns in reception history that made its existence possible. In other words, we are interested not just in the “what” but the “why.”

A second need for this project is that, when critics do make mention of the crisis theory in whatever form, descriptions of its background and genesis are often rife with misunderstanding. All of this will be discussed in much more detail later, but a few important examples suffice to demonstrate the point. In Schweitzer’s survey, the genesis of the idea was said to be the work of Karl Hase (1829).¹⁰ Schweitzer’s emphasis on Hase is not entirely misleading, but it fails to grasp that Hase’s reconstruction of two “periods” in Jesus’ career was a conscious *response* to prior research, and he relied on interpretive conventions to do so. More recently, John Meier briefly described, and ultimately rejected, the theory of “a joyous beginning and a disastrous

⁹ The study that nears the interest of this project more than any other is the recent work by the late Eckhard Rau, which he was unable to finish before his death. See Eckhard Rau and Silke Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu: Plädoyer für die Anknüpfung an eine schwierige Forschungstradition* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013). Rau will be an important conversation partner, but his survey of earlier work was much more limited in scope and it had different interests.

¹⁰ See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (trans. W. Montgomery; New York: Macmillan, 1955 [orig. 1906]), 61.

end” to Jesus’ Galilean ministry. He contended that “the germ of this idea” could be found “already” in Renan’s *Life of Jesus* (1863).¹¹ This also, I will argue, fails to grasp how Renan’s developmental biography of Jesus relied on preexisting interpretive tradition, and was more a flowering than the germ of this idea. Finally, and more recently still, there is Barry Smith’s monograph *Jesus’ Twofold Teaching of the Kingdom of God* (2009).¹² This volume does not seem to be aware that its hypothesis that Jesus’ ministry passed through two different “contexts” of reception (which he terms the “non-rejection context” and “rejection context,” respectively) is hardly a novel one.¹³ It may in fact have helped Smith’s case to show that he is not the only reader of the Gospels to think that certain tensions in Jesus’ teaching are best resolved by positing a change in historical situation.

To be clear, the point is not just to say that our study provides a missing piece of the puzzle, or simply that we are adding some missing content to other surveys of Jesus research. The point is that we actually do not know what we think we know about 19th-century criticism apart from an accurate grasp of the background and logic of the crisis theory. The idea of a Galilean crisis was a historical “solution” to preexisting “problems” of interpretation in the Gospels, and the story of the recognition of those problems, and even some important stabs at solutions to them, are necessary to understand how and why the crisis theory appeared as it did.

¹¹ John Meier, *Companions and Competitors* (vol. 3 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 25-26, and 35 note 24.

¹² Barry D. Smith, *Jesus’ Twofold Teaching about the Kingdom of God* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009).

¹³ Though see Smith, *Jesus’ Twofold Teaching*, 185 note 1, where he cites an important article by Franz Mussner that will be discussed later in detail.

Third, because our aim is not only to describe what people said about a Galilean crisis but to better understand why they did so, our inquiry into the history of scholarship informs contemporary discussions of Jesus and the Gospels. Of course, critics by and large no longer write *Lives of Jesus*, and very few recent monographs feature what could be called a Galilean crisis. So scholarship has, at least on a surface level, decided against the plausibility of the crisis idea. But, as I will argue, the interpretive issues that prompted the crisis theory are still very much with us. Not only that, the basic historical solution offered by the crisis theory—e.g., that we posit a change in historical context to resolve certain theological tensions in the Gospel tradition—parallels contemporary discussions in several remarkable ways. Thus, I will suggest that, while we must acknowledge differences between recent work and the much-criticized *Lives of Jesus*, it is also informative to identify clear interpretive parallels between the new and the old. Hopefully our discussion will enable one to see continuity where histories of research have tended to stress discontinuity.

Fourth, and finally, investigation of the crisis theory is informative for contemporary research not only because of the interpretive questions it helps to expose, but because some of the historical answers offered to those questions deserve a fresh hearing. I will contend that the idea of a Galilean crisis suffers from numerous problems as a historical hypothesis, and this study is not a wholesale endorsement of it. However, I will argue that particular features of the crisis theory offer valuable insights on perplexing traditions in the Gospels, particularly in the suggestion that the Jesus tradition is marked by disappointment and a struggle to respond to rejection. In this respect I must second the insight of Eckhard Rau that this earlier literature, its

weaknesses notwithstanding, offers “issues and insights which, though often forgotten or abandoned, could be helpful.”¹⁴

1.3. APPROACH

In one of his last published articles, Per Bilde wrote the following:

The traditional Christian (not Jewish or Muslim) interpretations of Jesus from the New Testament through Antiquity and the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment were religious, dogmatic and a-historical, and therefore are of no interest to modern research.¹⁵

The reality of significant change over time in cultural conceptions of history, and history writing, is beyond dispute.¹⁶ However, from the perspective of reception history, Bilde’s comments are deeply misguided. There are three related problems here, and identifying them can serve to introduce the approach of this study to the task at hand. First, earlier interpretations ought to be of interest simply because they are *not* always so foreign to modern research. As Chapters 2 and 3 of this project will detail, numerous readers of the Gospels before the advent of “modern

¹⁴ Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 22 (“...gibt es auch im Damals Fragestellungen und Einsichten, die, oft vergessen oder gar verleugnet, helfen können”). Also insightful here is Dale C. Allison Jr., “Secularizing Jesus,” in *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 1-26 at 9: “If...we can cast aside the strange notion that New Testament scholarship must, like the hard sciences, ever progress onward and upward, then there is no reason to doubt that some of the older books about Jesus might get us as close or closer to the truth than some of the more recent ones. The passing of time does not always and everywhere carry us closer to the truth.”

¹⁵ Per Bilde, “Can it be Justified to Talk about Scholarly Progress in the History of Modern Jesus Research since Reimarus?,” in *The Mission of Jesus: Second Nordic Symposium on the Historical Jesus, Lund, 7-10 October 2012* (eds. Samuel Byrskog and Tobias Hägerland; WUNT 391; Tübingen: Mohr, 2015), 5-24 at 17.

¹⁶ On changing conceptions of the historical task see Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (3rd ed.; Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Edward Wang and Georg G. Iggers, eds., *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross Cultural Perspective* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002).

historical criticism” anticipated the interpretive conclusions of contemporary critics.¹⁷ Moreover, even when pre-critical exegesis differs from modern work in terms of the interpretation of specific texts and themes in the Gospels, at times one can still identify in those earlier readings a grappling with interpretive issues that continue to inspire modern exegetical discussion.¹⁸ For instance, as I will show in Chapter 2, John Chrysostom thought that Jesus’ teaching changed over the course of his ministry: Jesus started with a pleasant message about promise and the advent of the kingdom of God, and then later, only when his disciples were adequately prepared, did he begin to speak about judgment and the future. Here Chrysostom reflected on the same Gospel material that later critics would use to periodize the ministry of Jesus and claim that he changed his mind on account of rejection. Chrysostom’s explanation was different, of course, for his Jesus did not change his mind but rather adapted to meet the theological capacity of his audience. But what we have here is only a minor difference in explanation of the same material. To make such a claim is not to assume a highly dubious hermeneutical theory that regards texts as containers of stable and timeless meanings.¹⁹ It merely acknowledges that, despite the

¹⁷ For some examples on other matters, see Dale C. Allison Jr., “Forgetting the Past,” *DRev* 120 (2002): 255-70.

¹⁸ Ulrich Luz’s commentary on Matthew demonstrates this time and time again. See also my study “The Seventy Faces of Peter’s Confession: Matt 16:16-17 in the History of Interpretation,” *BibInt* 20 (2012): 421-57.

¹⁹ Hence the practice of “reception history,” or *Wirkungsgeschichte*, has typically focused on the understanding and application of a text in time, and particularly interpretive variation. See David Paul Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics* (PTMS 107; Eugene: Pickwick, 2009); Mark Knight, “*Wirkungsgeschichte*, Reception History, Reception Theory,” *JSNT* 22 (2010): 137-46.

inevitable subjectivity of interpretation and the formative influence of the “horizon” of reception, texts remain agents in history, and they influence their readers to greater and lesser degrees.²⁰

This point leads to a second and closely related one, which has to do with the interpretive nature of historical Jesus research. Consider Figure 1:

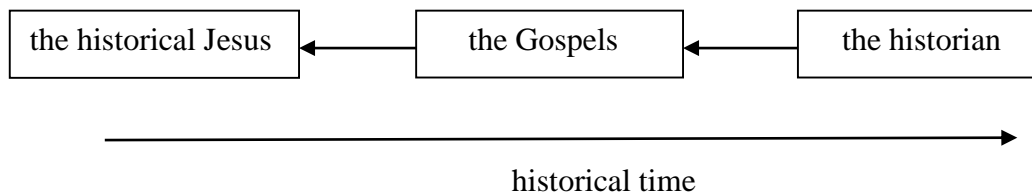


Figure 1. Interpreting History

²⁰ A distinction is often made between “reception history” and “history of interpretation,” on the grounds that, according to one critic, the latter has “interest in biblical texts as fixed or self-evident intellectual objects... (which have) intrinsic or ‘original’ meaning.” So Nancy Klancher, “A Genealogy for Reception History,” *BibInt* 21 (2013): 99-129 at 101. This study will at times use the descriptor “history of interpretation” positively, but I in no way hold to the view that Klancher here critiques. To believe that one can read any text in its historical context and make certain probabilistic determinations about its literary origins, genre, aims, and, if appropriate, historical reliability is not to hold to the view that that text is a “self-evident intellectual object.” Klancher’s own excellent reception history of Jesus’ encounter with the Canaanite woman in Matt. 15:21-28 (*The Taming of the Canaanite Woman: Constructions of Christian Identity in the Afterlife of Matthew 15:21-28* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013]) makes the point. For her project assumes that it is possible to engage these various “readings” of Matt. 15 in their respective historical contexts and come to determinations about textual meaning in those contexts. This study assumes nothing more about reading the Gospels. For similar attempts to show the interrelatedness of historical criticism and reception history, see Robert Evans, *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation: Gadamer and Jauss in Current Practice* (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2014). He notes on 39: “Historical-critical investigation may thus be viewed within the methodology of reception history as constituting one of the synchronic cross-sections of the diachronic line... historical-critical methods not only do not stand outside of the diachronic exercise of reception history, but may be represented as an [essential] operation within it. They do not produce the ‘primary datum’ in the sense of a single and unchallengeable ‘meaning’ of the text to which other meanings are later added... but they contribute to the ‘scholarly task’ of a ‘projection of the horizon of the past’ which for Gadamer is ‘one phase in the process of understanding’; and for Jauss, this is a strategy to render the ‘horizon of a specific historical moment comprehensible.’” Evans contends that attempts to distinguish and separately categorize “reception history” and “historical criticism” or “historical critical exegesis” misconstrue the thought of both Gadamer and Jauss.

The point of this basic and schematic diagram is to communicate two important truths. The first and most obvious one is that “the historical Jesus” is not accessible to the historian apart from the fragmentary and piecemeal primary sources that have been preserved. That is to say, anything that we conclude about the historical Jesus, or about the “actual past,” is only possible on the basis of what we can infer about that past from our sources. We cannot get “around” our sources to evaluate them by means of some other objective medium. That leads to the second and even more important truth, which is that the Quest for the historical Jesus is almost entirely an exercise in the interpretation of the Gospels.²¹ What historical Jesus scholars really do is *read texts* and posit various hypothetical historical scenarios for the actual past behind those texts.²² Thus, the distinction between “historical reconstruction” and “exegesis of the Gospels” informs insofar as it indicates a difference in the reader’s aims, but it can be misleading insofar as it disguises the fact that historical reconstruction is dependent on exegesis for nearly all of its content. The reason there are so many different reconstructions of Jesus available is that there are so many different ways to read these texts and posit what “actual past” inspired them. The enigma of “the historical Jesus,” in the end, is the reality of “the textual Jesus.”

²¹ “Almost entirely” because archaeology plays an important role as well; but here we face a similar question as artifacts must be interpreted. See John R. Bartlett, “What has Archaeology to do with the Bible—or Vice Versa?,” in *Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John R. Bartlett; London: Routledge, 1997), 1-19 at 13.

²² Helpful here is Jens Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth: Jew from Galilee, Savior of the World* (trans. Wayne Coppins and S. Brian Pounds; Baylor: Baylor University Press, 2014 [orig. 2012]), 17: “historical-critical Jesus research moves within a certain ‘fuzzy sphere,’ since it details as a historical endeavor with sources that do not mediate an unambiguous picture of the past. Therefore, its goal cannot be to reach the *one Jesus behind* the texts but to reach a conception grounded on the weighing of plausibilities, which as an abstraction from the sources always moves *in front of* the sources.”

Why is this relevant for our purposes? It is relevant because once contemporary historical Jesus research is properly seen as the interpretive procedure that it is, it no longer remains tenable to assume that “pre-critical” readings of the Gospels are of no interest to current historical inquiry. That is to say, just because pre-critical exegetes did not, on the whole, posit the same “actual past” as contemporary historians, that does not mean their engagement with the Gospels was wholly dissimilar. There may be similarity in terms of the interpretation of the Gospels, and dissimilarity in terms of the “actual past” that is inferred on the basis of those texts. The case of Chrysostom and later Jesus research above demonstrates the point, for there we have a similar interpretation of Gospels (for Chrysostom, in this case, of Matthew), and yet the construction of different narratives to explain them. The point is essential to grasp for the approach of this study, since one of the main theses of this book is that a number of different projects in the study of the New Testament, from a great variety of time periods, are actually held together by similar interpretations of our sources.²³ The crisis theory, for instance, is at once dissimilar to earlier claims about Jesus’ ethical teaching in the works of the English Deists, as well as to contemporary reconstructions of “Q” and the people that produced it, and yet similar in terms of several underlying reading strategies.²⁴

²³ This explains why, in what follows, I will use “harmonize” in a broader sense than is typical. I use the term to refer not only to the work of Gospel harmonies, but to other attempts to reconstruct the history of Jesus and the early Church on the basis of the entire Gospel tradition. For in that latter case, critics will similarly infer a narrative of historical development and change to make sense of all of the Gospel material—both what they deem authentic and secondary. Gospel harmonies, and many 19th-century Lives of Jesus, aimed to fit all of that tradition into the ups and downs of the career of Jesus, whereas later critics would use that same tradition to reconstruct a historical process that encompassed both the life of Jesus and the experiences of the early Church.

²⁴ Those who doubt the existence of Q or much of the critical scholarship on that document should still find the discussion of these interpretive parallels of interest for the reception of the double tradition. When it comes to my own reconstruction of Jesus in Chapters 6

Thirdly, Per Bilde's comment above about the independence of contemporary historiography from prior "religious" and "dogmatic" readings fails to acknowledge that all of our readings, like it or not, have been shaped by earlier exegetical tradition. In that sense, our project is not only interested in identifying interpretive parallels from various times and places, it is also interested in the way that certain "habits of reading" were constructed in the history of interpretation, which then influenced later interpreters.²⁵ Geoffrey Barraclough wrote that "The history we read, though based on facts, is, strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgments."²⁶ That perceptive statement is relevant to the point made above about the interpretive nature of historiography, and it is also relevant here since the acceptance of such "judgments" about the past have their own history and invariably impact the way that new generations of historians engage the material.²⁷ Among other arguments, I will propose in this

and 7, I will assume the existence of Q, even though, as will be clear throughout, I have doubts about the helpfulness of various stratification theories and reconstructions of the history of the "Q people." For arguments in favor of Q, I find the following treatments compelling in general: Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. Howard Clark Kee; 17th ed.; Nashville; New York: Abingdon Press, 1975), 63-76; Christopher Tuckett, "The Existence of Q," in *From the Sayings to the Gospels* (WUNT 328; Tübingen: Mohr, 2014), 51-77; John S. Kloppenborg, "On Dispensing with Q" and "Variation in the Reproduction of the Double Tradition and an Oral Q?," in *Synoptic Problems: Collected Essays* (WUNT 329; Tübingen: Mohr, 2014), 62-90 and 91-119.

²⁵ "Habits of reading" is from the excellent study by Brenda Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice: The Reception of the Gospel of Mark* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999). She writes on 17: "The history of how the Bible has been read emphasizes more forcefully than the history of any other text how tentative and yet how powerful reading-interpretive habits are."

²⁶ Geoffrey Barraclough, *History in a Changing World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 14.

²⁷ The point here is related to the notion of a readers' "horizon of expectation," which is partly derived from earlier readings of the text. See Klaus Berger, *Exegese des Neuen Testaments: neue Wege vom Text zur Auslegung* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1977), 95. On Jauss's influence here, see Anthony C. Thiselton, "Reception Theory, H. R. Jauss and the Formative Power of Scripture," *SJT* 55 (2012): 289-308.

study that the openness to, and curiosity in, reorganizing pericopae in the Gospels is one such “accepted judgment” that can be found well before the advent of modern historical criticism. Moreover, I will argue that changes in the appearance and layout of books around the time of the Reformation influenced later historians in terms of how they conceived of the past that those texts claimed to describe.

The preceding three points serve to explain why this study will begin its investigation of the crisis theory well before the supposed beginnings of the Quest for the historical Jesus. This project challenges periodizations of the Quest that, following Schweitzer’s lead, regard Hermann Samuel Reimarus in 1778 to have no real predecessor. Thus, my hope is that the arguments in the following pages contribute not just to our knowledge of the crisis theory, but to our knowledge of Jesus research in general.

1.4. THE QUEST FOR JESUS AND HISTORICAL METHOD

As a final prelude to our study, it is also necessary to address briefly recent concerns in Jesus scholarship involving historical method. Chapters 6 and 7 will make some proposals regarding the historical Jesus, and it needs to be stated clearly how this argument relates to current debate about the traditional “criteria of authenticity” (in particular: multiple attestation, embarrassment, coherence, and dissimilarity) and the notion of “authenticity” or “historicity” in general. Both

the criteria²⁸ and the notion of authenticity/historicity²⁹ have come under heavy scrutiny in recent years.

I should state at the outset that I have found many of the criticisms of the criteria to be forceful, and it is not necessary to rehash them here. It is problematic to continue using them without addressing the problems that critics have raised.³⁰ However, not all of the criticisms seem to be of equal value, and I dispute the idea that Jesus research has now entered a “new phase” or even a fourth or fifth Quest. I wish to make four points to state my position.

First, criticisms of the criteria and the notion of authenticity have sometimes produced rather grandiose claims about their “demise” or “uselessness,” which do not seem justified when one looks at the kinds of arguments that those same critics will use in making positive claims about the historical Jesus. Brant Pitre has recently shown that some of the most vocal critics of the criteria continue to use notions of contextual plausibility (sometimes called “primitiveness”), coherence, and even dissimilarity in their own reconstructions of Jesus.³¹ This does not render

²⁸ Although there is diversity of opinion among these works, see esp. Morna Hooker, “On Using the Wrong Tool,” *Theology* 75 (1972): 570-81 (though she concluded that the criteria must still be used, “for there are no others”); Klaus Berger, “Kriterien für echte Jesuworte?” *ZNT* 1 (1998): 52-58; Dale C. Allison Jr., “How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity,” in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (eds. Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter; 4 vols.; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 1:3-30; *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (eds. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2012).

²⁹ See Rafael Rodríguez, “Authenticating Criteria: The Use and Misuse of a Critical Method,” *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 152-67.

³⁰ The most recent contribution to John Meier’s *A Marginal Jew* on the parables of Jesus (2015), which continues to employ the authenticity criteria, contains no in-depth engagement with these recent challenges. That is striking considering Meier’s encyclopedic treatment of secondary literature throughout this series.

³¹ Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 32-46. For similar remarks, see Tobias Hägerland, “The Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus Research,” *JSHJ* 13 (2015): 43-65 at 53-62.

the criticisms of those scholars moot by any means, but it should temper any notion that current Jesus research need resurrect itself in a “post”-criteria age.

Second, and in a similar vein, some criticisms of the notion of “authenticity” or “historicity” can create the impression that there is a more disagreement with earlier research than seems to be the case. As Pitre has shown with the criteria, it is clear that some vocal critics of “historical positivist” approaches to Jesus continue to use a similar notion of “authenticity,” even if they prefer other terms. In Anthony Le Donne’s monograph *The Historiographical Jesus*, for instance, which rails against historical positivism, he nevertheless advocates using the criteria of authenticity “to determine whether the tradition originated in memory or invention.”³² There must be a notion of “what actually happened” at play here, otherwise his “memory or invention” binary is meaningless.³³ Chris Keith, who has also been critical of the quest for “authentic” Jesus tradition, and even more critical of the authenticity criteria, wrote this:

the claim that scholars cannot detach tradition from interpretation does not entail a further claim that scholars cannot posit, discuss, and propose a past entity (whether the oral Jesus tradition or the historical Jesus) behind the interpretations of the written Gospels. The claim, more accurately, is that scholars cannot engage in such enquiries by attempting to neutralize those interpretations and eliminate them from the historical task. Undoubtedly some of those interpretations have better claims to historical accuracy than others, and it is the job of critical scholarship to assess those claims. But scholars must carry out these tasks by explaining those interpretations, not casting them aside before the real historical work begins. In other words, the first step in the critical reconstruction of the past that gave rise to the Gospels should be toward the interpretations of the Gospels in an effort to

³² Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Baylor: Baylor University Press, 2009), 82-83.

³³ To my mind, Le Donne improves his point when he prefers to speak of “a basis in perception” rather than “a basis in invention” in his more recent study, “The Criterion of Coherence: Its Development, Inevitability, and Historiographical Limitations,” in Keith and Le Donne, *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, 95-114 at 96. It should be noted that Le Donne is a rather moderate voice in comparison to others in this volume.

understand them and explain them, not away from them, as was the case for form criticism and its outgrowth, the criteria approach.³⁴

This is an illuminating paragraph, which admits that one can discuss “a past entity...behind the interpretation of the Gospels.” Keith further uses expressions such as “historical accuracy” and “the past that gave rise to the Gospels.” So what then is the disagreement? In Keith’s words, it is that “the criteria approach” required that critics “neutralize those interpretations (in the Gospels) and eliminate them from the historical task.” On one level, of course, Keith is right: everything is interpreted; there is no pristine, “uninterpreted” past. On another level, however, it does not seem that acknowledging that truism takes us very far, particularly when we begin to discuss specifics in the Gospels rather than theory. I cannot imagine that a proponent of the criteria of authenticity would suggest that she “casts aside” the interpretative framework of the Gospels in a quest to get to the past behind them. Perhaps Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar did this; but they are already passé, and surely not all those who employ the criteria can be so described. What then would it look like, concretely, for a historian to “neutralize those interpretations and eliminate them from the historical task”? Presumably this historian would find material in the Gospels that is, in her estimation, *not helpful* for our understanding of what Jesus and his original followers thought; there is material that is, one might say, *misrepresentative*. Keith may wish to remind us that records of things that Jesus never actually said and did still may capture what he was about—such as the general impression that Jesus was engaged in controversies with his opponents, regardless of the particulars of those episodes.³⁵ That is a good insight that bears

³⁴ Chris Keith, “The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach to Form Criticism and Recent Attempts to Rehabilitate the Search for an Authentic Jesus,” in Keith and Le Donne, *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, 25-48 at 39-40.

³⁵ See his recent book *Jesus against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

repeating.³⁶ But here, if I understand Keith rightly, he does not so much challenge an underlying notion of “authenticity” as much as he offers a more expansive understanding of it.³⁷

This leads to a third point, which aims to describe more accurately what recent criticisms of the criteria and the notion of authenticity/historicity really entail. To my mind these criticisms do not really touch the logic of the criteria, nor the notion of authenticity/historicity in general, but rather are about *the end* to which the criteria, and the notion of authenticity/historicity, are sometimes used. That is to say, I find that recent critics are generally more skeptical than some earlier researchers about the promise of the criteria to deliver results about small, individual pieces of the Gospel tradition.³⁸ And *that* criticism, to my mind, is sound.³⁹ The problem with the

³⁶ See already C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1938), 94 (“fact stands independently of the historical status of the several stories in detail”). See also Hägerland, “The Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus Research,” 62-63 (“We will have to be aware [in our future use of the criteria] that ‘inauthentic’ material, although ‘invented’, always draws to some extent on remembered and commemorated traditions with a basis in perception...”).

³⁷ Insightful on this issue is James Crossley, *Jesus and the Chaos of History: Redirecting the Life of the Historical Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 50: “...even if we do not think miracles really happen/happened, we could theoretically learn something about the impact of Jesus and early understandings of Jesus which may assist us in understanding ideas associated with the historical Jesus. However, I am not convinced we should entirely dismiss concepts of ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’. For a start, we might indeed accept that memory and gist play a crucial role in reflections on the historical Jesus but at what point do we get out of touch with Jesus, or too abstractly related to Jesus to be of significant use in the study of the historical Jesus?”

³⁸ One finds that skepticism already in Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1979), who nevertheless contends that the criteria can be useful to establish the historical likelihood of a particular saying or action (rather than establishing or proving it).

³⁹ I wonder if much of the recent debate about the criteria of authenticity recasts an older debate over “holism” vs. “atomism” in Jesus study. On this see William R. Telford, “Major Trends and Interpretive Issues in the Study of Jesus,” in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden et al.: Brill, 1994), 33-74 at 49-50. See also Donald L. Denton, *Historiography and Hermeneutics*

criteria is not that they are worthless tools, but that, to borrow one of Allison's images, they are "too blunt" for the kind of surgery that some critics have set out to accomplish.⁴⁰ In that sense, the criteria may often be unable to settle the question of whether Jesus said precisely x or did exactly y. But the key point is this: just because the criteria cannot always settle particular questions does not mean that the historical logic of the criteria are inherently problematic,⁴¹ nor that the idea of an "authentic past" need be abandoned. Dale Martin wrote in a recent article that

I am under no illusion that the traditional, modern criteria render the kind of confident certainty imagined by some scholars in previous generations. But the simple argument that a saying or event passed along by different independent sources has a better chance of being historical is a sound one. Also, the argument that a saying or event that goes against the 'tendency' of the relevant text or the pieties of early Christianity renders that saying or event more likely historical seems to me still to be a valid point. I am not, that is, advocating a rigorous use of a particular 'method' designed to produce 'facts'; I am simply mounting what I take to be persuasive arguments.⁴²

I see nothing to disagree with here.

in *Jesus Studies: An Examination of the Work of John Dominic Crossan and Ben F. Meyer* (JSNTSup 262; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2004).

⁴⁰ See Dale C. Allison Jr., *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 153.

⁴¹ Denton, *Historiography and Hermeneutics*, 209: "(granting certain criticisms), that all criteria of historicity are therefore illegitimate does not necessarily follow. I would note that there are certain general historiographic principles that the criteria may reflect, such as the comparisons that are a part of all critical history. It may be possible to reconceive and reformulate the criteria with such principles in mind, along with the epistemological and literary observations that are presently impinging on historical and biblical studies."

⁴² Dale Martin, "Jesus in Jerusalem: Armed and Not Dangerous," *JSNT* 37 (2014): 3-24 at 12 note 15. See also Gerd Häfner, "Das Ende der Kriterien? Jesusforschung angesichts der geschichtstheoretischen Diskussion," in *Historiographie und fiktionales Erzählen: Zur Konstruktivität in Geschichtstheorie und Exegese* (eds. Knut Backhaus and Gerd Häfner; BTS 86; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), 97-130 at 128-30.

I would conclude, then, that the magisterial work of John Meier is troubled by recent criticism not because he offers arguments about what Jesus actually said and did; the issue is that Meier frequently makes arguments on a micro-scale, tracing the tradition-history of a particular logion or deed back to a reconstructed original form, to which he then applies the authenticity criteria. I doubt that this kind of endeavor can succeed.⁴³

The fourth and final point is where we go from here. Helpful again is Brant Pitre, who contends that the best guides for the future are actually behind us. In his view, E. P. Sanders's *Jesus and Judaism* (1985) endures because of its "triple-context approach" (Pitre's description) to the historical Jesus. Sanders wrote:

[T]he only way to proceed in the search for the historical Jesus is to offer hypotheses based on the evidence and to evaluate them in light of how satisfactorily they account for [1] the material in the Gospels, while also making Jesus [2] a believable figure in first-century Palestine and [3] the founder of a movement that eventuated in the Church.⁴⁴

Sanders did make some detailed claims about Jesus, to be sure, but in general he focused on the bigger picture. He intentionally avoided claiming much about the sayings tradition, since he thought that it was often impossible to determine the original forms and contexts of the utterances of Jesus.⁴⁵ In both respects Sanders's work dovetails nicely with that of other recent

⁴³ Though it is necessary even here to give Meier his due, for his approach at times resembles recent "holistic" approaches. For instance, he contends that we can be confident that Jesus was thought to perform miracles, even if we are uncertain about the historicity of the individual stories that have been preserved. See *Companions and Competitors*, 336. He makes a similar point elsewhere about Jesus' debates with the Pharisees, as well as his teaching in parables, see *Probing the Authenticity of the Parables* (vol. 5 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*; New York: Doubleday, 2015), 48-49.

⁴⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 166-67. This passage is also cited by Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 32.

⁴⁵ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 13-17.

critics who have urged that we at least start with the general “impact” or “gist” of Jesus’ actions and deeds in the Gospels.⁴⁶ It also coheres with the nuanced approach of Paula Fredriksen, who aimed to work “backwards” from the early Church to Jesus by charting certain “trajectories.”⁴⁷ Fredriksen, like Sanders, did not put much stock in the sayings tradition, and often concluded that it is impossible to decide on the historicity of particulars. To be sure, we may occasionally be able to make a good case that a certain saying or set of teachings goes back to Jesus. But here the objective is not to reproduce the *ipsissima verba Jesu*. The goal, rather, as Pitre has helpfully proposed, is to capture the *substantia verba Jesu*: the substance of the teaching of Jesus.⁴⁸

These approaches have influenced the final chapters of this project. Admittedly, pointing to a few exemplars does not constitute a “method” of approach. But to posit one particular method is not the objective here. James Crossley was right in his recent book to state that the best way forward in Jesus studies is “an old-fashioned view of interpretation, argument, and the combining of arguments for collective weight to make a general case.”⁴⁹ That is what I offer in Chapters 6 and 7.

The risk of concluding the Introduction with a discussion of the criteria of authenticity is that it may give the impression that this book is narrowly focused on my reconstruction of the

⁴⁶ See esp. Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 1-30.

⁴⁷ Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 77.

⁴⁸ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 47: “whenever I conclude that a particular saying or action is historical or historically plausible, I am not saying that Jesus said exactly these words (*ipsissima verba*), nor am I just saying that the text ‘sounds exactly like Jesus’ (*ipsissima vox*). Instead, I am claiming that the basic *substance* or content of the teaching or action can be reasonably concluded as having originated with him” (italics orig.).

⁴⁹ Crossley, *Chaos of History*, 44-45.

historical Jesus. But as stated above, that reconstruction is only one of several topics in this book.

Our project is really a commentary on the crisis theory, and the final chapters only serve to enrich our discussion of the whole. What James Carleton Paget described as the purpose of a biblical commentary will be the ideal for our project as well:

one might want to assert that the greatest achievement of a commentator may lie in the effectiveness with which he or she updates the reader on the story so far, that is, the extent to which he or she collates and arranges what has preceded, and how what may emerge from this in the way of firmer conclusions, however speculative, stimulates further discussion.⁵⁰

It is to those ends that we proceed.

⁵⁰ James Carleton Paget, review of *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James*, by Dale C. Allison Jr., *EC* 5 (2014): 393-416 at 415.

CHAPTER 2.0

INTERPRETIVE PRECURSORS AND HABITS OF READING

As noted in the Introduction, histories of the Quest of the historical Jesus conclude that the theory of a Galilean crisis gained currency only in the 19th century. It is assumed that prior critics did not have the philosophical underpinnings, methodological tools, and historical perspective that were necessary for such a conclusion. As Albert Schweitzer claimed in his famous survey of Jesus literature, Karl August Hase (1829) provides “for the first time the idea of two different periods in the life of Jesus,” and thus “created the modern historico-psychological picture of Jesus.”¹

The truth in this assertion is that Hase’s reconstruction, *as a whole*, was distinctive, and cannot be found packaged in an earlier form. This should not surprise. The hermeneutical and theological world of the 19th century was much different than that of pre-Enlightenment Christian thinkers, and so their approaches to and readings of the Gospels. But as much as the 19th-century Quest for Jesus differed from the work of prior generations, the pejoratively termed “pre-critical period” witnessed readings that in many ways anticipated and led to modern biblical scholarship, including Hase’s proposal. R. M. Grant was right in saying that many of “the problems, historical in nature, which arise out of the canonical gospels...were faced by Christian

¹ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 61.

writers in the first two or three centuries.”² And more recent critics have further demonstrated the point in discussing various takes on the composition of the Gospels, and even debates about historicity, in the works of Origen, Jerome, Augustine, and many others.³

This chapter traces a similar line of thought and wishes to demonstrate that, as much as the full-blown crisis theory does not emerge until the 19th century, earlier readers of the Gospels wrestled with many of the same issues, and even reached some of the same interpretive conclusions, as would later proponents of a Galilean crisis. Moreover, these earlier readings of the Gospels began to forge certain “habits of reading” that would influence later reception of the Gospels and contribute to the development of the crisis theory in the modern period. These habits of reading include not only exegetical treatments of particular passages and themes, but also the very questions, both historical and theological, that early interpreters began to raise about the Gospel sources and the life of Jesus. For we hope to show, in the end, that as much as the crisis theory belongs to the 19th-century Quest, it also attempts to offer a historical answer to very old interpretive questions.

2.1. THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

But before we consider some of these precursors and reading habits, it is necessary to address first certain theological barriers to the construction of a Galilean crisis in Gospel reading before the Reformation. For the very notion of a Galilean crisis assumes that Jesus was ignorant of the

² R. M. Grant, *The Earliest Lives of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1961), 2.

³ See e.g. Helmut Merkel, *Die Widersprüche zwischen den Evangelien: Ihre polemische und apologetische Behandlung in der Alten Kirche bis zu Augustin* (WUNT 13; Tübingen: Mohr, 1971); Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 1-3; Francis Watson, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013), 13-61.

future, that the concrete experiences of his ministry thwarted his expectations, and that his teachings and deeds were not found compelling by the majority of his contemporaries. Three commonly held theological perspectives on Jesus and his mission excluded these assumptions and hence the possibility of a Galilean crisis at the outset.

The first is that few believed the denouement on Golgotha resulted from an earlier failure. Instead the cross was the end goal from the very beginning—indeed, it was integral to the purpose of the incarnation itself—and the decision to go to Jerusalem certainly not *ad hoc*.⁴ There is little else to say here. Already in the 2nd century the Apostles Creed can pass over the ministry of Jesus without a word (“...conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate...”), and in the 4th Athanasius found it necessary to explain why Jesus did not go straightaway to death.⁵ Augustine wrote that Jesus had to go through the events of his ministry “so that there might be something for the evangelists to write down, something to be proclaimed to the Church. But when he had done as much as he judged would be sufficient for the purpose, the time indeed came...by his will.”⁶

Aside from the influence of the New Testament itself on this view,⁷ christological discussions that increasingly relied on notions of divine immutability further problematized the

⁴ Augustine speaks for a great many when he says “If Christ had not been put to death, death would not have died.” See *Serm.* 261.1 in *The Later Christian Fathers* (ed. and trans. Henry Bettenson; London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 222. See also *Trin.* 13.10. Aquinas notes in *Summa* 3a.46.2 (reply) that, since God foreknew and willed the passion, it could not be frustrated.

⁵ In his words: “this is why in his coming he did not offer his sacrifice for all (immediately)...he would have ceased to be visible to the senses. So to the contrary he showed himself visible in this body, remaining in it...” See *Inc.* 16.4 (SC 199:322-25 [my translation]).

⁶ Augustine, *Hom. Jo.* 8.12 in *Homilies on the Gospel of John 1-40* (trans. Edmund Hill; Works of Saint Augustine III/12; New York: Hyde Park: New City Press), 181.

⁷ Explored in Chapter 6 below.

idea that the divine Son reacted to external factors.⁸ There was also an apologetical motive, since apparently some non-Christian readers supposed that the death of Jesus arose from circumstances beyond his primary aims.⁹ Celsus declared at one point: “Let us disregard the treachery of his disciples and the nonsensical idea that Jesus foresaw everything that was to happen to him,” for “if it is true that he foreknew what was to happen—indeed intended it from the start, why is he represented as lamenting and wailing, and supplicating God to make him strong in the face of death?”¹⁰ For Celsus, then, Gethsemane shows that Jesus began with other intentions. If there were numerous readings of similar ilk, then they did not survive.

A second mitigating factor, closely related to the first, concerns the omniscience of Jesus. The Galilean crisis requires that Jesus’ knowledge develops, that he learns from his environment, and that he knows not what is to come. But the perspective that Jesus had perfect knowledge was widespread, especially after Nicea’s ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί.¹¹ The possibility that the Galilean

⁸ Nicea anathematized any suggestion that Christ was “subject to alteration or change.” And the Council of Antioch (ca. 341) decided that the Son was immutable by nature not just by will. See David M. Gwynn, *The Eusebians: The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the ‘Arian Controversy’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 195. Note here Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.36 (NPNF² 4:327): “the Son, being from the Father, and proper to His essence, is unchangeable and unalterable as the Father Himself.” See also *De synodis* 23 for four creedal statements drafted at Antioch.

⁹ For apologetical views see e.g. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 24.9.1; Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 27.2; Ambrose, *Exp. Luk.* 4.55-56 (ACCS 3:83) (“understand that he was not forced to suffer the passion of his body. It was voluntary”); Aristides, *Ap.* 10.15; Bede, *Hom. ev.* 2.3. Peter Chrysologus reminds that Christ’s death “is not a mishap, but an act of power” in *Serm* 72a.1 (FC 110:1), and the 8th century Pseudo-Cyprian’s Jesus tells his disciples: “Let me assure you that I am able to escape from everything which is about to befall me; and I know the things that will happen before they do happen.” See Roelof van den Broek, *On the Life and Passion of Christ: A Coptic Apocryphon* (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2013), 150-51.

¹⁰ *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians* (trans. R. Joseph Hoffmann; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 62-63 (my italics).

¹¹ A view evident in Ambrose’s categorical assertion—and the many like it—that “(Christ) is not ever mistaken.” See *Spir.* 2.11.114 (PL 16:799c). Cf. Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.51;

ministry itself was cut short by unforeseen circumstances is not clearly rejected by ancient interpreters because the hypothesis is not ever explored in detail. But since exegetes had little trouble making all texts affirm Christ's omniscience—Mark 13:32 (the son does not know the day or the hour) a famous example¹²—it is clear that any general theory of cognitive development or change on Jesus' part would be problematic.¹³ The issue of omniscience became acute in the West after Augustine since he thought ignorance the result of original sin and sense perception a consequence of the Fall and the loss of the light of God.¹⁴ Even though Aquinas would nuance the debate with the help of Aristotle's active intellect (*intellectus agens*) and passive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*),¹⁵ he concluded that Jesus did not really learn anything from experience,¹⁶ and asserted—like others before him—that Christ had the beatific vision

Basil, *Ep.* 236; Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 30.15; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 76.26.4-5, 17; Cyril of Alexandria, *Trin.* 6.

¹² See the excellent study by Kevin Magidan, “*Christus Nesciens?* Was Christ Ignorant of the Day of Judgment?,” in *The Passions of Christ in High-Medieval Thought: An Essay on Christological Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 39-50.

¹³ Cf. Raymond Moloney, “Approaches to Christ's Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” in *Studies in Patristic Christology* (eds. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey; Portland: Four Courts, 1998), 37-66. Aquinas: “Nothing could be new or surprising for the divine knowledge of Christ” in *Summa* 3a.15.8 (reply) (ed. and trans. Liam G. Walsh; vol. 49 of *Summa Theologiae*; London; New York: Blackfriars, 1974), 215. See here Bonaventure, *Comm. Luc.* 7.14.

¹⁴ Augustine, *Pecc. merit.* 2.48; *Maxim.* 2.9. See Raymond Moloney, *The Knowledge of Christ* (New York; London: Continuum, 1999), 57.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *De an.* 3.5.

¹⁶ *Summa* 3a.12.2 (reply). The issue is complicated, however, and there is much debate on how to interpret Aquinas on the issue. Cf. Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002), 137-90; Magidan, *Passions*, 31-38; Moloney, *Knowledge of Christ*, 62-63. See also *Summa* 3a.5.4 (reply) (ed. R. J. Hennessey; vol. 48 of *Summa Theologiae*; London; New York: Blackfriars, 1976), 148 where Aquinas affirms that Christ had a human mind and intellect as the Gospel narrative “records how he wondered (*commemorat eum fuisse miratum*).” The tension seems to arise from the desire to see grace maximize and perfect human nature rather than obliterate it. Aquinas admits that he has written inconsistently on the issue at *Summa* 3a.9.4 (reply).

while on earth (even in the womb).¹⁷ There is little room here for genuine disappointment. Of course not all shared these high views of Christ's knowledge,¹⁸ and Arians (considered in greater detail below) hunted for evidence that Jesus grew in knowledge or was ignorant of things.¹⁹ But these discussions concerned the interpretation of specific texts (esp. Phil 2:6-11; Ps 45:7-8; Heb 1:4; 3:2; Acts 2:36; Prov 8:22) and did not, as far as we know, suggest that Jesus' agenda changed over the course of his ministry.²⁰

Aside from the issue of omniscience, one might think that the eventual affirmation of two wills in Christ would make possible the conclusion that Jesus' *human* intentions were altered by the experiences of his ministry, or that Jesus, as very man, would have to deliberate and choose a certain course of action.²¹ But such is not the case.²² Maximus the Confessor assumed no conflict

¹⁷ *Summa* 3a.34.4 (reply). Cf. Michael R. Allen, *The Christ's Faith: A Dogmatic Account* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 37.

¹⁸ See e.g. Eulogius of Alexandria *apud* Photius, *Bibl. cod.* 230; Leontius of Byzantium, *De sectis* 10.13. Note also Themistius of Alexandria and the *Agnoetai* dispute, see Aloys Grillmeier, *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)* (vol. 2 of *Christ in Christian Tradition*; trans. John Cawte and Pauline Allen; London: Mowbray; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 362-84; *The Catena in Marcum: A Byzantine Anthology of Early Commentary on Mark* (ed. and trans. William R. S. Lamb; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 183-84.

¹⁹ Of course many dispute the characterization of "the Arians" as a clearly defined historical movement. See Gwynn, *Eusebians*, 183-86. But since the focus here is hermeneutics and not the historicity of the Arian community, I will continue to ascribe particular readings to "the Arians."

²⁰ See Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.37-3.58. Hilary of Poitiers also provides a catalogue of proof-texts in *Trin.* 10.9. It is unlikely that an Ebionite christology reached conclusions that were more radical than the Arians; see Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.26.1-2 concerning Christ's advanced knowledge and his endowment with the Spirit. See also *Clem. Hom.* 2.6, 10 (Christ knows all things).

²¹ Earlier thinkers like Gregory of Nyssa seem to have suggested at times that the two could be in conflict. Concerning Gethsemane he says: "There is a distinction between the divine and the human will, and he who made our sufferings his own utters, as from his human nature, the words which suit the weakness of humanity; but he adds the second utterance because he wishes the exalted will...to prevail over the human, for man's salvation." See *C. Apoll.* 32 in *Later Christian Fathers*, 141.

between the human and divine wills,²³ and the vindication of his view at Constantinople III (680/1 CE)²⁴ would be affirmed by many after though with quite different terms and logic.²⁵

A third barrier, which is also a sad chapter in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, concerns the common ways that Christians made sense of the rejection of Jesus by his Jewish contemporaries. Many were unwilling to accept the possibility that Jesus failed in an otherwise honest effort to win the faith and allegiance of his audience.²⁶ Instead, Jesus' hearers were to blame for not accepting the Son of God, and their failure was explained by blindness,²⁷

²² Cf. Grillmeier, *Chalcedon to Gregory the Great*, 153-73.

²³ See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (vol. 2 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*; Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 74. Maximus denied that Christ deliberated about a certain course of action as it would presuppose ignorance and mutability. Maximus also believed that the hypostatic union required the perfect accord of wills. See Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 129-74 (for additional reasons).

²⁴ Cf. *Exposition of Faith of the Third Council of Constantinople in Nicea I to Lateran V* (ed. Norman P. Tanner; vol.1 of *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*; London: Sheed & Ward; Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 128-30.

²⁵ See e.g. John of Damascus, *De fide* 14. Cf. Corey L. Barnes, *Christ's Two Wills in Scholastic Thought: The Christology of Aquinas and its Historical Contexts* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012).

²⁶ Theophlact in Aquinas' *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers* (trans. John Henry Newman; 1841; 4 vols.; repr., Southampton: Saint Austin Press, 1997), 2:105: "After the miracles which have been related, the Lord returns into His own country, not that He was ignorant that they should despise Him, but that they might have no reason to say, If Thou Hadst come, we had believed Thee..."

²⁷ E.g. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 27.4; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.8; Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.23; etc. Cf. Craig A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6.9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 161: "(Isa 6) lent itself very conveniently for purposes of anti-Jewish polemic and apologetic...the Isaianic text was used to explain the Jewish rejection of Jesus."

sinfulness,²⁸ and ignorance of the Scriptures.²⁹ Chrysostom made the point plain: “their (the Jews) misunderstanding was their own doing (τῆς αὐτῶν ἀγνωμοσύνης), it did not come from the weakness of the teacher.”³⁰ Moreover, many assumed that opposition to Jesus was not something that developed through the course of his ministry but was rather present at the outset.³¹ For it cannot be, Chrysostom and others supposed, that Galilean Jews would find over time divine teaching unpersuasive. Instead, the rejection was part of a mysterious divine plan as Paul discusses in Rom 9-11³² and befits the typology of salvation history: Jesus addressed a “stiff necked” and “rebellious” people whose ancestors also opposed Moses and the prophets.³³ Thus

²⁸ E.g. anonym., *Const. ap.* 6.2.5; Marcus Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 33; Lactantius, *Inst.* 4.10-11; Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. Luc.* 12; etc.

²⁹ E.g. Cyprian, *Idol.* 6.11-12; Lactantius, *Inst.* 4.15; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 7.1. For further discussion and additional texts see A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).

³⁰ *Hom. Matt.* 43.3 (PG 57:459 [my translation]).

³¹ Origen in his *Comm. Jo.* 6.151 suggests that the Jews who came to inquire about John's baptism (John 1:19-25) did not do so in good faith. Prosper of Aquitaine even argues that God waited to send Jesus until the most evil and sinful generation had arisen, so that the power of God to save some would be magnified. See *Voc. Gent.* 2.15 (ACW 14:115-16 [with my modifications]): “He rather chose the times which produced such people as would, in their wild and willful malice, persist in carrying out the very counsels of God's hands, and not because they wished to be helpful but because they intended to do harm.” Cf. Bede, *Hom. ev.* 2.6.

³² Hence it was predicted in the Scriptures. See e.g. Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 49; Hippolytus, *Antichr.* 58 (*ANF* 5:216: Moses “knew beforehand that the people would reject and disown the true savior of the world”); Tertullian, *Apol.* 21; Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 7.1; etc.

³³ Origen, *Cels.* 2.75 (trans. Henry Chadwick; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 123: “In fact, I think that this is enough for anyone who wants an explanation of the Jews' disbelief in Jesus, that it was consistent with the behavior of the people from the beginning as described in scripture.” Athanasius thinks the Jews who opposed Jesus *knew* they were in the wrong, see *Decr.* 1.1-2.

the whole may be preordained.³⁴ So the cause of the fallout is not the fault of Jesus, and it certainly did not generate a crisis in his confidence.³⁵

2.2. GOSPELS, GAPS, AND IMAGINATION

As widespread as these three theological assumptions were, however, they should not overshadow other clear antecedents to the theory of a Galilean crisis.

As will be seen in detail in Chapter 4, 19th-century proponents of a Galilean crisis will read Gospel scenes as snapshots of a larger story, a story that required the intuition and imagination of the historian to reconstruct in its entirety. This approach was possible because it was well recognized that the Gospels, particularly the synoptics, are largely episodic and that their chronologies are somewhat artificial. Thus, a Galilean crisis was constructed by reading between the lines of the Gospels and suggesting various interconnections among pericopae.

Readers well before the 19th century had recognized that the Gospels were incomplete and diversely ordered portraits of Jesus, and such knowledge affected the way the texts were read. Moreover, such readings helped generate an interest in filling out missing detail in a Gospel

³⁴ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Prov.* 10.60-61 (ACW 49:153): “God did not come to this decision as an afterthought but had so decreed from the beginning of time.” Augustine, *Hom.* 77.2 in *Sermons (51-94) on the New Testament* (trans. Edmund Hill; Works of Saint Augustine III/3; Brooklyn: New City Press: 1990), 317-18: “(How can it be that) the Lord, knowing full well why he had come, which was of course to have a Church among all nations, said that he had only been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel?...so it had been ordained, so presented from the beginning...because Christ Jesus had to come to the people of the Jews to be seen, to be slain, and to win from among them those whom he had already foreknown.” Rupert of Deutz, *Sup. Matt.* 9.755-63 (ed. Hrabanus Haacke; CCCM 29; Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 285-86 takes Matt 11:27 (“no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal”) to its logical extreme: Jesus himself chose those who were not accepted.

³⁵ The study of Christian responses to the Jewish rejection of Jesus is, of course, its own sub-discipline of history. See esp. Samuel Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy: From the Earliest Times to 1789* (ed. and rev. William Horbury; TSAJ 56; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995).

via one's knowledge of the others, the teachings of the Church, or some other matter.³⁶ This could take various forms: harmonizations, the posing of various backstories to certain pericopae, generalizations about the course of Jesus' career that made rational sense of the whole.

Papias' brief reflections on Mark and Matthew (ca. 120 CE), which have stimulated much discussion,³⁷ are illustrative. Indeed, his admission that the Markan framework is based on Peter's *ad hoc* reminiscence and is therefore not a properly ordered composition (σύνταξις) is remarkable on a number of levels. But notable for our purposes is this: while Papias seems to favor Matthew over Mark, he does not thereby disapprove of Mark's Gospel because of its organization.³⁸ This betrays the interesting assumption that, while historical reliability of the individual stories is unquestioned, their position in the overall chronology might not represent the way things actually happened.³⁹

Papias will share this sentiment with many after him. It is common to find assertions (or assumptions) *both* that the Gospels are historical records of what Jesus actually said and did, *and* comfortability moving things around in the Gospels and telling stories in a different order. A few examples: (i) The first harmonizer of the Gospels, Tatian (ca. 175 CE), appears to have based his harmony on a synthesis of Matthew and John, but at times he picks and chooses episodes with no

³⁶ See Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice*, 44.

³⁷ See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15. Cf. Adrien Delclaux, "Deux témoignages de Papias sur la composition de Marc," *NTS* 27 (1981): 401-11; Ulrich H. J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des frühen Christentums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 207-15; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 124-31.

³⁸ See Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 53-55; A. Stewart-Sykes, "Taxei in Papias: Again," *J ECS* 3 (1995): 487-92. Contra Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 222-30, who thinks Papias compares Mark to John.

³⁹ Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.2 (SC 456:68 [my translation]): "So what if they vary some in the narrative order (si narrationum disposition uariauit), provided that they agree (conueniat) in the crux of the faith."

apparent consternation.⁴⁰ (ii) Proba's *Centio* (ca. 350 CE) provides just a snapshot of the ministry, but even then follows the Sermon on the Mount with the encounter with the Rich Young Man and then Jesus walking on the water.⁴¹ (iii) Prudentius' *Cathemerinon* (ca. 400 CE) briefly touches on a great number of miracles but with no concern for chronology; at one point he skips from the woman with a hemorrhage (Mark 5:25-34) to the Johannine Lazarus scene (John 11) to Jesus walking on the water (Matt 14:22-33).⁴² (iv) Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale* (ca. 425-50) dwells on the ministry in much more detail than Proba and clearly imitates the Gospel narratives, yet his books three and four catalogue the miracles of Jesus in an order that agrees with not one

⁴⁰ Note J. Hamlyn Hill's comments in *Earliest Life of Christ Ever Compiled from the Gospels, Being the Diatessaron of Tatian* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1894), 27: "Tatian does not seem to have regarded the evangelists as infallible in regard to the chronological order of events, and has not hesitated in some cases to change their order for one which appeared to him more suitable." Tatian's preference for John and Matthew is likely due to their apostolicity; Tatian seems more at ease displacing Lukan pericopae than any of the others. See further Harvey K. McArthur, *The Quest through the Centuries: The Search for the Historical Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 42-44; Warren S. Kissinger, *The Lives of Jesus: A History and Bibliography* (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1985), 5 (Tatian "dealt quite freely"). This is not to say that Tatian did not have principles guiding his work; e.g. Theodor Zahn argued long ago that Tatian seemed to arrange his chronology according to the Johannine Passovers. See *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1881), 249-61. Tjitze Baarda, "ΔΙΑΦΩΝΙΑ—ΣΥΜΦΩΝΙΑ: Factors in the Harmonization of the Gospels, Especially in the Diatessaron of Tatian," in *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text and Transmission* (ed. W. L. Petersen; CJA 3; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 133-54 argues that Tatian's harmony was motivated in part to show critics that contradictions among the Gospels could be explained.

⁴¹ Proba, *Centro*, 505, 531. For an English translation see Elizabeth A. Clark and Diane F. Hatch, *The Golden Bough, The Oaken Cross: The Virgilian Centro of Faltonia Betitia Proba* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 12-95.

⁴² Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 9. Cf. the reconfigured order in the anonym. *Homerocentra* 11-36: baptism; temptation; call of the twelve; Cana; summary of healings; Jairus' daughter; Centurion's son; paralytic at Capernaum; paralytic at Jerusalem; the blind man from birth; another blind man (Matt 9:27-31?); cleansing of the leper; Peter's mother in law; exorcism in the Decapolis; man with the withered hand; deaf man; Canaanite woman.

Gospel.⁴³ (v) Later medieval harmonies of the Gospels, or hymns and poems about the life of Christ, have a similar hermeneutical ease about rearranging.⁴⁴ Ulrich Schmid can generalize:

“The order of the Gospel texts is varied. This applies both for the sequence of various stories, as well as for the collection of various narrative-details into one and the same narrative.”⁴⁵

To be sure, “history” in the modern sense is not the objective of these writings. Their reorganizations stem in general from theological or pastoral concerns.⁴⁶ The identity of Jesus is not contingent on the particular historical ordering of pericopae, but is rather supplied by the

⁴³ In the words of Carl P.E. Springer, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity: The Paschale Carmen of Sedulius* (VCSup 2; Leiden et al.: Brill, 1998), 64, Sedulus “skips back and forth from Gospel to Gospel, selecting and discarding episodes as he pleases.” Springer also notes that the transitions in the *Carmen* “are abrupt. He cares little about locating episodes in specific temporal or scenic contexts” (89). This is true, but Sedulus often connects pericopae with temporal markers: post, inde, interea, etc.

⁴⁴ The approach was highly influenced by Augustine’s *De consensu evangelistarum*, an “Old Latin Harmony” (now lost; cf. William L. Petersen, “Tatian’s Diatessaron,” in *Patristic and Text-Critical Studies: The Collected Essays of William L. Petersen* [eds. Jan Krans and Jozef Verheyden; NTTs 40; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012]), 175-203 at 185-86), and the 6th-century *Codex Fuldensis*. Cf. esp. Clement of Llanthony’s 12th-century *Unum ex Quattuor* and Ludolph of Saxony’s 14th-century *Vita Christi*. Charles Abbott Conway, *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and Late Medieval Devotion Centered on the Incarnation: A Descriptive Analysis* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1976), 6, describes the latter as “mosaic like,” and the same could be said of Clement’s work.

⁴⁵ Ulrich Schmid, “Lateinische Evangelienharmonien—Die Konturen der abendländischen Harmonietradition,” in *Evangelienharmonien des Mittelalters* (eds. Christoph Burger; August den Hollander; Ulrich Schmid; STAR 9; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), 18-40 at 35 (“Die Anordnung der Evangelientexte ist verschiedenen. Dies gilt sowohl für die Abfolge verschiedener Erzählungen als auch für das Zusammenstellen verschiedener Erzähldetails innerhalb ein und derselben Erzählung”).

⁴⁶ So Origen, at a now famous section of his *Commentary on John* (*Comm. Jo.* 10.19 [FC 80:259]), regards it theologically significant that the Gospels “have related what happened in this place as though it happened in another, or what happened at this time as though at another time,” for this shows the reader not to rely on the mere letter. Cf. Samuel Laeuchli, “The Polarity of the Gospels in the Exegesis of Origen,” *CH* 21 (1952): 215-24. Origen’s point here is often misrepresented, however. It is not often the case that Origen expressly argues that an episode in the Gospels is unhistorical. Here see Henri de Lubac, *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen* (trans. Anne Englund Nash; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 116, 132.

liturgy, praxis, and theological reflection of the Church, in addition to the Gospels. It is the presupposed knowledge of *that* Christ that permits exegetes to reorganize the Gospels in this manner. One should also account for the diversity of genres here and their various expectations (including *poetica licentia*).⁴⁷ Moreover, some of these exegetes were just imitating what they found in the canonical form of the Gospels. For in the Fourth Gospel we are told that only a small fraction of the things Jesus said and did have been recorded (20:30; 21:25), and it takes no synopsis to identify stories unique to particular Gospels and disagreements regarding the ones they hold in common. Thus, if the Gospels themselves, inspired by God, do not present a fictitious portrait of Jesus despite their selectivity and differences, so their interpreters could too be selective.⁴⁸

The point to emphasize, however, is simply this: these readers do not fear the charge of misrepresenting the Gospels by changing the order of the stories. There is no suspicion that fewer stories about Jesus might lead to less knowledge about him, or that differently ordered miracles might muddle his image. The parts could stand apart from the whole and be pieced

⁴⁷ See Michael Roberts on Christians borrowing classical conventions of paraphrase in *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (ARCA 16; Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1985). There are different emphases even within whole works, such as the 14th-century *De gestis Domini Salvatoris* by the Augustinian Simone Fidati. This massive 15 book work is more topical than chronological, but in the big picture a rough chronology emerges: John the Baptist; general life of Christ; miracles; parables; similitudes; vices; virtues; Sermon on the Mount; discourses; passion; resurrection. There is great variation within these larger groupings. See Mary Germaine McNeil, *Simone Fidati and His De Gestis Domini Salvatoris: A Dissertation* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1950), 74, 95.

⁴⁸ Some, however, thought divergent chronologies required a choice. Gaius of Rome (though linkage between Gaius and the Alogoi is disputed) looked for reasons to dismiss with the Fourth Gospel on account of its use by the Montanists. See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.28.2; 4.20.3. When reflecting on the claim by Matthew and Mark that Jesus went down to Capernaum after being baptized, Gaius claimed: ὁ δὲ Ἰωάννης φεύδεται μὴ εἰπὼν περὶ τούτων (!). See Epiphanius, *Pan.* 51.21.15-16. See also 51.18.1 (John φεύδεται about the flight to Egypt). See Grant, *Earliest Lives*, 28-29; Merkel, *Widersprüche*, 34-37.

together in different ways with little overall consequence. This frequent practice of reorganizing the Gospels—irrespective of the motives of the reader in question—functioned to normalize it so as to be theologically acceptable. It was both consciously thought and unconsciously assumed that, by virtue of the Gospel’s selective presentation of Jesus’ life, the interpreter was justified to adjust and reorganize them.

In addition to these theological explanations for an atomistic and sometimes free treatment of the Gospel frameworks, others had a more historical one which is nearer the logic of the later crisis theory. Here Augustine’s *De consensu evangelistarum* is the most clear and influential on late research.⁴⁹ He notes when reflecting on seeming contradictions in the infancy narratives:

We have to take notice of a fact which will also hold good for other like cases, and which will secure our minds against similar agitation or disturbance in subsequent instances. I refer to the circumstance that each evangelist constructs his own particular narrative on a kind of plan which gives it the appearance (*videatur*) of being a series of events without interruption. For, preserving a simple silence on the subject of those incidents of which he intends to give no account (*non vult dicere*), he then connects those which he does wish to relate with what he has been immediately recounting, in such a manner as to make the recital seem continuous (*ut ipsa continuo sequi videantur*)...(The Evangelist seeks) to give the appearance of a connected series...⁵⁰

What Augustine means to say, without really saying it, is that the narrative presentation of each Gospel is not *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. In particular, that at times the logical and/or historical

⁴⁹ On Augustine’s influence on later harmony writing, see Christian Pesch, “Ueber Evangelienharmonien,” *ZKT* 10 (1886): 225-244 at 238.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *Cons.* 2.5.16 (*NPNF*¹ 6:108-9 [with my modifications]). Latin text edited by Francisci Wehrich (CSEL 43; Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1904), 98-99. See also 2.42.90 (on Luke 4’s annunciation in Nazareth not mentioning a prior ministry in Capernaum). Cf. Pesch, “Ueber Evangelienharmonien,” 230-31, 233; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 30-31 and 36-37.

connection between individual pericopae is neither apparent nor reliable.⁵¹ For Augustine this observation was helpful most of all for harmonization—it allowed him to insert material from other sources into these historical “gaps” between stories.⁵² But the view also happens to be fundamental to the theory of a Galilean crisis as it assumes that the connections between pericopae are not reliable and that the historian must find an alternative explanation for the transitions. What is more, in the absence of a reliable chronology, Augustine assumes that such must be created by the reader on the basis of the general course, or historical outline, of the ministry.⁵³ This is not the major task of his *Harmony*, which is quite atomistic in general and much more interested in theological issues.⁵⁴ But he does indulge on occasion. At one point

⁵¹ Cf. Dionysius Bar Salibi, *Comm. ev.* 38 (Luke alone provides the historical sequence). Note Ludolph in the *proem.* to his *Vita Christi*: “I am not asserting that the order of events that follows here is without doubt the historical one; for this cannot be stated by anyone.” Cited in Pesch, “Ueber Evangelienharmonien,” 241.

⁵² See, e.g. *Cons.* 2.5.14; 2.6.18; etc. It is common to find the claim that the Gospels work together as if each contribute a part to a larger project. E.g. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.24.11. Theodor of Heraclea explains that the triumphal entry in John differs from the Synoptics because John leaves “the left over stuff for others to speak of” (τὰ παραλειμμένα τοῖς ἄλλοις εἰπεῖν). See *Fr. Comm. Jo.* 183 (ed. Joseph Reuss; TUGAL 89; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 112. See also Epiphanius, *Pan.* 51.4.11; 51.6.2. Cf. Markus Bockmuehl, “The Making of Gospel Commentaries,” in *The Written Gospel* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 274-95 at 285.

⁵³ Tatian of course assumed the same, as is well known. Cf. Hill, *Earliest Life*, 31; Curt Peters, *Das Diatessaron Tatians: seine Überlieferung und sein Nachwirken im Morgen- und Abendland sowie der heutige Stand seiner Erforschung* (OrChrAn 123; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1939), 16-19.

⁵⁴ At *Cons.* 2.21.52 Augustine says that it is not his task to investigate why the Evangelists report the events in the order they do, but he thinks such would be a worthwhile investigation. He notes (*NPNF*¹ 6:127): “But as to the reason why the Holy Spirit...has left one historian at liberty to construct his narrative in one way, and another in a different fashion, that is question which any one may look into with pious consideration, and for which, by divine help, the answer also may possibly be found. That, however, is not the object of the work which we have taken in hand at present.” McArthur, *Quest through the Centuries*, 53, is right that Augustine “was prepared to rearrange the order of the Gospels, but he was reluctant to do so against their explicit statements of time or relationship.”

Augustine observes that Matthew claims Jesus taught parables then went to Nazareth (13:1-58), but that Mark reports that Jesus set out to the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:1-41). Though Augustine anticipates Greisbach in thinking Mark the *breviator* of Matthew,⁵⁵ here he hints that the aftermath of the story makes better sense historically *in Mark* than in Matthew.⁵⁶ Of course Augustine and later historians would disagree radically about what is “commonsensical” about the course of the ministry.⁵⁷ But there is an interest here in finding what Schweitzer would later call an “inner-logic” to the stories.⁵⁸ In this respect Brenda Schildgen is right to note that, in Augustine’s production of a single *evangelium*, and his historicizing interest in the Gospels, he would “Ironically...produce a fascination with the ‘life of Jesus’” that would blossom in later centuries.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Cons.* 1.2.4.

⁵⁶ Augustine, *Cons.* 2.42.89.

⁵⁷ There is a similar thought process in Apollinarius of Laodicea’s work on John, though his logic is not apparent given the fragments that have survived. For example, he notes that John has preserved the temple action “more precisely” (ἀκριβέστερον) than the Synoptics. See *Fr. Comm. Matt.* 106 (ed. Joseph Reuss; TUGAL 61; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 36. Tatian took the opposite position—which too is interesting; see discussion in Nicholas Perrin, “The *Diatessaron* and the 2nd c. Reception of John,” in *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 301-18 at 307.

⁵⁸ See Ludolph of Saxony’s attempt to explain why he sometimes goes beyond the Gospels: “for the sake of making the story more impressive I shall present the narrative to you as though it had actually happened, or can be justly believed to have happened in accordance with certain imaginative reconstructions which the mind variously apprehends.” His reconstruction thus relies on the imagination but can still be rationally defended. Passage cited in Shirley Jackson Case, *Jesus through the Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), 263-64. Ludolph continues to explain that such reconstructions are legitimate when in keeping with faith and natural reason. Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 127 suggests it was a common technique of paraphrase to “achieve narrative economy and a more rational or effective sequence of events.”

⁵⁹ Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice*, 68-69.

In such attempts to rationalize the course of Jesus' career, I have not identified a single one that proposes some watershed point in the Galilean ministry. But there are notable precursors to that move. One regards the supposition that certain pericopae *presuppose* a particular position in the ministry.⁶⁰ Later historians will often posit that certain stories assume a particular narrative that may contradict the Gospels themselves. Ancient readers did likewise, and even with some of the same texts. For example, nearly all later proponents of a Galilean crisis believe that Jesus' woe over Galilean cities (Q 10:13-15)⁶¹ presupposes a position at or near the *end* of the Galilean ministry. The passage, it is said, expresses frustration over poor results, and is thought to imply a backstory of rejection. This view is not entirely without precedent.⁶² Concerning these same woes, Didymus the Blind reflects in passing in his *Commentary on Zechariah*: "for after Jesus had completed prodigious miracles (Τῶν γὰρ τεραστίων Ἰησοῦ δυνάμεων ἐπιτελεσθεισῶν), those from the cities Chorazin and Bethsaida, being Jews, did not repent, while the Tyrians and

⁶⁰ One could mention here the later attempt of Johannes Gerson's *Monotessaron* to arrange material on the basis of shared geography. See discussion in Marc Vial, "Zur Funktion des Monotessaron des Johannes Gerson," in *Evangelienharmonien des Mittelalters* (eds. Christoph Burger, August den Hollander and Ulrich Schmid; STAR 9; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), 40-72 at 46.

⁶¹ Luke 10:13-15 (NRSV): "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!" Cf. Matt 11:20-24.

⁶² It looks as though some harmonizers thought the passage odd in its Matthean and Lucan contexts. Juvencus' *Evangeliorum libri quattuor* 2.509-60, which rather closely follows Matthew at this point (9:10-38; 10:1, 5-39; 11:1-15), skips over the Galilean woes (along with the saying about the children in the marketplace) and then resumes with Matt 11:25-30; 12:1-15, 22-37. There are many possible explanations, of course. But surely Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 109, is wrong in dismissing the issue by saying the passage is not essential to the Gospel narrative. Roger P. H. Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 34, suggests the omission may be due to the names of the cities. But Juvencus provides geographical detail elsewhere (e.g. 3.176-77).

Sidonians would have done if these miracles had been done among them.”⁶³ Didymus’ summary of the woes, and particularly his word choice (“had completed” from ἐπιτελέω), goes beyond what the Gospels say about this text. The position of this saying in Matthew and Luke is not especially dramatic, but Didymus treats the text as a reflection on “completed” work. He reads the woe pericope not in its larger Matthean and Lucan contexts but rather in isolation and on its own terms.

Similar and even more explicit is John Chrysostom:

Then he proceeds to upbraid (ὀνειδίζει) the cities; now that wisdom has been justified; now that he has shown all the things that have been accomplished (ἀπέδειξε πάντα πεπληρωμένα). Since, having failed to persuade them (Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἔπεισε), he now proceeds to lament; which is a greatly terrifying thing. For he had shown both his teaching by his words, and his wonder-working power by his signs. But since they remain in their own unbelief, he now proceeds to upbraid.⁶⁴

Here Chrysostom ascribes to the woe pericope a sense of completion⁶⁵ and even a motive (e.g. “having failed to persuade”), whereas the contexts of the Gospels provide no such clarity.⁶⁶ And the climactic nature of Chrysostom’s paraphrase does not square with what is to come in

⁶³ *Comm. Zach.* 3.84 (SC 84:660 [my translation]).

⁶⁴ *Hom. Matt* 37.4 (PG 57:424 [my translation]).

⁶⁵ Chrysostom does not, however, think the woe spells certain doom on the cities; the objective is to get their attention. Cf. Paschasius Radbertus, *Ex. Matt.* ad loc. (ed. Bedae Paulus; CCCM 56a; Turnhout: Brepols, 1984), 663: “Ergo ciuitatibus Iudeorum quas exprobrat Dominus ideo praedicatum est Euangelium et signa ostensa ut inexcusabiles essent” (Therefore in the cities of the Jews which the Lord upbraids had the gospel preached in them and signs shown in order that they might be without excuse). See also Theophylact of Ohrid, *En. Matt.* ad loc.

⁶⁶ Augustine *Cons.* 2.32.79 (*NPNF*¹ 6:140) suggests that here Luke may have “recorded these words in the strict consecution in which they were spoken by the Lord, while Matthew has kept by the order of his own recollections.” Perhaps the reason is that in Luke Jesus has already left Galilee. Though Augustine also offers the possibility that the oracle was delivered on two different occasions, and that both Evangelists are correct. Cf. the anonym. (possibly early 8th century) *Lib. quest. ev.* ad loc. (ed. J. Rittmueller; CCSL 108F; Turnholt: Brepols, 2003), 213-14 (“‘Matheus’ uero more ‘suo’ recordatur”).

Matthew.⁶⁷ But in taking the pericope to tell a story larger than itself he is near the approach of later Jesus critics, and even near the conclusions of later proponents of a Galilean crisis on this passage.⁶⁸

Treatment of the Parable of the Sower and its relatives presents another parallel to later historical reflection on a Galilean crisis. The parable chapter occupies different positions in Mark and Matthew.⁶⁹ But some early readers suggested that Jesus spoke about the “mystery” of the kingdom when he had been rejected by certain people.⁷⁰ For Cyril of Alexandria, Jesus’ decision to withhold the “mystery” of the kingdom was not a random act of predestination, but was rather well deserved because certain members of Jesus’ audience were insolent and had “wickedly resisted his public teaching.”⁷¹ Chrysostom reached a similar conclusion: “from the beginning (of his ministry) he did not speak to them in this way (with parables), but (rather) with much clearness (μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς σαφηνείας); but because they turned themselves aside (ἐπειδὴ δὲ

⁶⁷ Cf. here too Ludolph, *Vita Christi* 1.57, which discusses this pericope alongside the immediately preceding (children calling in the marketplace). He uses Isa 5:4 as commentary: “what else could I have done for these people?”

⁶⁸ Note the intensifying *post* in Rabanus Maurus, *Ex. Matt.* ad loc. (ed. B. Löfstedt; CCCM 174; Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 332: quia post factas uirtutes et signa. Also Otfried of Weissenberg, *Gloss. Matt.* ad loc. (ed. C. Grifoni; CCCM 200; Turnholt: Brepols, 2003), 161. Otfried assumes that messengers have already been sent to these cities (“in quas [cities] et spirituales uenatores missi sunt”), which does not agree with Matthew (but assumes Luke 9:1-6).

⁶⁹ Cf. Mark 4:1-34 (early in the Galilean ministry); Matt 13:1-52 (later).

⁷⁰ Perhaps such is the idea behind Ludolph, *Vita Christi* 1.64 in *La grande vie de Jesus-Christ* (trans. Florent Broquin; 7 vols.; 2nd ed.; Paris: C. Dillet, 1883), 3:314: “La première parabole (of the Sower), relative à la semence jetée en terre et dont le quart seulement porta du fruit, figure la prédication de Jésus-Christ et des Apôtres qui s’adressèrent indistinctement aux Juifs bons et méchants; mais un petit nombre d’entre eux embrassèrent la foi, tandis que la majeure partie resta dans l’infidélité.”

⁷¹ Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. Luc.* 41 in *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke* (trans. R. Payne Smith; Astoria: Studion Publishers, 1983), 177. Cyril points to John 10:20 (“He has a demon and is insane, why do you listen to him?”) as having occurred *before* the giving of the parable.

διέστρεφον ἑαυτούς), thereafter he speaks in parables.”⁷² Jesus’ teaching strategy thus adapted to meet the situation on the ground. Both exegetes, then, anticipate many promoters of the crisis theory who will similarly suggest that Jesus began to teach in parables only at a later point in his ministry. Their logic will be different: Jesus rationalized the rejection of his public proclamation by saying the true meaning of his message was “hidden” in parables. But the general idea here is the same.⁷³ These earlier readers had already started to place and interpret certain episodes in Jesus’ ministry in a larger narrative context, a context that was sometimes at odds with the frames of the Gospels themselves.

A number of other writers similarly suggest that the rejection of Jesus occurred over a period of time in a way unlike the Gospels report. In a way similar to the *Diatessaron*, the 13th-century devotional work, *Meditaciones vite Christi*, divides the episode of Jesus’ annunciation in Nazareth in Luke 4 into two: it first describes the welcome (e.g. Luke 4:22, “all spoke well of him”) and then the rejection at a later point in the ministry.⁷⁴ The decision to move the rejection is surely informed by the placement of the Nazareth scene in Mark (6:1-6) and Matthew (13:54-58), and we must remember that the text is devotional and makes no aim to be a historical life of

⁷² Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 45.1 (PG 58:472 [my translation]). Cf. Aquinas, *Summa* 3a.42.3 (reply). See also Irenaeus’ treatment of Matt 11:27 (a key text for the Gnostics in their claims to possess Jesus’ esoteric teaching), which he claims is not a statement about the hiddenness of Jesus’ teaching at all times, but rather functions to condemn those who did not believe what was made visible to all. See *Haer.* 4.6.5. See also Tertullian, *Res.* 33; Archelaus (of Caschar) *apud* Cyril, *Cat.* 6.27-29; Rabanus, *Ex. Matt.* (on 13:13).

⁷³ The strategy was common and could achieve other aims as well. Faustus the Manichean apparently thought that when Jesus said “I have come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it” (Matt 5:17) he was not saying anything about the value of the Old Testament; he was instead trying to “calm the furor of the Jews.” See Augustine, *Faust.* 19.1 (trans. Ronald Teske; *Works of Saint Augustine* I/20; Hyde Park: New City Press: 1990), 237.

⁷⁴ Pseudo-Bonaventure (John of Caulibus?), *Meditaciones vite Christi* 18.1-13 (ed. M. Stallings-Taney; CCCM 153; Turnholt: Brepols, 1997), 92-93.

Jesus in the modern sense. But even then, the harmonization (esp. Tatian's) seems to assume that, when considering the reception of Jesus in a given city, it is more likely that the rejection would come later.⁷⁵ It is a common-sense approach to the issue of how Jesus' ministry would have unfolded.

The point is even clearer in Ludolph's 14th-century *Vita Christi*,⁷⁶ a work which moves the entirety of Luke 4 to a much later point in the ministry (1.65). Moreover, even though the author follows Matthew's chronology for the Galilean ministry more closely than the others, he positions several controversy stories at a much later period in the ministry than they appear in Matthew, and he gathers similar stories from the other Gospels as well. For example, the controversy over picking grain on the Sabbath (1.71), healing the man with a withered on the Sabbath (1.72), healing the blind and dumb demoniac (1.73; which the Pharisees attribute to the power of Beelzebul), the request for a sign (1.74),⁷⁷ and the woe against the Pharisees (1.76; from Luke 11:37-54). He also places in this context the feeding of the five thousand, which results in many disciples leaving Jesus (1.70). The upshot is that the "first part" of Jesus' ministry concludes with growing opposition.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ He may even have thought he had corroborating evidence elsewhere, as he says "For he did not begin with noise and pomp, but humbly and gradually" (Non enim cepit cum boatu et pompa, sed humiliter et paulatim). See *Meditaciones vite Christi* 18.42-43 (ed. M. Stallings-Taney), 94.

⁷⁶ For the Latin text see *Vita Jesu Christi ex Evangelio et Approbata ab Ecclesia Catholica Doctoribus Sédulo Collecta* (ed. L. M. Rigollot; 4 vols.; Paris: Palme: Lebrocquy, 1878).

⁷⁷ Ludolph seems aware of the chronological situation here, noting on the comparison between Jews and the Ninevites that the former had not received him "pendant trois ans" of his presence among them. See *Vita Christi* 1.74 (trans. Broquin), 4:6.

⁷⁸ This massive work is broken into two parts: Part 1 includes the ministry of Jesus until the feeding of the five thousand and other controversy stories, Part 2 commences with Caesarea Philippi. The division at this point was intentional, as Ludolph notes that Christ at this point

In all of these examples, then, we have attempts to reposition events and particular themes in the Gospels that at once build on the Gospels but infer more than their original narrative placements communicate, and are sometimes in tension with those placements. These readings are not critiques of the Gospels, to be sure, and it is doubtful that any intended to assert that the larger contexts of the Evangelists were misleading. But that is precisely the point. Some stories and motifs, if treated in isolation, have been thought to imply alternative backstories. And the general pattern of reading the Gospels as a unified story about Jesus' life that nevertheless lacked certain pieces to the puzzle justified and normalized such reading strategies.

To these examples about specific texts and issues we can add one more that concerns the big picture: the generalization that Jesus' ministry began with much success and only later did his reception turn sour. The heresiologist Epiphanius, hardly a forerunner of liberal Protestant scholarship, offers this assessment. In *De Incarnatione* we find undeveloped the theory of a period of *Zustimmung* and then a period of opposition:

In the eighteenth year of Herod also called Agrippa, Jesus began to proclaim (and after he received the baptism of John). And he proclaimed an "acceptable year" (κηρύσσει ἐνιαυτὸν δεκτόν), being opposed by no one (ὕπ' οὐδενὸς ἀντιλεγόμενος), neither by Jews nor by Greeks nor by Samaritans nor by anyone else. Then, being opposed, he proclaimed (ἔπειτα ἀντιλεγόμενος ἐκήρυξεν) a second year.⁷⁹

The division of the ministry into these two periods does not clearly emerge from any Gospel as a whole. But it is a convenient thematic organization of the ministry that is not entirely lacking textual evidence. For despite the fact that each of the Gospels presents opposition to Jesus at a

begins to speak of his passion. Other historians have recognized the significance of Ludolph on dividing the ministry precisely here; see Case, *Jesus through the Centuries*, 261-62; Mary Bodenstein, *The Vita Christi of Ludolphus the Carthusian: A Dissertation* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1944), 96-97. See also Schildgen, *Power and Prejudice*, 73.

⁷⁹ Epiphanius, *Inc.* 2.5-6 in his *Panarion* (ed. Karl Holl; GCS 25; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915), 229 (my translation). See also *Pan.* 51.25.1-8; 51.27.4.

very early point in the ministry—indeed, at the very beginning in John—Mark’s Gospel in particular describes a brief flurry of teaching, healing, and widespread popularity before the first mention of controversy.⁸⁰ Such did not escape the notice of other early readers.⁸¹ To be sure, some factors that contribute to Epiphanius’ reading are not shared by later questers. For one, it seems that Epiphanius gets his “one year” by a rather literal rendition of the “acceptable year” from Isa 61:2 (cited in Luke 4:19), and, further, he may be reacting to those who thought Luke’s “acceptable year” meant that Jesus’ ministry only lasted one year in its entirety.⁸² Moreover, Epiphanius nowhere suggests that this change in reception led to a moment of crisis for Jesus—

⁸⁰ Joel Marcus has described Mark 1:16-45 as the “honeymoon period.” See *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), 177 (“Here...Jesus’ human audience consists wholly of friends and neighbors, who receive him with open arms”).

⁸¹ Note Proba, *Centro*, 456-62, describes the beginning of Jesus’ ministry thusly (trans. in Clark, *Golden Bough*, 67):

Through the noble cities the talk winged.
And men convened; to all was one design:
Following him to whichever lands he wished
To escort them on the sea. Many besides,
The folk of no great name, or fame,
Came running with deafening din and mobbed him,
Crowding in. Their hearts beat wild with joy;
Now the multitude contained him in
Their midst;

See also Theodoret of Cyrus, *Prov.* 10.25; anonym. *Homerocentra* 15 (SC 437:235): “Tous, dans la foule, L’admiraient qui s’avançait, adolescents de prime jeunesse et vieillards aux tempes grisonnantes, boiteux, ridés, louchant des yeux, suppliants, lorsque l’un d’eux a commis transgression ou faute.”

⁸² We know of such a view from Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.22.1-3; *Clem. Hom.* 17.19; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.21; Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 32.5; idem, *Princ.* 4.5.

for that conclusion would violate his Christology and much else. But even so: Epiphanius betrays an interest to offer a logical, thematic summary of the ministry as a whole, and he relies on some of the same textual material that later critics will also take special note of.

For readings such as these, then, we must disagree with R. M. Grant's conclusion that "once (readers) had decided not only that Jesus himself was the divine logos but also that the sources for his life were written under divine inspiration, all the presuppositions which might make a 'biographical' interest possible had disappeared."⁸³ For while it is true that the nature of the biographical interest was quite different in the modern period, earlier readers of the Gospels were also very interested in *why* Jesus spoke and acted as he did, and tried to use their imaginations to fill in the many blank spots in the Gospel narratives. Their explanation for the why presupposed certain contextual and theological factors not shared by many of the 19th-century researchers, and thus did not require a "crisis" to make the pieces of the Gospels fit together.

2.3. REJECTION, DISAPPOINTMENT, AND FEAR

It is further significant that, despite the high Christology of the creeds and their implications for Jesus' omniscience and divine will, some readers still concluded that Jesus was indeed repelled by his contemporaries, at times disappointed, and even afraid.⁸⁴ There were prominent

⁸³ Grant, *Earliest Lives*, 2.

⁸⁴ Some actively promoted the idea that Christ experienced *dolor* and *tristitia* as essential to the incarnation. See esp. Peter Lombard, discussed in Marilyn McCord Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999), 22-23. However, for Peter this sorrow was still voluntary and not necessary. On sadness see Ambrose. *Trin.* 2.7.

theological trajectories in the opposite direction,⁸⁵ but when these humbling views of Jesus appear they presuppose a similar treatment of key issues and even specific texts that become significant for the theory of a Galilean crisis. The reading habit that helped generate these interpretations, and in turn pass on their influence to later readers, was simply an interest in divining the motives of Jesus' actions, as the Gospels so often fail to provide such information. Though not often admitted as such, it was common for readers to use their imaginations to discern why Jesus did what he did, which involved drawing parallels, either implicitly or explicitly, between Jesus' actions and normal human experience and emotion.

In contrast to the theological tendency outlined in section 2.1 to explain Jesus' rejection by ascribing blindness or ignorance to his opponents, there were some readers who did not share the Christology requisite for such a conclusion, and thus they read the Gospels with different eyes.⁸⁶ In fact, some found Jesus' rejection proof that he was a sham, which is the view that appears in the Talmud and in other Jewish sources.⁸⁷ Many of these reflections on Jesus,

⁸⁵ Via views such as e.g. (i) Hilary, *Trin.* 10.55 (*Later Christian Fathers*, 141), who asserted that "Grief does not come within the experience of the Word of God, nor tears within that of the Spirit." (ii) Anselm's defense of the necessity of the *Deus homo* includes a rejection of the view that Christ also experienced human unhappiness. See *Cur Deus Homo* 2.12. (iii) Aquinas argued that when Christ was troubled or distressed he had assumed the "affect" of such emotions, a sadness that began but was not perfected ("tristitia removetur a Christo secundum passionem perfectam; fuit tamen in eo initiata"), so that there was no deficiency of reason in him. See *Summa* 3a.15.6 (reply) (ed. Liam G. Walsh; vol. 49 of *Summa Theologiae*), 208.

⁸⁶ Gnostics liked the idea that Jesus was rejected for their own reason: it confirmed the esoteric nature of truth: "unnoticed, unknown, obscure, and disbelieved." See Hippolytus, *Haer.* 8.3 (*ANF* 5:120).

⁸⁷ Cf. b. Sanh. 43a; b. Git. 57a. See Clemens Thoma, "Die Christen in rabbinischer Optik: Heiden, Häretiker oder Fromme?," in *Christlicher Antijudaismus und jüdischer Antipaganismus: Ihre Motive und Hintergründe in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (ed. Herbert Frohnhofen; Hamburg: Steinmann & Steinmann, 1990), 23-49.

however, are quite detached from the Gospels and not particularly helpful for our project.⁸⁸ But the critics Celsus and Julian are another matter. In Julian's treatise *Against the Galileans*, he lists a series of miracles that Jesus was said to perform and notes that Jesus still failed to persuade his contemporaries even if one grants that these miracles occurred. Julian's critique here is not that myth and fiction overlay the Gospels to make Jesus seem greater than he was (though he makes that claim elsewhere). His point is that, even to grant such wondrous claims about Jesus, Christians still have to explain the upshot that few followed him at the end.⁸⁹ Even the Christian version of the story, he says, is a story of failure.

Julian points not to a moment in the ministry, or a "crisis" of rejection, but the final outcome. Julian's predecessor Celsus went further and was more explicit in his use of the Gospels. He, like Julian, asked rhetorical questions about the ministry in general such as, "Have you forgotten that while he lived this Jesus convinced nobody—not even his own disciples?" and further, "What god has ever lived among men who offers disbelief as the proof of his divinity?"⁹⁰ But the texts he drew on at times to prove the point are remarkable. In the words of Origen:

⁸⁸ Though note the anonym. 13th-century Jewish apologetic *Nizzahon Vetus* 174, which has this in response to Jesus' claim he was sent "only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24): "(If Jesus) came to the world only to forgive the transgressions of Jewish sinners, why did he cause them to sin and to stumble and to be blinded if he really came to forgive and pardon Israel?" The implication is that Jesus failed in this task. See David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 184. See also Christoph Ochs, *Matthaeus Adversus Christianos* (WUNT 350; Tübingen: Mohr, 2013), 142, 161 (on Joseph ben Nathan's *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*).

⁸⁹ See *Julian's Against the Galileans* (ed. and trans. R. Joseph Hoffmann; Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2004), 118-19.

⁹⁰ See *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians* (trans. R. Joseph Hoffmann; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 65, 68. Origen responded that the disciples wavered not because they did not believe Christ but because they had not been fully disciplined (*Cels.* 2.39).

(Celsus) censures Jesus, saying of him such things as, “(Jesus) threatens and rebukes on light matters (Ἀπειλεῖ καὶ λοιδορεῖ κούφως) as when he says, ‘Woe to you,’ and ‘I tell you beforehand.’ For in such words he openly concedes that he is unable to persuade (ὅτι πεῖσαι ἀδυνατεῖ); and this would not befit a god, not even a sensible person.”⁹¹

The passage intrigues on two levels. The first regards the assumption that certain features of Jesus’ message deviate from other things that he said. Celsus in general finds Jesus’ ethical teaching uninspiring and unoriginal,⁹² but here he has deeper problems with the “threats, rebukes, woes, and predictions of what is to come” in particular. To his mind, these latter features of the tradition bespeak a lack of self control on Jesus’ part: unlike the *bioi* of other famous men who exemplified the virtue of *apatheia*, Jesus appears mutable, weak, and succumbs to his circumstances.⁹³ Necessary for this comparison is the grouping of certain texts that appear to resemble (what later critics will call) the judgmental and eschatological strands of the tradition. As will be seen in greater detail in later chapters, this same compartmentalizing is characteristic of most reconstructions of a Galilean crisis and the experiences of the Q people.

The second point concerns the way that Celsus interprets scenes in the Gospels that “threats, rebukes, woes, and predictions” recall to mind.⁹⁴ For the threats and woes one thinks in particular of the woe over Galilean cities mentioned above, in addition to other cases (probably also the woe against the Pharisees in Matt 23). Celsus claims that these episodes reflect a failure

⁹¹ Origen, *Cels.* 2.76 (PG 11:911d [my translation]).

⁹² See Hoffmann’s introduction in *On the True Doctrine*, 41.

⁹³ E.g., the Pythagorean wonderworker Apollonius of Tyana never deviates from script and is always calm and collected. See e.g. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.13, 23; 3.43. On “consistency” in characterization see L.V. Pitcher, “Characterization in Ancient Historiography,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. John Marincola; 2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 1:102-117 esp. 103-104.

⁹⁴ On Celsus’ knowledge of the Gospels see John Granger Cook, “Some Hellenistic Responses to the Gospels and Gospel Traditions,” *ZNW* 84 (1993): 233-54 at 234-39. Cook thinks that Porphyry knew the Gospels even better than Celsus; see *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2000), 28.

of Jesus to achieve his aims; they are, as he says, evidence that Jesus was “unable to persuade.”⁹⁵ Not only does this view imply that these “threats, rebukes, woes, and predictions” come from a later period in the ministry after Jesus made his general offer, Celsus here “psychologizes” these passages (if one may use that term here). He provides a motive where one is lacking in the Gospels. Later questers and reconstructors of the Q people⁹⁶ will do the same. They will also assume that, whether it be the historical Jesus or an early community of his followers, the “inability to persuade” led to a change of theological tone: the ethical teacher became a prophet of doom.⁹⁷

Explanations like these were, of course, anathema for many Christian exegetes. But, even then, some Christians were able to identify genuine rejection and disappointment on the part of Jesus via the notion that his audience had free will.⁹⁸ In this case, Jesus, like God, desires that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. But the divine desire is, paradoxically, subject to the vicissitude of human response.⁹⁹ The issue is relevant because free will allowed some

⁹⁵ Origen in response argued that there were even more harsh words given in the Old Testament (he notes the covenant curses in Leviticus and Deuteronomy), and claims that these passages as well as Jesus’ woes intend to spur people on to conversion, and thus Jesus speaks “as a healer” (ὡς Παιῶνιον). See *Cels.* 2.76 (PG 11:915a).

⁹⁶ See also *Cels.* 7.9.

⁹⁷ It seems that others too identified the implications that Celsus draws from such passages and worked against them. Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 76-82), for example, suggests that Jesus’ admonitions and warnings of judgment were not a deviation from his ethical teaching, but rather integral to it; they intended to “arouse the mind” and “bring man to his senses” (FC 23:71). And Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 3.17, assures his reader concerning Matt 17:17 (“You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you?”) that Jesus was *not* overcome by frustration.

⁹⁸ Cf. Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (2nd ed.; New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17-22.

⁹⁹ As Gregory of Nyssa summed it up in *Or. cat.* 30 (LCC 3:308): God “left something under our own control and of which each of us is the sole master...the will.” See also Lactantius, *Inst.* 4.11 (ANF 7:110): “Since God is kind and merciful to His people, He sent Him to those

readers to affirm things that, given other christological proclivities, we might not expect them to affirm. The situation parallels treatments of God grieving over rejection of the covenant or human sinfulness in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Some theologians seem to affirm the divine grief when it functions to accent human responsibility for going astray.¹⁰⁰ Such disappointment does not impinge on God's omnipotence as much as it highlights God's mercy and love for all.

Some Christian readers also affirmed particular experiences and emotions in Jesus when it served to stress his compassionate nature or to heighten the culpability of those who refused to follow. These perspectives often emerge in consideration of particular themes or scenes in the Gospels later important for the crisis theory. Three examples are especially noteworthy. The first is a general perspective on the ministry as whole which assumes that, while the cross and resurrection was the definite *telos*, the degree to which Jesus was accepted or rejected during the ministry was not fixed.¹⁰¹ In other words, the saving death of Jesus was certain to occur, but the

very persons whom He detested, that He might not close the way of salvation against them forever. Rather, He desired to give them a free opportunity to follow God. So, they could either gain the reward of life if they followed Him...or else they would incur the penalty of death by their own fault if they rejected their King."

¹⁰⁰ E.g. *Opus Imperfectum* 46 in *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew* (trans. James A. Kellerman; ed. Thomas C. Oden; 2 vols.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010), 2:365-66: "God is saddened not for his own loss but for our destruction...Just as a kindly king, hearing criminal people, pronounces the sentence of death against them because the law forces him to, but yet he pours forth tears for them because his mercy urges him to, and he wants to help them and yet cannot, since righteousness opposes him..."

¹⁰¹ Note e.g. Bede, *Hom. ev.* 1.8 in *Homilies on the Gospels* (2 vols.; trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst; Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 1:79: "The Jews whom he had chosen as his own people, among whom he had reveled the hidden mystery of knowledge of himself...among whom he showed himself incarnate as he had promised—these people for the most part refused to accept him when he came. Not everyone refused; otherwise, no one would have been saved, and his incarnation would have been in vain." Cf. Tertullian, *Praescr.* 3; Athanasius, *H. Ar.* 8.67; Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 47.

extent of his reception during his public ministry, or even the timing of his death, was subject to human decision.¹⁰² Indeed we are far from a “crisis” here, but affirmed is that the rejection of Jesus had an impact on the way he carried out his ministry. Even if the Galilean crowds and opponents of Jesus are to some degree pawns in a divine game, Jesus responds to their moves.¹⁰³

The second and third examples concern particular texts: the rejection at Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6 and par.), and the occasions on which Jesus lamented over Jerusalem (esp. Luke 19:41-44; see also 13:34-35 and Matt 23:37-39). At Nazareth many readers find confirmation of the blindness and ignorance of Jesus’ opponents as discussed above.¹⁰⁴ But others claim that Jesus’ success, and even his miracle working power, were at times subject to the faith of his audience.¹⁰⁵ John Cassian wrote, “(Sometimes) the unfathomable depth of Christ’s goodness was

¹⁰² See Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 66.2; Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. Jo.* 7.30. Both thinkers and many others protest the idea that Jesus’ ministry was controlled by “fate.” Cyril, *Comm. Jo.* 7:1, 9-10 (vol. 1 of *Commentary on John*; ed. Joel C. Elowsky; trans. David R. Maxwell; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013), 264, says that Jesus knew the Gospel would go to the Gentiles, but he waited for the opportune time: “He neither wholly brings punishment on those of Israel ahead of time nor wholly gives himself to Galilee before the saving cross... (so that he could) justly and for good reason withdraw from his love toward them.” For contrary views see *Cat. Marc.* 3:7-12 (ed. and trans. Lamb), 258: “He (Jesus) controlled the timing of the Passion.” Aquinas, *Summa* 3a.46.9 (reply) expressly denies that the timing of Jesus’ death was variable.

¹⁰³ Cf. Jerome, *Pelag.* 2.14 (Jesus’ departure to Tyre and Sidon is evidence he could not do as he wished). Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 40.2 (*NPNF*¹ 10:260) remarks in light of opposition to Jesus in Matthew 12: “For His desire indeed was to heal in their presence; but since they thrust Him away, not even against this did He contend.” Ludolph explains in *Vita Christi* 1.41 (trans. Broquin), 2:428 that Jesus sent the healed leper to the Jerusalem priests “pour appeler les prêtres à la foi, et, *dans le cas d’incrédulité* pour leur enlever toute excuse, ordonne au lépreux d’offrir un présent qui devait leur servir de témoignage” (my italics).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. e.g. Hilary, *Comm. Matt.* 14.2; Peter Chrysologus, *Hom.* 48.2; Radbertus, *Ex. Matt.* ad loc.; anonym., *Lib. quest. ev.* ad loc. (ed. J. Rittmueller; CCSL 108F; Turnholt: Brepols, 2003), 250; Otfried of Weissenberg, *Gloss. Matt.* ad loc. (ed. C. Grifoni; CCCM 200; Turnholt: Brepols, 2003), 194; anonym. (10-11th century) *Comm. Matt.* ad loc. (ed. Bengt Löfstedt; CCCM 159; Turnholt: Brepols, 2003), 132.

¹⁰⁵ On the necessity of human response see Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 10.19; Gregory of Nazianzen, *Or.* 30.10.

so thwarted that it was said: ‘And Jesus could do there no mighty work because of their unbelief.’ So the bounty of God is actually curtailed temporarily according to the receptivity of our faith.”¹⁰⁶ He is not alone in this view.¹⁰⁷ The implications of this reading of the Nazareth episode are very different than those drawn by later historians, to be sure. For Cassian the rejection does not cause or contribute to an unexpected “crisis” in the ministry; it is rather emblematic of the nature of faith and the relationship between the individual and God in all times and places. But the underlying interpretation of the passage in both views is more similar than different. In Nazareth we deal with a real rejection when Jesus might have hoped otherwise.

Moreover, some thought the tears shed over Jerusalem were genuine and that his “desire” to gather Jerusalem was thwarted (e.g. “How long have I desired to gather your children together...but you did not desire it!”).¹⁰⁸ Some made Jesus’ weeping (alongside his other

¹⁰⁶ John Cassian, *Conf.* 13.15 (ACCS 2:80). Cassian was accused by some of Semipelagianism. Be that what it may, in the context of this comment Cassian seems to assume that God imparted faith to individuals in different degrees, which explains the diverse ways Jesus called people in the Gospels.

¹⁰⁷ Though of course there is strong opposition to this reading. See Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 2.13 (“it is not that he was unable”); Theophlact in Aquinas’ *Catena* (trans. Newman, 2:107): “What, however, is here expressed by ‘He could not,’ we must take to mean, He did not choose, because it was not that He was weak, but that they were faithless; He does not therefore work any miracles there, for he spared them, lest they should be worthy of greater blame.”

¹⁰⁸ Note *Clem. Hom.* 3.19; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.37.1 (ANF 1:518): the scene “set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God.” See also Eusebius in *Eusebius of Caesarea: Gospel Problems and Solutions* (ed. Roger Pearse; Ipswich: Chieftain: 2010), 379; Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 64.4; Augustine, *Civ.* 14.9 (“the hard-heartedness of the Jews moved him to sorrowful anger”); anonym., *Opus Imperfectum* 26; Paschasius Radbertus, *Ex. Matt.* ad loc. (ed. Bedae Paulus), 1144 (“in vain Christ here grants affection, and, without reaping the fruit, assumes flesh as a weak hen in order that he might gather them under the wings of his teaching...” [my translation]); Ludolph, *Vita Christi* 2.28.

emotions) merely pedagogical (and hence feigned),¹⁰⁹ but others did not. In Medieval scholastic theology, Hugh of St. Victor's early 12th-century *De quatuor voluntatibus in Christo* (*On the Four Wills of Christ*)¹¹⁰ made it possible for thinkers such as Bonaventure to claim that Christ genuinely wept in his will of piety (which seeks mercy) while his divine will sought justice (and hence destruction).¹¹¹ It is also significant that, when Jesus speaks about "how long" he had desired to gather the children of the holy city, many feel it necessary to provide a backstory. Most who do so recall the work of the pre-incarnate Christ in biblical history and make the passage a prophetic critique about Israel's constant disobedience.¹¹² So the failure of Jesus' desire is not crisis inducing because Jerusalem's refusal is consistent with its past behavior. But there is an affirmation here that Jesus' wishes did not come to pass, and that there is backstory in the verb "desired."

These issues of rejection and disappointment also emerged in debates about the humanity of Jesus. Arian exegetes searched far and wide for proof that Jesus had a creaturely existence, and to find evidence of disappointment, sadness, or fear—alongside ignorance—was one of their

¹⁰⁹ Cf. e.g. Hilary, *Trin.* 10.55, says Jesus wept but did not grieve or experience sorrow. This is consistent with Hilary's view expressed elsewhere that Jesus felt no pain during his passion (10.23, 35). Cf. Madigan, *Passions of Christ*, 53-55. On weeping see also Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 78.4; Sedulus, *Carmen Paschale* 4.276-78. For discussion of Athanasius see Aloys Grillmeier, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)* (vol. 1 of *Christ in Christian Tradition*; trans. John Bowden; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 315.

¹¹⁰ Hugh distinguished in Christ's human will three different operations (the will of reason, the will of piety, and the will of the flesh) which allowed that, in this hierarchy of wills, not each will desired the same thing. See Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul*, 73-76; Madigan, *Passions of Christ*, 79.

¹¹¹ Bonaventure claimed that, while there was difference within Christ's hierarchy of wills in terms of the objects desired, there was "conformity" (*conformitas*) in terms of the manner in which he desired them. See Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature?*, 20; Barnes, *Christ's Two Wills*, 89-112.

¹¹² Cf. e.g. Apollinarius, *Fr. Comm. Matt.* 121; Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. Luc.* 100; Radbertus, *Ex. Matt.* ad loc.; anonym., *Lib. quest. ev.* ad loc; etc.

primary aims.¹¹³ As is well known, the so called “Arian controversy” was in many ways an exegetical debate over particular texts in the Gospels.¹¹⁴ Arians claimed that a good number of passages confirmed their suspicion that Jesus had a different nature than the Father, a nature that was subject to change and could endure the pains necessary to achieve salvation.¹¹⁵ Proto-orthodox/orthodox theologians claimed that the same texts confirmed the reality Jesus’ human nature (contra Docetists) but in no way compromised attributes of the deity such as omniscience and immutability.¹¹⁶ In any case, frequently these de-divinizing or humanizing experiences were so thoroughly discussed that there developed a near formulaic “list” of them. The more frequently mentioned include hungering, thirsting, sleeping, and something pertaining to Gethsemane (e.g. sweating, fearing, or doubting).¹¹⁷ While these discussions do not mention a particular moment of crisis during the ministry of Jesus, they do recall particular scenes in the Gospels that would later become instrumental in the theory of a crisis.

One striking example appears in a fragmentary work of Hippolytus on the Psalms where he mentions, alongside hungering, thirsting, and many other things, that Jesus “flees in fear”

¹¹³ Cf. Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.35 on the Word being “alterable” (τρέπτός).

¹¹⁴ See T. E. Pollard, “The Exegesis of Scripture and the Arian Controversy,” *BJRL* 41 (1959): 414-29; James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 186; Sara Parvis, “Christology in the Early Arian Controversy: The Exegetical War,” in *Christology and Scripture: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (LNTS 348; ed. Andrew T. Lincoln and Angus Paddison; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 120-37.

¹¹⁵ So the thesis of the important work by Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), esp. 1-43.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge,” 40-41. Though note the anonymous *Commentary on the Psalms* (4th century?), which suggests that Christ’s soul did not share the immutability of the Godhead and was subject to human weakness. See Grillmeier, *Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 363.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Hippolytus, *Haer.* 10.29; Tertullian, *Prax.* 27.6; Hilary, *Trin.* 9.74; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 69.19.7; Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. cat.* 9; John of Damascus, *De fide* 3.20; etc.

(δειλιῶν φεύγει).¹¹⁸ It is difficult to know exactly the episode(s) in the Gospels that Hippolytus has in mind. But it is certain that “flees in fear” refers to the physical movement of Jesus from a certain place to another, and hence suggests that Jesus on one occasion or many departed not of his own volition but because of some threat to him.¹¹⁹ This is interesting because, while nowhere do the Gospels name “fear” the motive of any movement of Jesus, it is exactly what many later Jesus questers will conclude and link to a “crisis”: Jesus leaves for Gentile dominated Tyre and Sidon because of Jewish rejection, from Galilee because the people want to make him king, for Jerusalem because Herod wants to kill him. So there is a close parallel here in terms of the attempt to divine a motive for Jesus’ movements, and the reliance on normal human experience to fill in the gaps.

The Hippolytus fragment has a notable parallel in Athanasius’ *Against the Arians*. The bishop writes:

Therefore when he is said to hunger and thirst and to toil and not to know, and to sleep, and to weep, and to ask, and to flee (φεύγειν), and to be born, and to decline the cup, and in a word to undergo all that belongs to the flesh, let it be said, as is congruous, in each case, Christ then hungering and thirsting ‘for us in the flesh,’ and being exalted too, and born, and growing ‘in the flesh’; and fearing and hiding (φοβουμένου καὶ κρυπτομένου) ‘in the flesh’; and saying, If it be possible let this cup pass from me, and being beaten, and receiving, ‘for us in the flesh’; and in a word all such things ‘for us in the flesh.’ ...¹²⁰

Athanasius refers to such scenes in the Gospels because many were Arian prooftexts. So it is reasonable to think that Arians did, indeed, take some of Jesus’ movements (“fleeing” and

¹¹⁸ Hippolytus, *Fr. Ps. 2 apud* Theodoret of Cyrus, *Er.* 173 (ed. Gerard H. Ettlinger; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 156.

¹¹⁹ Here also Celsus according to Origen, *Cels.* 2.10 (PG 11:811b [my translation]): “Jesus hid most disgracefully and ran away” (ἐπονειδιστότατα κρυπτόμενος διεδίδρασκεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς). Origen says that anyone who claims as much is worthy of reproach.

¹²⁰ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.34 (*NPNF*² 4:412 [with my modifications]). Greek text in PG 26:396b.

“fearing and hiding”) as evidence of creatureliness and weakness. “Fleeing” may refer to John 6:15 where the people try to make Jesus king by force and he runs away (φεύγω is not used here, though the Vulgate will read *fugit*),¹²¹ and “hiding” certainly refers to John 12:36. But both echoes go beyond what the Gospels explicitly say. John 12:36 merely mentions that Jesus “departed and hid from them,” it says nothing of “fear.” Assigning such humbling motives to Jesus’ movements was in fact critiqued by some,¹²² and analyzed in different terms by others,¹²³ so we know that it was a live issue.

¹²¹ John 6:15 is certainly in mind in Hilary, *Tract. Ps.* 53.7 (ed. Antonius Zingerle; CSEL 22; Vindobonae; Prague: F. Tempsky; Lipsiae: G. Freytag, 1891), 140 (my translation): Jesus was “hungry, thirsty, slept, became tired, had to run away from an impious group (impiorum coetus fugit)...” See the discussion in Augustine, *Hom. Jo.* 25.4.

¹²² Pseudo-Chrysostom discusses “the flights of Christ” in one of his homilies (SC 48:143). The author questions why Jesus would flee the Jews when the purpose of his ministry was the passion itself. He says that “the ignorant have called this mystery (of fleeing) cowardice” (Καὶ τοῦτο οἱ ἄμαθεῖς τὸ μυστήριον δειλίαν ἐνόμισαν); but, instead, the fleeing was due to “observation of the concourse of dates” (τῆς συνδρομῆς τῶν προθεσμιῶν ἐπιτήρησις). In other words, Jesus flees because he waits for the predetermined time.

¹²³ Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 10.23; 11.16; idem, *Hom. Jo.* 18.201-202. Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 14.1 (PG 57:217 [my translation]) explains that Jesus returned to Galilee on account of John the Baptist’s enemies: “But observe for me carefully how at every time he is about to depart to the Gentiles, he has the reasons (τὰς αἰτίας) given him by the Jews.” The view that Jesus moved because of the response of certain people is itself is an interesting parallel to later work on Jesus, but fear does not appear to be a factor here for Chrysostom. Theophlact in Aquinas’ *Catena* (trans. Newman, 2:138) similarly states: “seeing that the Jews were incredulous, He (Jesus) enters into the country of the Gentiles, for the Jews being unfaithful, salvation turns itself to the Gentiles.” Bede, *Hom. ev.* 1.22 (trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst, 1:217-18) says the journey to Tyre and Sidon was sparked by the fact that “scribes and Pharisees, coming from Jerusalem, assailed the Lord and his disciples, making a great outcry because of their lack of faith, and [Jesus] soon left them, having rebuked them with the invective they deserved...” According to Ludolph, *Vita Christi* 1.46, Remi of Auxerre (9th century) suggested that Jesus departed whenever he was pressed upon by the crowd and needed refuge.

Other “lists” of Jesus’ human experiences expressly mention “sadness” or “disappointment,” which probably refer to weeping scenes or even the Galilean woes.¹²⁴ It is not always clear. The important thing common to all is the attempt to discern Jesus’ mental or emotional motive for various activities—which becomes a fully justified and well-established habit of reading. Therein we find not the identification of some “crisis” in the ministry, but some of its prerequisites.

2.4. CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Later chapters will explore the ways in which 19th-century critics divided the ministry of Jesus into different periods of activity by attempting to resolve perceived theological tensions and contradictions in the Gospel tradition. Critics who saw a disparity between Jesus’ ethical teaching and his proclamation of judgment and the near end, for instance, would often resolve this by positioning the ethical material in the first “period” of the ministry and the eschatology and judgment in the next. As such, Jesus was thought to develop over the course of his ministry, and often a crisis scenario was significant for producing this change of mind. It is often said that such developmental “Lives” of Jesus are a distinctly modern phenomenon. But this is misleading. It is true that many denied outright any contradiction in the Gospels. Chromatius of Aquileia could state univocally of the Gospels that “in nullo...sibi dissentiunt” (in nothing do they disagree with each other),¹²⁵ and the sentiment is not uncommon. Moreover, and as explored above, given certain theological underpinnings, it was absurd for many Christian

¹²⁴ E.g. Irenaeus, *Fr.* 52; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 69.51.7; 77.30.3-5; Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 4 (on 23:37); idem, *Hom. Ps.* 108.31; Augustine, *Div. quaest. LXXXIII* 80.3; etc.

¹²⁵ Chromatius of Aquileia, *Tract. Matt.* prolog. 3 (ed. R. Etaix and J. Lemarie; CCSL 9A; Turnholt: Brepols, 1974), 186.

exegetes to think that the omniscient Jesus would develop or gradually understand the nature of his mission as it went along. However, some early readers explored the same issues in the Gospels that later historians would label “contradiction” or evidence of periodization in the ministry.¹²⁶ Their examinations of many of these texts also lead to notions of development or even change, but with a few important differences.¹²⁷

Most study of the “development” of *Jesus* in particular focused on a single text: Luke 2:52 (“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in the favor of both God and people”).¹²⁸ The passage was another linchpin for the Arians and lead to some fantastical exegesis by proto-orthodox/orthodox readers. Readings were so various that Aelred of Rievaulx (12th century) could remark: “The number and the verbosity of comments which this (passage) has raised is equal to the variety of opinions of their authors.”¹²⁹ The most common reading was that Christ grew in age and size (the things proper to the flesh) but his divine nature, as perfect, did not progress.¹³⁰ The issue of Jesus’ development beyond Luke 2:52 is not much discussed.¹³¹ Origen

¹²⁶ Some pagan critics of Christianity in fact looked for inconsistencies between Jesus’ action and teaching. Theon, *Progym.* 3 instructed that readers identify inconsistencies in narratives. Note for example the anonymous 3rd-century philosopher discussed by Cook, “Hellenistic Responses to the Gospels,” 240-43.

¹²⁷ For Julian and Porphyry, for example, contradiction evidenced not a change of mind on Jesus’ part, but that he was a poor thinker or even deceitful. Porphyry at one point says “Christ contradicts himself and proves himself a liar when (two of his teachings conflict).” See *Porphyry’s Against the Christians: The Literary Remains* (trans. and ed. R. Joseph Hoffmann; Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994), 31.

¹²⁸ Luke 2:52: Καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν [ἐν τῇ] σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ χάριτι παρὰ θεῶ καὶ ἀνθρώποις.

¹²⁹ See *De Jesu puero* 1.10 (SC 60:68 [my translation]).

¹³⁰ E.g. Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.42-52; Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. Jo.* 1.14; John of Damascus, *De fide* 3.22; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa* 3a. 12.2 (reply); etc. Madigan, *Passions of Christ*, 24: “from the eighth century to the thirteenth, almost all Latin expositors denied that Jesus truly so progressed.”

seems to have thought on the basis of Luke 2:52 that Jesus “developed” until he reached full maturity at age twelve (which Origen saw as a miracle itself).¹³² Perhaps others shared this view.¹³³ But when there is mention of Jesus’ further development it is occasional and abstract, such as the ambiguous statement of Irenaeus that Jesus “passed through every stage of life.”¹³⁴ A few others: Athanasius implied that a progressive manifestation of the logos in Jesus throughout his ministry explains why Peter confessed the Messiahship first and then others at a later point;¹³⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia would claim that the assumed humanity must have freedom and moral choice and thus really grow in knowledge;¹³⁶ and Aponius would argue that Christ’s

¹³¹ Or the possibility is raised only to be rejected, as in Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 4.11 in *Proof of the Gospel: Being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea* (ed. and trans. W. J. Ferrar; 2 vols; London: New York: Macmillan, 1920), 1:185-86: “He lived His whole life through in the same manner, now revealing His nature as like our own, and now that of God the Word, doing great works and miracles as God, and announcing beforehand predictions of the future, and showing clearly by His deeds God the Word Who was not seen by the multitude, and He made the end of His life, when He departed from men, in tune with and similar to its beginning.”

¹³² Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 19.1-3.

¹³³ Diodore of Tarsus would argue that the divine nature shared its perfection with Christ’s humanity “in portions” (*particulatim*). Cf. James M. Carmody and Thomas E. Clarke, *Word and Redeemer: Christology in the Fathers* (Glenn Rock: Paulist Press, 1966), 83; Grillmeier, *Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 356. Ambrose believed that Jesus really grew in wisdom as a man, which means he had sense perception. See *Myst.* 7. Cf. Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature?*, 20. See also Basil, *Ep.* 236.1-2. On the Antiochene school see Engelbert Gutwenger, *Bewusstsein und Wissen Christi: eine dogmatische Studie* (Innsbruck: F. Rauch 1960), 100.

¹³⁴ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.18.7.

¹³⁵ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.52.

¹³⁶ Cf. R. A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 129-36; 223-28; Frederick G. McLeod, “The Christology in Theodore of Mopsuestia’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John*,” *TS* 73 (2012): 115-38 at 129-31.

human soul became inseparably united to the logos only after the “proving” of his earthly life.¹³⁷ With the exception of Athanasius, however (who parallels Origen, discussed below), such perspectives are large-scale summaries of the ministry and do not concern particular scenes after the baptism of John.

In any case, many of the same texts that later questers would use as evidence of change from one period of the ministry to another were indeed recognized and interpreted in similar ways. Origen and Chrysostom are two particular thinkers who do not assume that Jesus *himself* developed or changed his perspective, but rather that over the course of the ministry the disciples and/or his general audience became more able to receive the truth about Jesus. The Gospels thus evidence not a change in Jesus’ message but rather an unfolding of it and a gradual deepening in the theological understanding of his hearers.¹³⁸

Origen’s opinion on this matter stems from his reading of Matthew in his *Commentary*. As is Origen’s wont in his “spiritual reading” of the Bible in general, he typically clarifies a passage in Matthew by looking at another. Thus, in inquiring about the way in which certain parts of the Gospel relate to the whole, he concludes that the scene at Caesarea Philippi was a notable advance in the disciples’ knowledge.¹³⁹ In fact, Origen notes that Jesus had sent out his

¹³⁷ Here see Grillmeier, *Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, 385-88. Cf. Johannes Witte, *Der Kommentar des Aponius zum Hohenliede* (Erlangen: Junge & Sohn, 1903), who summarizes at 51-52: “Doch ist mit der Geburt aus der Jungfrau die Vereinigung der beiden Naturen noch nicht abgeschlossen und vollendet. Der heilige Geist hat sich in der Taufe erst auf den assumptus homo niedergelassen, nachdem er die sündlose Schönheit seines Leibes und die Hoheit seiner Seele erkannt hatte. Durch dies Herabkommen des Geistes ist der Verbindung des Logos mit der Seele eine unlösliche geworden.”

¹³⁸ Note Theodotus’s view that Jesus taught his disciples, “at first, typically and mystically; later, parabolically and enigmatically; and thirdly, clearly and plainly, in private.” See Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 66. Cf. Grant, *Earliest Lives*, 13.

¹³⁹ For discussion see Ferda, “Seventy Faces of Peter’s Confession,” 426-29.

disciples to proclaim the Gospel *before* Peter had confessed Jesus' Messiahship, which must mean that the disciples did not, at that time, proclaim him as such.¹⁴⁰ "The apostles had not yet announced to their hearers that he was the Christ," Origen says, instead they "earlier (πρότερον) proclaimed Jesus the doer of certain things (τινὰ ποιοῦντα) and the teacher of certain things (τινὰ... διδάσκοντα)."¹⁴¹ Origen also recognizes that only from the time of Caesarea Philippi on does Jesus begin to talk about his violent end.¹⁴² On these bases, then, and in attempt to avoid further narrative tensions, Origen claims to identify a development in the disciples' knowledge of Jesus.¹⁴³ How else will one explain that Jesus suddenly praises Peter for a confession that was common knowledge? Or that Jesus would at one time tell his disciples to travel and to proclaim throughout Galilee, and at another to be quiet? There must be some change.

The significance of Origen's reading of Matthew for the crisis theory concerns not just method but content. The focus of the discussion in and around the sending of the twelve and Peter's confession parallel many 19th-century "Lives of Jesus,"¹⁴⁴ which also identified these scenes as turning points in the ministry and often closely related to a Galilean crisis and Jesus' change of mind. Some regarded a crisis in Galilee as the catalyst for Jesus to begin speaking of himself as the Messiah and/or to anticipate his death, and Origen similarly positions these ideas as novelties at this point in Matthew's narrative. The main difference, of course, is the

¹⁴⁰ Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 12.15.

¹⁴¹ Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 12.18 (PG 13:1024a [my translation]).

¹⁴² Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 12.17. See Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 35.3.

¹⁴³ Origen claimed to find a similar development in Paul's thought between Gal, 1-2 Cor, Phil, and Rom where "nothing can separate him from the love of Christ." See the praef. of his *Comm. Rom.* (PG 14:833-35). Note also his explanation of why Jesus taught in parables in *Princ.* 3.1.

¹⁴⁴ See also the two part division of the *Vita Christi* by Ludolph as discussed above at note 77.

protagonist of change. For Origen, Jesus is the constant. For later historians, Jesus himself is the variable.

While Origen's parallels to later history-writing center on a few episodes in the Gospels, those in John Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew* are more extensive still. At some points Chrysostom nearly reads Matthew as a biography of Jesus.¹⁴⁵ He routinely attempts to explain the unspoken connections between pericopae, to relate individual episodes to what came before and what comes after, and to explain the motive of the itinerancy of Jesus. In this endeavor he sometimes comes close to expressing the idea of a "Galilean spring" and a time of rejection, and even the view that eschatological teaching was subsequent to the ethical.

Like Origen, Chrysostom does not think that Jesus changed his perspective during his ministry. Chrysostom's Christology is similar to that of Athanasius in that, while Christ had a human soul, it plays little role; the divine logos knows and wills and acts.¹⁴⁶ But Chrysostom believes that Jesus, in his perfect knowledge, did not always proclaim the same message. As Chrysostom sees it, the ministry of Jesus is an education whereby hearers progress from milk to solid food.¹⁴⁷ So at the beginning of the ministry, Jesus goes easy. The hard stuff comes later. Chrysostom elaborates on the earliest period after John's arrest:

¹⁴⁵ Similar claims have been made of the *Diatessaron* and Juvencus' *Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, but these do not compare.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Camillus Hay, "St. John Chrysostom and the Integrity of the Human Nature of Christ," *FrancStud* 19 (1959): 290-317 at 315; Melvin E. Lawrenz, III, *The Christology of John Chrysostom* (Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: Mellon University Press, 1996), 73-87, 104.

¹⁴⁷ For a similar motif in Chrysostom's use of John 4, what George L. Parsenios calls "pastoral adaptability," see "The Jesus of History and Divine Adaptability in Saint John Chrysostom's Interpretation of John 4," in *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions* (eds. James H. Charlesworth and Brian Rhea; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 863-73. The notion of divine adaptability or condensation is frequently found in Chrysostom, see David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: the Coherence of His Theology and Preaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

(Jesus) also was teaching this same thing which that one (John) proclaimed; and he says nothing yet concerning himself and the kerygma which he (John) proclaimed (καὶ οὐδὲν οὐδέπω περὶ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ κήρυγμα ὃ ἐκήρυττε λέγει). Since for the time it was good enough to be received, since not yet did they have the proper opinion about him. Therefore when beginning he places before them nothing burdensome and offensive (οὐδὲν φορτικὸν... καὶ ἐπαχθές) as John did, (such as) an axe and a tree being cut down, a winnowing fork and threshing floor and unquenchable fire; but his inauguration is pleasant (χρηστὰ προοιμιάζεται): he proclaims to his hearers there the good news about the heavens and the kingdom (τοὺς οὐρανούς καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν τὴν ἐκεῖ τοῖς ἀκούουσιν εὐαγγελιζόμενος).¹⁴⁸

Jesus backs off the offensive eschatological predictions that characterized John's preaching until he could win an honest hearing from the Galileans. At the outset, then, his message is "pleasant" and full of εὐαγγέλιον. Jesus does not talk about himself but the message centers on the kingdom. The announcement of impending judgment, and Jesus' own views about himself as the Messiah and his passion, appear later in the ministry when the audience was in position to understand and accept these things.¹⁴⁹

In other homilies Chrysostom elaborates further on Jesus' evolving pedagogy, sometimes more explicitly on the relationship between what later critics will term the ethical and eschatological strands of the tradition. On the saying about the disciples sitting on twelve thrones, Chrysostom writes:

Now to the disciples he promised the things to come (τὰ μέλλοντα), saying 'You will sit on twelve thrones'; for they were at a higher level than the rest, and they were seeking none of the things of the present world....And to the disciples in the early stages (ἐν προοιμίῳ), when they were in a more imperfect state, he reasoned from present things (ἀπὸ τῶν παρόντων διελέγετο). For when he drew them from the sea, and took them from (their) livelihood, and command them to leave the boat, he did not recall the heavens nor thrones but of present matters (ἀλλὰ τῶν ἐνταῦθα πραγμάτων), saying 'I

¹⁴⁸ *Hom. Matt.* 14.1 (PG 57:218-19 [my translation])

¹⁴⁹ This perspective appears elsewhere in his homilies. See e.g. *Hom. Matt.* 54.1. Concerning John 19:30 ("I have the power to lay down my life...such I have received from my Father"), Chrysostom denies that Christ *waited to receive* the command from God to die on the cross at some point during his ministry; the point of the saying is to show that Christ is not at variance with the Father. See *Hom. Jo.* 60.2-3.

will make you fishers of men.’ But since he had led them to higher places, then after that he reasons from that perspective.¹⁵⁰

Jesus does not begin his ministry with talk about the future but “reasoned from the things present.” Eschatology comes later when the disciples had been adequately equipped.

For Chrysostom the changes in the content of Jesus’ teaching find parallel in changes of tone. Later in the ministry, he notes, Jesus begins to demand “faith” before healing people, when he did not do so at the beginning.¹⁵¹ Jesus also rebukes and says things like “you of little faith” after he had given his hearers enough knowledge to be responsible for their reactions.¹⁵² Concerning Jesus’ prediction of judgment for the “sons of the kingdom” who are thrown out when many gather from the East and West, Chrysostom explains that Jesus here speaks “with more boldness” (μετὰ πλείονος...παρρησίας) than earlier in his ministry.¹⁵³ And regarding the triumphal entry Chrysostom writes: “since now he gave (them) sufficient experience of his power, and the cross was at the doors, he thereafter puts himself forward in a greater way (μειζόνως ἐκλάμπει λοιπόν)...For indeed it was possible for him to act this way at the beginning, but neither profitable nor advantageous to do so.”¹⁵⁴

In all these examples, what Chrysostom calls accommodation or “adaptability” (συγκατάβασις)¹⁵⁵ later historians will call change of mind. There is a real difference here. But

¹⁵⁰ *Hom. Matt.* 64.1 (PG 58:610 [my translation]).

¹⁵¹ *Hom. Matt.* 14.4.

¹⁵² *Hom. Matt.* 22.1.

¹⁵³ *Hom. Matt.* 26.2 (PG 57:335). Such statements are everywhere in Chrysostom. Cf. *Hom. Matt.* 55.2, where he says that Jesus gradually introduced greater commandments so that his hearers would not think it strange.

¹⁵⁴ *Hom. Matt.* 66.1 (PG 58:627 [my translation]).

¹⁵⁵ And here Chrysostom is part of a much wider conversation, see e.g. Margaret M. Mitchell, “Pauline Accommodation and ‘Condescension’ (συγκατάβασις): 1 Cor 9:19-23 and the

the fact is that Chrysostom's comments about the progression of Jesus' teaching mark the same textual material that later critics will use to construct the theory of a Galilean crisis. Chrysostom not only observes something of what others will call the "honeymoon period," he identifies seeming differences in tone, emphasis, and content. He contrasts teachings about the present and predictions about the future. He treats Matthew as a rather straightforward presentation of the ministry which, even if episodic, requires that the reader explain and resolve tensions in the layout of events. Chrysostom even resembles later critics in the degree to which he gets caught up in his own motif of progression so as to find it everywhere, as when he oddly claims that the second cleansing of the temple (the Synoptic) is "more severe" than the first (John's).¹⁵⁶

2.5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter has been to show that, to a greater degree than previously realized, readers of the Gospels before modern critical scholarship used similar strategies of interpretation as the proponents of a Galilean crisis, and even achieved some similar results. Significant points include:

- (i) noting the episodic nature of the Gospels and providing an overarching logic to them;
- (ii) moving Gospel episodes around so as to be more "commonsensical";
- (iii) assuming a particular position of a pericope (or "backstory") in the larger chronology based on its content;
- (iv) grouping Jesus' teaching and deeds together according to a common motif;

History of Influence," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. Troels Engberg-Petersen; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 197-214.

¹⁵⁶ From *Hom. Jo.* 23.2. See also Ludolph of Saxony, *Vita Christi*, 2.29. If anything it seems the opposite is the case, as Jesus has a whip in John.

(v) assuming Jesus was indeed rejected by his contemporaries and disappointed by the fact;

(vi) claiming Jesus' teaching changed over the course of his ministry.

Nowhere, of course, do we find the crisis theory itself. Hermeneutical structures indeed change and interpretations with them. But the conclusions of this chapter are important because they discourage the assumption that the logic of a Galilean crisis came solely from new hermeneutical and philosophical underpinnings, or merely from a new predilection to "psychologize" Jesus. The modern Quest, despite its attempt to free itself from the shackles of dogma and the theological reading of Scripture in earlier generations, did not advance radically new interpretations of particular texts and themes in the tradition when it came to a Galilean crisis. They rather situated rather old interpretations into new historical frameworks and methods, and therein found updated answers to rather old interpretive questions. It is especially noteworthy in this regard that, when certain texts have been considered on their own terms and apart from their original narrative contexts, such as the Galilean woes (Q 10:13-16), they have been thought to imply a similar backstory. The disagreement between the questers and earlier readers of the Gospels is not so much over the interpretation of this pericope, but rather the inferred "past" that that interpretation is thought to require (and the same could be said of the treatment of the parables and other passages).¹⁵⁷ Some earlier readers thought that Jesus really experienced rejection and was disappointed and afraid, but they did not make those particular experiences a historical "crisis" as it pertains to the ministry as a whole.

It should also be noted that many of these selections above are relevant to the issue of the crisis because they are about a similar task: to make sense of the ministry of Jesus as an inner-connected whole. The perspective that Jesus or his disciples changed, for example, results from

¹⁵⁷ For this language, see the Introduction, pp. 9-13.

an attempt to compare and contrast Jesus material, to note and resolve narrative tensions. It is a macro-level solution. That is why we find generalizations about Jesus having initial success and later rejection, or first talking about “things present” and only later about things to come. The attempt is to speak of the whole ministry of Jesus. The modern Quest would want to do the same, although for different reasons.

But we are not yet prepared to enter the 19th-century. Many years still lie between our research in this Chapter and the 19th-century Quest, and much of it is ignored by modern histories of Jesus scholarship.

CHAPTER 3.0

BEFORE REIMARUS: REFORMATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The division between Chapters 2 and 3 around the 15th and 16th centuries is not arbitrary. For despite much continuity with what came before, we find around the time of the Reformation in Europe developments of major consequence for the theory of a Galilean crisis. Our investigation here is also significant for the background of the modern Quest of the historical Jesus in general, since it is becoming increasingly recognized that Albert Schweitzer's monumental survey of Jesus literature left out much, and most New Testament scholars ever since have been content to ignore the three centuries before Reimarus' *Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Junger* (1778).¹⁵⁸ This chapter, then, like the last, provides better understanding of an under-investigated area, as many of the observations below have not been made in prior histories of Jesus research.

The goal is to show that both the modern Quest and the crisis theory begin to take shape in the methodological assumptions, historical questions, and theological tensions that

¹⁵⁸ See e.g. August C. Lundsteen, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und die Anfänge der Leben-Jesu Forschung* (Copenhagen: A. C. Olsen, 1939), 108-33; Henning Graf Reventlow, "Das Arsenal der Bibelkritik des Reimarus: Die Auslegung der Bibel, insbesondere des Alten Testaments, bei den englischen Deisten," in *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768): ein "bekannter Unbekannter" der Aufklärung in Hamburg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1973), 44-65 at 45 ("the work of Reimarus cannot be evaluated if one does not know his presuppositions in the biblical criticism of the English Deists"); Colin Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought, 1778-1860* (SHT 1; Durham: Labyrinth, 1985), 29-55; Dale C. Allison Jr., "Apocalyptic, Polemic, Apologetics," in *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters* (London; New York: 2005), 111-48 at 115-18.

characterize writing about Jesus and the Gospels from the Reformation (approximately) to Reimarus. As such, the approach continues the inquiry of the last chapter. Our interest again concerns interpretive parallels between this pre-Quest period and later Jesus study, as well as the further development of certain habits of reading that will influence subsequent research. Reimarus and the 19th-century Quest will build on the patterns of interpretation and harmonization that scholars from this period propagated.

Four topics will occupy our attention. The first takes up theological developments that made possible the kind of reflection on Jesus' mental state that we find in the crisis theory. The second investigates the boom of Gospel harmonies in the 16th century and beyond, particularly their underlying assumptions, aims, and key results. The third focuses on the contributions of Enlightenment rationalists, free-thinkers, and Deists on the issues of Jesus' aims and his approach to ministry. And the fourth probes an increase in the tendency to divide the ministry of Jesus into distinct "periods" or "sections" and some probable influences on that practice.

3.1. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

The Reformers made some radical breaks from prior tradition. In general, however, Christology was spared. Luther, Calvin, and many others affirmed the classic creedal positions,¹⁵⁹ even though they may have disliked particular aspects of earlier discussions.¹⁶⁰ It is no surprise, then, that many assumed the theological views discussed in Chapter 2.1 that excluded the possibility of

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)* (vol. 4 of *The Christian Tradition*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 158; Moloney, *Knowledge of Christ*, 69; Gerald O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 213.

¹⁶⁰ Luther, for instance, disliked the term *homousios*. Cf. Christa Tecklenburg Johns, *Luthers Konzilsidee in ihrer historischen Bedingtheit und ihrem reformatorischen Neuansatz* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966), 43. Calvin was unsure about *Theotokos*.

a Galilean crisis at the outset. For instance, few Christian thinkers retreated from the view that Jesus' death was essential to his mission; that Jesus was omniscient and foreknew all who would reject him; that the Jews and others who opposed Jesus were blind and ignorant for doing so; that Jesus' message, timeless divine truth, did not change and develop throughout his earthly ministry.

Despite such continuity, however, there were deeper christological shifts underway that contributed to the construction of the very human Jesus of the later Quest. These changes manifested in the treatment of Gospel texts that had been notoriously problematic for orthodox Christology. Here many Christian readers affirmed, with little drama, conclusions that earlier thinkers took great lengths to avoid. It seems that one could affirm the christological traditions of the church, yet not affirm the same reading of the Gospels that these traditions often inspired.

Luther himself provides a good example of this trend in a sermon on John 6, a text which will also feature prominently in many reconstructions of a Galilean crisis. Concerning the report that "many" deserted Jesus and no longer followed him (John 6:66-67), Luther explains that Jesus had hoped for a different outcome:

(Jesus) would have been glad to convert them and to remove the offense from their hearts. But it was all in vain. They could not be persuaded, even though He told them that this was a matter of the spirit...One can well imagine how grieved the Lord must have been to see His own disciples, His daily companions, desert him. Very likely they took a large number of people with them.¹⁶¹

When Jesus turns to ask his disciples if they too would go away, Luther continues to explain that Jesus "very likely...uttered these words with a saddened heart."¹⁶² Luther also claims that Jesus

¹⁶¹ Martin Luther, *Twenty-first Sermon* (on John 6), in *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6-8* (vol. 23 of *Luther's Works*; ed. Jaroslav Pelikan; trans. n.m.; St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 185-97 at 186.

¹⁶² Luther, *Twenty-first Sermon*, 189.

found the defection “an ill omen and a bad sign. If the pillars and the foundation will not stand, what will become of the superstructure and the rafters?”¹⁶³

Of course Luther has not succumbed to Arianism or some other christological heresy that slights or denies the divinity of Jesus. Luther affirmed Nicea and Chalcedon, and he enjoyed calling Zwingli Nestorius *redivivus*.¹⁶⁴ But there is an ease with which Luther makes these remarks that are unimaginable in a medieval treatise on Christology or an attack of Arianism by one of the church fathers.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, one could see Arius applauding Luther’s remarks as evidence of “creaturely limitation” in Jesus. Yet Luther neither intends nor expects any controversy here.

The key point is this: despite Luther’s professed allegiance to christological tradition, his reading of John 6 presents a striking psychological evaluation of Jesus. Luther here traces a straight line from the words of Jesus to his emotions and mental state. The Reformer does not intimate that, because Jesus is the Son of God, his reaction to mass defection would be different than that of a normal person.¹⁶⁶ In fact, the reading assumes the contrary: the experience of Jesus,

¹⁶³ Luther identifies among those who deserted the 72 disciples that Jesus had earlier sent to preach the Gospel. See *Twenty-first Sermon*, 185, 190.

¹⁶⁴ See Luther’s remarks in *The Theology of Christ: Sources* (ed. Vincent Zamoyta; Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), 128-29.

¹⁶⁵ The irony here is that, in terms of Luther’s more dogmatic discussions of Christology, the Reformer is closer to Monophysitism than any Christology that denies the divinity of Jesus. See Sydney Cave, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (New York; Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925), 151-52.

¹⁶⁶ Luther departed from earlier christological thought when he said that Christ experienced the psychological torment of being abandoned by God on the cross. Cf. Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature?*, 93-94 (Luther here “reject[s] patristic exegesis”).

in this case, comports with human experience generally.¹⁶⁷ One can approximate the experience of Jesus by drawing an analogy to normal human life.

Similar depictions can be found in the writings of many others. Calvin affirmed that Jesus, in his humanity, confided in God (Heb 2:13),¹⁶⁸ truly progressed in wisdom (Luke 2:52),¹⁶⁹ and was ignorant of the last day (Mark 13:32).¹⁷⁰ One historian believes that Jerome Zanchius (1516-1590) sowed the seeds of kenotic Christology already in the 16th century, as he argued that Christ gave up the glory, power, and knowledge of the deity.¹⁷¹ In subsequent generations, the pietistic stress on subjective human experience led to an emphasis of the same in Jesus. Pelikan summarizes: “if the subjective experience of divine grace for which Spener and

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Case, *Jesus through the Centuries*, 281.

¹⁶⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* (trans. John Owen; Calvin’s Commentaries 22; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 68: “he would have no need of such trust, had he not been a man exposed to human necessities and wants. As then he depended on God’s aid, his lot is the same with ours.”

¹⁶⁹ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* (trans. William Pringle; 3 vols.; Calvin’s Commentaries 16, 17; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 1:166-67: “Some excessively timid persons restrict what is here said to outward appearance, and make the meaning to be, that Christ appeared to make progress, though, in point of fact, no addition was made to his knowledge. But the words have a quite different meaning, and this mistaken opinion is still more fully refuted by what Luke shortly afterwards adds, that *he grew in age and wisdom with God and man* (ver. 52). We are not at liberty to suppose, that knowledge lay concealed in Christ, and made its appearance in him in progress of time. There is no doubt whatever, that it was the design of God to express in plain terms, how truly and completely Christ, in taking upon him our flesh, did all that was necessary to effect his brotherly union with men” (italics orig.).

¹⁷⁰ Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 3:153-54: “many persons, thinking that this was unworthy of Christ, have endeavoured to mitigate the harshness of this opinion by a contrivance of their own...(but) There would be no impropriety...in saying that Christ, who knew all things, (John xxi.17), was ignorant of something in respect of his perception as a man.” Cf. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.14.2 (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Fort Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; LCC 20, 21; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1:483-84.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Donald G. Dawe, *The Form of a Servant: A Historical Analysis of the Kenotic Motif* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 9.

Pietism called was no less to find its ground in the human life of Jesus Christ, there had to be, within his own humanity, some way of exhibiting it.”¹⁷²

One noteworthy case-study of this christological tendency is the work of the Puritan John Owen (1616-1683). Owen advanced a “Spirit Christology” that claimed to be orthodox in all matters but went beyond the contributions of his forbearers. He argued that Christ’s rational soul—not his divine nature—was the animating principle of all his actions.¹⁷³ Thus Owen could affirm that Jesus’ wisdom and knowledge, by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, “was *objectively* increased, and in new trials and temptations he *experimentally* learned the new exercise of grace.”¹⁷⁴ Owen does not conclude on this basis that Jesus gradually discovered the purpose of his ministry.¹⁷⁵ But his focus theologically justified the humanization of Jesus’ experience of the world and opened a door for further investigation of his self-consciousness.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma*, 361. Many early Protestant hymns, especially those by Johann Arndt and Johann Gerhard, also map the experience of the believer onto the experience of Jesus. E.g. Arndt’s “Jesu, allerliebster Bruder” in *Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Meditations and Hymns* (ed. Eric Lund; New York; Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2011), 326-29. Cf. Dieter Georgi, “The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism,” *HTR* 85 (1992): 51-83 at 70.

¹⁷³ So Owen: “Being a perfect man, his rational soul was in him the immediate principle of all his moral operations even as ours are in us.” Cited in Richard W. Daniels, *The Christology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 295.

¹⁷⁴ John Owen, *On the Holy Spirit* (vol. 3 of *The Works of John Owen*; ed. William H. Goold; repr., Philadelphia: Leighton Publications, 1862), 170 (*italics orig.*).

¹⁷⁵ In his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (vol. 21 of *The Works of John Owen*; ed. William H. Goold; London; repr., Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), 524, Owen states: “Being always full of grace, truth, and wisdom, he was never at a loss for what he had to do, nor wanted anything of a perfect readiness of mind for its performance.”

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Alan Spence, *Incarnation and Inspiration: John Owen and the Coherence of Christology* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 118 (“there were no aspects of his activity where God, or the divine nature, replaced the normal operation of his humanity”). See also Oliver D. Crisp, *Revisioning Christology: Theology in the Reformed Tradition* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 91-110.

One could give many more examples, but the point for our purposes is clear: the 15th and 16th centuries witness a heightened interest in the thought process of Jesus and the way in which he experienced his surroundings.¹⁷⁷ For some, there was an increase in comfortability with the notion that Jesus was honestly disappointed by rejection, taken back by defection, and wished things that did not come to pass.¹⁷⁸ Such features of the Gospel tradition were not necessarily troublesome for Christian thinkers, but were rather points of contact between the life of Jesus and the life of the everyday believer. They evidenced the humbling extent of the incarnation.¹⁷⁹ As will be discussed more below, this period also produced thinkers not bound by christological tradition who came to their own radical conclusions about the humanity of Jesus. But the focus here concerns the interesting phenomenon of *Christian* readers who assumed and/or defended the classic christological creeds in word, yet did not take the creedal framework to demand the same readings of the Gospels as in earlier times. To be sure, we find no details about the nature of Jesus' intellectual development, far less any suggestion that some "crisis" induced a change of mind on his part. As in the last chapter, discussions typically relate either to Jesus' ministry considered as a unified whole or they cluster around select passages in the Gospels. But we do find something important that squares with a budding humanistic *Zeitgeist*: an "anthropological turn" in Christology wherein the "consciousness of individual subjects and their experience of

¹⁷⁷ See, however, the important contributions of Scotus and Occam, discussed in Georgi, "Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism," 62.

¹⁷⁸ See e.g. Lapse, *The Great Commentary* (trans. Thomas W. Mossman, assisted by various scholars; 6 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: John Hodges, 1887 [orig. 1681]), 4:463, on Christ weeping over Jerusalem: "He wept as well over the blindness, obduracy, and ingratitude of the people of Jerusalem...and because He saw His own labours and sufferings for them frustrated and rendered of no effect." Hereafter I will provide original publication dates for citations below when such information is significant and not mentioned in the body of the argument.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi* (trans. Wilhelm Pauck with Paul Larkin; LCC 19; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964 [orig. 1551]), 177. I will provide

themselves and the world” takes on new significance and will become, for some, “the major and even exclusive criterion for christological argument.”¹⁸⁰ The theory of a Galilean crisis cannot be understood apart from this.

3.2. GOSPEL HARMONIES AND PARAPHRASES

We also find in the 16th century an incredible boom in the production of harmonies of the Gospels. While it is difficult to determine a precise number, it can easily be said that more harmonies appeared in the 1500s than in all of the previous thirteen centuries combined.¹⁸¹ Contributing factors to this trend include the heightened emphasis on the humanity of Jesus as discussed above, as well as a growing interest in Jesus’ life for devotional imitation.¹⁸² The Renaissance interest in language, original sources, and history was also influential.¹⁸³ These harmonies are significant because, it will be argued, the later Quest for the historical Jesus, and the theory of a Galilean crisis in particular, will sprout and grow in the soil provided by them.

¹⁸⁰ O’Collins, *Christology*, 217. Cf. John Macquarrie, “Rationalist Christology,” in *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 175-91.

¹⁸¹ Cf. McArthur, *Quest through the Centuries*, 86; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 12.

¹⁸² This devotional motive is also behind the production of Ludolph’s *Vita* (1350), discussed in the last chapter. Cf. Conway, *Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony*, 122; Anthony J. Godzieba, “From ‘Vita Christi’ to ‘Marginal Jew’: The Life of Jesus as Criterion of Reform in Pre-critical and Post-critical Quests,” *LS* 32 (2007): 111-133 at 118.

¹⁸³ Cf. Gerhard Müller, “Osianders ‘Evangelienharmonie,’” in *Histoire de l’exégèse au XVIe siècle: textes du colloque international tenu à Genève en 1976* (eds. Olivier Fatio and Pierre Fraenkel; Geneva: Droz, 1978), 256-64 at 257; Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), 40-41; Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 7-20; Peter Harrison, “Fixing the Meaning of Scripture: The Renaissance Bible and the Origins of Modernity,” *Concilium* 1 (2002): 102-10.

It may seem initially unlikely to relate Gospel harmonies and later work on Jesus in this manner, given the traditional understanding of the harmony as an outdated, apologetical, and hardly critical genre. It is often said that the modern Quest for Jesus in the late 18th century was the first to deal with historical issues behind the Gospel narratives, while harmonies did not share this historical interest and have little value beyond the theological assumptions that produced them. To be sure, according to common periodizations, the Quest is thought *to begin* with the conclusion of mass harmony production in the mid- to late 18th century.¹⁸⁴

Some of this critique is fair. It should go without saying that harmonies are worthless guides to the historical Jesus.¹⁸⁵ But it is also true that many who disparaged the harmonies benefited greatly from doing so, as it made their own work appear original and more critical.¹⁸⁶ Of course there is no denying that later research was original and more critical on many issues. The point, instead, is that the severing of the harmony tradition from the Quest has clouded from view the significance of the aims, assumptions, and even results of Gospel harmonies for later Jesus research and especially for the crisis theory. Four considerations demonstrate this.

(i) *Biographical interest*. First, when 19th-century historians started titling their works “A Life of Jesus” or “A History of Jesus,” they were not doing something new:

Erasmus Alber, *Historia de Christo Jesu* (1532)

Wilhelm van Branteghem, *Iesu Christi vita* (1537)

¹⁸⁴ Cf. e.g. Charles C. Anderson, *Critical Quests of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 9; Daniel L. Pals, *The Victorian “Lives” of Jesus* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1982), 9.

¹⁸⁵ Here already Johann J. Griesbach, *Synopsis evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci et Lucae* (2nd ed.; Halle: J. J. Curtius, 1797 [orig. 1774]), v-vi. Cf. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 85.

¹⁸⁶ See e.g. William Gilpin, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (2 vols.; 4th ed.; London: Cadel and Davies, 1811 [orig. 1790]), 1:xxxvii-iii.

Joachim Perion, *De vita resbusque gestis Iesu Christi* (1553)

Alanus Copus, *Syntaxis historiae evangelicae* (1572)

Georg Wirth, *Vita vel evangelium Iesu Christi* (1594)

Many works in the 16th century and later regarded themselves as *Vitae* or *Historiae*.¹⁸⁷ Even the much reviled Andreas Osiander said that the purpose of his work was to present “totam domini nostri IESV CHRISTI uitam.”¹⁸⁸

The titles are important because they betray the intention of the harmonist to present for the reader something of a biography of Jesus. The biographical interest becomes more and more evident in 17th and 18th-century harmonies.¹⁸⁹ This fact is oddly absent from histories of the Quest and even studies of the genre of the Gospels.¹⁹⁰

Moreover, to produce a biographical portrait of Jesus means that the harmonists treated the Gospels *as sources* for this portrait. In this sense, the writing of harmonies was not a purely literary exercise.¹⁹¹ Many believed their work provided the events of Jesus’ life as those events

¹⁸⁷ And of course there was even earlier precedent in the likes of Ludolph of Saxony. Cf. McArthur, *Quest through the Centuries*, 57-58, 78-84.

¹⁸⁸ Andreas Osiander, *Harmoniae evangelicae libri IIII Graece et Latine* (Basil: s.n., 1537), praef. to Elenchus, A 1. Catholic harmonist Cornelius Jansen had similar aims; see Wim François, “Augustine and the Golden Age of Biblical Scholarship in Louvain (1550-1650),” in *Shaping the Bible in the Reformation: Books, Scholars and Their Readers in the Sixteenth Century* (eds. Bruce Gordon and Matthew McLean; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 235-90 at 252.

¹⁸⁹ Note William Whiston, *A Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, and of the Harmony of the Four Evangelists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1702), 97: “The four Gospels are not *Occasional Memoirs*, but *Methodical Annals* of the Acts of Chrif[t]” (italics orig.).

¹⁹⁰ Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004) begins his survey of the Gospels as biographies with the 19th-century Lives.

¹⁹¹ Here Mark Allan Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 12 is on target:

actually happened historically. The perspective is significant for our purposes and rests upon a number of key assumptions. One the previous chapter also explored: the Gospels, many harmonists thought, each contribute one portion to a fuller narrative about Jesus. Some even concluded that the Gospels were intentionally written to facilitate such harmonization.¹⁹² But another is more historical in orientation and has less in common with prior work. It is this: in the treatment of the Gospels as sources we find a small distinction between the Jesus of each Gospel and the Jesus of the harmonist, with the latter more approximating historical reality.¹⁹³ It is true that the Christian harmonist would deny that the biblical Jesus of each Gospel distorted history or misrepresented it in any important way.¹⁹⁴ But, as we will see in more detail below, many would grant that Jesus did not, in fact, say and do things in the order and manner in which he is said to say and do them in each Gospel.¹⁹⁵ Augustine had partly paved the way for this view

“In producing Gospel harmonies, scholars were already asking historical questions about Jesus, but they did so within a context of faith, not skepticism.”

¹⁹² Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 1:xxxix, thought the compilation of a harmony demonstrated the working of the Holy Spirit in the Evangelists: “under this diversity in the manner of writing...(one sees) an astonishing harmony.”

¹⁹³ Hence already the much discussed distinction between the narratives of the Gospels and the historical world behind them, a distinction that will soon dominate discussions of the inspiration of New Testament books. See Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1974), 1-16; Gregory Dawes, *The Historical Jesus Question: The Challenge of History to Religious Authority* (Louisville et al.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 2-4; Michael C. Legaspi, “From Scripture to Text,” in *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3-26.

¹⁹⁴ As David Steinmetz has generalized, there was “no slippage” here. See “The Eucharist and the Identity of Jesus in the Early Reformation,” in *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (eds. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 270-84 at 270.

¹⁹⁵ Grotius is significant here. The primary significance of the Gospels in his view is their attempt (he does not think they are inerrant) to point the reader to the teaching of Jesus and to guarantee Jesus’ authority via stories about his miracles and the resurrection. Cf. Henk Jan de Jonge, “Grotius’ View of the Gospels and the Evangelists,” in *Hugo Grotius, Theologian: Essays*

conceptually, as discussed in the prior chapter. But 16th-century harmonies also built on the prioritization of the historical or literal sense of Scripture stressed by the Reformers and others,¹⁹⁶ as well as an increasingly popular view that the Gospels resemble ancient works of history.¹⁹⁷ Thus, harmonists engaged these inspired documents with interests and methods shared by humanist intellectuals in other disciplines: namely, knowledge of a historical figure based on careful reading of the sources.

(ii) *Order of events*. A second and related point on the significance of these harmonies is that their authors, just like many 19th-century questers and proponents of the crisis, have a fundamental interest in the order of events in the ministry. That is, their concern is not just to produce an atomized synthesis of individual pericopae; they want to know the course of their Savior's life. Of course the harmonies differ greatly in design, degree of detail, and results in this regard. But the interest and aim is there. Already in Gerson's *Monotessaron* (1420), which for many in the 16th century and beyond was an exemplary harmony, one main concern is to identify

in Honour of G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes (eds. Henk J. M. Nellen and Edwin Rabbie; Leiden, New York; Köln: Brill, 1994), 65-76.

¹⁹⁶ This is not to ignore the fact that, in practice, many of the Reformers were quite imaginative readers and in many ways closer to medieval exegesis than that of the 19th or 20th centuries. See Richard A. Muller, "Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: The View from the Middle Ages," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of his Sixtieth Birthday* (eds. Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 3-22. For more on the literal sense see J. H. Bentley, *Humanist and Holy Writ* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 115-26.

¹⁹⁷ Note Luther in *A Brief Introduction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels* (1521): "(the gospel) is and should be nothing else than a discourse or a story about Christ, just as it happens among men when one writes a book about a king or a prince... Thus the gospel is and should be nothing else than a chronicle, a story, a narrative about Christ, telling who he is, what he did, said, and suffered." See *Word and Sacrament I* (vol. 35 of *Luther's Works*; ed. and trans. E. Theodore Bachmann; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 117-18.

the “ordo rerum gestarum.”¹⁹⁸ So too, Luscinius’ *Evangelicae historiae narratio* (1523) claims to offer a “simplex una atque ea perpetua narratio.”¹⁹⁹ One finds the same in 16th-century notables Jansen,²⁰⁰ Calvin,²⁰¹ Chemnitz,²⁰² and in many others. The focus persists throughout 17th and 18th-century harmonies to such a degree that it is impossible to study fully here.²⁰³ The significance for the crisis theory is self-evident, as the identification of a crisis requires one to know which events happened when. Stated better: the crisis theory is, in many ways, a sustained effort to order the ministry.

In addition, for some harmonists the effort to fit the Gospel stories together in a rational way helped identify a plot to the ministry and thus aid interpretation of the Gospels. Not all harmonists had this aim, to be sure, and many limited their reflections to commentarial

¹⁹⁸ Johannes Gerson, *Monotessaron* (vol. 4 of *Ioannis Gersonii opera omnia*; ed. Ellies du Pin; Antwerp: s.n., 1706), cols. 82-202 at 89.

¹⁹⁹ Cited in Dietrich Wünsch, *Evangelienharmonien im Reformationszeitalter: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Darstellungen* (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1983), 41.

²⁰⁰ Cornelius Jansen, *Commentarii in suam Concordiam, ac totam Historiam evangelicam* (Lugduni: Peter Landry, 1589 [orig. 1549]), praef. (to the reader) 4; also 1A (on the proomium of Luke).

²⁰¹ Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 1:xl states his goal to “arrange the three histories in one unbroken chain” so a reader can see “at a glance” the similarities and differences.

²⁰² Cf. Henk Jan de Jonge, “Sixteenth-century Gospel Harmonies: Chemnitz and Mercator,” in *Théorie et pratique de l’exégèse: Actes* (Geneva: Droz, 1990), 155-166 at 156 (Chemnitz sought a “natural” order).

²⁰³ Cf. e.g. Bernard Lamy, *Commentarius in concordiam Evangelicam et Apparatus chronologicus et geographicus* (2 vols.; Paris: Johannes Anisson, 1699), praef. i: because the individual stories the Gospels have been “spread out” (*sparsa*) and “disconnected” (*divulsa*), one must “inquire into the true series of the acts and words of the Lord” (*inquirere in veram seriem actuum & verborum Domini*). See also John Lightfoot, *The Harmony, Chronicle and Order of the New Testament* (vol. 3 of *The Whole Works of Rev. John Lightfoot*; ed. John Rogers Pitman; London: J. F. Dove, 1822 [orig. 1654]), vi (the exegete may “profit” “by reducing them [events] to their proper time and order”); Matthew Pilkington, *The Evangelical History and Harmony* (London: W. Bowyer, 1747), ix (“I attempted to reduce the History to a proper Series”).

discussion on the individual pericope at hand. But we do find some broader reflection. For example, Martin Chemnitz wanted his reader to understand “by what plan many were converted; by what things very many were offended; under what circumstances many fell from faith; how He sought fruit among His hearers; how long He waited for such fruit; how He finally announced the wrath of God upon them.”²⁰⁴ In other words, Chemnitz sought to communicate an overarching plot of the ministry—including its aims (e.g. “by what plan”), progression (e.g. “finally announced the wrath”), and circumstances of action (e.g. “how...”). Such plot construction became increasingly common in later harmonies which were more paraphrastic and robustly biographical in nature.²⁰⁵ Thus, the aim of later Jesus research to chart larger patterns in the chronology of Jesus’ ministry and rationalize the sequence of events was not a new concern, but rather stood in continuity with this prior work and developed it toward different ends.

(iii) *Principles of arrangement.* The third and closely related consideration is that, given the aim to arrange the events properly, harmonists engage in a kind of reconstructive work. In so doing there is an implicit criticism of the Gospels that resembles later Jesus study and the interpretive moves behind the theory of the crisis. From such criticism we can exclude at the outset Osiander and his “school” of thought, since he figured that each Gospel maintained an

²⁰⁴ Martin Chemnitz, Polycarp Leyser, and John Gerhard, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Volume One, Book One* (trans. Richard J. Dinda; Malone: Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy, 2009 [orig. 1586]), 3. This massive work occupied the attention of all three of these scholars: Chemnitz started the project, after his death [in 1586] Leyser continued it, and Gerhard finished it [in 1652] after Leyser’s death.

²⁰⁵ Cf. e.g. Thomas Ellwood, *Sacred History: or, The Historical Part of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament; Gathered Out from the Other Parts Thereof, and Digested (as Near as Well Could Be) into Due Method, with Respect to the Order of Time and Place* (2nd ed; London: J. Sowle, 1719 [orig. 1705]). Ellwood provides connections absent from the text, explains unclear points, and often paraphrases.

accurate chronology at all times.²⁰⁶ Here the harmonist would re-narrate the same event (e.g. healing of Peter's mother in law) multiple times if that event appeared in different Gospels in different contexts.²⁰⁷ As influential as this approach was,²⁰⁸ in my estimation it does not anticipate later Jesus research in any notable way.²⁰⁹ But another "school" of thought, represented by Calvin and Chemnitz, followed Augustine and Ludolph in supposing that the Evangelists had displaced certain events, and thus one should not assume that each preserved the correct chronological order.²¹⁰ In this case, the criticism took the form of (either explicitly or

²⁰⁶ Osiander "omitted nothing, conflated nothing, but sought to interleave the events in a way that made sense"; so William L. Petersen, "From Justin to Pepys: The History of the Harmonized Gospel Tradition," in *Patristic and Text-Critical Studies*, 272-300 at 299. Cf. Müller, "Osianders 'Evangelienharmonie,'" 261.

²⁰⁷ The method achieved some humorous absurdities: Jesus cleansed the temple three times; he cured four blind men around Jericho; he cured three centurion's sons in Capernaum; and he was anointed three times. See discussion in John Barton, "Biblical Criticism and the Harmonization of Texts," *PSB* 26 (2005): 144-56 at 149.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Laurent Codmann, *Harmonia Evangelistarum* (1563); Carolus Molinaeus, *Evangeliorum Unio* (1565); Georg Wirth, *Vita vel evangelium Iesu Christi* (1594); Caspar H. Sandhagen, *Eine kurtze Einleitung, die Geschichte unsers Herrn Jesu Christi* (1684); Johann Reinhard, *Harmonia Evangelistarum* (1727-30); E. D. Hauber, *Harmony of the Evangelists* (1737); etc.

²⁰⁹ The underappreciated study by Dietrich Wünsch, *Evangelienharmonien im Reformationszeitalter* (1983) is on target in the suggestion that the harmony tradition prepares for later Jesus research. However, his main thesis that Osiander's type of harmony was the most significant here is not compelling. The harmonists who followed Augustine would, by necessity, develop the kinds of principles for reorganization that would later become standard practice. Thus Merkel, *Widersprüche*, 261, is right in saying that Osiander's harmony is "einen Rückschritt."

²¹⁰ See de Jonge, "Sixteenth-century Gospel Harmonies," 157. So Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 2:105: "The Evangelists, as we have remarked on former occasions, were not very exact in arranging Christ's discourses, but frequently throw together a variety of sayings uttered by him." Cf. idem, 1:xxxix; 1:258 (on the Sermon on the Mount: "Those who think that Christ's sermon, which is here related, is different from the sermon contained in the sixth chapter of Luke's Gospel, rest their argument on a very light and frivolous argument"); 1:449 (on the sending of the twelve: "Perhaps, too, Matthew may have collected into one passage discourses which were delivered at different times"). Chemnitz, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Volume One, Book One*, 2 remarks that the Gospels have their own rationale, and that "in the context and

implicitly) identifying which Gospel preserved the accurate placement of a particular event, and which one(s) did not.²¹¹ According to this view particular sayings and deeds in the tradition are not rejected *in toto* as unhistorical, and there is no admitting of irresolvable contradictions between the Gospels—two moves that later questers will make.²¹² But it is an important and overlooked step in that direction, and readers will recall that it goes beyond Augustine who had less interest—or less confidence of success, perhaps²¹³—in such an endeavor.²¹⁴

For those who decide that rearrangement is necessary, then, the question of how to do it quickly becomes pertinent. And in fact the Chemnitz-Calvin style of criticism led to important debates about method, since harmonists were well aware of the potentially arbitrary nature of rearranging the Gospels. Thus, what frequently reappears in the harmony tradition is discussion about the logic, or “*ratio*,” of arrangement. Concerning Gerson’s influential *Monotessaron*, for example, Chemnitz remarked that “some things did not hold together by reason of their

sequence of their accounts, each follows his own order and unique plan which does not agree in every respect with the rest...”

²¹¹ The influential Grotius would hold that the Gospels were not always in historical order. Cf. *Annotationes in libros evangeliorum* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1641), 437 (on Matt 26:6): “Nothing is more certain than in the writings of the Evangelists many things are not related in temporal order but as matters led to it” (*Nihil est certius quam à scriptoribus Euangeliorum multa referri non temporis ordine, sed ex rerum ductu*). See also his comments on Luke 9:51 (706).

²¹² Here Barton, “Biblical Criticism,” 151, is right to draw this distinction between harmony writing and later historical criticism: the historical critic “has to recognize honestly that the Gospel accounts are incompatible.” The view that the Gospels were not in historical order did not, by and large (there were dissenters, especially in the 18th century), lead to the conclusion that the Gospels are incompatible. The Gospels were thought to have a “*concordissima dissonantia*” (harmonious dissonance), a phrase from Gerson.

²¹³ The notion of a “science” of chronology in the 16th century aided this confidence. See M. H. de Lang, “Gospel Synopses from the 16th to the 18th Centuries and the Rise of Literary Criticism of the Gospels,” in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (ed. Camille Focant; BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 599-610 at 604.

²¹⁴ Rightly noted in Pesch, “Ueber Evangelienharmonien,” 234.

consequence,”²¹⁵ and the influential Catholic harmonist, Cornelius Jansen, similarly claimed that Gerson’s order of events had no “*ratio*.”²¹⁶ We find comments like these throughout the entire three centuries of harmony writing considered here.²¹⁷ The debate over “*ratio*” typically concerned which Gospel(s) to prioritize and how and when one should incorporate the others, since many assumed that, at any given time, at least one of the Gospels maintained the proper chronology.²¹⁸ But the discussion is not entirely bound by this assumption, and in attempt to arrange the material critics advanced a number of arguments that would come to dominate Life of Jesus research and even help construct a Galilean crisis. Two in particular are worthy of note.

One approach was to reconfigure the chronology according to circumstances that individual stories in the Gospels seem to require.²¹⁹ As some exegetes considered in the last

²¹⁵ Chemnitz, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Volume One, Book One*, 13. He will later note: “there have been many who have neither examined nor set forth a voluntary or arbitrary order of the accounts on the basis of the circumstances of the Gospel narrative itself but on the basis of their own (or who knows whose) imaginations, no reasons for which they have explained” (31).

²¹⁶ See Wunsch, *Evangelienharmonien im Reformationszeitalter*, 213.

²¹⁷ Cf. e.g. Ellwood, *Sacred History*, iii (on “Skip[ing] to and fro”); Pilkington, *Evangelical History and Harmony*, ix (laments the diverse and poor methods used by others “to fettle the Order of Facts”).

²¹⁸ E.g. (i) Paul Crell, *Monotessaron historiae evangelicae* (Wittenberg: s.n., 1566) largely maintained Mark and John as they are and inserted Matthew and Luke as he found appropriate; (ii) Bernard Lamy’s *Commentarius in concordiam Evangelicam* prioritized Matthew, as he followed the Papias tradition on Mark (and assumed the same of Luke); (iii) and Augustin Calmet’s brief harmony written in 1715, published later in a Latin translation by G. D. Mansi in *Commentarius literalis in omnes libros novi Testamenti*, preferred Luke. On the last see Christian Pesch, “Die Evangelienharmonie seit dem 16. Jahrhundert (Ueber Evangelienharmonien II),” *ZKT* 10 (1886): 454-80 at 462-67.

²¹⁹ It became popular to clarify the teachings of Jesus by drawing attention to the location in which he delivered them, the idea being that Jesus’ *modus dicendi* was to draw analogies to his physical setting. Isaac Newton had great interest in such matters, see *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (Dublin: S. Powell, 1733), 148: “I observe, that *Christ* and his forerunner *John* in their parabolical discourses were wont to allude to things present.” Edmund Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion* (4th ed; London: s.n., 1759

chapter, then, but now on a much greater scale, many harmonists assume that particular episodes imply a backstory that may or may not be consistent with the Gospel framework in which they stand.²²⁰ This contextual manner of weighing material would become a hugely influential feature of later Jesus study, as we will discuss in due course.

Harmonists employed such inner-narrative criteria to identify the location of passages significant for our interest in the crisis, including major discourses of Jesus,²²¹ the commissioning of the twelve,²²² certain movements throughout Palestine,²²³ the feeding of the

[orig. 1745]), 302-11 comments at length on the suitability of Jesus' teaching to context. He even notes that if the connection is not evident, "we have reason to believe it chiefly owing to the omission of some circumstances in the history" (312).

²²⁰ It is noteworthy that Chemnitz had advocated for an arrangement according to a principle of ancient rhetoric: a narration must be plausible via the "circumstantiae" of its placement. See de Jonge, "Sixteenth-century Gospel Harmonies," 158. Cf. Chemnitz, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Volume One, Book One*, 5: "In very many important parts of the Gospel narrative, therefore, one can seek out and show the order of times and things done on the basis of the circumstances." Typically, however, the Chemnitz harmony would still maintain contact with at least one Gospel chronology at a time. See J. H. A. Ebrard, *The Gospel History: A Critical Compendium of Critical Investigations* (ed. Alexander B. Bruce; trans. James Martin; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1863), 51.

²²¹ Many figured that Luke's placement of the Sermon on the Plain a little later in the ministry was a better location for Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (viewed as the same event), since Jesus had time to collect a larger following and call his twelve disciples. Whiston, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, 104, would say that the Sermon in the Mount is "much too soon" in Matthew, and he also writes this: "Besides, the vast success of Christ's Preaching and his mighty Fame thro' all the Neighboring Countreys, mention'd before this Sermon in St. *Matthew*, and attested to at the same time by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, are good evidence, that a considerable time must have pass'd since the beginning of his public Ministry before this famous Sermon."

²²² The codex Fuldensis had followed the sending of the disciples (Mark 6:7-13 and par) with a series of narratives which presuppose the presence of the disciples. Luscinius' *Die ganz euangelisch hystori* (1525) identified this problem. See also Edward Wells, *An Help for the More Easy and Clear Understanding of the Holy Scriptures: Being the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Theater, 1718), 101, 111 (the question from John the Baptist actually happened "a considerable Time before Christ's sending the Twelve to preach").

²²³ Cf. Samuel Nelson *The History of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: s.n., 1759), 39 (on Jesus' move to Capernaum). Similar moves appear in commentaries. Cf. e.g. Zachary Pearce, *A Commentary, with Notes, on the Four Evangelists and*

five thousand,²²⁴ parables,²²⁵ and the Galilean woes (Matt 11:20-24 and par).²²⁶ Like later historians, therefore, Gospel harmonists already started the process of isolating certain passages, inferring their probable historical context(s), and, if need be, reconfiguring the Gospel narratives in response.

To demonstrate the point we can focus on the ever important Galilean woes. Calvin found necessary to alter the Matthean framework to achieve a reasonable synthesis, and he

the Acts of the Apostles (London: E. Cox, 1777), 160 (on the lament over Jerusalem: “from the words how often, here added to them by Jefus, we may [I think] gather, that Jefus had been prefent at Jerufalem more than once...during his miniftry, though neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke mention his going thither, till a few days before his crucifixion”).

²²⁴ Some exegetes, including Ludolph discussed in the last chapter, figured that John 6 actually took place before John 5. See Simon du Corroy’s *Pandecta legis evangelicae* (1547). Martin Bucer figured that the plot to kill Jesus for violating the Sabbath assumes that John 5:1 and 7:1ff belong together. See Irena Backus, “The Chronology of John 5-7: Martin Bucer’s Commentary (1528-36) and the Exegetical Tradition,” in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, 141-55 at 151.

²²⁵ Many will explain that Jesus’ parabolic teaching responds to rejection. See Samuel Cradock, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists, and the Text Methodiz’d According to the Order and Series of Times, in which the Several Things by them Mentioned, were Transacted* (London: s.n., 1668), 180: “feeing they (the Scribes and Pharisees) regarded not his former Doctrine plainly delivered to them, wherein he taught the way to eternal life, nor were willing to be guided by him, (thus) they should not understand the mysteries of his Kingdom, nor what would be his future Dispensations toward his Church.” See also John Fleetwood, *The Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Containing an Accurate and Universal History of our Glorious Redeemer* (2 vols; rev. ed.; Carlisle: L. Smith, 1792 [orig. 1767]), 1:136 (on the Parable of the Sower: “surely a more proper parable could not have been delivered when such multitudes came to hear his discourses, and so few practised the precepts, or profited by the heavenly doctrines they contained”). The suggestion was also popular in the commentaries. Cf. e.g. Johann Bengel (with M. E. Bengel and J. C. F. Steudel), *Gnomon of the New Testament* (5 vols.; trans. James Bandinel and Andrew R. Fausset; 3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1858 [orig. 1742]), 1:284 (“Our Lord, therefore, did not speak to the people in parables without a cause. And nevertheless He had often before spoken to them without parables, out of compassion...and they had not profited”); Johann C. Koecher, *Analecta philologica et exegetica in quatuor SS. Evangelia* (Altenburg: Richter, 1766), 276.

²²⁶ For a discussion of placement see Pilkington, *Evangelical History and Harmony*, 22-23. He mentions two main options: a) to follow Luke; b) to move the woes to the sending of the Twelve (which does not agree with Matthew or Luke).

preferred Luke's placement during the sending of the Seventy. He also added a key detail that the Twelve had returned from their first mission (which Matthew does not mention). Thus, according to Calvin's creation, the woes reflect a rejection of the preaching in those cities. He explained:

Luke states the time when, and the reason why, Christ uttered such invectives against those cities. It was while he was sending the disciples away into various parts of Judea, to proclaim, as they passed along, that the kingdom of God was at hand. Reflecting on the ingratitude of those among whom he had long discharged the office of a prophet, and performed many wonderful works, without any good result, he broke out into these words, announcing that the time was now come, when he should depart to other cities, having learned, by experience, that the inhabitants of the country adjoining that lake, among whom he had begun to preach the Gospel and perform miracles, were full of obstinacy and of desperate malice...²²⁷

Calvin's reading of the Galilean woes, then, assumes that they spell a certain doom over the named cities. They imply a backstory that the Gospels themselves—particularly Matthew, but Luke as well—had not fully explained.²²⁸

Others spin similar historical narratives, particularly in 17th- and 18th-century harmonies and paraphrases. For Bishop Lightfoot, a sense of finality in the woes led him to rethink Jesus' reception in the rest of the Galilean ministry. He explained that Jesus told the family of Jairus to remain quiet because "that city (Capernaum) had justly forfeited all such revelations of him."²²⁹ That is, the message of the Galilean woes, which Lightfoot believes Jesus delivered at an earlier

²²⁷ Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 2:26-27. On Calvin's general reservations about delivering an exact historical chronology of events see de Lang, "Gospel Synopses from the 16th to the 18th Centuries," 603.

²²⁸ Here see Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (ed. Leslie F. Church; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978 [orig. 1708-10]), 126: "He began to preach to them long before (*ch.* iv. 17), but he did not *begin to upbraid* till now. Rough and displeasing methods must not be taken, till gentler means have first been used. Christ is not apt *to upbraid*. *Wisdom* first invites, but when her invitations are slighted, then she *upbraids*" (italics orig.).

²²⁹ Lightfoot, *Harmony, Chronicle and Order of the New Testament*, 88.

point, still applies here and explains Jesus' curious secrecy after this miracle.²³⁰ Lightfoot thinks it illogical to suppose that Jesus would pronounce judgment on these cities and then continue his ministry in them as before. For him the woes paint a picture that is bigger than their frames in Matthew and Luke.

Interestingly enough, other harmonists will favor the Lukan placement of the woes and omit them from their location in Matthew, undoubtedly because they were deemed better suited to the end of Jesus' Galilean tenure. A comment in Joseph Priestley's harmony in the late 18th century speaks for many before him:

According to the present order of Matthew's gospel, Jesus pronounces the woe upon Chorazin and other places in that neighbourhood, xi. 20. before he had made one half of his stay in Galilee for that time; whereas it is more natural to suppose, with Mark (sic) and Luke, that he pronounced it just before taking his leave of Galilee, in order to go to Jerusalem, when the inhabitants of those cities had had more opportunities of seeing his miracles, and hearing his instructions."²³¹

The reading anticipates the logic of a Galilean crisis not only in terms of method, but also content.

A second ordering technique is slightly more detached from the Gospels than the prior one: namely, harmonization on the basis of "common sense" when considering certain stories or even thematic issues in the abstract. A comment in Jean Leclerc's *Harmonia evangelica* is exemplary: gaps in the narrative (*circumstantiae omissae*) can be filled in by using intuition

²³⁰ Cradock, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, 11, wrestles with a similar issue with the healing of the blind man outside Bethsaida, an event he believes happened after the Galilean woes. He comments: "And though the greater part of the Inhabitants of that place, as it seems, were so obstinate, that there was little hope of their repentance, yet he is willing to use means for the conversion of some of them, which might be more tractable."

²³¹ Joseph Priestley, *Harmony of the Evangelists, in Greek* (London: J. Johnson, 1777), 90. He also says: "It is not improbable but that our Lord might have used the same expressions more than once or twice... Luke might introduce it where he has done, as being most pertinent on our Lord's taking his final leave of Galilee" (94). Further: "this solemn denunciation might refer to what would be the consequence of *all* his preaching in Galilee" (94, *italics orig.*).

when there may be no textual evidence to use.²³² Such a process of “gap-filling,” especially by supplying emotions or intentions to Jesus and/or his opponents (what later researchers will call “psychologization”),²³³ becomes increasingly popular in later harmonistic work. Here authors treat the Gospel frameworks with greater flexibility, extracting some or many pericopae from their original contexts and rearranging them in settings that befit the author’s judgment alone.²³⁴ A growing skepticism about the reliability of the Gospel chronologies encouraged this approach, since it placed more weight on the harmonist’s ability to fashion the course of Jesus’ life in a reasonable matter. Edmund Law (1745) clearly recognized the predicament: the Gospels record “many naked *facts*” without mention of their motive or occasion.²³⁵

Harmonists proposed a number of different possible solutions to this dilemma of rearrangement. Matthew Pilkington tried to proceed “by separating the distinct Passages, and connecting those only which have a proper and necessary Relation to each other.”²³⁶ Robert Wait similarly focused on “such connections as circumstances of the history seemed necessarily to

²³² Jean Leclerc, *Harmonia evangelica cui subjecta est historia Christi ex quatuor Evangeliiis concinnata* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1699), 519. Spinoza’s form of historical criticism was likely influential here, since he regarded it necessary to reconstruct a proper historical setting for biblical events that was “natural.” In his words: “to interpret Scripture, we need to assemble a genuine history of it and to deduce the thinking of the Bible’s authors by valid inferences from this history, as from certain data and principles.” Cited in Jeffrey L. Morrow, “Historical Criticism as Secular Allegorism: The Case of Spinoza,” *Letter and Spirit* 8 (2012-13): 189-222 at 209. On Spinoza’s influence see also R. H. Popkin, “Spinoza and Bible Scholarship,” in *The Books of Nature and Scripture* (eds. J. E. Force and R. H. Popkin; Dordrecht; Boston: Kluwer, 1994), 1-20.

²³³ E.g. Newton, *Prophecies of Daniel*, 147: Jesus, “being afraid” of the Pharisees, departed to Galilee after John’s arrest.

²³⁴ See Johann D. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament* (4 vols.; trans. Herbert Marsh; 2nd ed.; London: F. and C. Rivington, 1802 [orig. 1750]), 3:61, 63, on the Pharisees telling Jesus to leave Galilee (Luke 13:31), and the Samaritans rejecting Jesus (Luke 9:51-56).

²³⁵ Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 268 (italics orig.).

²³⁶ Pilkington, *Evangelical History and Harmony*, ix.

require.”²³⁷ Joseph Priestley went further still: he cut out all the pages of two printed Bibles and arranged them on a large table according to his own historical judgment. He even rejected initially the approaches of other harmonists: “(I) resolutely avoided so much as looking into any harmony whatsoever.”²³⁸ Priestley praised his “mechanical methods” and his focus on cause and effect.²³⁹ This atomization of the tradition and the employment of a historical “common sense” is significant not because these harmonists reconstructed a Galilean crisis in the process, but because the approach will become a norm of later Jesus research and a prerequisite for the crisis theory.

(iv) *Key results.* A fourth contribution of harmony writing before Reimarus is that many reach conclusions that approximate key elements of the crisis theory. In particular, we have harmonies that indicate a successful beginning to Jesus’ Galilean ministry and, for some, growing opposition throughout it.²⁴⁰ Luscinius’ 1524 summarized harmony is an example, which

²³⁷ Robert Wait, *The Gospel-History, from the Text of the Four Evangelists* (Edinburgh: Sands et al., 1765), vi.

²³⁸ Priestley, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, xvi-ii. The refusal to look at any other harmony probably has to do with Priestley’s materialism.

²³⁹ Priestley, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 71, also 76. The influence of the scientific revolution and empiricism can be found in many harmonies from this period. This is especially evident in the interest in causation and the understanding of history as a chain of cause and effect. See Dawes, *Historical Jesus Question*, 30. James P. Martin, “Toward a Post-Critical Paradigm,” *NTS* 33 (1987): 370-85 at 374, makes this insightful point: “There is probably...(a) correspondence between the change from a fourfold to single (efficient) causalism in the science in the 17th century and the triumph of the single past-historical sense of Scripture in scientific biblical interpretation.”

²⁴⁰ On early success see Fleetwood, *Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 57: Jesus’ preaching was “at first attended with great success, for they listened attentively to his doctrine, and received it with particular kindness and courtesy” (he also believes there was early opposition from the Jewish leaders, 60).

begins the “erst iar der predig des herren”²⁴¹ by growing the mission field and gathering to this early point the call of the twelve, the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plane, and other stories in and around Capernaum.²⁴² Also noteworthy is the fascinating harmony by Gerhard Mercator (1592), which employs as a criterion for placement the emotional intensity of Jesus’ conflict with opponents.²⁴³ The criterion assumes the more intense, the later the placement.

In addition, we know that Epiphanius’ idea (discussed in Chapter 2) about a period of welcome and a period of rejection was a topic of conversation. Chemnitz explicitly mentions the notion, as well as Epiphanius himself, and offers a qualified endorsement.²⁴⁴ Others are more supportive still. Jeremy Taylor’s more biographical *Life of our Blessed Saviour* (1649), for example, comments on the healing of two blind men and a demon possessed man in Matt 9:27-34:

the Pharisees could hold no longer, being ready to burst with fury, and said, he cast out devils by the help of devils.... This was the first eruption of their rage, for all the last year, which was the first of Jesus’ preaching, all was quiet, neither the Jews nor the Samaritans, nor the Galileans did malign his doctrine or person, but he preached with much peace on all hands, for this was the year which the prophet Isaiah called in his prediction, the accepted year of the Lord.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Othmar Nachtgall (Luscinius), *Die Evangelisch Hystori* (1524 und 1525) (ed. Petra Hörner; Berlin: Weidler, 2008), 9.

²⁴² Luscinius, *Evangelisch Hystori*, 9-12.

²⁴³ Hence Mercator thought that Luke 6-8 happened before John 5. Cf. Wünsch, *Evangelienharmonien im Reformationszeitalter*, 253 note 7.

²⁴⁴ Chemnitz, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Volume One, Book Two*, 191, says, contra Epiphanius, that Jesus “did have some enemies during His first year,” referring to Jesus’ first cleansing of the temple (John 2:18-25), as well as the temptation by Satan. Though he also says: “this account in which Christ flees because of imminent persecution, seems to belong to the second year” (163).

²⁴⁵ Jeremy Taylor, *The Life of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ* (repr.; Somerset: J & J Patton, 1818 [orig. 1649]), 82.

For Taylor this is not an isolated motif. He further remarks that, before Jesus departed for Jerusalem, he “went up and down the cities of Galilee, inforcing the doctrines he had taught them, and adding new precepts, advertising them of the multitudes of those that perish, and how few shall be saved, and that they should strive to enter into the straight gate; the way to destruction being fair and plausible, but the way to heaven very difficult.”²⁴⁶ To cluster such gloomy words near the end of the Galilean ministry is clearly intentional on the author’s part. It requires one pull warnings and threats from all over the Synoptics to this location.

As a final example, Bengel supposed chronological “transference” (*trajectionem*) necessary for an accurate harmony,²⁴⁷ and in his Gospel outlines he identified gradually increasing stages of opposition to Jesus. For his outline of Luke, he divided Jesus’ time in Capernaum into three stages, whereby Jesus’ acts “are not censured by adversaries” (*ab adverfariis non reprehensa*), “are censured...with gradually increasing severity” (*ab adverfariis, paulatim gravius, reprehensa*), and “were different in relation to the various persons” with whom he met.²⁴⁸

A clear conclusion, then: the presence of an early success and growing opposition motif in many notable works demonstrates that Gospel harmonies and paraphrases had already popularized ideas that Hase and other 19th-century critics would later elaborate into the notion of

²⁴⁶ Taylor, *Life of our Blessed Saviour*, 111.

²⁴⁷ John Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testament* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Schrammii, 1750 [orig. 1742]), praef. d 3.

²⁴⁸ Bengel, *Gnomon*, 221. Bengel’s fascination with chronology is well known. See Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 71; Julien Lambinet, “Les principes de la méthode exégétique de J.A. Bengel (1687-1752), piétiste du Württemberg,” *ETL* 89 (2013): 253-78 at 264.

“two periods” in the ministry. The notion of early success and growing opposition had already become a convenient summary of the course of Jesus’ ministry as a whole.²⁴⁹

As for the other three considerations in this chapter, we can conclude with this: the three centuries of harmony writing before Reimarus produced not a Galilean crisis *in toto*, but it did advance many of the assumptions and methodological approaches that are integral to it.

3.3. FREETHINKERS AND DEISTS

We also cannot properly grasp the prehistory of the Quest without mention of those typically situated “outside” orthodox boundaries: that is, those frequently called freethinkers and/or Deists in the 17th and 18th centuries.²⁵⁰ These critics were also interested in Jesus and early Christianity, although they were not, in general, devoted to the writing of harmonies or biographies of

²⁴⁹ It also appears to have influenced the largely forgotten work by French Atheist Baron d’Holbach in 1770, entitled *Ecce Homo: Histoire Critique de Jesus Christ, ou Analyse raisonnée des Evangiles*. A critical edition has been translated into English: *Ecce homo! An Eighteenth Century Life of Jesus: Critical Edition and Revision of George Houston’s Translation from the French* (ed. Andrew Hunwick; History of Religions in Translation 1; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1995). Note at 114-15 (Jesus’ reputation was “so great in Galilee” and “the troop of Jesus’ adherents grew”), 119, 124, 134 (Jesus “closed the first year of his mission in glorious manner”); for opposition see 134 (in Jerusalem Jesus meets opposition he “had [not] hoped for”), 169 (“It seems that one day...he distinctly avowed that he had changed his resolution in regard to the Jews, and meant to abandon their conversion; and that this was the reason he spoke to them in parables”), 173 (“lack of success, due solely, it was claimed, to the weakness of their faith, would seem to cast some doubt over the foresight and penetration of their divine master”), 192 (“Despised and rejected on every side, he presumed, quite sensibly, that being once excluded from all the provinces, and the Gentiles being not much inclined to receive...he would be constrained sooner or later to return to Jerusalem, where he must expect to meet with perilous adventures”).

²⁵⁰ On some definitional issues associated with the Deists and others see John Orr, *English Deism: Its Roots and Its Fruits* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1934), 13-18; Günter Gawlick, “Der Deismus als Grundzug der Religionsphilosophie der Aufklärung,” *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, 15-43 at 18 (there is no Deist “schule”); David Pailin, “British Views on Religion and Religions in the Age of William and Mary,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 6 (1994): 349–375 at 354; Diego Lucci, *Scripture and Deism: The Biblical Criticism of the Eighteenth-Century British Deists* (SEMEC 3; Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2008), 17-63.

Jesus.²⁵¹ Instead, the vast majority of their reflection concerned isolated issues such as miracles²⁵² (especially the resurrection),²⁵³ the reliability of the Gospels,²⁵⁴ the fate of proof-from-prophecy,²⁵⁵ and textual criticism.²⁵⁶ Others have rightly noted—though most often with generalities and not specifics²⁵⁷—such discussions make Reimarus appear far less original than commonly assumed.²⁵⁸

²⁵¹ Cf. Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 53; Pals, *Victorian “Lives,”* 24; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 14; Paget, “Quests for the Historical Jesus,” 140-41.

²⁵² Cf. Gawlick, “Deismus als Grundzug,” 29-30; Pals, *Victorian “Lives,”* 23; James A. Herrick, *The Radical Rhetoric of the English Deists: The Discourse of Skepticism (1680-1750)* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 145-80.

²⁵³ Cf. William Lane Craig, *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy* (Lewiston: Queenston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 252-96; Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (2nd ed.; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 233.

²⁵⁴ Cf. James Carleton Paget, “Quests for the Historical Jesus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 138-55 at 141; Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 39-57.

²⁵⁵ Here esp. Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (London: s.n., 1724).

²⁵⁶ See Richard Simon (and Andrew Hunwick), *Critical History of the Text of the New Testament: Wherein is Established the Truth of the Acts on which the Christian Religion is Based* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013 [orig. 1689]). Cf. Lyle O. Bristol, “New Testament Textual Criticism in the Eighteenth Century,” *JBL* 69 (1950): 101-12; Henning Graf Reventlow, “Richard Simon und seine Bedeutung für die kritische Erforschung der Bibel,” in *Historische Kritik in der Theologie: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte* (ed. Georg Schwaiger; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 11-36.

²⁵⁷ E.g. Helen K. Bond, “The Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Appraisal,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Jesus* (ed. Delbert Burkett; Malden: Blackwell, 2011), 337-54 at 338. For a more detailed study, see Jonathan Birch, “The Road to Reimarus: Origins of the Quest of the Historical Jesus,” in *Holy Land as Homeland?* (ed. Keith W. Whitlam; SWBA 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 19-47.

²⁵⁸ A few examples: (i) Jesus did not reject Judaism and did not found a “new” religion; cf. John Toland, *Nazarenus: or, Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan Christianity* (London: J. Brown, J. Roberts, J. Brotherson, 1718), vi (“Jesus did not take away or cancel the Jewish law in an fenfe whatfoever”). For discussion and other sources see Matti Myllykoski, “‘Christian Jews’

In addition to a collective disinterest in harmonies, most of these writers left Jesus alone. While there was mass defection from certain creedal positions on Christology, as well as a general propensity to conceive of Jesus in a purely human manner, critics mostly regarded Jesus a noble ethical teacher and in many ways the ideal enlightened man.²⁵⁹ The notion that Jesus' message changed was not, at this point, a popular one. Instead, Jesus' message, often identified with a universal "natural religion,"²⁶⁰ was largely assumed to be consistent. Thus, the liberal Anglican Bishop Edmund Law expresses a common sentiment when he says that "(Jesus pursued) one plain and uniform design."²⁶¹ In fact, writers often treat Jesus' teachings in the

and 'Jewish Christians': The Jewish Origins of Christianity in English Literature from Elizabeth I to Toland's *Nazarenus*," in *The Rediscovery of Jewish Christianity: From Toland to Baur* (ed. F. Stanley Jones; SBLHBS 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 3-44 at 30-36. (ii) The disciples stole the body; cf. Thomas Woolston discussed in Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 41. (iii) The disciples (and early Christian leaders generally) sought power and wealth; cf. the response already in Grotius, *The Truth of the Christian Religion, with Jean Le Clerc's Notes and Additions* (trans. John Clarke; ed. Maria Rosa Antognazza; Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012 [orig. 1627]), 103. (iv) Jesus' kingdom was this-worldly; cf. Thomas Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury* (ed. William Molesworth; 11 vols.; London: John Bohn, 1839-1845), 3:397: the kingdom of God is "a *kingdom properly so named*" (italics orig.). Also: "The kingdom therefore of God is a real, not a metaphorical kingdom" (402).

²⁵⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology: From the Enlightenment to Pannenberg* (Oxford; New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 13, summarizes a christological trope from this time: "Christ possessed to a greater degree what every man has latent within him." On "the Enlightenment" see Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 3-27; Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-22.

²⁶⁰ See Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 16-19; Peter Harrison, "Religion" and the Religions in the English Enlightenment (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28-60.

²⁶¹ Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 302. Also: "In short, his whole life was a lecture of true practical philosophy" (ibid). There is some socio-political subtext to such views, since it was common to view "enthusiasm"—esp. in the purported religious experiences of Methodists and Pietists and others—as counter to the calm, composed, and rational nature of true religion. Cf. Samuel Clarke's comment in David Hartley, *Observations on Man: His Fame,*

Gospels as a monolithic whole, agreeable to generalizations such as “the doctrine of Christ” or “the law of Jesus” or “the teaching of Christ” and the like.²⁶² Change, disruption, and inconsistency in Christianity stemmed not from Jesus but from his followers (especially the leaders).²⁶³ Here the Reformation’s distinction between “Scripture” and “Tradition,” and the

His Duty, and His Expectations (Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints; Gainesville: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1966 [orig. 1749]), 490: “(a student of the life of Christ) cannot without the extremest malice and obstinacy in the world charge him with enthusiasm.” Cf. T. L. Bushell, *The Sage of Salisbury: Thomas Chubb 1679-1747* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967), 138, claims that in Chubb’s view “the imagination and the understanding of Jesus... (was such that) the gospel may justifiably be deemed a kind of verbal embodiment of the Law of Nature.”

²⁶² Cf. e.g. *The Racovian Catechism, with Notes and Illustrations* (trans. Thomas Rees; London: Longman et al., 1818), cvii (“we observe that the Church is the less polluted, the nearer it is to those who received the divine wisdom with their own ears”); John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (ed. John C. Higgins-Biddle; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999 [orig. 1695]), 132; John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious: or, A Treatise Shewing, That there is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason* (London: s.n., 1702), 49; Thomas Jefferson, *The Jefferson Bible: With the Annotated Commentaries on Religion of Thomas Jefferson* (ed. O. I. A. Roche; New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1964 [orig. 1895]), 326 (“the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has ever been offered to man”). Though Jefferson did think that some of Jesus’ teachings were ignoble and confined to his time, see Orr, *English Deism*, 215.

²⁶³ It was commonly thought that those who came after Jesus obfuscated his teachings and developed elaborate and speculative theories about his person, the nature and organization of the church, and the sacraments. See e.g. Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious*, 71. Cf. Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 300-301. On the perceived simplicity of earliest Christianity see David S. Katz, *God’s Last Words: Reading the English Bible from the Reformation to Fundamentalism* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004), 136-37; Margaret C. Jacob, “The Enlightenment Critique of Christianity,” in *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815* (vol. 7 of *The Cambridge History of Christianity*; eds. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 265-82 at 269. Orr, *English Deism*, 31, generalizes: “(the Deists) claimed Jesus to be of their party.” The influence of anticlericalism on this reconstruction of Christian origins has been well documented. See S. J. Barnett, *Idol Temples and Crafty Priests: The Origins of Enlightenment Anticlericalism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

privileging of the former over the latter, developed into a distinction between Jesus' own intentions and the opinions of those who came after him.²⁶⁴

If, therefore, these figures produced few harmonies or Lives, and did not suppose any noteworthy crisis, change, or development in Jesus' teaching, then what is the point of treating them for our purposes? Simply put: we find in these works the solidifying of certain theological and historical perspectives that will encourage, and in some cases require, the development of a crisis theory by later scholars. This becomes apparent in light of common approaches to Jesus' teaching, his atoning death, and his announcement of coming judgment.

What happens is this. Beginning with the work of Italian theologian Faustus Socinus (1539-1604), the issue of the *purpose* of Jesus' ministry was up for debate in ways never before seen. There had always been different views on the nature of the atonement, to be sure.²⁶⁵ But, as mentioned in the last chapter, there was widespread agreement among Christian interpreters that Jesus' death was not an afterthought or a mistake, but was rather integral to the saving mission of the incarnation itself. For Socinus, however, the matter was not so straightforward. In his *De Jesu Christo servatore* (1578), he argued that Jesus of Nazareth (who was not a preexistent being) saved humanity by means of his teaching and obedient life to God's will, not by atoning for sins on the cross.²⁶⁶ The fundamental aim or *telos* of Jesus' ministry, then, was to persuade

²⁶⁴ See here Thomas Chubb, *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted* (London: Thomas Cox, 1738), 46: "the gospel of Jesus Christ is not any *particular private opinion* of any, or of all the writers of the history of his life and ministry; nor...of all those whom he sent out to publish his gospel to the world" (italics orig.).

²⁶⁵ Cf. Paul R. Eddy and James Beilby, "The Atonement: An Introduction," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 9-22.

²⁶⁶ Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 15. See also Jan Rohls, "Calvinism, Arminianism and Socinianism in the Netherlands until the Synod of Dort," in

his contemporaries to live righteous lives and to follow his moral example.²⁶⁷ The cross was simply a lived parable of his ethic and a pledge that God would also vindicate those who sacrifice all for the life of virtue. The death of Jesus, then, while not insignificant, is secondary to, and exemplary of, his teaching and ethical demand.²⁶⁸ Jesus dies a martyr for his own cause.

Socinus himself was not a historical critic. He grounded his proposals in an extreme form of biblicism—which he inherited from the Reformation²⁶⁹—and the submission of any and all theological tradition to “sound reason.” But Socinus’ contributions spurred widespread discussion and even merited an entire treatise from Grotius (*De satisfactione*) which defended Anselm’s doctrine of satisfaction.²⁷⁰ Grotius’ refutation functioned to bring the debate into sharper relief, and he even agreed in part with Socinus on a few issues.²⁷¹

Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe (eds. Martin Muslow and Jan Rohls; BSIH 134; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 3-48 at 23: “believing in Christ meant converting to Him out of free will in obedience to His commands and doing good works. Christ here loses His Divine nature, and sin its harshness.”

²⁶⁷ Cf. Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 235, on the Socinians’ influence of linking the teaching of Jesus with natural moral philosophy.

²⁶⁸ On the prevalence of Christ as teacher see James P. Martin, *The Last Judgment in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 96-99, 121; Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 43, 52-57; McGrath, *Making of Modern German Christology*, 13.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Klaus Scholder, *The Birth of Modern Critical Theology: Origins and Problems of Biblical Criticism in the Seventeenth Century* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990 [orig. 1966]), 33-38; Nicholas Keene, “‘A Two-Edged Sword’: Biblical Criticism and the New Testament Canon in Early Modern England,” in *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* (eds. Ariel Hessayon and Nicholas Keene; Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 94-115 at 94: “it is one of the defining paradoxes of early modern Protestantism that its elevation of the written record of divine revelation to totemic status stimulated an explosion of scholarship that would ultimately serve to forge a critical discipline that could be mimicked and manipulated to undermine the sacred text it had been designed to protect.”

²⁷⁰ Hugo Grotius, *A Defense of the Catholic Faith concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, Against Faustus Socinus* (trans. Frank Hugh Foster; Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1889 [orig.

Now whether by the influence of Socinianism or by some other means,²⁷² this emphasis on Jesus' ethical teaching, call for repentance, and obedient life—either to the exclusion or downplaying of his sacrificial death—finds in later years a number of adamant supporters.²⁷³ Many would find in the doctrine of atonement, especially the Calvinistic idea of penal substitution, a sorry model of divine violence. So too, it was common to think that such atonement theories fueled an antinomianism that encouraged Christians to confide in their own miraculous salvation and even be willing to kill over theological disagreement.²⁷⁴ Many

1617]). Grotius explains that, in Socinus' view, "the death of Christ persuades us to exercise that which is requisite to obtaining remission of sins; viz. faith, or, as Socinus himself explains it, the hope of obtaining eternal life" (44). The cross, then, furthers the preaching of repentance. See Debora Kuller Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 57-60.

²⁷¹ See Hans W. Bolm, "Grotius and Socinianism," in Muslow and Rohls, *Socinianism and Arminianism*, 121-47. Grotius himself faced, and faces, the charge of promoting Socinian principles intentionally or unintentionally. Cf. Fiammetta Palladini, "The Image of Christ in Grotius's *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*: Some Thoughts on Grotius's Socinianism," *Grotiana* 33 (2012): 58-69.

²⁷² A comment of Earl M. Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and its Antecedents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), 45 that still holds true: "To ascertain the extent to which Socinian thought was disseminated in England during the early years of the seventeenth century is not easy." Harnack famously, and perhaps overzealously, supposed a direct correlation between Socinus and the Enlightenment. See Adolph Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (3 vols.; 4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1910), 3:784-808. For a recent assessment, see Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 58-59.

²⁷³ A noteworthy example: Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* was criticized for having omitted the notion of the atonement, which Locke denied. However, he could only find two passages from the book in his defense, which (as Higgins-Biddle rightly notes, li) probably took him awhile to find. See the discussion in Archibald Campbell, *The Authenticity of the Gospel-History Justified: and the Truth of the Christian Revelation Demonstrated* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill, 1759), 1:xli-iii, xlv. Cf. comments on Isaac Newton in Stephen David Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, Socinianism and 'The One Supreme God'," in Muslow and Rohls, *Socinianism and Arminianism*, 241-98 at 263.

²⁷⁴ See discussion in Lawrence Jackson, *An Examination of a Book Intituled The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted, by Thomas Chubb* (London: s.n., 1739), 154-55, 193; Campbell, *The Authenticity of the Gospel-History*, xlv.

prominent critics further argued that linking sacrifice or blood-letting with forgiveness of sins was primitive and irrational.²⁷⁵ To find the truth of Christianity, it was necessary to scrape away such cultural residue from its origins to reveal a purer form: a rational, natural religion that teaches love of neighbor and a “practical” or simple faith.²⁷⁶

The upshot is that there developed in some circles a well established contrast between Jesus’ ethical teaching, on the one hand, and the notion of his saving or expiatory death, on the other.²⁷⁷ To be sure, some before had identified a similar tension in the Gospel tradition (even on the basis of many of the same texts),²⁷⁸ or had at least claimed that, for pedagogical reasons, Jesus’ ministry began with ethical teaching or the “moral law” and only later turned to issues of atonement.²⁷⁹ But these rationalists have more difficulty reconciling the two. Ironically, Luther

²⁷⁵ Cf. e.g. Charles Blount, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians, or, The Original of Idolatry Together with the Politick Institution of the Gentiles Sacrifices* (London: s.n., 1680), 14-15. It was customary to regard the Old Testament law as an accommodation to pagan religion, inherited from the Egyptians. See Katz, *God’s Last Words*, 146-47. On the influence of Grotius here see Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 83.

²⁷⁶ See Arthur Bury, *The Naked Gospel* (London: s.n., 1690), 28. See also James Murray, *The History of Religion: Particularly of the Principal Dominations of the Christians* (4 vols.; 2nd ed; London: C. Henderson, W. Nicoll, and J. Johnson, 1764 [orig. 1744]), 1:1. Cf. Harrison, “Religion” and the Religions, 45-49.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Helena Rosenblatt, “The Christian Enlightenment,” in Brown and Tackett, *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution*, 283-301 at 284-87.

²⁷⁸ Esp. Jesus’ preaching of repentance, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Rich Young Ruler.

²⁷⁹ Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349) and John Baconthorpe (1290-1347) proposed that the distinction between the OT and the NT explained the organization of the Gospel of Matthew. Cf. Christopher Ocker, “Scholastic Interpretation of the Bible,” in *The Medieval Through the Reformation Periods* (vol. 2 of *A History of Biblical Interpretation*; eds. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson; Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 254-91 at 269. Chrysostom suggested that Jesus abolished the law “gradually” (*paulatim*), though it is not clear how he worked this out, see *Hom. Jo.* 42.1 (PG 59:239-40). See also anonym., *Treatise of the Three Imposters* 3§13 in Anderson, *Problem of the Enlightenment*, 24 (Jesus at first defended the law, but “when he had made himself more famous, he overturned it almost totally”); Robert Miller, *The History of the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism, Wherein the*

and especially later Protestant Reformers may be in some ways responsible for the seemingly insurmountable nature of the divide, since a radical contrast between Law and Gospel made it natural for post-Reformation thinkers to lump ethics and atonement into contrary soteriological systems. In fact, in many Lutheran readings of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus preaches “Law” (works) to confound his hearers and drive them to trust in the grace of the “Gospel” (Christ’s work for them).²⁸⁰ The reading assumes the message of the Sermon on the Mount, if taken literally, is contrary to the message of the cross. It is not a coincidence that many freethinkers and Deists openly embraced what their opponents would call Pelagianism.²⁸¹

The significance of the tension for our purposes is simple: it became difficult for many later interpreters to think that Jesus’ ethics (including his calls for repentance) and his expiatory death could co-exist in the same rational system. Consider the following sentiments:

- Lord Herbert, who traced atonement theories to the influence of pagan priests, claimed that “the *Heathens* esteemed *Repentance* the Universal Atonement or Sacrament of Nature. But now the *Priest* began to obscure and involve it in multiplicity of dark *Rites* and *Ceremonies*; that they might make Men believe they

Christian Religion is Confirmed (2 vols.; 2nd ed; London: G. Strahan et al., 1726 [orig. 1723]), 1:404 (after baptism, Jesus “particularly explained the Moral Law, restoring it to its juft Authority over the Minds of Men”). Cf. Ochs, *Matthaeus Adversus Christianos*, 47.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Martin Luther’s comments on Matt 5:17 in *The Sermon on the Mount* (vol. 21 of *Luther’s Works*; ed. and trans. Jaroslav Pelikan; St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 67: “He does not discuss the great chief doctrine of faith here. Instead, He begins from the bottom by clarifying and commending the Law, which their Pharisees and scribes had completely obscured and distorted.” Hence the point of saying “your righteousness must exceed the Pharisees and the scribes” is to surprise the audience by telling them that even the most righteous people in Israel are going to hell (73). For a very brief discussion of the history of interpretation see Ulrich Luz, *Matthew: A Commentary* (trans. James E. Crouch; 3 vols.; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001-2007), 1:177-81.

²⁸¹ See Orr, *English Deism*, 35, 69. Note that C. W. F. Walch’s *History of Heresies* (1762-85) did not believe that Pelagianism should be considered a heresy. See Heinrich Holze, “Pelagianism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (eds. Erwin Fahlbusch, Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al.; 5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1999-2008), 4:124-126 at 126.

only had the Power and Authority of *Divine Mysteries*.”²⁸² He believed atonement theories encouraged antinomianism.²⁸³

- Charles Blount argued against the claim that one cannot be accepted by God apart from propitiation, by claiming that “Sorrow and a true Repentance” rather suffice, as “Reason dictates without Revelation.”²⁸⁴
- Thomas Chubb wrote an entire volume dedicated to “the great end, and the professed design of our Lord Jesus Christ’s coming into the world” as well as the “method Christ took, and the means he made use of in order to obtain that end.”²⁸⁵ That end and method were this: Jesus preached “certain *doctrinal propositions* founded upon the supposition of a *Deity*” in hopes to might bring about “action in men as might reform their vices and *rightly* direct and govern their *minds* and *lives*.”²⁸⁶ Jesus aimed not to point out “any *new way* to God’s favour” via, e.g., his atoning death. Rather, he taught “that good old way which always was.”²⁸⁷ Jesus’ reply to the Rich Young Ruler demonstrates, he claims, “the only ground of divine acceptance...is *keeping the commandments*.”²⁸⁸
- Thomas Morgan stressed that Judaism in Jesus’ time needed “a true national Repentance, a strict Regard to the moral Law” since “Reliance upon Sacrifices

²⁸² Edward Herbert of Cherbury, *The Ancient Religion of the Gentiles, and the Causes of their Errors Considered* (trans. William Lewis; London: John Nutt, 1705), 318 (*italics orig.*).

²⁸³ Lord Herbert, *Ancient Religion of the Gentiles*, 319 (“For what is it that a wicked Wretch will not perpetrate, who can make such an easy Atonement for his Sins?”). Essentially the same view appears in the work of Blount, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. At one point he associates sacrifice with “Fables and Fictions” proposed by pagan priests, not with the “Virtue and Piety” advanced by the philosophers (3). On Herbert’s influence on later thinkers in this regard see Orr, *English Deists*, 213. For similar views in Toland see Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 78-79, 101-02, 112, 118.

²⁸⁴ Charles Blount, *The Miscellaneous Works of Charles Blount* (London: s.n., 1695), 209-10.

²⁸⁵ Chubb, *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, iii.

²⁸⁶ Chubb, *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 16-17 (see also 102).

²⁸⁷ Chubb, *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 30 (see also 36).

²⁸⁸ Chubb, *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 27. Cf. Reventlow, *Authority of the Bible*, 387; Alister E. McGrath, “Soteriology,” in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (ed. Alister E. McGrath; Oxford; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 616-26 at 618; Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 199-200.

and priestly Absolutions was not found absolutely necessary to a national Restoration.”²⁸⁹ In fact, he argued that the reliance of the people on such supernatural absolutions, “without any Regard to their own moral Conduct”²⁹⁰ was precisely what the Old Testament prophets, and then Jesus, opposed. He stated the issue clearly: “I think, (it) is very strange, that Jesus Christ, or any other Lawgiver in the World, should suffer Death to make Satisfaction and Atonement for Disobedience to himself, or to nullify and destroy the Obligation of all his own Laws.”²⁹¹

- Philip Skelton, in his critique of Deism, summarizes a common view when he says: “Christianity, rightly understood, promises forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, only to a true repentance; and those men do but deceive themselves, who are led, by their own interpretations of Scripture, to depend on foreign or imputed merit... Christ is called our Saviour, because he set us an example, which if we follow, and gave us a law, or rule of action, which if we observe, we shall save ourselves.”²⁹²
- Joseph Priestley wrote that “the great object of the mission and death of Christ, was to give the fullest proof of a state of retribution, in order to supply the strongest motives to virtue; and the making an express regard to the doctrine of a resurrection to eternal life, the principle sanction of the laws of virtue, is an advantage peculiar to Christianity. By this particular advantage the gospel reforms the world, and *remission of sins is consequent on reformation*.”²⁹³

One can see in this tension, therefore, what will become at least one need for a Galilean crisis: a necessary shift or transition in theological orientation from Jesus preaching ethics to Jesus

²⁸⁹ Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher: in a Dialogue between Philalethes a Christian Deist, and Theophanes a Christian Jew* (London: s.n., 1737), 324.

²⁹⁰ Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 325.

²⁹¹ Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 159. Morgan believed that Paul did not support the idea of atonement, though he used language drawn from the Old Testament sacrificial system to accommodate his readers. See Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 54.

²⁹² Philip Skelton, *Deism Revealed, or, The Attack on Christianity Candidly Reviewed* (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: A. Millar, 1751 [orig. 1749]), 1:258.

²⁹³ Cited in George Payne, *Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, Election, the Atonement, Justification, and Regeneration* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1836), 162-64. See here also Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation: or, The Gospel, a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (London: s.n., 1730), 79.

preaching the saving effects of his death. For if one takes the general sentiment of the above lines, combined with the assumption that Jesus was a rational teacher, it is impossible to advocate both at the same time. These writers were themselves more interested in promoting the ethical dimension of Jesus' mission than working out a historical reconstruction of Christian origins.²⁹⁴ But their theological and philosophical reflections helped precipitate the later reconstructions—especially those that rely on shifts, breaks, or transitions in theological orientation—by reifying two distinct soteriological “trajectories.”²⁹⁵ We will revisit this in the next chapter when discussing Reimarus.

Three further observations can be drawn at this point. First, one can anticipate the dire consequences of rejection if Jesus' major aim was to teach and inspire. For should one read the story of Jesus in light of the metanarrative of creation, fall, and redemption, some rejection of Jesus' teaching along the way is not that critical.²⁹⁶ However, if one largely dispensed with that metanarrative, as did many of the freethinkers and certainly the Deists, and rather supposed that the plight to which Jesus addressed was general moral ineptitude, carnal political or nationalistic

²⁹⁴ If there were attempts they more often than not resembled the “cut and paste” method of Thomas Jefferson, who, interestingly enough, intentionally excluded many of the texts that bespeak eschatology and atonement. Cf. e.g. *Jefferson Bible*, 342-43. We will revisit this.

²⁹⁵ There are important connections here with the larger construction of “religion” in the West, as other scholars have detailed. Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), has traced the way that the understanding of the term “religion” shifted over time: what once described the cultivation of internal virtues became in the Enlightenment a descriptor for a propositional system of belief. Charles M. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), similarly described what he called the “intellectualization” and “excarantion” of Christianity into a “system of belief.” It is fitting, then, that in this period we find critics treating the teaching of Jesus as a propositional system which is self contained, definable, and suitable for comparison with other systems.

²⁹⁶ On this theological context for reading see Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, “Introduction and Overview,” in Hauser and Watson, *Medieval Through the Reformation Periods*, 1-84 at 6.

hopes, and an inability to understand the truth and practice virtue, then Jesus' success was, in some sense, dependent on the favorable response of the people. Thinkers within this paradigm could, of course, still find Jesus successful, as did Anglican priest John Heylyn who thought that John the Baptist and Jesus began preaching repentance because it was a *necessary* first-step to enter the kingdom: "near as it (the kingdom) is, it cannot be come at, till Repentance, which is the Entrance into the Legal State, has opened the Way to it."²⁹⁷ It is good news, then, to Heylyn's mind, that when Jesus sent out the twelve he did not instruct them to call for repentance, for this meant "Thofe to whom they were now fent, *had repented*, and had brought for them the proper Fruits of Repentance."²⁹⁸ But in this framework the outcome could also be the exact opposite, as Thomas Morgan concluded: "great Numbers of this Nation, at firft, adhered to Jefus, as their Mefſiah or national Deliverer, tho' he could not prevail with them to bring forth any Fruits of Repentance, *as a neceffary Qualification for fuch a Deliverance*."²⁹⁹ In this context, the theory of a Galilean crisis is near to hand.

Second, this focus on Jesus' ethical teaching carries with it wider implications concerning the nature of his audience. Since many of these thinkers in question despised all things Calvinistic (esp. here predestination and total depravity), as well as any hint of theological intolerance and/or intellectual coercion (which were patently thought *unethical*),³⁰⁰ we frequently

²⁹⁷ John Heylyn, *Theological Lectures at Westminster-Abbey: With an Interpretation of the Four Gospels* (London: s.n., 1749), 45.

²⁹⁸ Heylyn, *Theological Lectures*, 176 (my italics).

²⁹⁹ Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 325 (my italics).

³⁰⁰ Spurred by the religious wars following the Reformation. Cf. Orr, *English Deism*, 23-25; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols.; 3rd ed.; New York: Peter Smith, 1949), 1:75-76; Rosenblatt, "The Christian Enlightenment," in Brown and Tackett, *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution*, 285.

find the notion that Jesus set out *to persuade* his audience by appealing to common reason.³⁰¹

This is important because Jesus' ministry takes on a different dimension when one thusly respects the agency of his audience. Indeed, the possibility of rejection becomes inherent, for the audience has free will.³⁰² Jesus appears as an advocate for a truth that people may or may not choose to accept, and he must *respond* to their reactions.³⁰³ The results are open ended.

Lastly, the prioritization of free will and ethical teaching leads to a slightly different evaluation of the judgment material in the Gospels. This means, on the one hand, that critics downplay the announcement of judgment.³⁰⁴ To be sure, many thought judgment required by the proposition of a just God, despite wide-ranging attacks on the traditional doctrine of hell.³⁰⁵ But, in any case, judgment was not the focus of Jesus' teaching: it rather conformed to, and supplemented, his ethical demand. On the other hand, with the jettisoning of predestination (or at least that Jesus was privy to knowing who was "in" and who was "out"), it made little sense to

³⁰¹ Mortimer, *Reason and Religion*, 2, identifies a further aspect of Socinus' influence: "religion must be freely chosen if it were to be at all praiseworthy." Here see Hobbes, *English Works*, 3:490: "(Jesus) was sent to persuade the Jews to return to, and invite the Gentiles to receive, the kingdom of his Father." On "freethinking" see Lucci, *Scripture and Deism*, 137-48.

³⁰² Cf. Lord Herbert, *Ancient Religion of the Gentiles*, 259 (on free will); Chubb, *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 16-17 ("we shall find that he [Jesus] applies himself to men as *free beings* who have the direction of their own actions, and as such he lays before them and recommends to their most serious consideration" his teaching [italics orig.]). Cf. Jackson, *An Examination*, 129; Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 46; Reventlow, *Authority of the Bible*, 187, 299; Duane Olson, *Issues in Contemporary Christian Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 6-7.

³⁰³ Hence, e.g., Conyers Middleton, "Reflections on the Variations found in the Four Evangelists," in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Conyers Middleton* (2nd ed.; 5 vols.; London: R. Manby and H. S. Cox, 1755 [orig. 1752]), 2:352-53: Jesus began saying that he came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, and that he fulfilled the law and the prophets, only after his Jewish audience had showed their hesitancy to join his "new" religion.

³⁰⁴ Cf. Martin, *Last Judgment*, 97-99.

³⁰⁵ Cf. D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell; Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

think that Jesus announced judgment on people because they were chosen by God to be so damned. On the contrary, Jesus' judgment, like God's, must be duly deserved, for divine judgment is a *response* to human action.³⁰⁶ English cleric John Hales, though himself not a Deist, speaks their language when commenting on the Pharisees plans to kill Jesus in Matt 12:14:

Hitherto, as yet, this zeal and endeavours of the Pharisees to maintain the traditions of their elders, and the religion of their fathers, might seem somewhat excusable; and therefore Christ, adding miracle to miracle, did wait for their repentance and amendment; in the mean time preventing them by escapes, and concealing of himself, from doing him any violence or mischief, till such time as that, resisting the light and testimony of their own conscience (as some of them did very shortly after, as we shall see anon) they had more deservedly drawn upon themselves the guilt of that innocent blood.³⁰⁷

The assumption is that for Jesus' judgment to be just, it must be justly timed. Jonathan Edwards's Jesus may begin his ministry by announcing the damnation of particular people, for such is the nature of God's sovereign choice. But for others it must logically come later, simply by virtue of their system.³⁰⁸

All these discussions regarding the atonement, nature of Jesus' audience, and preaching of judgment are robustly theological or philosophical in nature. But they have historical implications that would be influential on later generations of scholars. As New Testament studies today still grapples with the form critical questions and assumptions from Dibelius' generation,

³⁰⁶ Though the expectation of future judgment is thought beneficial for correcting behavior in the present. Lord Herbert, *Ancient Religion of the Gentiles*, 4, included the following as the fifth principle of common religion: "*That Divine Goodness doth dispense Rewards and Punishments both in this Life, and after it*" (italics orig.). See Reventlow, *Authority of the Bible*, 385. Thomas Chubb, *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 112: "God does not approve or disapprove from capricious humour or arbitrary pleasure; but from the real and intrinsic valuableness or unworthiness of the object of such his approbation or dislike."

³⁰⁷ John Hales, *A Paraphrase on the Twelfth Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel* (vol. 1 of *The Works of the Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton*; London: J. Balfour; Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1765 [orig. 1677?]), 12.

³⁰⁸ The view is not unique to the Deists, to be sure. Reventlow, *Authority of the Bible*, 289: "even its (Deism) orthodox opponents shared a series of its fundamental presuppositions."

so too the intellectual culture of the Deists very much shaped early questers for Jesus—including Reimarus and Hase, to name a few—as will be shown in the following chapters.

3.4. PERIODIZATION AND BOOK CULTURE

I wish to make one final observation on the backdrop to the 19th-century crisis theory concerning an issue that is of great importance but has escaped detection by New Testament scholars. It is this: we find more frequently in the 16th century and beyond a tendency to break up the ministry of Jesus into “periods,” “parts,” or “sections.” The practice is not entirely new. As mentioned in the last chapter, Ludolph the Carthusian’s *Vita Christi* had two major sections that divided, significantly enough, at Peter’s confession.³⁰⁹ So too, Gerson’s *Monotessaron* broke the ministry of Jesus into three parts: before the baptism, from the baptism until Passover, and the final week.³¹⁰ But the practice becomes widespread and much more intentional.

The point for later Jesus study is obvious. Just as early questers had precedent to call a work a “Life of Jesus,” so too there was a well established tradition of dividing the ministry into “periods.” Thus, the notion of an early “period of success” and a later “period of rejection”—punctuated by a Galilean crisis—is merely an adaptation of the practice.

But a question arises at this point: what is the rationale of such periodizations that may help explain their influence on later Jesus study? I suggest two things: one conscious and interpretive, the other possibly unconscious and related to the physical form of the book in this period.

³⁰⁹ See above pp 44-45.

³¹⁰ Cf. Wunsch, *Evangelienharmonien im Reformationszeitalter*, 18.

In terms of the first, it appears that periodization has to do with interpretive strategies that relate to the content of the Gospels. The reason—a rather ironic one, in fact—is that the notion of periodizing comes straight from Gospel harmonies and paraphrases. That is, precisely from the works that later historians will claim worthless for reconstructing the Jesus of history.

Periodization must, of course, *assume* something of a chronology of the ministry that can be further divided into constituent parts. Thus periodization, for the harmonist, is one outcome of completed labor. In some cases, periodization functions as a compromise between a desire to harmonize and a recognition that it is impossible to know for certain the exact order of the chronology.³¹¹ Here, then, even if the precise order cannot be known, one can still identify the general “period” in which these particular events happened.³¹² This practice is still widespread, and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Periodization also relates to some of the interpretive strategies of the harmony tradition noted above. One is the attempt to identify a plot, or overarching logic, to the ministry. For some critics, to break up the ministry into smaller sections made evident the rationale of Jesus’ career and thus served the larger purpose of aiding the proper interpretation of the Gospels.³¹³ In fact, it is common to find critics complain that the division of the Gospels into chapters and verses—a relatively recent phenomenon—atomized and obscured the Gospels (and other parts of the

³¹¹ Cf. e.g. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 3:38, 61.

³¹² Cf. Ebrard, *The Gospel History*, 52-53.

³¹³ See Daniel Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 170-72 (on Gerson’s *Monotessaron*). Such subdividing was common in this period, especially of Bibles. See Jean-François Gilmont, “Protestant Reformations and Reading,” in *A History of Reading in the West* (eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier; trans. Lydia G. Cochrane; Amherst; Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 213-37 at 228.

Bible).³¹⁴ Hence Edward Wells wrote in his preface about the need to divide the harmony into “*Sections and Paragraphs, very different from the common Division, into Chapters,*” and he thus identified “*the several Parts of our Saviour’s Life.*”³¹⁵ It also became popular to have each year of Jesus’ ministry, or at least the time between significant festivals, constitute a “section” or “part” of the whole, which allowed the reader to identify patterns of activity.³¹⁶

Another interpretive advantage to periodization regards the identification of development or progress throughout the ministry. Some harmonists broke up the ministry not according to precise temporal markers but rather thematic or situational ones. Pilkington claimed “there were two Parts of the Ministry of *Christ*; one, more private, carried on at the same Time with that of *John the Baptist*; and the other more publick, after *John* was cast into Prison; when *Jesus* returned in the Power of the Spirit into *Galilee.*”³¹⁷ In Bengel’s *Gnomon*, he identified “two parts” (*in duas partes*) of the ministry: the first emphasizing Jesus’ identity as the Messiah, the second focusing on his suffering and death.³¹⁸ In his *Harmonie* (1737), Bengel identified smaller “divisions” (*Abtheilungen*) within these larger breakdowns of the ministry, and he called the

³¹⁴ Such as John Locke on Paul’s epistles in “An Essay for the Understanding of St Paul’s Epistles by Consulting St. Paul Himself,” in *John Locke: Writings on Religion* (ed. Victor Nuovo; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 51-66 at 54: the letters are “so chop’d and minc’d” that readers “lose very much of the strength and force of the Coherence.”

³¹⁵ Wells, *Understanding of the Holy Scriptures*, 1, 3 (*italics orig.*).

³¹⁶ E.g. already Jansen’s *Commentarii in suam Concordiam* has four parts, at least in the 1589 edition (I did not have access to the 1549 original): to the second Passover; to the third Passover; to the raising of Lazarus; to the Passion and Resurrection. Note also that Robert Wait divided his *Gospel-History* into “books,” each corresponding roughly with a year of ministry. On page layout and textual division as attempts to “express intention, orient reception, and constrain interpretation,” see Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (trans. Lydia G. Cochrane; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 28.

³¹⁷ Pilkington, *Evangelical History and Harmony*, lv (*italics orig.*).

³¹⁸ Bengel, *Gnomon*, 111 (on Matt 16:21).

“third division” (which is the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee), the “*Gnadiges Jahr des HERRN*.”³¹⁹ This description, which we have by now traced back to Epiphanius and found throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, will be picked up by Karl August Hase in his construction of two periods in the ministry.³²⁰

There were, to be sure, incredibly diverse conclusions regarding such periodization. Crell’s *Monotessaron* (1566) had five parts, as did the harmonies of Samuel Nelson, John Fleetwood, and Samuel Lieberkühn. Protais Henriet’s *Harmonia evangelica* (1660) had seven, with many further subdivisions. William Whiston, who was critical of the chronology of chpts. 4-14 in Matthew, thought this material alone could be grouped into “fifteen Branches or Periods, tho’ of very different size and quantity.”³²¹ And one could go on. The main thing to see here, however, is not consensus in details, but ubiquitous attempts. For by the time we get to Reimarus and the Quest of the historical Jesus, periodization was already a well established practice.

In addition to this interpretive and synthetic logic for the increase of periodization, there is another, I submit, that has to do not with the content on the page but rather the medium or form through which readers encountered it—that is, the layout of the book and the inclusion of a “table of contents.”

³¹⁹ John Bengel, *Richtige Harmonie der vier Evangelisten: da die Geschichten, Werke und Reden Jesu Christi unsers Herrn, in ihrer geziemenden natürlichen Ordnung* (3rd ed.; Tübingen: Christoph Heinrich Berger, 1766 [orig. 1737]), 5.

³²⁰ Hase, it should be noted, was well acquainted with earlier harmonies, including Bengel’s, which he viewed positively. See *Das Leben Jesu: ein Lehrbuch* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Leich, 1829), 17. He does not mention Bengel as an influence on his periodization, however.

³²¹ Whiston, *Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, 103.

Even before the Reformation period one finds tables of contents and other reading aids.³²² These reference devices served scholastic ends by making books easier to consult—for already by the end of the Middle Ages, university culture had produced reader-researchers who sought quick access to subsections of texts.³²³ The advent of the printing press in Europe in the 15th century hastened these developments and brought in a few new ones, including the title page.³²⁴ The printing press also made it easier to standardize pagination, which “opened up new possibilities for indexing and reference and the modern table of contents became possible.”³²⁵ In addition to such scholastic advantages, these developments had a commercial purpose: printers/publishers worked for a profit, so they wanted recognition for their work (e.g. title page) and needed to communicate quickly the general contents of a volume to potential buyers. In all, by the mid-16th century, the printed book had essentially the same form it has today.³²⁶

³²² Indexes, running titles, and tables of contents appear in the 13th century and became more and more common up to the advent of print in the 15th century. See Malcolm B. Parkes, “The Influence of the Concepts of Ordination and Compilation on the Development of the Book,” in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt* (ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 115-41 at 123; Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, “Backgrounds to Print,” in *Authentic Witnesses: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Their Manuscripts* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 449-68 at 453; Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity*, 8.

³²³ Cf. George R. Keiser, “Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in Some Late-Medieval English Texts,” in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A. I. Doyle* (ed. Richard Beadle and A. J. Piper; Aldershot: Scolar, 1995), 205-26 at 212; Jean-François Gilmont, *John Calvin and the Printed Book* (trans. Karin Maag; Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2005), x.

³²⁴ Cf. S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (rev. ed.; Bristol: Pelican Books, 1961), 28; Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800* (ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton; trans. David Gerard; London: NLB, 1976), 77-78.

³²⁵ Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (trans. Lydia G. Cochrane; Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 303.

³²⁶ Martin, *History and Power of Writing*, 308. Cf. Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010), 36.

Here is the upshot: if someone in the late 16th century wanted to write a harmony of the Gospels, or a paraphrase of the Life of Jesus, then they had to fit the increasingly standardized form of the book.³²⁷ And for many this meant including a table of contents and other textual divisions.³²⁸ Thus, whether the material in the harmony or paraphrase required it or not, authors started drawing lines to create chapters and sections. As evident above, it is clear that many did not regard this dividing process a totally arbitrary one. At least in conception and appearance, the table of contents merely reflects the content, and one could find rational reasons to divide here or there. But the reality may be slightly the reverse, especially for later thinkers: the form actually shapes the content to some degree. People start thinking about the life of Jesus in the same kind of outline-able and divisible way that a table of contents would suggest about the material that follows.³²⁹

Another point of evidence is a parallel to our case: the 13th and 14th-century spread of silent and private reading coincided with the introduction of subdivisions to earlier classical and medieval texts.³³⁰ Paul Saenger rightly notes that such modes of presentation, including chapter

³²⁷ Cf. Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, 80; Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, “*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* Revisited,” in *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers* (eds. Mark D. Jordan and Kent Emery, Jr.; Notre Dame; London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 113-34 at 124-28 (on influences on authors).

³²⁸ Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity*, 169, claims that by the 15th century such aids “had penetrated the fabric of book production” and “had become a common expectation and practice.”

³²⁹ Elizabeth Eisenstein traced similar influences on other disciplines in *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Though she may overstress the influence of print, she rightly notes that “Increasing familiarity with regularly numbered pages, punctuation marks, section breaks, running heads, indices, and so forth, helped to reorder the thought of *all* readers, whatever their profession or craft” (105-06, *italics orig.*).

³³⁰ See Martin, *History and Power of Writing*, 316-17 (humanists “imposed their numbering system and their rigid references on the great texts” and “Publishers of ancient texts gradually began to present works in numbered *capitula* even when the scheme somewhat

headings, tables, and subject lists, presupposed someone “who read only with his eyes.”³³¹ So too here: the dividing of someone’s life into periods or sections is a very literary-minded thing to do. The notion that one can outline a life and literally “see” the breaks and divisions in that life presupposes a tight correspondence between the biography of Jesus and the visual appearance of (some) late medieval manuscripts and especially printed books.³³² The point is significant for the crisis theory because such outlines not only reinforce the seeming linearity of narrative biography—and thus an apparent spatial distinction between “earlier” and “later” in that narrative—they also visually encourage sharp transitions *from* one period or section or chapter *to* another.

One final point. It is worth recalling that we know print allowed and encouraged great efforts in the 16th century *to systematize* ancient law codes, geography, scientific advancements, and much else.³³³ Our study, then, would be a case study of a much larger trend. It is also encouraging that New Testament scholars have elsewhere supposed that print culture impacted the study of Jesus and the Gospels in rather drastic ways. For example, it is common to hear the critique that the 20th-century form critics thought about history within the confines of the printed

fragmented the author’s thought”). Cf. Parkes, “Ordination and Compilation,” 124-26; Rouse and Rouse, “The Development of Research Tools in the Thirteenth Century,” *Authentic Witnesses*, 221-58 at 244-46.

³³¹ Paul Saenger, “Reading in the Later Middle Ages,” in Cavallo and Chartier, *A History of Reading in the West*, 120-48 at 134.

³³² It may be noteworthy in this regard that, by the 14th and 15th centuries, many authors used rubrics and other spatial devices to compose drafts of their works. See Richard Beadle, “English Autograph Writings of the Later Middle Ages: Some Preliminaries,” in *Gli autografi medievali: problemi paleografici e filologici* (eds. Paolo Chiesa, Lucia Pinelli, and Fondazione E. Franceschini; Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1994), 249-68 at 261-62.

³³³ On law and history in particular, Julian Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History* (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1963).

medium through which they encountered (e.g. “read”) it.³³⁴ That is, Dibelius and the rest supposed the development of the Gospel tradition akin to a series of literary editions which progressed, in linear fashion, from simple to complex and from short to long. It is natural to think that readers made similar assumptions during the explosion of book production in the late Middle Ages and especially at the introduction of print in the 15th and 16th centuries.³³⁵ In this case it is lived history, rather than tradition history, that is thought to resemble the orderly and systematic format of tables of contents.³³⁶

It should be stressed, in closing, that the objective of drawing attention to these material and formal influences is not to dismiss the whole attempt to periodize. The form critics were not entirely wrong, despite their unchecked assumptions. Moreover, and as mentioned above, there was periodization before the 14th and 15th centuries.³³⁷ The point, instead, is to show that there were material as well as intellectual influences on this practice, and the interplay between form and content should not be overlooked here.

³³⁴ Cf. e.g. Werner Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 1-43; James D. G. Dunn, “Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisioning the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition,” in *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2013), 41-79.

³³⁵ McArthur, *Quest through the Centuries*, 88-93, has argued that the format of parallel columns, aided by the development of the printing press, facilitated the boom of harmony production in the 16th century.

³³⁶ On the impact of print on writing “orderly” world history, see Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 102-03, 186-87, 200.

³³⁷ One should also not forget the concern for spatial arrangement in Origen’s *Hexapla* and also Eusebius’ *Chronicle*. Cf. Anthony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library at Caesarea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 103-05, 137-43, 195-200.

3.5. CONCLUSION

Our review of the three centuries of writing about Jesus and the Gospels before Reimarus reveals that many of the interpretive moves that will contribute to the construction of a Galilean crisis are already in use. Not only that, we find key developments in theological mindset and historical praxis that make possible the conclusions of the 18th and 19th centuries. A summary of our important conclusions:

- (i) Christian readers began to reflect more deeply on Jesus' mental state and the motivations for his actions. Such emphasis on Jesus' human nature opened the door for later "psychologization";
- (ii) many harmonies of the Gospels, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, had underlying biographical interests and sought to provide an orderly historical account of Jesus' ministry;
- (iii) many harmonies intentionally or unintentionally devised certain criteria to aid the process of re-organizing the Gospels in a rational manner, such as identifying the implied backstory of particular pericopae, and employing a kind of historical "common sense";
- (iv) some readers popularized the idea that Jesus had early success in the ministry and/or growing opposition throughout it;
- (v) freethinkers and Deists helped to solidify theological tensions between "ethics" and "atonement" that will be significant for later scholars;
- (vi) freethinkers and Deists also emphasized that Jesus sought to persuade an audience that could, by its own volition, accept or reject his instruction, and they advanced the idea that, for God's judgment to be just, it had to be a response to human action;
- (vii) harmonies and paraphrases started the process of breaking Jesus' life into "periods";
- (viii) the form of the book, in particular the introduction of subdivisions and a "table of contents," influenced the way that people thought about Jesus' career.

These points contribute to the prehistory of the Quest of the historical Jesus in general because, as mentioned in the Introduction, the notion of a Galilean crisis intersects a number of key issues that all Jesus scholars must address: the nature of the Gospels, the chronology of the ministry, the character of Jesus and his aims, the degree coherence and consistency in his message, the origin

of opposition to him, the impact of rejection. Thus, this chapter itself fills an important lacuna in New Testament scholarship.

With this prehistory in mind, we turn now to address research typically considered within the modern Quest of the historical Jesus. We will look first at the advent of the crisis theory proper in the 19th century (Chapter 4), and then what happens to the idea in the 20th and 21st (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 4.0:

THE GALILEAN CRISIS AND THE 19TH-CENTURY QUEST

Amidst all the precursors to the theory of a Galilean crisis identified in Part I, it remains true that we have yet to encounter the proposal itself. Something changes in the late 18th through the 19th centuries. In the hands of new critics, many of the assumptions, approaches, and interpretive moves detailed in Chapters 2 and 3 will aid the construction of the life of Jesus into different “periods” of varying success, often punctuated by a great moment (or moments) of disappointment. This particular reconfiguration of the Gospel tradition becomes more or less a blueprint of the many Lives of Jesus published from the 1860s to the early 20th century.

The first objective of this chapter is to investigate (in the first three sections) the appearance and development of the crisis idea in the 19th century. The discussion will begin by reassessing the significance of Herman Samuel Reimarus for the crisis theory and for later Jesus research in general. It will further identify the interpretive and historical backdrop of the many 19th-century works that featured some form of a Galilean crisis. And it will conclude with the “eschatological school” of Weiss and Schweitzer, suggesting that, contrary to common opinion, their work did not move far from the periodizations of earlier Lives.

The second objective is to begin, for the first time in this study, a more evaluative discussion of the problems and prospects of the crisis theory as it appeared in the 19th century. The hope is that, having examined reading habits, hermeneutical assumptions, and interpretive

moves here and in the last two chapters, we can start to assess the value of a Galilean crisis as a historical hypothesis. This form of inquiry will continue in Chapter 5.

4.1. REIMARUS AND STRATIFICATION

We have by this point multiple reasons to disagree with Albert Schweitzer's assessment that Reimarus marks the beginning of the Quest.³³⁸ But Reimarus was indeed significant for establishing the context of Karl Hase's 1829 *Leben Jesu* and many early forms of the crisis theory.

If one were to consider just the general contours of Reimarus' reconstruction of Jesus as a political revolutionary, its significance for our purposes would not be immediately evident. To be sure, there is no Galilean crisis here. There is no major development in Jesus' self consciousness. There is no notion of two stages in the ministry. In fact, the contrary is true: Reimarus was clear that the proclamation of an earthly, messianic kingdom constituted "the total intention of Jesus and all his teachings and deeds."³³⁹ One could also note that the negative reaction to Reimarus was quick, steep, and ultimately successful. The *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*³⁴⁰ published numerous critical responses to the book, and Johann Semler, one of the foremost Neologians, offered a 452 page rebuttal.³⁴¹

³³⁸ On the role of Reimarus in Schweitzer's "German narrative" in the *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, see Simon J. Gathercole, "The Critical and Dogmatic Agenda of Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*," *TynBul* 51 (2000): 261-83 at 264.

³³⁹ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Reimarus: Fragments* (ed. Charles H. Talbert; trans. Ralph S. Fraser; repr.; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985 [orig. 1779]), 126.

³⁴⁰ The *ADB* (1765- 1806) was a significant outlet for the German Enlightenment.

³⁴¹ For discussion see George Wesley Buchanan, "Introduction," in *The Goal of Jesus and His Disciples* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 1-34 at 15-24; Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 11-16; Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 174-77.

But the reconstruction is significant for our purposes, and for three reasons. First, despite the fact that Reimarus was well acquainted with the English Deists, and that many of his claims were not original but rather echoed and intensified their points,³⁴² he nevertheless offered a much more comprehensive historical account of Christian origins than those before him. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Deists were mostly content with isolated studies of miracles, eschatology, ethics, and so on. But Reimarus tried to put the pieces together in a historical framework.³⁴³ The aftereffect was this: later critics could not respond to Reimarus, or write critically about the historical Jesus, without addressing his ministry *as a whole*.³⁴⁴ One could say that Reimarus' impact on subsequent scholarship was not due to the originality of his ideas, but rather to the robustly historical manner in which he attempted to demonstrate them.

Second, and more importantly, surveys of the Quest have generally failed to recognize that, despite the general rejection of Reimarus' portrait, many of his insights continued to be

³⁴² Between 1745 and 1782, over twenty works by English Deists appeared in German. They were influential on Reimarus and Lessing. See Reventlow, "Das Arsenal," *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, 44-65; A. O. Doyson, "Theological Legacies of the Enlightenment: England and Germany," in *England and Germany: Studies in Theological Diplomacy* (ed. S. W. Sykes; Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1982), 45-62 at 55. See also McArthur, *Quest through the Centuries*, 104-05; Buchanan, "Introduction," in Buchanan, *Goal of Jesus and His Disciples*, 5-6; Henk J. De Jonge, "The Loss of Faith in the Historicity of the Gospels: Hermann S. Reimarus on John and the Synoptics," in *John and the Synoptics* (ed. Adelbert Denaux; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 409-21; Gathercole, "Critical and Dogmatic Agenda," 268; Birch, "The Road to Reimarus," 29-46.

³⁴³ So rightly Luigi Salvatorelli, "From Locke to Reitzenstein: The Historical Investigation of the Origins of Christianity," *HTR* 22 (1929): 263-369 at 274: "(Reimarus) broke away from the anti-historical method of the deists." See also Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems* (trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee; Nashville; New York: Abingdon, 1972), 90; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 14; Helen K. Bond, *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 8.

³⁴⁴ Cf. Buchanan, "Introduction," 20-21 (later critics tried "to deal with the topic [of Reimarus] by writing lives of Jesus").

influential. The most significant of these, I submit, has to do not with any one argument or motif, but rather something more fundamental to the structure of his historical reconstruction. In particular, Reimarus diagnosed and attempted to resolve “tensions”³⁴⁵ in the Gospels by a stratification technique. Earlier readers, as we have seen, sometimes pointed to Jesus’ changing pedagogy and the developing receptivity of his audience to explain seeming differences in theological perspective or in the temperaments of characters (as did Origen and John Chrysostom).³⁴⁶ But Reimarus would resolve a perceived tension by positing two different historical contexts for the contrary traditions. That is to say, Reimarus would periodize the gospel material in one of two stages: the life of Jesus, on the one hand, the life of the early church, on the other. The Deists had already paved the way here by often crediting the disciples of Jesus or other later followers with certain doctrines that, either by accident or contrivance, made their way back into the Gospels.³⁴⁷ But it was again Reimarus’ historically focused arguments on these matters that made such a significant impact on his contemporaries and subsequent study.

³⁴⁵ See here Marius Reiser, “Jesus Research from the Enlightenment until Today,” in *Gospel Images of Jesus Christ in Church Tradition and Biblical Scholarship* (eds. Christos Karakolis, Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, and Sviatoslav Rogalsky; WUNT 288; Tübingen: Mohr, 2012), 93-114 at 97: “The main *literary* criteria (for Reimarus) for the discernment of the true and the false are contradictions and incongruities in the sources, whether alleged or real” (*italics orig.*).

³⁴⁶ See pp 59-67 above.

³⁴⁷ Esp. noteworthy here is their common take on the notion of the Second Coming. For many, this was one of several “vulgar errors” typical of the disciples after Jesus’ death, so Collins, *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons*, 33. For a collection of views, see Tucker S. Ferda, “The Enlightenment, Deism, and the ‘Painful Prick’ of the Second Advent Expectation” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta GA, 21 Nov. 2015), 3-12.

The form of Reimarus' stratification is particularly significant for the crisis theory, for he modeled for others a structure of historical argumentation: the posing of different "periods" of activity for incongruous perspectives in the text. In fact, the parallel between Reimarus' stratification procedure and the later crisis theory includes content as well as form. For instance, Reimarus' reconstruction presumed to find a tension regarding Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God in the Gospels. The correlative of the idea that Jesus' kingdom was entirely political and this-worldly was the relegating of spiritual or otherworldly traditions (as he saw them) to the post-Easter period.³⁴⁸ Reimarus did largely the same thing with messianism. He thought that a "spiritual Messiah" who saves humankind from their sins is nowhere among the messianic hopes of Jesus' contemporaries,³⁴⁹ and it stands at odds with Jesus' ethical teachings and devotion to the Jewish Law.³⁵⁰ Thus, he ascribed this material to the church, and hence made a historical argument for the theological contrast between ethics and atonement that many of the Deists had written about (as discussed in Chapter 3). Concerning both points, then, it was Reimarus' knowledge of a conceptual tension that allowed him to identify the "remnants" of

³⁴⁸ Key texts and arguments for Reimarus' "political kingdom" included: (i) Mark 1:14-15, and 6:7-13, where Jesus never explained what he meant by "the kingdom of God," so he must have assumed the political expectations of his contemporaries (See *Fragments*, 65-66, 126-28, 136-38, 141); (ii) Matt 19:28 (the twelve on thrones); Luke 22:29 ("I bestow to you a kingdom"); Matt 8:11 (eating in the kingdom); Mark 10:30 (receive a hundredfold in this age). Cf. *Fragments*, 145. See already Peter Annet, *The Resurrection of Jesus Considered; In answer to the Tryal of the Witnesses* (London: the author, 1744), 13-16.

³⁴⁹ On this distinction see Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 207, who termed the Messiah in Judaism a "Temporal Prince," whereas Christians proclaimed "a Spiritual One."

³⁵⁰ Reimarus, *Fragments*, 101, 128-31, 136, etc. Cf. Kümmel, *Problems*, 89; Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 171. On Jesus upholding the Jewish law, see *Fragments*, 69-71, 100 (only by the proper practice of the Law could one participate in the kingdom), 101 ("Jesus in no way intended to abolish this Jewish religion and introduce a new one in its place"), 123 (Jesus and his disciples "were all full-fledged Jews"). The influence of the Deists here is patent.

their previous doctrine that had been left in the Gospel tradition “by accident.”³⁵¹ Not only is Reimarus’ approach here nearly identical to those historians who would later reconstruct a crisis in the ministry—where material from earlier and later “periods” had been inaccurately reorganized by the Evangelists—but these particular tensions over the kingdom and messianism would reappear in later debate.

Reimarus’ third significant legacy is closely related. Having periodized tensions in the tradition, he also tried to explain, historically, *how* such changes in theological orientation came about. And for him, significantly enough, the *failure* of Jesus’ initial political hopes was the hinge. The spiritual or non-political material arose from the disappointment of the worldly aspirations for the kingdom in Jerusalem. In his words:

...after Jesus’ death the apostles changed their previous doctrine of his teaching and deeds and only then for the first time ceased hoping in him as a temporal and powerful redeemer of the people of Israel.³⁵²

Further, and even more clearly:

Now, however, that their (the disciples’) hope is disappointed, in a few days they alter their entire doctrine and make of Jesus a suffering savior for all mankind... (W)e can think only that their first doctrine had been based on an intended temporal redemption of Israel and that they invented another doctrine concerning his intention, namely, of his becoming a suffering spiritual savior of men, only when their hopes had been disappointed after his death...³⁵³

In terms of the structure and logic of a historical argument, Reimarus’ proposal is what later critics would call a Galilean crisis. Some details differ in terms of the location (in Jerusalem),

³⁵¹ Reimarus, *Fragments*, 130. See here Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture: Theology and Historical-Critical Method from Spinoza to Käsemann* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 61.

³⁵² Reimarus, *Fragments*, 129.

³⁵³ Reimarus, *Fragments*, 134.

time (at the very end of his career), and agency (the disciples).³⁵⁴ But there is substantial agreement here between Reimarus' argument and the form and function of a Galilean crisis for a larger historical reconstruction. In both, the crisis of failure and disappointment serves as a transition or bridge between material otherwise thought incongruous.³⁵⁵ Given Reimarus' influence on later Jesus research, and how he shaped future debate with the very questions he posed of the texts (while his answers were less compelling), it will be no coincidence that his line of demarcation between Jesus and the church clearly parallels the division between the first and second "periods" of the ministry of Jesus himself in many later Lives. In this sense, it can be said that Reimarus' overall scheme may have been torn down by critique, but later researchers would continue to build on the same structure.

In light of our interests, then, the three significant legacies of Reimarus are these: his historicizing method called forth more comprehensive treatments of the life of Jesus; he sought out theological and thematic tensions in the Gospels and separated them into different historical contexts; and he employed failure or disappointment as a transitioning mechanism between perceived tensions in the tradition. Via each one Reimarus shaped later discussion, as we will now see.

³⁵⁴ Although the similarities are still striking: (i) a rift between the intentions of Jesus and the actual outcome of his ministry presupposes disappointment somewhere along the line (Reimarus thought Jesus went up to Jerusalem with hopes the people would "accept him and retain them as their expected messiah" [*Fragments*, 145]); (ii) the attitude of the crowds toward Jesus could evidence a turning point (*ibid.*, 148); (iii) some sayings of Jesus point to frustration and disillusionment (*ibid.*, 148-150 [the cry of dereliction]).

³⁵⁵ Reimarus, *Fragments*, 151 (italics mine): "the new system of a suffering spiritual savior, which no one had ever known or thought of before, was invented after the death of Jesus, and invented only *because the first hopes had failed.*"

4.2. HASE IN PROPER HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the interval between Reimarus and Hase's *Leben Jesu*, we find the crisis theory take shape in a number of forms. It emerges as critics respond to the *Fragments* controversy and the issues discussed above, as well as continue to develop those interpretive moves and reading patterns identified in Part I, such as assuming backstories behind pericopae, psychologizing Jesus, reorganizing the Gospels on the basis of "common sense," and so on. This interval shows that Hase's periodization is quite understandable and perhaps even expected given the nature of the debate in his day. Four facets of the discussion before Hase are necessary to recover here.

(i) Reimarus' radical periodization led to great debate about the consistency of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel tradition. And one common way to respond to Reimarus was to argue that the Gospels do not present contrary perspectives on the kingdom of God or messianism. So too, materials that appeared "too Jewish" or contrary to later Christian teaching were actually examples of Jesus "accommodating" to his hearers.³⁵⁶ Major intellectuals of the late 18th and early 19th centuries made this case in different ways. Semler tried to outflank Reimarus by incorporating more of the Gospel material into his portrait of Jesus than Reimarus did, arguing that the Sermon on the Mount demonstrates that his kingdom was in fact ethical and not political.³⁵⁷ Johann Herder (1744-1803) similarly read the teachings of Jesus through the lens

³⁵⁶ See Charles H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 17: "Diversity within Scripture was dealt with by separating out temporally conditioned ideas (*Zeitideen*) which represent an 'accommodation' to the thought of people in biblical times; what is left is the essence of biblical teaching, i.e., the timeless, rational truths of religion and morality." Calvin was important for popularizing the idea of divine accommodation. Cf. Arnold Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology: Analysis and Assessment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

³⁵⁷ Johann Semler, *Beantwortung der Fragmente eines Ungenannten, insbesondere vom Zweck Jesu und seiner Jünger* (Halle: s.n., 1779), 30. Cf. Chester Charlton McCown, *The Search for the Real Jesus: A Century of Historical Study* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), 29-31; Jean G. H. Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus et le Jésus de l'histoire; étude de la valeur*

of the Sermon on the Mount. He called it “the Magna Carta of this new reign of God” which went above and beyond the earthly and temporal fixations of Judaism.³⁵⁸ Herder also argued that Jesus himself was consistent in his ministry: his isolation in the desert and temptation allowed him “to think over the plan of his call” (um seinen Beruf zu überdenken) and “choose the plan of his life” (den Plan seines Lebens zu erwählen).³⁵⁹ Later, Reinhard, Gieseler, and von Ammon would all argue in various ways that Jesus assumed the language of Judaism to invest it with higher, spiritual significance.³⁶⁰ The means of his ministry were, consistently, “the gentile influence of convincing instruction.”³⁶¹

historique des vies de Jésus de langue française, non catholiques, d'Ernest Renan à Charles Guignebert (Paris: Prostant apud Messageries Évangéliques distributeur, 1947), 2.

³⁵⁸ Johann Herder, *Vom Erlöser der Menschen nach unsern 3 ersten Evangelien* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1796), 92. He claimed concerning the Sermon on the Mount that “if we had merely this collection of ethical sayings from the mouth of Christ, then it would be enough to let us have no doubt about what he called the kingdom of God...” (87). On the contrast between Jesus’ teachings and Judaism see Marcia Bunge, “The Restless Reader: Johann Gottfried Herder’s Interpretations of the New Testament” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1986), 168.

³⁵⁹ Herder, *Vom Erlöser der Menschen*, 71, 72.

³⁶⁰ See e.g. F. V. Reinhard, *Plan of the Founder of Christianity* (trans. Oliver A. Taylor from 5th German ed.; New York: G. & H. Carvill, 1831 [orig. 1781]), 9, 12 (after acquiring influence and authority he “declared in still plainer language, that the old order of things was soon to be destroyed”), 29 (Jesus began with “reference to the *expectations they entertained*” [italics orig.]); Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, *Text-Book of Ecclesiastical History* (trans. Francis Cunningham from 3rd German ed.; 3 vols; Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1836 [orig. 1824-35]), 1:41 (Jesus “began, indeed, only with the same summons to repentance with which John had appeared, but soon unfolded a far more comprehensive system, which, although addressed directly to the Jews, was in its nature intended for all mankind”); Christoph Friedrich von Ammon, *Die Fortbildung des Christenthums zur Weltreligion: eine Ansicht der höheren Dogmatik* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1833), 211 (“Diesen politisch-mystischen Schleier nahm Jesu allmählig”).

³⁶¹ Reinhard, *Plan of the Founder*, 8. Also: Jesus “chose the gentlest means possible” to achieve his plan (112); “Instruction...was the principal means of which he intended to avail himself in the accomplishment of his object” (113); Jesus “always appeared entirely free from every wild and furious passion” (226).

These arguments are relevant to the issue of a Galilean crisis because they reflect a wider debate around this time, spurred by Reimarus, about the consistency of Jesus' teaching and how the narrative shape of the Gospels informs one's understanding of his ministry. These (selectively) canonical and narrative-critical observations in many ways repeat what Origen and Chrysostom argued centuries earlier, but here aim at a new target. At core, they challenge Reimarus' periodization by seeking theological continuity in the texts. They show that the non-political material is not contrary to other aspects of the tradition, but rather could come from Jesus himself and reflect his own pedagogical strategy.

(ii) Others who rejected the entirety of Reimarus' reconstruction still agreed that the Gospels contain varied perspectives on the kingdom of God and the nature of messianism. This was partly due to the boom of studies on New Testament background in Second Temple Judaism,³⁶² since many concluded that any "kingdom" language in this context would certainly be understood "theocratically." That is, the prophets and others had hoped for a terrestrial kingdom in which God would be king over all the earth (e.g. Zech 14:9) with his rule established in Jerusalem (e.g. Isa 2:2-4).³⁶³ Moreover, many conceded that some of Jesus' sayings and deeds (many of which Reimarus himself had highlighted, as noted above) shared the same "theocratic" hope.³⁶⁴ Unlike Reimarus, however, these critics did not, by and large, surgically remove the apolitical material to the post-Easter period. They supposed, instead, there to be some

³⁶² Cf. e.g. Carl Keil, *Historia dogmatis de regno Messiae Christi* (Leipzig: s.n., 1781); Gottlob Storr, *De notione regni coelestis in N.T.* (Tübingen: Drucker, 1782); Carl Flatt, *De notione vocis βασιλεια των ουρανων* (Tübingen: Drucker, 1794).

³⁶³ Some of these descriptions resemble what modern scholars have called "restoration eschatology." Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 77-122.

³⁶⁴ Cf. J. C. Baum, *Versuch über das Nationalreich Christi* (trans. F. G. C. Rütz; Göttingen: Boßiegel, 1783) 206-07, see also 318-19, 349, 352.

development or change of approach during Jesus' own ministry as he responded to new circumstances.

Especially significant for this view is the work of W. M. L. de Wette, a scholar who is unfortunately ignored by most NT critics given his more notable contributions to OT studies. In his 1813 *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik*, de Wette argued that Jesus' teachings about the kingdom in the Gospels were "very fluctuating and ambiguous" (viel Schwankendes und Zweydeutiges),³⁶⁵ and he partly attributed the fact to interpolations from the early church (as did Reimarus). But he also argued that Jesus' teaching changed. Jesus *began* as a spiritual and moral teacher who clarified "his messianic agenda (Zweck)" in the Sermon on the Mount and "dismissed all worldly hopes."³⁶⁶ But because Jesus was unable to compel his contemporaries to share his new vision for the kingdom, he was forced to change strategies and momentarily take up the "material messianic hopes" of his followers.³⁶⁷ The decision ultimately led to his death, a martyr's death, for de Wette thought that there was no expectation that the Messiah would expiate the sins of the people.³⁶⁸ According to de Wette, then, the apparent tension in the kingdom tradition could be resolved by positing a Semler-like Jesus at first, and then a Reimarus-like Jesus (though as a guise) at the end. In all, he effectively responded to the debate

³⁶⁵ W. M. L. de Wette, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik in ihrer historischen Entwicklung dargestellt* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1813), 206.

³⁶⁶ de Wette, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik*, 198. Cf. Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 228.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (7th ed.; Philadelphia: Desilver, Thomas & Co., 1835 [orig. 1818]), 326.

³⁶⁸ See W. M. L. de Wette, *Commentatio de morte Jesu Christi expiatoria* (Berlin: [s.n.], 1813), 8. See also idem, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik*, 212. Cf. John W. Rogerson, *W.M.L. de Wette: Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism. An Intellectual Biography* (JSOTSS 126; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 95, 120; Thomas Albert Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 88-89.

of his day by saying that both Reimarus and his critics were right in part, and that the insights of each could be maintained if one rightly periodized the ministry of Jesus. His proposal was rhetorically forceful in this context because he preserved much of the tradition as historical, whereas Reimarus was thought cavalier in this respect.

(iii) Something else that appears with increasing frequency after Reimarus is the claim (or assumption) that the aim of the teaching of Jesus was the repentance and ethical restoration of his hearers. This notion has theological underpinnings in the work of the Deists and earlier thinkers, as explored in Chapter 3.3 (including the notion that Jesus' program was not one of coercion).³⁶⁹ Reimarus furthered it by linking Jesus' ethics to his theocratic goals. But the view becomes popular not just among those who agreed with Reimarus on the kingdom. The idea here is that Jesus' ethical teachings were not instructions on how to live once justified by the grace of the cross. Rather, the teachings, and more importantly the people's adherence to them, were *the means* by which Jesus was to redeem the people. Significant for this position was the common belief that the OT prophets had called Israel to restore themselves by internal, ethical renewal, rather than by trust in ceremonial (sacrificial) observance (again we see an ethics/atonement contrast).³⁷⁰ Jesus was thought a prophet-teacher in this line of tradition.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Cf. Reinhard, *Plan of the Founder*, 113 (Jesus "honored the freedom of the human mind").

³⁷⁰ Here see Heinrich E. G. Paulus, *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums* (2 vols.; Heidelberg: C. F. Winter, 1828), 1:40. Cf. Ronald E. Clements, *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 52-53; Robert R. Wilson, "The Prophetic Books," in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 212-25 at 215-17; Julia M. O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 12-15.

³⁷¹ See de Wette, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik*, 199 ("Es ist der geistig wiedergeborene Prophetismus, der ihn beseelt"). Cf. August Neander, *The Life of Jesus Christ in*

The corollary of the point is this: the cross becomes (both historically and theologically) either inconsequential to the larger aims of Jesus' ministry, or a "plan b" after the failure of his initial hope that the people respect his teaching. And many, in fact, drew both conclusions. Of those critics we have already mentioned, Gieseler wrote that the founding of the kingdom of God *required* "first *change of heart*, that they might be fitted to receive the spirit of God; and then *faith* in him as the Christ, that by trusting to the guidance of a higher spirit, they might be elevated to unrestrained communion with the Divinity."³⁷² De Wette similarly thought that the task of the Messiah was "probably thought of as a reconciliation through a real improvement and purification of the people."³⁷³ Von Ammon, taking the same logic a step further, wrote this:

To judge according to some very determined expressions, an act of self sacrifice for his religion did not lay in the original plans of Jesus (in dem ursprünglichen Plane Jesu). He wanted to bring about an encouraging religious education, founded on the mosaic Law...(though weakening the sacrificial cult)...and through these means to make his nation happy, without making a change in their political constitution. But this design failed (Dieser Entwurf scheiterte aber), partly because of the superstitions and the indolence of his people, partly because of their prevailing political messianic beliefs, and, finally, partly and admittedly more significantly, because of the stiff orthodoxy of the Pharisees and Scribes, who worked violently against his work.³⁷⁴

its Historical Connexion and Historical Development (trans. John McClintock and Charles E. Blumenthal from 4th German ed.; New York; Harper & Brothers, 1855 [orig. 1837]), 81-82.

³⁷² Gieseler, *Text-Book of Ecclesiastical History*, 1:42 (italics orig.). Cf. Herder, *Vom Erlöser der Menschen*, 34, 37, 53 (on John the Baptist).

³⁷³ de Wette, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik*, 182 ("wahrscheinlich dachte man sich eine Versöhnung durch wirkliche Besserung und Läuterung des Volkes"); cf. also 243-44.

³⁷⁴ Christoph Friedrich von Ammon, *Biblische Theologie* (2nd ed.; 3 vols.; Erlangen: Johann Jakob Palm, 1801 [orig. 1801]), 2:378-79.

Jesus, in other words, had hoped for one thing, but because the people failed to heed him and the leaders opposed him, he found himself on a cross instead.³⁷⁵ It is easy to see how this view of Jesus' ethical teaching could divide the ministry into two periods.

There is one further point to make at this juncture, as it concerns the approach to the study of Jesus at play here. These critics were trying to understand the career of Jesus by correlating the overarching aim(s) of his ministry with the means he took to achieve those ends. Since the Deists, many just took for granted that the outcome of Jesus' career (in the form of early Christian theology) was not his initial intention. Hence, essential to the recovery of the historical Jesus was the authentication of tradition, and the reconstruction of his ministry, around whatever in the Gospels appeared agreeable to Jesus' actual aims. The approach (which later critics will call the criterion of coherence) is significant because it naturally gathered Gospel traditions into different clusters according to the aim, or *telos*, that they seemed to presuppose. In turn, these different blocks of tradition could be placed into the pre- or post-Easter periods, or into different periods in the life of Jesus.

(iv) The interval between Reimarus and Hase also witnessed an increasing number of critics who furthered the common conception of Jesus' ministry (as we have seen) in terms of early success and growing opposition.³⁷⁶ In fact, by Hase's time the idea was so engrained that it could be *assumed* without much argument. It is not clear that the dissemination of this motif relates to the impact of Reimarus. But it is clear that the notion of early success/growing

³⁷⁵ For von Ammon, the cross was an attempt by Jesus "not to destroy, but to refine messianism" (den Messianismus...wo nicht vernichten, doch veredeln). See *Biblische Theologie*, 2:379.

³⁷⁶ William Burkitt, *Expository Notes, with Practical Observations upon the New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New Haven: Abel Morse, 1794), 20: "How affecting our Saviour's ministry was at first..." Such is, to him, commonsensical: early on "our people's affections are then warmest, and our own zeal perhaps is then greatest."

opposition was not created again and again *ex nihilo*; it was rather a hermeneutical convention that new scholars inherited from earlier ones. The prior two chapters have amply shown that the idea appeared as early as Epiphanius and reemerged with increasing frequency in harmonies and paraphrases of the Gospels after the Reformation.

One factor that contributed to the popularization of the schema was renewed wrestling with the episodic nature of the Gospels. As harmony writing began to fall out of style in the late 18th century,³⁷⁷ critics became increasingly skeptical about the reliability of the chronologies of the Gospels. This skepticism, however, did not lead researchers to despair regarding knowledge about the course of Jesus' life. They rather relied more heavily on their own abilities as historians (a confidence we will discuss later), and two other well-established interpretive approaches to the Gospels we have seen already: using generalizations to identify "commonsensical" patterns of activity, and inferring backstories for individual pericopae. The sentiment of Reinhard was common: "(the Evangelists) *never give a connected delineation of his plan*. Their accounts of the various events of his life are made up of single fragments, the importance and connexion of which, evidently they did not perceive. To form a clear and correct conception of the views of this original personage, we must combine them together and give the whole a laborious examination."³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ For claims about problems with Gospel harmonies, see Johann Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke* (ed. Bernhard Suphan, Carl Redlich, and Reinhold Steig; 33 vols.; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877-1913), 10:159; William Gilpin, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (2 vols.; 4th ed.; London: Cadel and Davies, 1811 [orig. 1790]), xxxvii-iii; Hermann Olshausen, *Commentary on the Gospels: Adapted Expressly for Preachers and Students* (trans. H. B. Creak; 4 vols.; 2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark; New York: J. Wiley, 1854 [orig. 1830]), 1:18. Cf. Jörg Frey, "Herder und die Evangelien," in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Aspekte seines Lebenswerkes* (eds. Martin Keßler and Volker Leppin; Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 92; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2005), 47-92 at 64-65.

³⁷⁸ Reinhard, *Plan of the Founder*, 7 (italics orig.).

Two influential studies of Jesus represent the prevalence of this early success/growing opposition motif. The first is Johann Jakob Hess' *Lebensgeschichte Jesu*, which appeared in 1781. Hess's work may be a "paraphrasing history,"³⁷⁹ but he clearly reorganized pericopae according to this early success/growing opposition schema. He offered the observation that the Evangelists "do not determine the degrees according to which his public reputation had grown, nor the point of time when it increased to the highest point, nor also how it gradually was undermined and last of all was overthrown. But they still list some clues of this increase and decrease."³⁸⁰ The details of his portrait confirm the generalization.³⁸¹ But he provided no further argument for it. He assumed the transitions; he failed to explain the transpositions. The notion of early success/growing opposition is something Hess learned from other works and used to guide his own conclusions.

A similar presumption underlies the conspiratorial Life of Jesus by Karl Venturini in 1802.³⁸² The fantastical plotline of this work, which Schweitzer and subsequent scholarship has enjoyed ridiculing, involved the Essenes using Jesus as their tool to cleanse their Jewish

³⁷⁹ See here Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 29.

³⁸⁰ Johann Jakob Hess, *Lebensgeschichte Jesu* (8th ed.; 3 vols; Zürich: Drell, Fußli and Co., 1822 [orig. 1781]), 1:410 (bestimmen zwar nicht die Grade, nach welchen sein öffentliches Ansehen gewachsen, noch den Zeitpunkt, wann es am höchsten gestiegen, noch auch, wie es nach und nach untergraben und zuletzt gestürzt worden; sie führen aber doch auf einige Spuren dieser Zu- und Abnahme).

³⁸¹ E.g. Hess, *Lebensgeschichte Jesu*, 1:553 (Jesus sent out his disciples because his popularity was "so groß"); 2:199-239 (the situation worsens, and Jesus concludes his Galilean ministry with the woes). For Hess, the major obstacle to Jesus' success was Jewish "patriotism" (235).

³⁸² Karl Heinrich Venturini, *Natürliche Geschichte des grossen Propheten von Nazareth* (2nd ed.; 4 vols.; Copenhagen: Schuboth, 1806 [orig. 1800-02]).

contemporaries from political messianism.³⁸³ En route Venturini exemplified many of the points noted above, including the view that Jesus' first hope was not to end up on a cross but to have the people hearken to his vision for the kingdom. But between the first aim and the rejection, Venturini claimed that Jesus had early success on account of his healings and his debates with Jewish leaders,³⁸⁴ even repeating the customary line that "In the first year of his public ministry he still found little opposition" (Im ersten Jahre seines öffentlichen Lebens fand er noch wenig Widerstand).³⁸⁵ He posited that Jesus' successes nourished the hope that he would in fact lead his nation "to the lofty goal," which "spread a happy and cheerful mood over his entire being" (verbreitete eine frohe und heitere Stimmung über sein ganzes Wesen).³⁸⁶ And he further asserted that soon after the second Passover, Jesus' hope "sank terribly" (schrecklich sinken) and his entire disposition changed with it.³⁸⁷

As with Hess, Venturini provided few arguments in support of his views on these points (or others for that matter). That is partly due to the melding of historical, biographical, and fictional genres in his *Life of Jesus*. But it is also due to the fact that he relies on convention here. Venturini borrowed the early success/growing opposition motif from other writers. On account of his influence (in the sense that he was much read), these biographical features would reappear

³⁸³ Karl Friedrich Bahr, *Ausführung des Plans und Zwecks Jesu. In Briefen an Wahrheit suchende Leser* (11 vols.; Berlin: August Mylius, 1784-1792) has a similar plotline. See Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 38-47.

³⁸⁴ Venturini, *Geschichte des grossen Propheten*, 2:125.

³⁸⁵ Venturini, *Geschichte des grossen Propheten*, 2:209.

³⁸⁶ Venturini, *Geschichte des grossen Propheten*, 2:233-34.

³⁸⁷ Venturini, *Geschichte des grossen Propheten*, 2:234. Cf. Herder, *Vom Erlöser der Menschen*, 108-09; de Wette, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik*, 204 (But he [Jesus] painfully saw himself disappointed in his hope" [Aber er sah sich schmerzlich in seiner Erwartung getäuscht]).

in subsequent study, especially the notion that rejection left its imprint on Jesus' "sorrowful attitude."³⁸⁸

It is in this state of affairs, then, that Karl Hase wrote his *Leben Jesu* in 1829. His reconstruction is best understood as an attempt to navigate these historical and interpretive issues and to respond to the debates of his day.

Given our work thus far, to summarize his proposal is to show its indebtedness to prior discussion.³⁸⁹ In brief: Hase proposed that at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he had hoped to be recognized as the Messiah and found the "theocratic" kingdom of God on earth. To accomplish this he knew that it was necessary first "to effect an ethical-religious rebirth of his people." But in the course of his ministry Jesus experienced rejection, which he interpreted as a divine rejection of any limitation of his ministry to Israel alone. So, in the later stages of his life, he aimed to found a spiritual kingdom open to all. Hase divided the public ministry of Jesus into two periods accordingly. Later editions called the first "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Das angenehme Jahr des Herrn) and the second "the year of conflict" (Das Jahr des Kampfes).

Hase's starting points, interpretive assumptions, and extensive points of contact with fellow critics made this reconstruction, in his view, "necessary to suppose." Hase in large part agreed with those before him who argued that the Jewish expectation for the kingdom in Jesus' time was "theocratic" in nature, and that the accompanying messianic hope was inherently this-

³⁸⁸ Schweitzer said of Venturini in *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 47: "all the fictitious Lives go back directly or indirectly to the type which he created. It is plagiarized more freely than any other Life of Jesus, although practically unknown." Cf. Gerald O'Collins, "On Reissuing Venturini," *Gregorianum* 75 (1994): 241-65.

³⁸⁹ Karl Hase, *Das Leben Jesu: ein Lehrbuch zunächst für akademische Vorlesungen* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Leich, 1829), esp. 85-88.

worldly and political.³⁹⁰ Thus, for Jesus to proclaim a kingdom, and to accept acclamation as the Messiah, must mean, as Reimarus had argued, that he confirmed those hopes in some sense. Hase even recalled many of the same texts and arguments that Reimarus did to prove the point.³⁹¹ Hase also identified a tension in Jesus' kingdom teaching and general outlook. He relegated the apolitical hope to a later period in the ministry after disappointment, and claimed that Jesus became less "cheerful" than at the commencement of his mission.³⁹² In sum, Hase essentially squeezed Reimarus' pre- and post-Easter periods together into one biography—a middle ground between the apologetical "accommodation theory" of the Neologians and the tendentious views of Reimarus.³⁹³

Another pillar of Hase's logic is the assumption, much explored by this point, that Jesus' ethical teaching conflicts with the theology of the cross. Thus, for Jesus to be internally consistent—which was a necessary and unquestioned item for most—he could not have taught both at the same time. Hase also thought that Jesus (as John the Baptist before him) stood in line with OT expectation in calling for Israel's national redemption by means of "reine Gottesverehrung."³⁹⁴ It was only the failure of the people to heed his call that led to the

³⁹⁰ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 46 (on the Jewish hope "als Theokratie").

³⁹¹ Cf. Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 85-87.

³⁹² Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 61: "In opposition to later sadness, this year seems full of cheerful hope that through an ethical rebirth of the nation the messianic reign would come also with the expressed blessings (Im Gegensatze der spätern Wehmuth erscheint dieses Jahr voll der heitern Hoffnung, dass durch eine sittliche Wiedergeburt der Nation das messianische Reich auch mit äussern Segnungen kommen werde)."

³⁹³ Günther Fuß, "Die Auffassung des Lebens Jesu bei dem Jenaer Kirchenhistoriker Karl von Hase" (PhD diss., University of Jena, 1955), 25-26 argues rightly that Hase took a "Mittelstellung" between other theological debates of his day as well.

³⁹⁴ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 47. See also 71 (Jesus' teaching contained "die Aufforderung zur sittlichen Erneuerung"), 85.

disappointment of this initial hope, and hence the need for Jesus to make theological sense of his impending death.³⁹⁵

Hase also wanted to provide “a purely scientific and scholarly presentation of the life of Jesus”³⁹⁶ with Gospel sources that, in his estimation, sometimes mix up the order of events.³⁹⁷ Although he did not entirely dispose of the Gospel chronologies,³⁹⁸ his solution to this problem was to divide the public ministry into periods and stratify the sayings and deeds accordingly.³⁹⁹ He considered this periodization “scientific” because, to his mind, it was data driven and therefore objective. He claimed that the life of Jesus “divides itself” into periods.⁴⁰⁰ The approach betrays Hase’s romantic and rationalistic *Zeitgeist*.⁴⁰¹ But many of his conclusions we have seen before. (a) He thought Jesus left Galilee disappointed by lack of success, which

³⁹⁵ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 111-13.

³⁹⁶ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, i. Critics have too readily adopted Hase’s own claim that his “scientific” presentation was unique in his time.

³⁹⁷ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 3-5.

³⁹⁸ Cf. Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 167-68. On his use of John 2:13, 6:4, and 13:1 as structuring devices, see Fuß, “Die Auffassung des Lebens Jesu,” 39. However, Hase spent more time reflecting explicitly on the Johannine question in his second edition.

³⁹⁹ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 16.

⁴⁰⁰ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 16. Hase claimed at one point that his periodization was something required on the basis of a “total perspective” on the life of Jesus. The pieces did not fit together any other way. Cf. Kümmel, *Problems*, 95, quotes Hase here: “Only if it could be demonstrated that a perfectly clear and self-contained concept of his whole being is possible without assuming this relationship and is appropriate to a historical development of his life, would I not only be refuted in this respect but also converted.”

⁴⁰¹ Also crucial here is the predilection for “system” in the 18th and 19th centuries: everything has its place and rationally coheres with the whole. See Rolf-Peter Horstmann, “The Unity of Reason and the Diversity of Life: The Idea of a System in Kant and in Nineteenth-Century Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century (1790-1870)* (eds. Allen W. Wood and Songsuk Susan Hahn; trans. Allen W. Wood; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 61-94. Cf. Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 169 (“Hase’s appeal was to an intrinsic rational cogency which he found in the Gospel stories as a whole”). Cf. Fuß, “Die Auffassung des Lebens Jesu,” 45-50.

occasioned his infamous woe over Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida.⁴⁰² (b) He identified a similar sense of disappointment in Luke 19:41-44 (“how long I have desired to gather you, but you did not desire it!”), and (c) he figured that Jesus’ sayings about judgment presuppose a more solemn and melancholic attitude than the “joyous” flair of his earlier teaching.⁴⁰³ (d) Moreover, given the form and content of Hase’s layout, it is no coincidence that he considered Gospel harmonies “the first step toward a history of Jesus,”⁴⁰⁴ and had particularly fond things to say of Bengel’s work.⁴⁰⁵ And finally, (e) Hase’s “scientific” presentation of the life of Jesus maintained the “orderly” appearance of select chapters and larger sections of chapters (by now common), which, I would submit, is related to the impact of book layout on New Testament study as discussed in Chapter 3.

In later editions Hase would revise some of the basic tenants of his theory in response to criticism.⁴⁰⁶ It is nonetheless true that we have here the clearest articulation to date of a Jesus

⁴⁰² Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 86.

⁴⁰³ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 86, 61.

⁴⁰⁴ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 19 (“als das erste Element einer Geschichte Jesu”). Cf. Fuß, “Auffassung des Lebens Jesu,” 26 (“Der Grundgedanke der Harmonie ist umfassend genug für das Ganze und zugleich prägend für das Einzelne seiner Darstellungen”).

⁴⁰⁵ Hase, *Leben Jesu*, 19.

⁴⁰⁶ Criticism of Hase’s first edition, especially by Lücke (1831) and Ullmann (1833), caused him to revise his periodization theory. See discussion in Fuß, “Auffassung des Lebens Jesu,” 29-30 (“Die Annahme eines zweifachen Planes Jesu wird von Hase nunmehr fallen gelassen”). Changes in the third edition (1840) were mostly devoted to issues raised by Strauss, and editions four (1854) and five (1865) fine tuned the third edition and addressed newly published literature (including Strauss’s *New Life* in 1864, as well as Keim and Weizsäcker). In any case, the crisis idea was not completely expunged, cf. Karl Hase, *Life of Jesus: A Manual for Academic Study* (trans. James Freeman Clarke from 4th German ed.; Boston: Walker, Wise, and Company, 1860), 182-83 (on departing from Galilee): “Jesus left Galilee without any hope of returning thither. He saw himself forsaken by his countrymen and threatened by Herod, who feared to find in a friend of the Baptist an avenger of his death...His last word concerning a country on which he had before pronounced the highest blessing was not a curse, but a word of pain and of dark foreboding.”

who began with certain aims that he then revised, with disappointment, in response to rejection. It is evident that the novelty of this reconstruction has little to do with Hase's unique "rationalism," or a sudden penchant to psychologize Jesus.⁴⁰⁷ It is misleading to say he "created" the notion of two periods in the ministry. Hase's portrait was a "solution" to much discussed interpretive and historical "problems" in the study of Jesus. His real contribution, we can conclude, was synthetic not analytic.

4.3. THE CRISIS THEORY IN LATER LIVES OF JESUS

After Hase, the three major shapers of 19th-century Jesus study—Schleiermacher, Strauss, and Baur—had little to say about any crisis in the ministry. Schleiermacher thought it impossible to "achieve a connected presentation of the life of Jesus" given the nature of the sources, and while he believed opposition grew throughout the ministry, he concluded that Jesus was consistent in his aims and message.⁴⁰⁸ Strauss reasoned that the periodization theory of Hase was "not

⁴⁰⁷ We must disagree, then, with Kümmel's assessment of Hase in *Problems*, 94: "With this hypothesis...he (Hase) ventured for the first time the conjecture that has since reappeared in the most varied forms: Namely, that a change took place in Jesus' way of thinking, and in this way he showed that Jesus as a historical person must be subjected as any other to psychological and genetic analysis." Contra also J. M. Robertson, *A History of Free Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (2 vols.; London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 1:133; Anderson, *Critical Quests of Jesus*, 18 (Hase "the first"); Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 19. All are just rephrasing Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 58-62. Cf. Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 6.

⁴⁰⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Life of Jesus* (ed. Jack C. Verheyden; trans. Maclean Gilmour; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975 [orig. 1864]), 43, 362 ("opposition gradually increased"), 390 (despite opposition, Jesus "continued in his ordinary way of life"). On Schleiermacher's view of historical development, see Craig M. Watts, "The Intention of Schleiermacher in *The Life of Jesus*," *Encounter* 46 (1985): 71-86 at 78-79. Schleiermacher's *Life* is a composite work, drafted from the notes of five students on lectures that he delivered in 1832.

inconceivable,” yet he remained characteristically skeptical.⁴⁰⁹ Baur was more interested in the role of the Gospels themselves (rather than the historical Jesus) in the development of early Christian theology.⁴¹⁰

But the writing of *Lives of Jesus* by no means ceased, and many would adopt the notion of a Galilean crisis with even more vigor. These biographies shared much with Hase including the periodization, the notion of early success/growing opposition, the contrast between ethics and atonement, among other things. But there were important differences too. As debate had shifted over time, the pressing theological tensions that helped spur Hase’s periodization had evolved. With Reimarus and the *Fragments* controversy now in the distant past, issues besides the “theocratic” nature of the kingdom would take the foreground. Moreover, some would pose a

⁴⁰⁹ Strauss thought that the researcher is “almost destitute” of knowledge about Jesus’ intellectual development, and he figured it was impossible to arrange the Gospel stories (“so frequently at variance with each other”) into a reliable chronology. See David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (trans. George Eliot; 4th ed.; London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1902 [orig. 1835-36]), 203, 279. Strauss’s later work softens a bit to the idea, however. Cf. *A New Life of Jesus* (trans. s.n.; 2 vols.; London; Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1865), 1:319. Here Strauss claims it is possible that Jesus at first desired to be a teaching messiah, but the more “among his own people he met with want of sympathy and with resistance, the more he saw the hatred of the upper ranks excited against him, the more occasion he had to adopt into the conception for the Messiah he had formed the peculiar characteristics in (Isaiah 50, 52, 53).” He also offered this reflection: “(Jesus must have) considered it possible gradually to advance the Jewish people so far by means of moral and religious teaching that they would extricate themselves more and more from the system of external ceremonies, purifications, and perhaps also sacrifices, withdraw (also from the religious leaders), and entrust themselves to the guidance of men whose minds had been educated in the spirit of genuine inward piety” (1:384-85).

⁴¹⁰ For Baur’s most explicit reflections on the historical Jesus see *The Church History of the First Three Centuries* (trans. Allan Menzies; 2 vols.; 3rd ed.; London; Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1878 [orig. 1853]), 1:22-43. Baur proposed that Jesus was fundamentally a teacher, and that his message, encapsulated in the Sermon on the Mount, was consistent throughout his career. He did think, however, that Jesus grew in the knowledge of his messiahship, and that before his execution it was “a possibility that he and the people might come to agree on the ground of the Messianic faith: the people might acknowledge him to be the person to whose advent the national expectations pointed” (1:41). But this is a minor feature of his portrait.

Galilean crisis not because historical inquiry required that conclusion, but simply because the view was popular and appeared in many other biographies. Borrowing was extensive.

Two important factors contributed to the heightened interest in writing Lives of Jesus from 1860 on, as well as to the prevalence of some Galilean crisis in many of them. The first is Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863), which generated further interest in moments of change and growth in Jesus' psychological development.⁴¹¹ Renan generalized that "during the first period of his career, it does not appear that Jesus met with any serious opposition,"⁴¹² and that Jesus had much success in his tranquil Galilean environment. He further claimed that, in light of opposition from the religious leaders, Jesus became more ascetic, began to preach judgment, and expected an imminent world catastrophe. In the later stages of his ministry, then, Jesus was "no longer the mild teacher who delivered the 'Sermon on the Mount'," but was rather more inflammatory and gloomy, pronouncing woes over the cities that rejected him.⁴¹³ As clear as the connections are with prior work, however, it is important to note that Renan's interest in such matters differed widely from that of Hase. Hase sought internal theological consistency, while Renan wanted to understand Jesus' psyche and character.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, Renan's *Vie* is a rather different genre than the work of Hase and others before him, as it blends historical insights with the form of a

⁴¹¹ On Renan's impact, see Étienne Trocmé, "Exégèse scientifique et idéologie: de l'école de Tubingue aux historiens français des origines chrétiennes," *NTS* 24 (1978): 447-62; Pals, *Victorian "Lives,"* 32-39; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 24-25; Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 237-38; Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 376, 382-84.

⁴¹² Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus* (trans. n.m.; New York: Modern Library, 1927 [orig. 1863]), 295.

⁴¹³ Renan, *Life of Jesus*, 297. Cf. Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 34-35, 49.

⁴¹⁴ See Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 42; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 25.

fictional novel. The upshot, for Renan, was a penchant for the dramatic. The notion that the main character progressed via struggles and disappointments made for a more interesting plotline.⁴¹⁵

In addition to Renan's *Vie*, we also cannot understand this period of the Quest apart from Heinrich Holtzmann's source criticism and his *Life of Jesus* that grew out of it. For earlier historians, source criticism was not a major component of Jesus research. Hence Hase's *Leben* hardly dealt with source critical questions or reflected on their significance for periodizing the ministry. Even Strauss's work, the most detailed and compelling of his time, gave such matters little attention.⁴¹⁶ But Holtzmann thought that his recovery of the earliest Gospel—a lost “A” source (commonly known as *Urmarkus*)—provided a more reliable starting point for tracing development in the ministry of Jesus.⁴¹⁷ Surveys of Jesus research have misrepresented the opinion of Holtzmann and many of his contemporaries on the reliability of the synoptic chronology. The truth is that few, in fact, adopted the Markan or Matthean frameworks *in toto*.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ On the important issue of genre in the Lives from this period, see Jennifer Stevens, *The Historical Jesus and the Literary Imagination, 1860-1920* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), esp. 24-29, 42 (Renan “manipulated the conventions of contemporary genres such as travel writing, the historical novel and realist fiction”).

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Salvatorelli, “From Locke to Reitzenstein,” 290; Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 187.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Shirley Jackson Case, “The Life of Jesus During the Last Quarter-Century,” *JR* 5 (1925): 561-75 at 568; idem, *Jesus Through the Centuries*, 307. It is noteworthy that Holtzmann's predecessor, Christian Hermann Weisse, also sought to discover the earliest source that could be used as a reliable basis for the life of Jesus, and he also thought Mark best approximated it. Cf. *Die evangelische Geschichte kritisch und philosophisch bearbeitet* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1838). While he did not think the whole of the Markan framework was historical, its outline was: a gradual increase of success, a growing confidence on the part of the disciples, and an increased tension with religious leaders. For a brief history of the issues, see David R. Law, *The Historical-Critical Method: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 120-23.

⁴¹⁸ Already Herder on the synoptic chronology, see *Sämmtliche Werke* (eds. Bernhard Suphan, Carl Redlich, and Reinhold Steig; 33 vols.; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877-1913), 19:222-24. Cf. e.g. Carl Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische*

But still Holtzmann's work contributed to the popularity of the crisis theory because his earliest and most reliable source divided the ministry into two sections: the first devoted to the preaching of the kingdom, the second to the predictions of suffering and death.⁴¹⁹ Here was further evidence that the ministry of Jesus had two periods of activity.⁴²⁰

In the 1860s and beyond, then, numerous German Lives of Jesus appeared that paid greater attention to source critical issues, showed interest in Jesus' psychological development, and contained some form of a Galilean crisis. A brief look at three significant works provides a good sample of the unity and diversity on these issues.

(i) Carl Weizsäcker published his *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte* in 1864. Though influenced by Baur and the Tübingen School, Weizsäcker agreed more with Holtzmann that the Synoptics follow a primitive narrative Gospel, *Urmarkus*, that best approximates canonical Mark. He also thought that the Synoptics used an early sayings collection (Papias' *logia*), and that the Gospel of John, written by a disciple of John the son of Zebedee, could provide reliable information about Jesus. Weizsäcker used primarily these sources to claim that Jesus' ministry underwent "eine kritische Wendung" around the time of

Geschichte: ihre Quellen und den Gang ihrer Entwicklung (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1901 [orig. 1864]), 439, 442 (the Gospels have "no cohesive narrative" and the "thread [continually] breaks"); Daniel Schenkel, *A Sketch of the Character of Jesus: A Biblical Essay* (trans. n.m. from 3rd German ed.; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1869 [orig. 1864]), 19; Willibald Beyschlag, *Das Leben Jesu* (2 vols; 3rd ed; Halle: Eugen Strien, 1893 [orig. 1885]), 1:256-57 (reconstructing the course of events is an "ungemein groß und mannigfalt" task).

⁴¹⁹ We recall here the same division in Ludolph's *Vita*.

⁴²⁰ For Holtzmann's own reconstruction of Jesus, see John Kloppenborg, "Holtzmann's Life of Jesus According to the 'A' Source: Part 2," *JSHJ* 4 (2006): 203-23. Holtzmann actually broke the development of Jesus into seven stages, but he thought the Caesarea Philippi episode especially significant. Cf. Salvatorelli, "From Locke to Reitzenstein," 303.

Peter's confession,⁴²¹ and he characterized "älterer" and "späteren" Galilean periods on that basis. He proposed that the events contained in John 6 were especially significant for this turning point: after the feeding of the five thousand, the crowds tried to make Jesus king and he ran away (6:15). The event initiated a stage of the ministry characterized by hiddenness and "inneren Entscheidung."⁴²² Hereafter Jesus no longer ministered in and around Capernaum or in synagogues.⁴²³ He instead addressed the people as a whole, went to pagan lands, and began to form his own separate community of followers (cf. e.g. John 6:66-67).⁴²⁴

(ii) Theodor Keim's three volume *Die Geschichte Jesu von Nazara* appeared in 1867-1872.⁴²⁵ Keim, unlike Holtzmann and Weizsäcker, confided more in Matthew than Mark (or *Urmarkus*), but he still was quite free to rearrange.⁴²⁶ He argued that Matthew's structure, though sometimes inaccurate,⁴²⁷ evidenced that Jesus' ministry had "two great stages," and he called upon Hase and Weizsäcker as important predecessors in this thought.⁴²⁸ Keim famously called the first period "der galiläischen Frühling" (the Galilean Spring) and the second the "die

⁴²¹ Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte*, 305.

⁴²² Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte*, 306, also 332.

⁴²³ Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte*, 395, 441.

⁴²⁴ Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte*, 397, 399-400, 440. Compare with his claim that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed to "the pious among the people generally" (336).

⁴²⁵ See Theodor Keim, *The History of Jesus of Nazara, Freely Investigated in its Connection with the National Life of Israel, and Related in Detail* (trans. Arthur Ransom; 6 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: Williams and Norgate, 1876-83).

⁴²⁶ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 1:71-72, 87, 138-41.

⁴²⁷ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 1:87: "In spite of the general preservation of the correct sequence of events, the exact chronology of the lesser details has been lost, both in the sayings and in the narratives..." Moreover: some facts are "artificially brought together" and "given either too early or too late" a date in the ministry. Cf. 3:5.

⁴²⁸ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 1:viii.

galiläischen Stürme” (the Galilean Storms).⁴²⁹ In the first Jesus was an idealistic teacher. Certain portions of the Sermon on the Mount—excluding the mention of the judgment of the Messiah, and the warnings about false prophets (which he placed in the Galilean Storms)—come from this earlier time, as do his calls for repentance, many healings, and his widespread success among the Galileans.⁴³⁰ Here Jesus was “harsh to no one”⁴³¹ and his message was gracious.⁴³² Keim concluded that, should the Evangelists put forward in their narratives any traditions that do not cohere with this character of “the Galilean Spring,” they have confused the correct historical order. It was for this reason that Keim was suspicious of the Gospel of John.⁴³³

Through a series of conflicts and struggles, a “startling and unexpected turning-point” in Jesus’ career led to the second period or “the Galilean Storms.”⁴³⁴ The Pharisees and other religious leaders became jealous of Jesus’ popularity and began to debate him publically.⁴³⁵ The

⁴²⁹ Keim also talked about a “third period,” which was the final week in Jerusalem. The language of a Galilean spring appeared also in Renan’s *Vie*.

⁴³⁰ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 3:16-35.

⁴³¹ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 3:10.

⁴³² Keim thought that the woes in Luke’s version of the Beatitudes did not square with the character of the Galilean Springtime. He wrote: “only the morose world-hating Ebionite of Luke’s source is able to break up the eight beatitudes into four blessings and four woes” (*History of Jesus of Nazara*, 3:75).

⁴³³ This is a key difference from Weizsäcker’s investigation, and also explains why John 6:66—which was crucial for Weizsäcker—plays little role in Keim’s work.

⁴³⁴ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:1: “Across the blue spring sky of Galilee, over the fresh green and the fragrant blossoms of the initial period of Jesus’ ministry, over the joyous mood of the people and the disciples, even over the successful work of the first and solitary labourer of the kingdom, there spread dark clouds, growing from scarcely perceptible specks to huge threatening masses...”

⁴³⁵ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:5-16. He thought it was not possible to know the exact order of the controversy stories. The best one can do is to say they came from “the later Galilean period generally” (4:16).

people of Galilee wavered in their enthusiasm, and Jesus, in response, delivered the Parable of the Sower and other parables (e.g. Parable of the Dragnet; Parable of the Marriage Feast; Parable of the Fig Tree; Parable of Demons Returning Sevenfold).⁴³⁶ It was in this period that Jesus warned of the consequences of not repenting (Matt 11:21; 12:41), talked about the necessity of breaking with family (Matt 10:37; Luke 14:26), said that he came to bring not peace but sword (Matt 10:34), and that the gate to life was narrow (Matt 7:13; Luke 13:23).⁴³⁷ He started talking about a “wicked and adulterous generation” and delivered a woe against Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida (Matt 11:21-24).⁴³⁸ Although there were glimmers of success in this period, the signs of the fall were clear, and Jesus became fearful of arrest and began to “flee” from Antipas throughout Galilee.⁴³⁹ Over time Jesus reckoned with the fact of rejection, and “resolved upon a march to Jerusalem, a struggle for life or death, an attempt to save his people from the internal and external enemy by the sacrifice of *his own* life.”⁴⁴⁰ Jesus believed that his death would “cancel” the liability of the people for rejecting him.⁴⁴¹

(iii) Another important work is the two volume *Leben Jesu* by Bernard Weiss (1882).⁴⁴² Weiss was convinced that “historical sequence of the events cannot certainly be established from

⁴³⁶ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:107-21, 131 (“it was...the purpose of Jesus to speak in parables *because* hitherto the people, seeing, had seen nothing” [italics orig.]).

⁴³⁷ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:78.

⁴³⁸ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:123. He comments here: “(these) last summonses to the kingdom of heaven, in the form of threats of exclusion from that kingdom, betray the ultimate aim of gaining the people.”

⁴³⁹ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:216, 226, 231, 235, etc.

⁴⁴⁰ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:257 (italics orig.).

⁴⁴¹ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 4:281.

⁴⁴² Bernard Weiss, *The Life of Christ* (trans. John Walter Hope; 3 vols; Clark’s Foreign Theological Library 14-16; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1883).

our Gospels,”⁴⁴³ partly because the earliest Gospel—a collection of sayings of Jesus in some narrative form (e.g. Papias’ *logia*)—did not accurately preserve the correct chronology,⁴⁴⁴ partly because each of the Synoptics also rearranges the other main narrative source in different ways,⁴⁴⁵ and partly because of faulty memory.⁴⁴⁶ Thus, the researcher had to rely on “a topical uniting of what is related when the attempt to establish the chronology of the individual portions proves futile.”⁴⁴⁷ This “topical uniting” involved the placing of various Gospel traditions into different periods in the ministry.

In the earliest period, Weiss thought that Jesus aimed to change the “politico-national conditions” by calling the people to share his ethical vision for the kingdom of God.⁴⁴⁸ The agenda took for granted that “Every prophetic promise was either expressly or tacitly connected with the condition of the nation’s conversion, and in the same way each and every result of His ministry was dependent on the position the nation took up towards Him.”⁴⁴⁹ Early

⁴⁴³ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 1:204.

⁴⁴⁴ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 1:35-36.

⁴⁴⁵ Hence he claimed “nothing can be more uncritical” than to have a Life of Jesus founded on Mark alone. Cf. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 1:48. On Matthew, see 1:59-60.

⁴⁴⁶ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 1:134: “memory is obliged to throw a bridge over the increasing intervals between the actual occurrence of the events or the time in which the continued intercourse with Jesus furnished the corrective of any inaccurate view of them, and the time when the communication of them was made.”

⁴⁴⁷ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 1:205. Weiss was found more convincing than Keim by W. Frantzen, *Die “Leben Jesu”-Bewegung seit Strauss: nach Uhlhorn, Luthardt, B. Weiss u.A.: Vortrag* (Dorpat: W. Frantzen, 1898), 22-23.

⁴⁴⁸ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 2:70. Weiss believed that Jesus had theocratic hopes but he left the “how” of accomplishing it to God. In this way he distanced himself from Reimarus and Hase.

⁴⁴⁹ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 2:69.

success fueled the hope that the ideal kingdom of the biblical prophets might be established.⁴⁵⁰ But rather soon Jesus encountered conflicts that led to the disappointment of those hopes. Such a “crisis” occurred over time and not all at once. For even as Jesus delivered the Parable of the Sower to explain the resistance to his conception of the kingdom, he did not thereby abandon his mission to the people at large. So too, Jesus staged a number of attempts to win the crowds to his cause, notably sending out his twelve disciples (a “last endeavour to secure, if possible, wider acceptance”⁴⁵¹), and feeding the five thousand. But Jesus failed. After the mass feeding in particular, Jesus knew that the people would not accept him as the Messiah he proclaimed to be.⁴⁵² This “turning-point of His life”⁴⁵³ led ultimately to the realization of a new *telos* for his ministry. His words became more sorrowful and pessimistic,⁴⁵⁴ and he began to see his death as “required for the salvation of the people.”⁴⁵⁵ Jesus had to atone for the sin of the people that hindered the consummation of God’s will.⁴⁵⁶

All three of these Lives contain treasures both old and new. It is not difficult to see why. On the one hand, they all arrive at slightly different perspectives on periodization because they have different source-critical assumptions. (But because they use primarily the synoptics, the difference is minimal.) They also are longer than most pre-1850 studies of Jesus and are written

⁴⁵⁰ E.g. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 2:75, 107, 191.

⁴⁵¹ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 2:310.

⁴⁵² Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 2:390.

⁴⁵³ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 2:394.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. e.g. Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 3:9-17 (e.g. Matt 12:42, Luke 11:33-6; 12:49).

⁴⁵⁵ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 3:69.

⁴⁵⁶ Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 3:74. Weiss claimed that, should Jesus had known early on that he would die, “It would only have paralyzed the moral power and joyful enthusiasm of His work” (3:67).

in continuous narrative (rather than short comments on individual pericopae, as in Hase),⁴⁵⁷ which allowed them to frame their Galilean crisis in more detail than their predecessors.⁴⁵⁸ On the other hand, their similarity with each other and with earlier works is due to extensive borrowing of ideas and kindred interpretive approaches. They believe that certain stories and even themes in the Gospels presuppose particular backstories.⁴⁵⁹ They argue on the basis of “common sense.”⁴⁶⁰ They identify and try to resolve tensions in the tradition, whether theological in nature or related to Jesus’ attitude and tone. The notion of an atoning death is set apart from the earlier teaching material.

We could consider numerous other German Lives from this period, but it would only repeat the impression provided by these three notable ones.⁴⁶¹ Luigi Salvatorelli was right to

⁴⁵⁷ Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 167.

⁴⁵⁸ Keim’s thoroughness won the approval of many. Cf. Frederic Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1889), 413 (“Keim’s work is one of the most complete, most careful, and most ingenious that has been written on the life of Jesus”); J. Estlin Carpenter, *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century: Eight Lectures* (New York; Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903), 282.

⁴⁵⁹ E.g. Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte*, 439, argues that “a change of circumstances had occurred” on the basis of “certain traits in the history itself (gewisse Züge in der Geschichte selbst).”

⁴⁶⁰ E.g. Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über die evangelische Geschichte*, 380 (on Jesus’ publicity); Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 1:87; 2:6-7; Weiss, *Life of Christ*, 1:193, 205.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. e.g. Schenkel, *Character of Jesus*; Beyschlag, *Leben Jesu*; Rudolf Otto, *Life and Ministry of Jesus: According to the Historical Critical Method, being a Course of Lectures* (trans. H. J. Whitby; Chicago: Open Court. 1908 [orig. 1901]); Oscar Holtzmann, *The Life of Jesus* (trans. J. T. Bealby and M. A. Canney; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1904 [orig. 1901]); Otto Schmiedel, *Die Hauptprobleme der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1906). Also worth mentioning is Wilhelm Bousset in his *Jesus* (ed. W. D. Morrison; trans. Janet Penrose Trevelyan; New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1906 [orig. 1904]), who is more skeptical than the others listed here but still offered this assessment: “We are no longer in a position to reconstruct an historical picture of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee according to its chronological development, for the narrative of our Gospels, with its prevailing timelessness and its frequent arrangement of the words and deeds of Jesus in a designedly material order, does not provide the means necessary for such a picture. Only a few scanty data can be established with certainty: that

generalize in this way: “between 1860 and 1890, notwithstanding the differences in views of literary criticism and in theological opinions, the representation of the internal and external history of Jesus which grew up in Germany was remarkably uniform.”⁴⁶²

Crisis-driven periodizations were popular not only in Germany, however. They appeared also in the English and French speaking worlds. Despite the more conservative inroads to critical biblical scholarship in Britain, the famous *Life of Christ* by Frederic Farrar (1875) adopted many features of the crisis idea in German Lives.⁴⁶³ His Jesus encountered growing opposition throughout his ministry, experienced a “marked crisis” of rejection after the feeding of the five thousand, and eventually left for Jerusalem with only words of woe for three Galilean cities.⁴⁶⁴

his success and the enthusiasm of the multitude steadily increased at first; that he gradually gathered round him a band of disciples and followers whose devotion was unbounded, but that then a gradual slackening of enthusiasm set in, and that towards the end of his Galilean ministry he saw himself surrounded by dangers, which he sought to avoid by a considerable journey towards the north; that his following grew less and less, and that he deliberately restricted himself to the instruction of his own disciples” (11-12).

⁴⁶² Salvatorelli, “From Locke to Reitzenstein,” 303. One review in 1872 wrote: “Lives of Jesus multiply with a rapidity that makes hopeless all freshness, and very much worth. They simply repeat one another like sermons.” See “The English Life of Jesus by Thomas Scott,” *British Quarterly Review* 56 (1872): 269-71 at 269. Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 200, was similarly bold: “The works of Renan, Strauss, Schenkel, Weizsäcker and Keim are in essence only different ways of carrying out a single ground-plan. To read them one after another is simply to be appalled at the stereotyped uniformity of the world of thought in which they move.” Cf. John Kloppenborg, “Holtzmann’s Life of Jesus According to the ‘A’ Source: Part 1,” *JSHJ* 4 (2006): 75-108 at 93.

⁴⁶³ On the reception of German biblical criticism in Britain, see Pals, *Victorian “Lives,”* 27-29. T & T Clark published translations of more conservative German works in their series “Biblical Cabinet” and “Foreign Theological Library.” On Renan’s impact in Britain, see *ibid.*, 38-39, 77. Hase’s was translated in 1860, Keim in 1873.

⁴⁶⁴ Frederic Farrar, *Life of Christ* (2 vols; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1875), 1:410-21; 2:99 (“And now the time has come for Him to set forth, and it must be in sorrow. He left, indeed, some faithful hearts behind Him; but how few! Galilee had rejected Him, as Judea had rejected Him”), 100 (on the Galilean woes: “With such thoughts in His heart, and such words on His lips, he started forth from the scene of His rejected ministry; and on all this land, and most of all on that region of it, the woe has fallen”).

Similar motifs abound in other British works, such as Richard Hanson's *Jesus of History* and Edward Clodd's *Jesus of Nazareth*.⁴⁶⁵ In the United States, Lyman Abbott claimed that Jesus' teaching "changed" after experiencing rejection, and he identified the mission of the twelve, the feeding of the five thousand, and the bread of life discourse as "the crisis" of the ministry.⁴⁶⁶ Another American critic, James Stalker, labeled the three years of ministry "the year of obscurity," "the year of public favor," and "the year of opposition," respectively, and he situated the attempt to make Jesus king (John 6:15) and the subsequent bread of life discourse as the key point of crisis in the ministry.⁴⁶⁷ Many French Lives of Jesus hummed a similar tune, such as that of Edmond Stapfer.⁴⁶⁸

As a testament to the popularity of these crisis motifs, it is worth noting that some of them even emerged from more conservative theological circles where one would expect that certain doctrinal commitments would mitigate such readings. It is true that theological developments in this century, such as kenotic Christology, made, for some, the very human Jesus

⁴⁶⁵ Richard Hanson, *Jesus of History* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1869), 179 ("the mission of Jesus, so far as Galilee is concerned, appears to have ended in failure"); Edward Clodd, *Jesus of Nazareth: Embracing a Sketch of Jewish History to the Time of His Birth* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1880), 232 ("Success rapidly attended his mission"); 297 ("the disappointment was keen, and gave a sternness to his words"); etc.

⁴⁶⁶ Lyman Abbott, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life and Teachings* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), 275, 284 ("A marked change also characterizes Christ's public instructions"), 302-17 (on "the crisis").

⁴⁶⁷ James Stalker, *The Life of Jesus Christ* (Chicago; New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1880), 104 (John 6:15 "an hour of sad and bitter shame"), 105 ("[Jesus himself] struck the fatal blow at His popularity").

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Edmond Stapfer, *Jésus-Christ, sa personne, son autorité, son oeuvre* (3 vols.; Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1896-98). See also Henri Didon, *Jésus Christ* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit and Cie, 1890).

of the crisis theory less threatening.⁴⁶⁹ But the extent to which the notions of change, disappointment, and rejection appear in these works from conservative groups is a remarkable feature of 19th-century religious history. A full discussion here would take us too far afield, but we can mention the works of Samuel Andrews,⁴⁷⁰ William Hanna,⁴⁷¹ John Geikie,⁴⁷² A.M. Fairbairn,⁴⁷³ and Alfred Edersheim⁴⁷⁴—none of which are remembered for pushing theological

⁴⁶⁹ See *God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology* (trans. and ed. Claude Welch; New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 8 (historical Jesus study [esp. Strauss] was a point of departure for the three major kenotic theologians of the 19th century: Thomasius, Dorner, Biedermann); Dawe, *Form of a Servant*, 87-91, 122. Cf. Thomas R. Thompson, “Nineteenth-Century Kenotic Christology: the Waxing, Waning, and Weighing of a Quest for a Coherent Orthodoxy,” in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: the Self-emptying of God* (ed. C. Stephen Evans; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74-111 at 76–77.

⁴⁷⁰ Samuel J. Andrews, *The Life of Our Lord Upon the Earth: Considered in its Historical, Chronological, and Geographical Relations* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1863), 119 (“the wish and will of God [was] that the Jews should receive His Son”), 341 (“Gradually the great crowds, that at first thronged around him, diminished; the novelty of His first appearance passed away; His calls to repentance were by most disregarded; His miracles, wonderful as they were, were not of a kind to satisfy the populace that He was the expected the Messiah; His enemies were active and unscrupulous in representing Him as a blasphemer...”), 342 (“Against those cities which He had often visited, and where He had wrought His mightiest works, He pronounced a fearful judgment. Thus in Galilee as in Judea, Jesus was despised and rejected of men”).

⁴⁷¹ William Hanna, *The Life of Christ* (3 vols.; New York: Hurst & Co., 1869), 1:152 (on growing opposition), 222 (“now, at the close of his second circuit through Galilee, after nearly a year’s labor bestowed upon that province, the collision came, and the whole manner of his speech and action towards them was changed” [discussing John 6:15 in context, which he calls “a marked crisis”]); 2:177-79 (on the curttness of Jesus’ expressions and his general attitude on his journey to Jerusalem), 182.

⁴⁷² John Cunningham Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ* (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1880), 2:42 (on “widening success” in Galilee), 91 (on breaking the Sabbath in John 5: “This was the turning point in the life of Jesus. Till now, He had enjoyed a measure of toleration and even of acceptance, but, henceforth, all was changed. Jerusalem was no longer safe for Him, and, even in Galilee, He was dogged by determined enmity. The shadow of the Cross darkened His whole future career”), 199 (“The false enthusiasm which had hitherto gathered the masses round Jesus was henceforth at an end, now that their worldly hopes of Him as the Messiah were exploded”).

⁴⁷³ A. M. Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ* (New York: D. Appleton, 1882), 183: In the “later teaching” of Jesus, “darkness deepened round the Hero’s path.” “His consciousness

boundaries. For the layperson, Thomas Taylor, Earl Taylor and Charles Morgan did not shy away from breaking the ministry of Jesus into periods of varying success in their devotional *Studies in the Life of Christ: A Year Long's Course of Thirty-Five Lessons, Providing a Daily Scheme for Personal Study*.⁴⁷⁵ Lastly, and perhaps most surprisingly, we must mention 19th-century Dispensationalism, beginning with John Nelson Darby (1800-82).⁴⁷⁶ The views of Darby and his followers would differ over particulars,⁴⁷⁷ but some forms of their system would claim that Jesus had offered the Kingdom of Heaven (a terrestrial kingdom to be established in Jerusalem) to "Israel" (e.g. his Jewish contemporaries), but the realization of this offer was contingent on Israel's obedience.⁴⁷⁸ Because Jesus was rejected, then, a new "dispensation" or period of

grew more exalted as His way grew more troubled," but he was "sadder." "Cities, once zealous, were cold; crowds, once arduous, were specious; enemies, once soft-spoken and fearful, were harsh and arrogant."

⁴⁷⁴ Alfred Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (2 vols.; 8th ed.; New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896 [orig. 1883]), 1:451 (on the "first" Galilean ministry), 2:25 (on John 6 and the "Great crisis in popular feeling"), 2:75-76.

⁴⁷⁵ Thomas Eddy Taylor, S. Earl Taylor and Charles Herbert Morgan, *Studies in the Life of Christ: A Year Long's Course of Thirty-Five Lessons, Providing a Daily Scheme for Personal Study. Adapted Also to Class-Work* (Boston; Chicago: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1901), 75-76 ("fame...had now so increased that great multitudes followed him"), 77 (Jesus had until this point "taken no steps toward a formal and open separation from Judaism"), 119 ("trouble was sure to follow his straightforward denunciation of sin").

⁴⁷⁶ The lines of communication between 19th-century Lives of Jesus and the Dispensational movement are not clear.

⁴⁷⁷ Defining "Dispensationalism" is notoriously difficult. Cf. Mark S. Sweetnam, "Defining Dispensationalism: A Cultural Studies Perspective," *JRH* 34 (2010): 191-212 at 194 (on the continuity from Darby to the mid 20th century). Regardless, the issue is not as important in our case, since our interest is not in the definition of groups but in shared interpretive patterns.

⁴⁷⁸ Here Darby himself: "Suppose for a moment that Christ had not been rejected, the kingdom would have been set up on earth." Cf. "Lectures on the Second Coming of Christ," in *The Collected Writings of J.N. Darby* (ed. William Kelly; 34 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: G.M. Morrish, n.d.), 11:313-512 at 431. See also George N. H. Peters (although himself not a dispensationalist, he agrees on many of these issues), *The Theocratic Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus, the Christ, as Covenanted in the New Testament* (3 vols; New York; London: Funk &

salvation history began which centered on the preaching of grace, a universal “Kingdom of God” for all people, and the activity of the church.⁴⁷⁹ The argument has its own peculiar internal logic, but many of the interpretive moves we have seen already: that Jesus’ earlier teaching, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, operates in a “works-righteousness” framework that stands opposed to the theology of the cross;⁴⁸⁰ that the prophetic hope of Israel was for the ethical renewal of the people; and that certain sayings of Jesus presuppose rejection and evince disappointment.⁴⁸¹

Wagnalls, 1884) 1:176, 276, 362. Cf. Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 27, 29, 32 (“National repentance was the condition on which the kingdom was to be instituted, but Israel did not repent—it rejected its King”); Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 67.

⁴⁷⁹ Representative here, though later, is Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (8 vols; Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 4:174 (“no record of any step toward the formation of the Church...until...His rejection as King is evident”), 178 (“As the King came nearer to His death, and the rejection became more evident, He made mention of that aspect of the rule of God in the individual heart which was to characterize the hitherto unannounced age of grace”).

⁴⁸⁰ In touch with these ideas in the early 20th century is Cyrus I. Scofield, *The New Testament* (vol. 2 of *The Scofield Bible Correspondence School*; Dallas: s.n., 1907), 180 (“the student will note that the Sermon on the Mount is pure law”); Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:175, 211-12; 5:97 (the Sermon on the Mount is “addressed to the Jew before the cross”). See also Peters, *Theocratic Kingdom*, 1:368 (he calls the cross Christ’s “second work”). Cf. Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 149-50.

⁴⁸¹ See J.R. Graves, *The Work of Christ in the Covenant of Redemption; Developed in Seven Dispensations* (Memphis: Baptist Book House, 1883), 272 (on the men of violence saying), 274 (“Not one of the cities or towns of Palestine, not even the village of Bethlehem, where he was born...or that of Nazareth, where he was brought up, nor Capernaum, in which his mightiest works were done, was converted by all his preaching and his miracles...they rejected him as an imposter, and even sought his life”); Scofield, *New Testament*, 181 (“our Lord points out how, really, His rejection is already apparent. That generation would have neither John the Baptist nor Himself [xi. 16-19]. The cities in which His mightiest works had been done had not been aroused to faith [xi. 20-24] and there remains for them a sorer judgment than that which had been sent upon Sodom...”). Cf. Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God as Set Forth in the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 157-58; Fuller, *Gospel and Law*, 158.

In all, therefore, key motifs of the crisis theory found international representation in the 19th and early 20th century, and not only among Bible scholars.

According to traditional surveys of the Quest we should stop at this point, since it is often thought that Albert Schweitzer and “the eschatological school” “marks the end of the old quest.”⁴⁸² But this study must agree with recent criticism that has challenged this standard typology,⁴⁸³ for it does not hold true in regard to the crisis idea. Without denying the significance of early 20th-century developments, it is evident that the discovery of Jewish eschatology in Jesus’ message did not fundamentally alter the way that the ministry of Jesus was understood. Instead, this eschatology functioned within and alongside many of those same crisis motifs that characterized earlier Lives.⁴⁸⁴

One aspect of truth in the conventional periodizations of the Quest is that Schweitzer did, indeed, try to distance himself from the “Liberal Lives” of Jesus, and this included their crisis theory on two levels.⁴⁸⁵ Schweitzer’s criticisms deserve mention at the outset because they help focus his views on the historical Jesus. The first is that Schweitzer opposed any separation of the “ethical” and “eschatological” in the Gospels. By Schweitzer’s time the relationship between ethics and eschatology had proved to be a particularly confounding theological tension in the

⁴⁸² Cf. Eddy and Beilby, “Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Introduction,” 9-54 at 20. See also W. Barnes Tatum, *In Quest of Jesus: A Guidebook* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 71; Telford, “Major Trends and Interpretive Issues,” 55-56.

⁴⁸³ Cf. Allison, “Secularizing Jesus,” *Resurrecting Jesus*, 1-26; Fernando Bermejo Rubio, “The Fiction of the ‘Three Quests’: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Historiographical Paradigm,” *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 211-53.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. e.g. Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Die wichtigsten Fragen im Leben Jesu* (Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1904), 64-69.

⁴⁸⁵ See Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus’ Messiahship and Passion* (trans. Walter Lowrie; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1970 [orig. 1901]), 59-69.

Gospels, and there were many different strategies for resolving it,⁴⁸⁶ one being some crisis theory which assigned each to a different period in the ministry.⁴⁸⁷ Schweitzer's own argument, of course, was that eschatology dominated the whole (hence "Konsequente Eschatologie"),⁴⁸⁸ and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount made good sense in—because they were subordinate to—his eschatological hope. The logic of the proposal relates directly to our discussion thus far. The real target of Schweitzer's criticism is the assumption that Jesus intended to establish the kingdom by having the people adopt his ethical teachings.⁴⁸⁹ For Schweitzer, the establishment of the kingdom was purely an act of God. Hence Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount did not aim to bring the kingdom but, as an *Interimsethik*, to anticipate the kind of righteous life that the kingdom would require.⁴⁹⁰ Thus, Schweitzer opposed one manner of periodizing the

⁴⁸⁶ For attempts to spiritualize the language or assign the eschatology to the early church, cf. e.g. Timothée Colani, *Jésus-Christ et les croyances messianiques de son temps* (Strasbourg: Truettel and Wurtz, 1864); Gustav Volkmar, *Jesus Nazarenus: und die erste christliche Zeit, mit den beiden ersten Erzählern* (Zürich: Caesar Schmidt, 1882); Wilhelm Bousset, *Jesu Predigt im ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892). For an attempt to reconcile them, see Shailer Matthews, *The Messianic Hope in the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905).

⁴⁸⁷ See Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 185-86; *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 85-86. Cf. Gösta Lundström, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus: A History of Interpretation from the Last Decades of the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day* (trans. Joan Bulman.; Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963 [orig. 1947]), 52-53, 59-60; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 42.

⁴⁸⁸ Here Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 238, nods to Weiss as instigating the third great "antithesis" of the 19th-century Quest: "either eschatological or non-eschatological!" Though he thought Weiss was wrong to consider only the preaching of Jesus.

⁴⁸⁹ Or, even more pointedly, against those who thought the ethical teachings of Jesus—and the "association" or "society" they helped foster—constituted the kingdom. Most influential here was Albrecht Ritschl, *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* (3 vols.; Bonn: A. Marcus, 1870-74). Cf. Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 14-16; Lundström, *Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 3-9.

⁴⁹⁰ See Schweitzer, *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 95-99.

ministry by resolving the theological tension at the root of it. If thoroughgoing eschatology can explain the whole, including the Sermon on the Mount, then there is no need to posit any change of mind on this fundamental matter.⁴⁹¹

The second criticism was closely related to the first. Because Jesus' kingdom message was fundamentally about divine not human action, Schweitzer also challenged the idea that Jesus' mindset changed in accordance with his reception among the people.⁴⁹² In particular, he rejected the popular notion that early success and growing opposition shaped Jesus' understanding of his mission.⁴⁹³ Not only did he argue that evidence for early success and growing opposition is lacking,⁴⁹⁴ he further contended that Jesus was unaffected by such matters, given his eschatological worldview.⁴⁹⁵ For Schweitzer, Jesus' "dogma" (e.g. eschatological perspective) was not shaped by external circumstances; it was actually his "dogma" that drove

⁴⁹¹ The rationale is similar to Schweitzer's defense of Jesus' predictions of coming suffering in Matt 10 in *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 361: "the Lives of Jesus...can(not) make anything of it. They either strike it out, or transfer it to the last 'gloomy epoch' of the life of Jesus, regard it as an unintelligible anticipation, or put it down to the account of 'primitive theology,' which serves as a scrap-heap for everything for which they cannot find a place in the 'historical life of Jesus.'" See *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 89, 92-93, 115.

⁴⁹² E.g. Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 358 on the rejection at Nazareth: "(it) makes no difference whatever to the nearness of the coming of the kingdom." Cf. *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 116.

⁴⁹³ See Walter P. Weaver, *Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century: 1900-50* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 28.

⁴⁹⁴ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 359 ("theologians of the modern historical school invented the theory of growing opposition and waning support"); idem, *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 64-69, 81. Cf. Weaver, *Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century*, 28; Dawes, *Historical Jesus Question*, 124.

⁴⁹⁵ Instructive is Schweitzer's reading of the so-called "Parables of Growth." For Schweitzer, these were not reflections on Jesus' growing success, but rather pointed to the sudden and mysterious power of God. Cf. *Mystery of the Kingdom*, 106-10.

his actions and his responses to unforeseen situations.⁴⁹⁶ Interestingly enough, Schweitzer's 2nd German edition of the *Quest* in 1913 would deemphasize the "unconditioned" nature of Jesus' eschatology, since after finishing an intense study of Jesus' mental health from 1905-1912, Schweitzer thought it important, for Jesus to be considered sane, that "the changes in Jesus' ideas (and behavior) are always conditioned by outward circumstances and represent completely logical consequences in harmony with the total picture."⁴⁹⁷

Despite these clear points of difference from earlier Lives, however, Schweitzer adopted key aspects of the earlier crisis theory in his own portrait. One is that Schweitzer perpetuated the common distinction between Jesus' ethical teaching and the material relating to his death. For Schweitzer both the teaching and the resolve to die were subject to imminent eschatological hope, and hence were not in conflict conceptually. But he still focused the activity of Jesus around each consecutively, and divided them by a moment of crisis in the ministry. Schweitzer's Jesus, famously, falsely predicted that the end would come before his disciples returned from

⁴⁹⁶ Note here the contrast with Keim, who wrote in an important article that influenced Holtzmann, Schenkel, and many others in the late 19th century: "(Jesus') knowledge of the world...came not through intuition but rather through perception and, indeed, through an entirely uncustomary acuity in meticulous, critical, and ironic observation of reality." Cf. Theodor Keim, *Die menschliche Entwicklung Jesu Christi: akademische Antrittsrede am 17. Dezember 1860* (Zürich: Orell, Füssli, 1861), 13.

⁴⁹⁷ Albert Schweitzer, *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus, Exposition and Criticism* (trans. Charles R. Joy; Boston: Beacon Press, 1948 [orig. 1913]), 64 note 14. I owe the point to the excellent study by Carl R. Holladay, "Schweitzer's Jesus: Crushed on the Wheel of the World?" *EC* 4 (2012): 435-67. The 2nd ed. of the *Quest* was considerably longer than the 1st, and Schweitzer would omit his famous depiction of Jesus being "crushed on the wheel of the world." He would also add a new discussion of Jesus' Davidic ancestry, which showed that he was not insane for claiming to be the Messiah. Further, he added a longer discussion of Jewish eschatology, which, according to James Carleton Paget, "Albert Schweitzer's Second Edition of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*," *BJRL* 9 (2010): 3-38 at 18, portrayed Jesus as "a distinctive and considerable thinker." Holladay also notes that the 2nd ed. changes make Jesus appear "healthy and normal, given his first-century setting" (444).

preaching in the land of Israel (Matt 10:23).⁴⁹⁸ This failure and disappointment made Jesus *change* his strategy and plan his journey to Jerusalem to die so that the kingdom could come. Thus, Schweitzer positioned the “interim ethics” before the Matt 10:23 crisis and the traditions about the death of Jesus and its soteriological significance after it. Such a reconstruction, and particularly its underlying perspective that disappointment made clear the necessity of death, is a conventional periodization that Schweitzer learned from others and tweaked to fit his own purposes.

There is also continuity between Schweitzer and earlier Lives in terms of his approach to reconstructing the Jesus of history. Schweitzer may have decried the notion that Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom “developed” throughout his ministry, but he himself was very much interested in finding (what he called) “the inner connexion” among pericopae.⁴⁹⁹ Schweitzer assumed, alongside his colleagues, that the Gospels were not always accurate chronologically. But he shared their confidence that, by inferring the backstories behind particular pericopae, and by paying close attention to the logic and assumptions of Jesus’ sayings, one could provide a rough sketch of how things went.⁵⁰⁰ In finding such “inner connexion,” Schweitzer routinely

⁴⁹⁸ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 359: “To this extent modern theology is justified when it distinguishes two periods in the life of Jesus; an earlier, in which He is surrounded by the people, and a later in which He is ‘deserted’ by them, and travels about with the Twelve only.” Schweitzer differs from other critics in terms of the cause of this transition (Jesus’ own eschatological prediction vs. lack of success among the people).

⁴⁹⁹ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 7, 88, etc. Cf. Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, *Jesus and the Historians* (WUNT 269; Tübingen: Mohr, 2010), 59-60; Cees den Heyer, “Historic Jesuses,” in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2:1079-1101 at 1081-82.

⁵⁰⁰ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 7: “There is really no other means of arriving at the order and inner connexion of the facts of the life of Jesus than the making and testing of hypotheses. If the tradition preserved by the Synoptists really includes all that happened during the time that Jesus was with his disciples, the attempt to discover the connexion must succeed sooner or later.” Further: “We only begin to understand these (individual events)

“psychologized” the Gospels in quite the same manner as the liberal questers, at times reaching the same conclusions.⁵⁰¹ After all, Schweitzer’s most famous psychologization—the disappointment caused by the failure of the Matt 10:23 prediction—was not an unprecedented interpretation.⁵⁰² Schweitzer even gave “liberal criticism” credit for having used “natural psychology” on the tradition, which he thought prepared for his own “eschatological psychology.”⁵⁰³ The difference is semantic.

Continuity with the Lives of Jesus is even clearer in the work of Schweitzer’s predecessor, Johannes Weiss (1892). Weiss argued that Jesus initially expected the kingdom to come soon, but then experienced “a delay.” He wrote: “we may infer indirectly that at some earlier period in his ministry Jesus believed the coming of the Kingdom closer than turned out later to be the case.”⁵⁰⁴ Moreover, he argued that Jesus’ belief that the end had been postponed arose from “the pressure of certain circumstances.”⁵⁰⁵ In particular, he noted that Jesus found

historically when we can mentally place them in an intelligible connexion...” (7). Cf. James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus and Other Essays* (Rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983 [orig. 1959]), 34, 194.

⁵⁰¹ This is a frequent criticism of Schweitzer. Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *The Problem of the Historical Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 5-6; Weaver, *Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century*, 30 (“Schweitzer knew the mind of Jesus, even at the point of death”).

⁵⁰² Cf. already d’Holbach, *Ecce Homo*, 176. Note also that Hanson, *Jesus of History*, argued that much success inspired Jesus to send out his disciples to evangelize, promising that the Messiah would come before their return (Matt 10:23). But when this failed to happen, his popularity began to fade. For a selective survey of some other 19th-century readings of Matt 10:23 that identified some kind of imminence here, see Martin Künzi, *Das Naherwartungslogion Matthäus 10,23: Geschichte seiner Auslegung* (BGBE 9; Tübingen: Mohr, 1970), 89-97.

⁵⁰³ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 222.

⁵⁰⁴ Johannes Weiss, *Jesus’ Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (trans. R. H. Hiers and D. L. Holland; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971 [orig. 1892]), 85. On Weiss see Perrin, *Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 17-23.

⁵⁰⁵ Weiss, *Proclamation of the Kingdom*, 86.

little fruit of repentance, that the Galileans thought Jesus was a revolutionary Messiah (e.g. misunderstanding), and that the religious leaders rejected and opposed him. Thus, for Weiss, Jesus adjusted his outlook on account of growing opposition, and decided to go to Jerusalem to remove “the guilt of the people” which had postponed the coming of the kingdom.⁵⁰⁶ To be clear: Weiss’ Jesus, like Schweitzer’s, had an eschatological outlook throughout the entirety of the ministry. His Jesus did not begin with an ethical, Ritschlian kingdom, and then move to eschatology when matters became difficult.⁵⁰⁷ But it is nonetheless true that, for Weiss, external circumstances—and precisely those circumstances that earlier Lives had highlighted—caused an adaptation in Jesus’ eschatological scenario, and he grouped together and separated diachronically certain sayings and deeds of Jesus from others that do not seem to share the same outlook.

Our conclusion, then, is this: the eschatological school did make important breaks from earlier work, but some of the periodizations, the psychologizations, and the identifications of smaller clusters of congenial material betray more continuity than discontinuity. Hence Weiss and Schweitzer offered the 20th century not a wholly different Jesus, and certainly not the end of the theory of a Galilean crisis.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ Weiss, *Proclamation of the Kingdom*, 86. Cf. Salvatorelli, “From Locke to Reitzenstein,” 317.

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. Lundström, *Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 40-41; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 37-38.

⁵⁰⁸ Note that, in Schweitzer’s second edition of the *Quest*, he lists in a footnote critics who retain the “modern historical outline” of Jesus’ life into successful and unsuccessful periods. See *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (ed. Bowden), 446, 544-45. So one can see how things had continued.

4.4. THE 19TH-CENTURY CRISIS THEORY: AN ASSESSMENT

A full assessment of the crisis theory must await the final section of this study. But to conclude this chapter and to prepare for our later work, it is fitting to offer some initial reflections on the problems and prospects of the crisis idea as it appeared in the 19th century. For it is clear, on the one hand, that Schweitzer's critique was not definitive, given how much of the earlier plotlines he left intact. On the other, modern critics have too often preferred the opinion of Schweitzer or other surveys to the more difficult task of responding to that literature on their own. The unfortunate consequence is that earlier arguments too easily become straw men, and later scholarship runs the risk of ignoring some of the better insights and repeating, perhaps unknowingly, the ones that should have been forgotten. The following chapter, in fact, will make the case that this has happened in regard to certain issues that pertain to a Galilean crisis.

For now, however, here are four problems that cast doubt on the workability of a Galilean crisis as a historical hypothesis—at least as it appears in these 19th-century works.

(i) It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the 19th-century Lives, and their Galilean crises, could only be produced by overconfident historians.⁵⁰⁹ An odd thing happens after the general fallout of harmony writing in the late 18th century: many critics were no longer confident that the Gospel sources permitted such detailed harmonizations, but they remained confident in their own abilities to reassemble the Gospels into a broadly reliable chronology.⁵¹⁰ Hence 19th-century

⁵⁰⁹ Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (trans. John Bowden; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998 [orig. 1996]), 5, rightly discuss “the optimism” of the liberal Quest.

⁵¹⁰ Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and the University in Germany (1700-1914)* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 173, on German scholarship, summarizes that critics “were convinced that the knowledge of their predecessors was superficial at best, and that bold acts of intelligence and will by the single scholar could uncover profound secrets of the human world and the universe beyond.”

skepticism focused primarily on the Gospels themselves, not on the aims and methods of the historians using those texts.⁵¹¹ To be sure, in some ways 19th-century skepticism of the texts did not go far enough. Critics were still, in general, far too credulous in their use of particular Gospel chronologies,⁵¹² and many assumed the historicity of nearly every episode in the Gospels. But the key point is that critics considered the reconstruction of the course of the ministry to be far easier than it actually is.⁵¹³ Many Lives of Jesus betray their overconfidence here with a weighty silence: one finds few actual arguments for particular reconstructions of the ministry. In Hase's *Leben Jesu*, for instance, one finds the Gospel materials already reorganized into their respective "periods" of activity, and the criteria by which Hase came to these determinations are never disclosed.⁵¹⁴ His presentation seems to assume that merely explaining the logic of the periodization as a whole is sufficient to justify his particular reorganization. This is obviously a significant oversight.

⁵¹¹ Illuminating is A. M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1893): "Harmonies have almost ceased to be, and instead we have discussions as to the sources, sequence, dependence, independence, purpose, dates, of the four Gospels. Lives of Christ by men of all schools, tendencies, churches, abound, each using some more or less rigorous method."

⁵¹² Although subsequent criticism may have misrepresented the 19th century on this point; see rightly Salvatorelli, "From Locke to Reitzenstein," 291 (on Weisse).

⁵¹³ Such warnings were, however, afoot at the time. See Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 277, 279; Édouard Reuss, "Études comparatives sur les trois premiers évangiles au point de vue de leurs rapports d'origine et de dépendance mutuelle," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie chrétienne* 10 (1855): 65-128 at 71 ("aucun effort de science et de sagacité n'arrivera jamais à rétablir la chronologie évangélique"); Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ* (trans. Carl E. Braaten; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964 [orig. 1892]), 48-49, 89. Cf. the cautious attempt in Schmiedel, *Hauptprobleme der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 23-24.

⁵¹⁴ Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 167 ("consisted largely of reflections on a concatenation of self-contained episodes"). It should be noted, however, that the presentation has much to do with the fact that Hase's *Leben* was first written as a *Lehrbuch* designed to accompany his lectures. So Fuß, "Die Auffassung des Lebens Jesu," 14, rightly calls it "ein Kompendium" and "ein Hilfsbuch für seine Vorlesungen."

Another aspect of this overconfident historiography concerns the degree of detail with which critics reconstructed this Galilean crisis, especially from the 1860s on. For many, claims about a major turning point (or turning points) in Jesus' career were not self-contained arguments about one or two episodes in the Gospels. They were rather integral to a much larger discussion of Jesus' psyche and the development of his messianic consciousness.⁵¹⁵ At issue here is not merely that questers were trying to understand Jesus' overarching intentions.⁵¹⁶ The problem is that many of these historians believed they could trace the contours of Jesus' thought life on the basis of his experiences, as though one could draw a straight line from an event (in the Gospels) to the interpretation or significance of that event in the mind of Jesus.⁵¹⁷ Such matters are well beyond our reach, even if they were not theoretically dubious. Many critics of 19th-century Jesus study have amply raised similar critiques and there is little need to elaborate further.⁵¹⁸

(ii) It is also apparent that many critics from this era relied on faulty premises about the nature of messianism and first century Judaism. In terms of messianism, many lives too readily assumed the existence of a standard "political" messianic expectation in Jesus' time. This

⁵¹⁵ *Apropos* here are Baird's comments on Keim in *From Deism to Tübingen*, 390: "the magnitude of Keim's accomplishment is the measure of its weakness. Here is a life of Jesus too complete, too accurate, too fulsome in detail—above all, too confident."

⁵¹⁶ Such an aim may be regarded as essential to any knowledge of Jesus as a historical figure. See Ernst Baasland, "Fourth Quest? What Did Jesus Really Want?," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1:31-56. Cf. Ben F. Meyer, "Jesus' Ministry and Self-Understanding," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1994), 337-52; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 101; Kim Huat Tan, *The Zion Traditions and the Aims of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4-5, 125-26.

⁵¹⁷ Empiricism had a major impact on the understanding of human psychology in this period. See Gary Hatfield, "Psychology" in *Cambridge History of Philosophy (1790-1870)*, 241-62.

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 6; Jürgen Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. James E. Crouch; New York; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 20; Stevens, *Historical Jesus and the Literary Imagination*, 48 (on Renan); Bond, *Historical Jesus*, 10.

reification⁵¹⁹ had significant impact on the plotlines of many Lives. Countless works saw in Jesus' ministry a struggle to choose a particular messianic vocation, and offered the "political" messianic hope as the norm against which he continually fought; or, they presented the larger failure of his Galilean mission as the consequence of his inability to sway his audience from their "carnal" messianism (often culminating in the attempt of the people to make him king at John 6:15).⁵²⁰ The mischaracterization is partly due to reading Second Temple Jewish texts primarily as "background" to the New Testament, since researchers were quick to make convenient generalizations in hope to illuminate Christian origins.⁵²¹

In terms of the nature of first century Judaism, many 19th-century Lives were prone to the kind of caricatures and stereotypes that would later motivate E. P. Sanders to write *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.⁵²² In particular, one often finds that critics began their work with the presupposition that that the Judaism of Jesus' day was a soulless and decrepit religion, wrongly focused on trifling matters of law observance. Here questers borrowed a popular declension narrative of Israel's history that appeared in the work of Julius Wellhausen and other (largely

⁵¹⁹ Cf. James Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 3-35.

⁵²⁰ E.g. Hess, *Lebensgeschichte Jesu*, 1:lxix; 2:235; de Wette, *Lehrbuch der christliche Dogmatik*, 205, 209; Schenkel, *A Sketch of the Character*, 137 (Jesus had to "cleanse" the messianic idea in Israel); Beyschlag, *Das Leben Jesu*, 1:279-80 (the sensual messianism leads to "an inevitable clash"[*einem unvermeidlichen Zusammenstoß*]), 284 (on John 6:66); 2:259-67; 273 (Jesus replaced the carnal sensual messianism with a "genuine, spiritual, heavenly" [*ächte, geistliche, und himmlische*] one).

⁵²¹ On the perils of "NT background," see Steve Mason, "Josephus and the New Testament, the New Testament and Josephus: an Overview," in *Josephus und das Neue Testament* (eds. Christfried Böttrich and Jens Herzer; Tübingen: Mohr, 2007), 15-48.

⁵²² E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977).

Protestant) historians.⁵²³ It was also common for critics to frame the teachings of Jesus as an alternative religious system to the Judaism of his time, often via binary abstractions such as Jesus taught love, they taught legalism; Jesus taught inner righteousness, they taught external observance; Jesus taught love of all people, they taught love of other Jews only; and so on.⁵²⁴ This portrayal of Judaism helped shape the Galilean crisis in these Lives, much like Luther's portrayal of Judaism helped shape his own doctrine of justification by faith. The reason is that the "problem" with Jesus' audience that needed a "solution" was precisely the Christian caricature of Judaism that the 19th century had projected onto the first. With so vast a chasm between Jesus and Judaism, then, it could only be expected that he would come into sharp conflict with the religious leaders, and ultimately be rejected by the people. Thus the failure of Jesus became a testament to the depravity of first century Judaism, and upheld Jesus as a unique religious genius who was ahead of his time.⁵²⁵ Some even argued against the crisis theory on the

⁵²³ Cf. Lou H. Silberman, "Wellhausen and Judaism," *Semeia* 25 (1982): 75-82; John Barton, "Wellhausen's Prolegomena to the History of Israel: Influences and Effects," *Text and Experience: Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible* (ed. Daniel Smith-Christopher; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 316-29.

⁵²⁴ See e.g. Baur, *Church History*, 1:30-33; Abbott, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 285; Bousset, *Jesu Predigt im ihrem Gegensatz zum Judentum*. On 19th-century depictions of Judaism, see Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 66-75, 153-57, 190-93, 212-13; Halvor Moxnes, "Jesus the Jew: Dilemmas of Interpretation," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen* (ed. Ismo Dunderberg et al.; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 83-103; James D. G. Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 58-63. On the Deists see Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵²⁵ See e.g. Reinhard, *Plan of the Founder*, 1 ("The character of Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, is so unique, so extraordinary, and venerable, that even the enemies of this religion...must acknowledge that it has not like it in history") 221-41; Willibald Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology, or, Historical Account of the Teaching of Jesus and of Primitive Christianity According to the New Testament Sources* (trans. Neil Buchanan; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895 [orig. 1891-2]), 1:32 (the parables evince "pure genius"). Cf. also McGrath, *Making of Modern German Christology*, 68-69 (on Ritschl's influence on later study).

basis that Jesus must have known as he began “the corrupt carnality of the Jewish nation...(and thus could not have) deceived himself as to suppose that he could suddenly transform the larger part of such a nation into a true people of God.”⁵²⁶ It hardly requires saying that all such claims tell us only about 19th-century Europe.

(iii) An additional problem is that, while some periodizations of the ministry aimed to resolve theological tensions in the Gospels, the diagnosis of such tensions remained in the eye of the beholder. The history of the Quest teaches the point easily enough: researchers have not identified the same inconsistencies. That reality points not just to the inherently subjective nature of all historical writing, but to the heightened consequences of that subjectivity in this particular case. Here one’s periodization is subject to a macroscopic interpretation of the texts. If the Gospels do not actually contain the theological tension that a particular critic presumes (which is an interpretive decision), then there is no need to reorganize the material diachronically (via periodization or excision).⁵²⁷ Reimarus’ work is a good example, for his reconstruction of the pre- and post- Easter periods assumed there to be contrasting visions of the messianic task in the Gospels. But it is now clear that Reimarus was not only selective in his reading of the Gospels, he brought to the texts a reified category of “political messianism” that in many ways determined his conclusions. Hence the ground for his periodization was sand. We will revisit the issue of tension-finding in Chapter 6.

⁵²⁶ Neander, *Life of Jesus Christ*, 84. See too William J. Dawson, *The Life of Christ* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1901), 187-95.

⁵²⁷ J. G. Osiander’s response/critique of Paulus and Hase in “Bemerkungen über die evangelische Geschichte mit Beziehung auf ihre neueren Bearbeitungen in Paulus und Hases Leben Jesu,” *Tübinger Zeitschrift* 1 (1831): 125-67 at 147, noted that the posed antithesis in the mood (Stimmung) of Jesus was “only an alleged (one)” (nu ein angeblicher).

(iv) A final criticism concerns the relation between the crisis theory and the intellectual ethos of the 19th century. On many levels, 19th-century Lives “fit” too comfortably in the bygone dogmas of this period. The general critique has been made many times before, perhaps most memorably by Schweitzer, who claimed at one point that the portraits by Renan, Strauss, Schenkel, Weizsäcker, and Keim were “fixed from the first, being determined by the mental atmosphere and religious horizon of the (eighteen) ’sixties.”⁵²⁸ But here we can be more specific about particular influences on the construction of Galilean crises in these works.

As a first point, it is no coincidence that the emergence of multi-volume biographies of Jesus in the mid to late 19th century coincided with the popularity of the *Bildungsroman* in Europe.⁵²⁹ The plotlines of such “novels-of-formation” often detailed the development of particular individuals through their experiences in the world. Moreover, it was common for a protagonist to progress through the narrative via a series of conflicts and struggles that lead to disappointments. The disappointments, in turn, were often redeemable and contributed to the developing outlook (and maturity) of the main character. The parallel to the Lives is clear enough, and indeed these historical reconstructions have a kind of literary artificiality to them. It is likely here that, as with the impact of book format on the periodization of the life of Jesus (as argued in Chapter 3), form has again shaped content to some degree. It is clear that the economics of a consumer-driven book market created demand for such novelistic presentations

⁵²⁸ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 200. Cf. Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 95; Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 275: “The history of the study of Jesus in European thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is as much a history of changing philosophies, theologies, and world views, as it is of growing refinements in historical techniques.”

⁵²⁹ The term is a collective for a number of potential genres, including *Entwicklungsroman* and *Erziehungsroman*. Cf. Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1987).

of Jesus' life, since in the late 19th century many Lives of Jesus had a popular and not merely academic readership.⁵³⁰ Historians both wittingly and unwittingly obliged to supply that demand.

A related observation has to do with the notion of “development” in general. As many surveys of the Quest rightly note, much of 19th-century New Testament study was overly beholden to an optimism about moral and intellectual progress. The worldview greatly affected historiography in this period, as critics often approached their subjects with the presupposition that detailed studies of the past would fit inside other identified trajectories in history.⁵³¹ In the study of the historical Jesus, therefore, many questers presumed to find “development” in the ministry of Jesus given their initial frame of reference, and the details only confirmed the starting point. To be sure, the assumption was not something submerged and hidden in the Lives of this period, but was often explicitly recalled as an argument in support of one's reconstruction.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ See Jefferson J. A. Gatrall, *The Real and the Sacred: Picturing Jesus in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 5-6 (Novelists “reworked secular biblical scholarship” and thus helped disseminate higher criticism “into popular culture, a legacy bequeathed to later fiction and film”). Historical Jesus scholars have hardly investigated this reality. Cf. Clive Marsh, “Quests of the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective,” *BibInt* 5 (1997): 403-37 at 422-26 (though focusing here on more recent studies); Robert D. Priest, “Reading, Writing, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century France: The Popular Reception of Renan's Life of Jesus,” *JMH* 86 (2014): 258-94.

⁵³¹ Cf. the criticism already in William Sanday, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1907), 94-96, who refers approvingly to Schweitzer's similar critique. It is not without consequence for our project that, even before Hase's life appeared, Leonhard Usteri wrote his *Entwicklung des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs mit Hinsicht auf die übrigen Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Zürich: s.n., 1824) which, according to Kümmel (*Problems*, 95), was the first to analyze the development of Paul's doctrine.

⁵³² As was also the case for theologians in matters of Christology. The thought was that a “developing” psychology was a truly human psychology, therefore Christ *must* have developed to be fully human. Cf. Isaak August Dorner, *Special Doctrines: The Doctrine of Christ in God and Incarnation*, 247: “Since development is proper to humanity, and Christ presents true humanity in an actual human life, a truly human development pertains to him. Since on the other hand God can be perfectly manifest in Christ only when the whole fullness of the divine Logos has become this man's own fullness in knowledge and will, and has thus become divine-human, a development of God-manhood is also necessary.” See also Gottfried Thomasius, *Christ's*

Theodor Keim, for example, wrote that “The fundamental law of historical science, even with reference to the life of Jesus, is uninterrupted sequence.”⁵³³ His point was that, in light of this *fact*, one must identify the development in the ministry of Jesus to really understand it.⁵³⁴ There is little here that ought to be resurrected for current Jesus study.

And lastly, many Lives of Jesus were too eager to believe that they could trace “cause and effect” in history, encouraged as they were either by the science of their day or some Romanticist or Hegelian sense of unity and inner connection in history.⁵³⁵ As mentioned above, historians of early Christianity in the 19th century became increasingly suspicious of the reliability of their primary sources, and Strauss’ arguments about “myth” only intensified this. But some were still confident in this: every individual episode in the Gospels is intrinsically related to the others in some manner, so by inferring cause and effect, or by probing inner

Person and Work in God and Incarnation, 65: Christ’s consciousness “works itself out gradually, in a way similar to that which occurs in all others.”

⁵³³ Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 1:6.

⁵³⁴ See Keim, *History of Jesus of Nazara*, 3:7: “History is development.” Even Osiander’s critique of Hase in “Bemerkungen über die evangelische Geschichte,” 147, did not deny “the psychological truism of the idea of successive development of the intellectual life of Jesus.” His point was that the development did not have to proceed “through error” (durch Irrthum). Cf. a similar position in Ullmann, “Character of Jesus,” 410 (“development should always be viewed as a growing whole, its parts dependent on each other; and through great crises, though sudden and extraordinary changes may take place in the same individual, still the earlier moral condition will transmit its influence to the later”). For similar perspectives, see the discussion in Albert W. Hitchcock, “The Self-Consciousness of Jesus its Relation to the Messianic Hope, I,” *The Old and New Testament Student* 13 (1891): 209-20.

⁵³⁵ Cf. Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 169 (on Hase), 207-08, 217 (on Baur); Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, 69 (De Wette on history as “Kette von Begebenheiten”); Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 392, is right to recognize that “the gap between deism and Tübingen is immense.” However, the two prevailing philosophical perspectives that he believes predominate—on the one hand the mechanistic and empirical Enlightenment worldview, and on the other philosophical Idealism (393)—similarly inspired optimism about recovering the course of Jesus’ career, just in different ways. See here Fuß, “Die Auffassung des Lebens Jesu,” 24-5, 45-6, 49.

connections, one can probabilistically trace the correct order.⁵³⁶ It became increasingly common for critics to self-identify as “historians” rather than “chroniclers” since the former sought not merely to record separate events but to identify “the underlying unity” among them.⁵³⁷ That there is some truth to this approach cannot be denied, and it builds on a larger interpretive tradition of making “commonsensical” solutions to historical conundrums in the Gospels.⁵³⁸ But the approach has its limits. On the one hand, it is much more useful for identifying where the chronology is likely wrong than helping the historian reassemble it. In order to reassemble, critics not only had to treat Jesus as a rationalist who had some intellectual reason for everything that he did (which, coincidentally, was the prevailing approach to studying ancient religion in this time).⁵³⁹ They also had to assume that they could retrace that rationale. And on the other, some pericopae may suggest particular backstories (or “causes”) but not necessarily point to specific episodes. One’s view of the whole ministry is much more determinative of what, for instance, preceded Jesus’ preaching in parables, than anything inherent in the parables themselves. The

⁵³⁶ Cf. Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 38-39 (on Bahrdr and Venturini). The sense of the unity or “organic wholeness” of history was crucial for Hase and other historians. Cf. Magdalena Herbst, *Karl von Hase als Kirchenhistoriker* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2012), 200-205, 231-32. Herbst also notes the impact of the scientization of historical writing: the form of a historical presentation could no longer be “collections of individual events,” but rather must show “context which connects the events (er die Ereignisse verbindende Zusammenhang), the network of causes and effects (das Geflecht der Ursachen und Folgen), (that) shapes and holds together the presentation” (174). Periodizing history was important for historians to help identify these connections (192).

⁵³⁷ See Halvor Moxnes, “The Mission of Jesus to ‘the Totality of the Jewish Land’ in Schleiermacher’s Life of Jesus,” in Byrskog and Hägerland, *Mission of Jesus*, 25-40 at 28-29.

⁵³⁸ Cf. here Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 88; Beyschlag, *Leben Jesu*, 1:262 (on development “mit einem natürlichen Tact”).

⁵³⁹ On such an “intellectualist” approach to religion, as it is known, see Daniel L. Pals, “Max Muller, E. B. Tylor, and the ‘Intellectualist’ Origins of the Science of Religion,” *International Journal of Comparative Religion* 1 (1995): 69-83.

history of interpretation shows that the Gospels can be assembled and reassembled in many different ways with little consequence for one's overall portrait of Jesus.

There is more to criticize about 19th-century Lives than the four points above, to be sure. But these issues are of particular importance for our project and some will be visited again in the following pages. As the next chapter will argue, later scholarship will repeat some of the problematic features of these arguments even though the "Life of Jesus era" stands as an easy target for problems with historical method and much else.

Our verdict on the 19th-century crisis theory is not entirely negative, however. Just as we can learn from mistakes, there are some positive things to takeaway. Here are three prospects going forward.

(i) Since 20th- and 21st-century criticism has largely depended on the work of earlier scholars to dismiss the old Lives of Jesus, it is significant that much of the early pushback against a Galilean crisis relied on some dubious assumptions of its own. As an illustration we note the following comments from the opening of *Ecce Homo*, perhaps the most significant English Life of Jesus in the 19th century.⁵⁴⁰

No other career ever had so much unity; no other biography is so simple, or can so well afford to dispense with details. Men in general take up scheme after scheme, as circumstances suggest one or another, and therefore most biographies are compelled to pass from one subject to another, and to enter into a multitude of minute questions, to divide the life carefully into periods by chronological landmarks accurately determined, to trace the gradual development of character and ripening or change of opinions. But Christ formed one plan and executed it; no important change took place in his mode of thinking, speaking, or acting; at least the evidence before us does not enable us to trace any such change.⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴⁰ See Pals, *Victorian "Lives,"* 39-50; Stevens, *Historical Jesus and the Literary Imagination*, 49.

⁵⁴¹ [John Seeley], *Ecce Homo: A Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1867), 24.

Seeley's best point is the qualification at the end that we lack sufficient evidence. But the rest is a mere assertion of a unity of message and mind in Jesus. This was a common response to any claim of change or development.⁵⁴² It is no more plausible, at the outset, that Jesus always had before him "one plan," than is the assumption that his message and attitude changed in response to new situations.⁵⁴³ At issue here is a not merely one historical conclusion verses another. At issue is the dilemma of starting points and how they lead, almost unavoidably, to certain end points. It could well be that Seeley's conclusion was the result of much careful study. But there is the inherent risk that he, as do all, began his study with certain expectations about what to find. One predisposed to unity will likely discover unity, just as one predisposed to discontinuity will likely unearth the same. Instructive here is Robert Alter's *The Art of Reading Scripture*: what von Rad and other historical critics understood as editorial "seams," inconsistencies, and even errors in the Hebrew Bible, Alter turned into essential features of the "literary artistry" of the

⁵⁴² Cf. Osiander, "Bemerkungen über die evangelische Geschichte," 147 ("The steady, deep harmony of his inner life vouches for us also the same of his plan" [Die stetige, tiefe, Harmonie seines innern Lebens verbürgt uns auch die seines Planes]); Ullmann, "Character of Jesus," 402 ("the events of Christ's life give the impression, that he had the greatest calmness, clearness of mind, and discretion, united with living, deep enthusiasm"); 407 ("Never was Jesus driven out of his own path; it was a quiet path, and always even"); Neander, *Life of Jesus Christ*, 80-81; Heinrich Ewald, *Life and Times of Christ* (trans. Frederick Smith; vol. 6 of *History of Israel*; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1883 [orig. 1843-59]), 200-04, 240-41; Johann Peter Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ: A Complete Critical Examination of the Origins, Contents, and Connection of the Gospels* (ed. Marcus Dods; trans. J. E. Ryland; 6 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1864 [orig. 1844-47]), 2:70-72; Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, 102.

⁵⁴³ Similarly unconvincing here is Adolf Harnack, who pointed not to Jesus' "one plan" but the "natural" language of his speech: "unless all appearances are deceptive, no stormy crisis, no breach with his past lies behind the period of Jesus' life that we know. In none of his sayings or discourses, whether he is threatening and punishing or drawing and calling people to him with kindness, whether he is speaking of his relation to the Father or to the world, can we discover the signs of inner revolutions overcome, or the scars of any terrible conflict. Everything seems to pour from him naturally, as through it could not do otherwise, like a spring from the depths of the earth, clear and unchecked in its flow." See *What is Christianity?* (trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986 [orig. 1900]), 32-33.

narrative as a whole.⁵⁴⁴ Despite his many valuable insights, one fears that Alter, in presuming to find such “artistry,” has found it everywhere, just as many 19th-century critics of the crisis found unity and coherence throughout.⁵⁴⁵ To be sure, there are problems with all starting points. But given that all must enter the hermeneutical circle at some point, it is best to begin with an openness to finding inconsistency in the tradition, and then be explicit about one’s criteria for what qualifies as such. At least in terms of the openness, then, the crisis theory of 19th-century Lives set a good example.

(ii) It is also instructive to recognize the “big picture” view on Jesus that the 19th-century Galilean crisis demanded. To identify a moment, or moments, of crisis in the ministry, one must situate it/them in the larger context of Jesus’ career. Crisis proponents did not always do this effectively. The point is the logic: one cannot talk about major change, or transition, without also explaining the before and the after. A crisis only makes sense as part of a larger whole.

This panoramic perspective is significant because, for one, it forced critics to seek broader themes in the tradition in order to periodize the ministry. Instead of treating the Gospels atomistically, critics had to find motifs that encompass a number of individual pericopae: notes of success and hints of disappointment, presuppositions of rejection, seemingly optimistic and pessimistic outlooks, etc. This approach parallels some recent attitudes in the study of Jesus.⁵⁴⁶

We will revisit this in Chapter 7.

⁵⁴⁴ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011 [orig. 1981]).

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. criticism of the crisis theory by H. L. Heubner in an appendix to Reinhard’s *Plan of the Founder*, 287: it would not be fitting for Jesus to change his mind because “This is not the character of a wise mind, perfectly free, clear, and unconstrained.”

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. e.g. Telford, “Major Trends and Interpretive Issues,” 52, 57; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 10-30; Bengt Holmberg, “Futures for the Jesus Quests,” in *Handbook for the Study of the*

In a similar line of thought, most Lives attempted to deal with as much of the Gospel tradition as possible (hence their length), and that meant that they had to attend to the larger consequences of smaller interpretive decisions.⁵⁴⁷ If one's periodization involved the moving of a particular batch of texts to one location in the ministry, it affected the placement of others elsewhere. It is easy to get lost in the speculative details of these Lives (not to make light of such speculation), but there is an important historical logic at work here that perhaps not even the practitioners themselves were aware of. In later historical Jesus study, heavily influenced by 20th-century form criticism, it would become too easily pick and choose from the tradition without weighing the implications. For instance, it was popular (and still is, in some circles) to argue that Jesus was a non-eschatological teacher by assigning the eschatological elements of the tradition to the early church.⁵⁴⁸ But this tells us nothing about the historical development of these traditions and from where they might have come. The move provides a pseudo-confidence in having solved a historical question, but in reality has ignored it. The Lives of Jesus, wrong as they often were, could not ignore such things. They had to fit into the story somewhere.

For this reason, 19th-century Lives and their crises forced critics to be open and forthright about their explanation of development or change in the tradition. Later scholarship would be similarly interested in the discovery of tensions and inconsistencies in the Gospels, but often less

Historical Jesus, 2:887-918 at 906-16; Chris Keith, "The Fall of the Quest for an Authentic Jesus," in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, 200-05.

⁵⁴⁷ See J. Estlin Carpenter, *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century: Eight Lectures* (New York; Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903), 282 (on Keim).

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. e.g. Marcus Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Holiness* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991); Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991); Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, eds., *Redescribing Christian Origins* (SBLSymS 28; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

clear about explaining the transition between these polarities. Another example to make the point: it became common, especially under Bultmann's influence, to claim that the resurrection experiences were responsible for creating important changes in theology among the followers of Jesus that were then read into the Gospel tradition.⁵⁴⁹ But this argument often pointed to something we know little about to do a good deal of historical legwork. The crisis theory, in contrast, attempted to name and to explain key transitions often by pointing to specific episodes in the ministry.⁵⁵⁰ In so doing the Lives were often overconfident and speculative, to be sure. But surely later critics could do no better by making similarly bold claims about theological change but offering *less* reflection on the historical process behind it.

(iii) Finally, the 19th-century crisis theory assumes some reasonable treatments of certain episodes and themes in the Gospels. In particular, that the Galilean woes seem to stand at the end of his Galilean tenure (at least in those three cities) and reflect on poor results; that there are indeed some commonsensical approaches to the chronological placement of Jesus' popularity and his conflicts with religious leaders; and that some of Jesus' utterances (e.g. about "this generation") seem to reflect a context of mixed reception or even rejection. All these points will receive full attention in the final chapter of this study.

⁵⁴⁹ See here W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 8-10.

⁵⁵⁰ This is especially true of the later Lives. In Hase's *Leben* the transition point is more assumed than identified, and he spends his time discussing individual pericopae in each period.

4.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter completes our study of antecedents to the idea of a Galilean crisis, and investigates the logic, as well as the unity and diversity, of its forms in 19th-century research. To summarize our key findings:

- (i) Reimarus' work called for more comprehensive treatments of the life of Jesus, and his own reconstruction modelled the format of a Galilean crisis by periodizing theological tensions in the tradition and highlighting disappointing experiences;
- (ii) in the interval between Reimarus and Karl Hase, critics continued to identify inconsistencies in Jesus' teaching, explored various means of resolving those tensions, and further popularized the motif of early success/growing opposition in the ministry;
- (iii) Hase offered the most intentional periodization of the ministry to date, and his suggestion that Jesus' initial hope to foster moral regeneration among the people, which failed and led to his theology of the cross, was an attempt to respond to the interpretive debates of his day;
- (iv) later 19th-century Lives of Jesus further developed the crisis idea but were, in general, more detailed in scope, more interested in Jesus' psychological development, and more grounded in source critical investigations;
- (v) the crisis theory had international representation in the late 19th century, and its form in the Lives of this period (such as in the works of Weizsäcker, Keim, and Weiss) was broadly familiar in character but differed in detail;
- (vi) Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer made some breaks from prior historical Jesus study but still recapitulated key elements of a Galilean crisis in their proposals;
- (vii) problems with the crisis idea in this period include its overconfident and speculative nature, false assumptions about messianism and first century Judaism on the part of its proponents, its subjective foundations in the diagnosis of tensions in the Gospel tradition, and its clear situatedness in 19th-century intellectual *Zeigeist*;
- (viii) prospects with the crisis idea in this period include its openness to identifying inconsistencies in Jesus' teaching and praxis, its "big picture" perspective and explicit commentary on change and development in the Gospel tradition, and its treatment of certain issues in the Gospels.

Aside from our focus on a Galilean crisis, this investigation contributes to the history of the Quest generally, as it traces the development of historical method and offers a unique angle on characters both popular and overlooked.

We are now in position to follow the crisis theory into 20th-century scholarship and up to the present. We will find that, despite larger shifts in historical approach and method, the idea does not disappear.

CHAPTER 5.0:
THE AFTERLIFE OF THE CRISIS THEORY IN
20TH- TO 21ST-CENTURY CRITICISM

What was once a salient feature of 19th-century Lives quickly became a topic mentioned only briefly if at all in study of the historical Jesus. Indeed, one searches in vain in most recent monographs for any discussion of a Galilean crisis. A telling example: the four volume *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (2009), which presents leading voices on an incredibly wide range of issues in current discussion, includes not a single essay devoted to the crisis theory, still less any substantial discussion to issues of development or disappointment in the ministry.⁵⁵¹ One gets the impression that, in the minds of modern historians, the plausibility of a Galilean crisis perished along with the Life of Jesus genre, such that it no longer deserves serious consideration.

But this raises two questions. First, why the decline in popularity? And second, is it in fact true that scholarship has moved beyond the logic and assumptions at play in the construction of a Galilean crisis?

The purpose of this chapter is to offer responses to both questions and, as Chapter 4, to conclude with a historical assessment of the discussion that prepares for the final section of the

⁵⁵¹ Though note that Rainer Riesner, “From the Messianic Teacher to the Gospels of Jesus Christ,” in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1:405-46 at 423, mentions in passing the “Galilean crisis” idea approvingly to explain the background of Jesus’ “esoteric instructions.” He is following Mussner here, who will be discussed below.

book. We will consider the impact of form criticism and other early 20th-century developments in the field, a few proposals for a Galilean crisis in the last hundred years of Jesus study, and the striking similarity of form and argument between the crisis theory and some recent attempts to stratify Q.

5.1. THE IMPACT OF WREDE AND FORM CRITICISM

New Testament criticism in the early 20th century met with a host of changes, and the important survey and critique of prior Jesus literature by Albert Schweitzer (1906) was one of them. But, as shown already, Schweitzer's criticism was not fatal to the crisis theory, nor did it end the writing of *Lives of Jesus*. For Schweitzer's "thoroughgoing eschatology" would significantly alter the course of Jesus research, but not the linear and biographical manner in which historians thought about Jesus.⁵⁵² A more significant point of transition, it will be argued here, hinged not on any one reconstruction of Jesus, but rather some new approaches to the Gospels that carried important implications for Jesus research.

One better appreciates the impact of these changes in New Testament study when one notes that the 19th-century Quest, at least since Baur and Holtzmann, was essentially a source-critical Quest.⁵⁵³ That is to say, the search for the historical Jesus revolved around the search for, and proper historical reading of, the earliest Gospel sources. The assumption was that if one had

⁵⁵² See Robinson, *New Quest*, 34, 194 ("Schweitzer's emphasis upon the chronological sequence of the Synoptic Gospels is emphatically denied in the quest that has followed upon Form Criticism").

⁵⁵³ See Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh from German 5th ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1963 [orig. 1921]), 1; Case, "The Life of Jesus," 568; Anderson, *Critical Quests of Jesus*, 70; Arland J. Hultgren, "Form Criticism and Jesus Research," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1:649-71 at 666.

the earliest sources, then one had the most reliable sources, which meant that one was close to the historical Jesus. As mentioned in Chapter 4, many of these 19th-century critics did not regard these sources as historically reliable *in toto*; proponents of Markan and Matthean priority alike recognized the episodic nature of the Gospels and often cut out large blocks that were considered legendary or apologetic. Still, the *modus operandi* was that in the earliest source(s) one found a genuine historical interest in the person of Jesus, as well as a more or less accurate chronology of the ministry.

Two things changed this source-critical mindset and by implication ideas about a Galilean crisis. In particular: (i) new perspectives on the Gospels as theological documents in their own right, and (ii) the advent and dominance of form criticism. These changes led, I wish to argue here, to a decline in the popularity of the crisis theory, on the one hand, and to a significant change in its appearance, on the other.

(i) The focus on the theological nature of the Gospels, and particularly the earliest and supposedly most reliable Gospel, Mark, was well underway before Schweitzer. Scholars have rightly noted the impact of William Wrede's 1901 *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, which was discussed (critically) in Schweitzer's 1906 survey.⁵⁵⁴ Of course the general idea that the Gospels have different theological emphases was hardly novel: Irenaeus and Augustine were influential in linking the four Evangelists to the four creatures of the divine presence in Rev 4:6-7, which appropriated their differences as theologically valuable.⁵⁵⁵ But Wrede's claim was not merely about theological emphasis; his claim, rather, was more diachronic in scope and concerned the provenance and historical value of Mark's traditions. Wrede insisted that the

⁵⁵⁴ See Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 330-51. Cf. Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 103-04; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 40.

⁵⁵⁵ See Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.11.8; Augustine, *Cons.* 1.6.9.

messianic secret motif in Mark had nothing to do with the historical Jesus: it was rather a cover-up attempt by the early Church to explain why Jesus was not considered the Messiah before Easter.⁵⁵⁶ Hence, for Wrede, Mark's Gospel contained historical material, but it was primarily a theological document which stemmed from the perspective of the post-Easter community.⁵⁵⁷ Many would disagree with the particulars of Wrede's study, but this manner of framing the theological nature of Mark, in addition to other sources, was hugely influential on later scholars.⁵⁵⁸ It is noteworthy in this respect that Schweitzer, writing after Wrede, claimed Jesus' eschatology and the messianic secret idea were *Jesus' own* "dogmas," not merely those of the early Church.⁵⁵⁹ The kinds of questions posed by Wrede and others created the need for such arguments.

In regard to the crisis idea, then, the challenge from Wrede was clear: the standard motifs and theological *Tendenzen* used to periodize the ministry could have more to do with the theological views of early Christians than the historical Jesus. The crisis theory, in this framework, faultily melds pre- and post-Easter traditions. The bold reconstructions of the late 19th century would give way to a new skepticism.

⁵⁵⁶ See William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J. C. C. Greig; Greenwood: Attic Press, 1971 [orig. 1901]), 34-76, 101.

⁵⁵⁷ Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 129 ("*Mark no longer has a real view of the historical life of Jesus*" [italics orig.]).

⁵⁵⁸ See William Baird, *From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann* (vol. 2 of *History of New Testament Research*; 3 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 144-50. Also influential here was the work of Julius Wellhausen and Alfred Loisy; see Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 119; Kissinger, *Lives of Jesus*, 48; David R. Hall, *The Gospel Framework, Fiction or Fact? A Critical Evaluation of Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu by Karl Ludwig Schmidt* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 146-51.

⁵⁵⁹ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 351.

(ii) In addition to the impact of Wrede, the advent of form criticism in New Testament study cast similar doubts on the Jesus research that typified the late 19th century. And like Wrede's work, the focus of form criticism was not the historical Jesus per se, but it bore important implications for Jesus study. In particular, the form critics argued, against source criticism, that the recovery of the earliest sources will not necessarily lead to the historical Jesus. Rather, between Jesus and the written sources spans a near forty year period of oral transmission for which we have little direct evidence. Thus, New Testament form criticism sought to investigate this oral period via the cogent assumption that the literary form of individual pericopae in the Gospels betray a *Sitz im Leben* in the post-Easter community.⁵⁶⁰ This assumption adapted and reshaped the insight of Hermann Gunkel in Hebrew Bible studies that communication was governed by genre, and genre was linked to concrete social practices.⁵⁶¹ By careful investigation of the different "forms" in the Gospels and their genres, then, one could understand their various uses in the early Christian community.

All of this is well known, of course.⁵⁶² What is notable are the two different ways that this change of perspective impacted the crisis theory.

The first concerns the atomization of Gospel study and Jesus research. Form criticism had no single mode of application, as any comparison of Dibelius and Bultmann clearly shows. But in regard to the episodic nature of the Gospels—a textual phenomenon we have discussed much in prior chapters—most of the early form critics reached similar conclusions. Because these

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. Martin J. Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in its Context* (JSOTSupp 274; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 287-88 (Dibelius assumed "the life situation of a genre can be deduced from its structure").

⁵⁶¹ See Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism*, 212.

⁵⁶² Cf. Baird, *From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann*, 269-85.

pericopae so easily functioned as isolated stories (with their own introductions and conclusions), adhered to different genres, and were freely reorganized by the Evangelists' themselves, many concluded that the pre-written tradition lacked any narrative framework.⁵⁶³ It was argued that the Evangelists supplied the framework later as they pieced together various pericopae according to their own theological concerns. The implication for Jesus study was sobering: for those who accepted some of the basic assumptions of form criticism, the historical reliability of the Gospel narrative had been demolished. The capstone of this conclusion was the 1919 study by Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*. This argued in detail that the majority of the Markan narrative was created by the Evangelist as a "string" on which to place the "pearls" of select pericopae.⁵⁶⁴

If, therefore, the form critics had found the narrative framework to be fundamentally unhistorical, then any reconstruction of Jesus which relied on such chronology or made significant logical inferences on the basis of it would be doomed to fail.⁵⁶⁵ Skeptical statements to such effect became routine.⁵⁶⁶ The conclusion would prove troublesome for the crisis theory

⁵⁶³ See Julius Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin: Reimer, 1905), 3; Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 2-7; R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 16-17; Martin Dibelius, *Jesus* (trans. C. B. Hedrick and F. C. Grant; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1949 [orig. 1939]), 12, 16-17.

⁵⁶⁴ See Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919), 317.

⁵⁶⁵ See here Schmidt himself, *Der Rahmen*, 14, where he criticized "developmental" Lives of Jesus such as Keim's, Holtzmann's, and B. Weiss's. He claimed Mark's outline was "ein Scheme" "so gut wie der des John Ev" (17). Cf. John Reumann, "Lives of Jesus during the Great Quest for the Historical Jesus," *IJT* 23 (1974): 33-59 at 42 (form criticism destroyed "the old-style endeavour to put together on a day-by-day basis an account of Jesus' life which moved from event to event").

⁵⁶⁶ Even before Schmidt, see Kähler, *So-Called Historical Jesus*, 48 ("I repeat: we have no sources for a biography of Jesus of Nazareth which measure up to the standards of

because, as noted in Chapter 4, many of its proponents assumed that at least one Gospel chronology could be mined for historically reliable information (even if it were erroneous in some matters). Not all reconstructions of a crisis had to assume much on this front, to be sure. As we have seen, many forms of a Galilean crisis in the 19th century emerged *as attempts to order* the ministry, and hence had already recognized and problematized chronological disagreements among the Evangelists. Some critics, such as Hase, had even concluded that a moment of transition or rupture was something logically required for a reconstruction of the ministry, rather than something empirically verifiable in any one chronology. Moreover, the last three chapters have amply demonstrated that pericopae thought to evince disappointment and imply rejection were sometimes detached from their narrative frames and rearranged.

In any case, the upshot for the form critically inclined was clear: it was no longer possible to reconstruct a Galilean crisis with the kind of detail and comprehensiveness that characterized 19th-century research. Instead, historians were thought to be required, given the nature of the sources, to make limited claims about the ministry of Jesus as informed by the interpretation of specific pericopae or particular motifs in the Gospels.⁵⁶⁷ Here historians still could, and would,

contemporary historical science”), 49 (the Gospels contain “a vast field strewn with the fragments of various traditions”); Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 8, 22 (“Mark shows he was unaware of the view of history ascribed to him. His presentation is altogether too confused to enable us to immediately gain a clear picture”), 129-32; Allan Menzies, *The Earliest Gospel: A Historical Study of the Gospel According to Mark* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1901), 20-21, 29; Schmiedel, *Hauptprobleme der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 24 (“ein Mosaik von kleinen Erzählungen”). After Schmidt, see A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark: with Introduction, Commentary and Additional Notes* (London: Methuen, 1925), xiv; Donald Taggart Rowlingson, “The Continuing Quest of the Historical Jesus,” in *New Testament Studies: Critical Essays in New Testament Interpretation, with Special Reference to the Meaning and Worth of Jesus* (ed. Edwin Prince Booth; New York; Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), 42-69 at 67-68.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. e.g. Dibelius, *Jesus*, 29: “we are obligated therefore to forego chronological order from the outset, as well as the reconstruction of any development in Jesus, in his success, in his conflict with his enemies—a ‘biography’ of Jesus in this sense cannot be written. All we know is individual incidents, not interconnected events.”

make common sense assumptions about the chronology of the ministry by inferring backstories behind particular pericopae (an interpretive move we have seen frequently in this study). But gone were the days in which historians could *assume* the chronological reliability of the Gospels and reconstruct a Galilean crisis on that basis. Hereafter, those who would continue to propose a crisis in the ministry would either totally ignore the insights of form criticism,⁵⁶⁸ or respond to and critique certain aspects of the form critical method and its bearing on historical Jesus research. As we will see below, the latter was characteristic of several British New Testament critics of the early to mid 20th century, such as Cecil J. Cadoux and C. H. Dodd.

The second significant impact of form criticism on the crisis idea is more subtle but just as important for our purposes. It concerns the way in which the form critics read the Gospels as windows into the history of the early communities of Jesus followers, rather than into the history of Jesus' own ministry.⁵⁶⁹ In view here is either the general notion that the gathering, shaping, and preserving of traditions betrays a communal interest, or the more radical notion that the early Church readily made up stories and sayings about Jesus as new circumstances required. In either case, focus on the oral transmission of Jesus tradition, and the creative influence of the community on that tradition, meant the historical reality to which the texts were thought to point was primarily the *Sitz im Leben* of the early Church and only secondarily, if at all, the *Sitz im*

⁵⁶⁸ As was typical of the Catholic Lives of Jesus, see Case, "The Life of Jesus," 562; idem, *Jesus Through the Centuries*, 323-28. There is, however, this odd fact: some critics give lip service to form critical changes in the field, or at least acknowledged the episodic nature of the tradition, but then proceeded to write a more or less biographical "Life" of Jesus with little hesitation. See Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times and Teaching* (trans. Herbert Danby; New York: Macmillan, 1925 [orig. 1922]), 126.

⁵⁶⁹ See here Robinson, *New Quest*, 35: the Gospels are "primary sources for the history of the early church, and only secondarily sources for the history of Jesus."

Leben Jesu.⁵⁷⁰ And here is the point: this shift in focus from Jesus to the Church allowed for much *continuity* with the 19th-century Quest in terms of the interpretation of certain texts in the Gospels. For the form critical paradigm was not fundamentally about textual interpretation. For a 19th-century biographer of Jesus, as well as for a 20th-century form critic, Mark 7 reflected a harsh dispute over matters of law observance. The difference was that, for many a form critic, the historical referent inspiring the text was some struggle between an early community of Jesus followers and their Jewish contemporaries, not some event in the life of Jesus. Another example more relevant for our purposes: Bultmann said of the Galilean woes: “we have here a community formation, since the sayings look back on Jesus’ activity as something already completed, and presuppose the failure of the Christian preaching in Capernaum.”⁵⁷¹ There is nothing here that we have not seen many times in this study already: a recognition of the retrospective nature of this text, an inferred backstory of rejection. Examples like this could be multiplied.

Section 5.3 below will revisit this line of inquiry and suggest that later 20th- and 21st-century research on particular Christian communities—in particular the so-called “Q people”—will repeat some forms of the 19th-century crisis theory. For the form-critical underpinnings of Q scholarship allowed for much continuity with prior Jesus research when it came to the interpretation of specific texts and treatment of particular motifs.

⁵⁷⁰ Of course, as mentioned above, not all the form critics were of the same mind. Dibelius was skeptical of writing a biography of Jesus, but he thought the Synoptics contained a good deal of historical material (see *Jesus*, 22). He gave the sayings tradition the benefit of the doubt: “it is proper to speak of non-genuine sayings only where the later circumstances, conditions, or problems of the already existing Church are clearly presupposed” (26; cf. 34).

⁵⁷¹ Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 112.

5.2. A GALILEAN CRISIS AFTER FORM CRITICISM

After the advent of form criticism, then, I suggest that the idea of a Galilean crisis essentially suffered two different fates in 20th- to 21st-century scholarship. Each deserves detailed analysis given the little attention the history of scholarship has given to this topic.

(i) In Germany, where form criticism and Bultmann's shadow loomed large, it is hard to find many critical scholars who defend the notion of a Galilean crisis in any detail. This is not entirely unexpected, given the insights in section 5.1, and it squares with some overstated but not entirely inaccurate generalizations about the history of the Quest. To be sure, suggestions of a "No-Quest" period following the work of Bultmann are misleading, and Dale Allison was right to reframe the issue in this way: "we have not 'no Quest,' but 'no Biography.'"⁵⁷² The fact of few biographies of Jesus—that is, few presentations of Jesus' career in a linear and chronological scheme—includes the corollary that it was thought difficult if not impossible to reconstruct a key moment of change in the ministry.

There were still historical studies of Jesus, of course, even by some of the leaders of the form critical movement: Dibelius, Bultmann, and Schmidt.⁵⁷³ But these projects were devoid of any substantive chronology, and had little interest in Jesus' psychological development or change of mind. Such would be typical of the next generation of scholars trained in this form

⁵⁷² Allison, "Secularizing Jesus," *Resurrecting Jesus*, 5. Though this is truer of Germany than anywhere else. So rightly Robinson (at least until his time), *New Quest*, 154 (the first Quest "never really ended in America"). Cf. Reumann, "Lives," 34; Weaver, *Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century*, 73-79, 109-24.

⁵⁷³ Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus* (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1929 [orig. 1926]); Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "Jesus," in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (6 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1929), 3:110-51; Dibelius, *Jesus*.

critical tradition,⁵⁷⁴ such as Käsemann, Bornkamm, Conzelmann, and Robinson.⁵⁷⁵ These critics were more confident than Bultmann (though not necessarily Dibelius) in having something to say about the historical Jesus. But they were convinced that form criticism had demolished any effort to reconstruct the contours of Jesus' career, and so they focused on the nature of his teachings and the significance of a select few activities, irrespective of chronological placement. Here study of Jesus had been relegated to the investigation of isolated historical facts, the "pearls" of the "string."

In addition to atomization, two related issues contributed to the decline of the crisis idea. On the one hand, the either/or debates over eschatology that characterized the last decades of the 19th century and the first of the 20th—that is, *either* present *or* future—was thought by some to be a false alternative.⁵⁷⁶ Indeed, the one-sided "realized eschatology" of C. H. Dodd was in a way a reversion to an earlier time, since many had already concluded that the present and future

⁵⁷⁴ On the so-called "Bultmann School," see William Baird, *From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz* (vol. 3 of *History of New Testament Research*; 3 vols. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 129-94.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. e.g. Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. Irene and Fraser McLuskey with James M. Robinson; New York: Harper & Row, 1960 [orig. 1956]), 13 (the opening sentence of the book: "No one is any longer in the position to write a life of Jesus"), 25 (gospel pericopae do not require "explanation in terms of previous happenings. None is directed at later events for the unfolding of what has gone before"), 53 (the best we can do is glean "historical facts" "to compile the main historically indisputable traits, and to present the rough outlines of Jesus' person and history"). Cf. Tatum, *Quest of Jesus*, 90 ("What resulted was a presentation of Jesus which focused on his words and deeds. Chronology and psychology were of little interest"); Irvin W. Batdorf, "Interpreting Jesus since Bultmann: Selected Paradigms and Their Hermeneutic Matrix," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1984 Seminar Papers* (ed. Kent Harold Richards; SBLSPS 23; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 187-215 at 188.

⁵⁷⁶ Surveys of New Testament scholarship sometimes give the impression of a linear movement here: thoroughgoing eschatology (e.g. Weiss and Schweitzer) → realized eschatology (e.g. Dodd) → a mediating present/future Kingdom (e.g. Kümmel). Cf. Mark Saucy, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (Dallas: Word, 1997), 8-21. But this is inaccurate.

elements in the tradition were adequately attested.⁵⁷⁷ Thus, there was no need to posit a crisis in the ministry to explain a transition from one kind of eschatology to another, as some earlier critics had proposed.⁵⁷⁸ On the other hand, the form critics claimed more readily than their forbearers that early Christians were creative producers of sayings and stories about Jesus. So when tensions in theological outlook or tone were identified—which, for some, included eschatology—the solution was to ascribe the contrary material to the early Church. In fact, identifying such “discontinuity” or “dissimilarity” between Jesus and the post-Easter community became one of the primary tools for authenticating Jesus traditions in the mid to late 20th century.⁵⁷⁹ This approach was similar to the stratification technique of Reimarus as noted in Chapter 4, in which contrary traditions in the Gospels found their bridge not in some crisis event in the life of Jesus, but rather in the subsequent theological developments of his earliest followers in the post-Easter period.

⁵⁷⁷ See Willibald Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology, or, Historical Account of the Teaching of Jesus and of Primitive Christianity According to the New Testament Sources* (trans. Neil Buchanan; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895 [orig. 1891]), 1:51: “It has been supposed, that in order to solve this apparent contradiction in the announcements of Jesus about the kingdom (e.g. present and future), we must distinguish different stages in His doctrinal development....But though we do not in any way deny a gradual development....the riddle is not solved in this way, because it is clear that the kingdom had never appeared in the sense in which from the beginning it had been expected and finally predicted as future. Both views of the kingdom, so far as we can see, run side by side through the teaching of Jesus, nay, they are embraced in one and the same expression.” Cf. also Luis Muirhead, *The Eschatology of Jesus* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1904); Erich Haupt, *Zum Verständnis der eschatologischen Aussagen Jesu in den synoptischen Evangelien* (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1894); Henri Monnier, *La mission historique de Jésus* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1906); Henry L. Jackson, *The Eschatology of Jesus* (London; New York: Macmillan, 1913); Dibelius, *Jesus*, 69.

⁵⁷⁸ See here criticism of the crisis theory on these grounds in Werner Georg Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus* (trans. Dorothea M. Barton from 3rd German ed.; 2nd ed.; SBT 23; London: SCM Press, 1961), 141-55.

⁵⁷⁹ For discussion see Dagmar Winter, “Saving the Quest for Authenticity from the Criterion of Dissimilarity: History and Plausibility,” in Keith and Le Donne, *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, 115-131.

As we will see below, there was substantive pushback against the form critics, especially in Britain, and few today would fully endorse the proposals of early form criticism for our knowledge of Christian origins. But their arguments about the atomized nature of the tradition have been incredibly influential on later scholarship and contributed to the declining popularity of the crisis theory up to the present day.⁵⁸⁰ Because the form critics so convincingly dismissed any investigation of *diachronic* progress in the ministry, subsequent Jesus study has been content with a *synchronic* discussion of sayings, events, and themes in the Gospels.⁵⁸¹ Consequently, the most important Jesus studies the past thirty to forty years have been organized topically not biographically. A few recent examples, chosen randomly:

- Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz's *The Historical Jesus* deals with "Jesus and his Social Relationships," "Jesus' Eschatology," "The Miracles of Jesus," "The Parables of Jesus," and so on, each as focused studies;⁵⁸²
- James D. G. Dunn's *Jesus Remembered* investigates "The Kingdom of God," Jesus' audiences, "The Character of Discipleship," Jesus' "Self-Understanding," and so on, each as focused studies;⁵⁸³
- Maurice Casey's *Jesus of Nazareth* considers "God," "Exorcism and Healing," "Ethical Teaching," and so on, each as focused studies.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁰ On the reception of form criticism, see William R. Telford, "The Pre-Markan Tradition in Recent Research," in *The Four Gospels, 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (eds. Frans van Segbroeck et al.; 3 vols.; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 2:693-723; Christopher Tuckett, "Form Criticism," in *Jesus in Memory: Traditions in Oral and Scribal Perspectives* (eds. Werner H. Kelber and Samuel Byrskog; Baylor: Baylor University Press, 2009), 21-38.

⁵⁸¹ See John P. Meier, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (vol. 1 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 41-42, 408.

⁵⁸² Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*.

⁵⁸³ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁵⁸⁴ Maurice Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth: An Independent Historian's Account of His Life and Teaching* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010).

The collective assumption is that one can discuss, for instance, the meaning of the “kingdom of God,” without much consideration of the course of Jesus’ ministry. Notions of crisis, change of mind, or even any difference in meaning due to the changing context of Jesus’ career, are so far from recent critics’ minds that they find no place in the larger argument. The point here is not to critique but to show how deeply ingrained these form critical assumptions are for current Jesus research. Predictably, then, not only is a Galilean crisis absent from most reconstructions of Jesus, but the very conditions necessary for reconstructing such a crisis event are absent, simply because of the historical approach.

(ii) In the early 20th century to the present the crisis idea has not only been rejected or ignored, however. It has also been defended, albeit in somewhat different form than in the 19th century. Although there are several works that could be considered here, our attention is best focused on four studies that responded to form criticism and yet offered robust defenses of a Galilean crisis in the ministry. It is, in any case, important to recognize the existence of these other works, as it is further reason to doubt the “No Quest” generalization and any notion that the crisis theory perished with Schweitzer’s critique.⁵⁸⁵ But the arguments we find in these four

⁵⁸⁵ See Isaac Bronson Burgess, *The Life of Christ* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908), 109, 142-50; A. T. Robertson, *Epochs in the Life of Jesus: A Study of Development and Struggle in the Messiah’s Work* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 86, 91-92; É. Mangenot, *Les Evangiles Synoptiques* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1911), 170-73, 176-79; W. Sanday, *Outlines of the Life of Christ* (2nd ed.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912 [orig. 1905]), 123-25; R. J. Campbell, *The Life of Christ* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1922), 148, 302-303; Edward Bosworth, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1924); Benjamin W. Bacon, *The Story of Jesus and the Beginnings of the Church* (New York; London: Century Co., 1927), 97-98, 102-104; Joseph Warschauer, *The Historical Life of Christ* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 123-66; James Mackinnon, *The Historic Jesus* (London; New York: Longmans, 1931); F. C. Burkitt, *Jesus Christ: An Historical Outline* (London: Blackie & Son, 1932); Hall Caine, *Life of Christ* (New York: Doubleday, 1938), 366-67, 369, 447, 477, 555; H. D. A. Major, *The Mission and Message of Jesus: An Exposition of the Gospels in the Light of Modern Research* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1938), xxvi, 67-69, 101; S. H. Hooke, *The Kingdom of God in the Experience of Jesus* (London: Gerald Duckworth

studies represent—in both their similarities and differences—the most critical and forcefully argued versions of the crisis theory to emerge in this period.

(a) In 1932, French scholar Maurice Goguel wrote a *Life of Jesus* in which the crisis idea featured prominently. Goguel's "yes, but" response to form criticism⁵⁸⁶ affirmed that the narrative frames of each Gospel were to some extent "artificial creations," and that Mark (the earliest Gospel, in his view) arranged portions of his narrative thematically rather than in historical sequence (esp. the conflicts in Mark 2:1-3:6).⁵⁸⁷ However, for Goguel, this criticism only went so far. In his view, it was still possible, and even necessary,⁵⁸⁸ to come to some knowledge about the course of Jesus' career. His response to the form critics on this point evidently had its foundation in three premises that surface throughout the work: (1) one can still arrange a rough chronology around secure "facts" that have more or less fixed positions in the ministry; (2) the Gospel of Mark has a general "plan" that is not entirely worthless, and sometimes John and the other Synoptics can be used to supplement Mark;⁵⁸⁹ (3) there is a logic to certain themes and episodes in the Gospels that presupposes a historical chronology.

& Co., 1949), 75, 104; Henry Battenhouse, *Christ in the Gospels: An Introduction to his Life and its Meaning* (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), 230-53; Edward W. Bauman, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 56, 75-83. The continuation was probably encouraged by the publication of new editions of Renan, Edersheim, Smith, Farrar, and Fairbairn, among others. Cf. Weaver, *Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century*, 72-73.

⁵⁸⁶ Maurice Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity* (trans. Olive Wyon; 2 vols.; New York: Harper, 1960 [orig. 1932]), 1:18, states that one of his chief goals is to respond to the form critics who fragmented the Gospels and are agnostic about his life.

⁵⁸⁷ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:235. See also 1:10, 136, 146, 148 (use Mark's plan is to be used only "with great caution").

⁵⁸⁸ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:209.

⁵⁸⁹ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:136, 142-43.

The three fixed points of the public ministry included Jesus' move to work independently of John, the final departure from Galilee, and the passion.⁵⁹⁰ Goguel thought the precise order of events between these facts were blurry and impossible to reconstruct in their entirety. But a rough sketch was possible nonetheless.⁵⁹¹ He proposed that Jesus found tremendous success among the Galileans if still occasional conflicts with some of the Jewish leaders. His evidence was the alternating reports of success and conflict in the early chapters of Mark, which he thought was generally reliable (even if the success was exaggerated).⁵⁹² He further claimed that Jesus in this period limited his mission to Israel, spoke nothing of himself as the Messiah, and gave no indications of coming death. His teaching befitted his circumstances and was marked with "pessimism and optimism."⁵⁹³ The "Galilean crisis" changed this situation, even though Goguel refused to point to one single event as "the crisis" itself. He wrote: "It is not possible to fix, even approximately, at what point this crisis in the Galilean ministry occurred. It would be useless to hazard conjecture on this point."⁵⁹⁴ His approach instead was to highlight evidence of increasing opposition to Jesus, as well as the confluence of key themes and episodes in the synoptics that, in some instances, John's Gospel corroborated. Particularly important for him were these: Herod became aware of Jesus' activity (Mark 6:14); Jesus fled an attempt to make

⁵⁹⁰ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:210-11.

⁵⁹¹ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:211: there is "a direct relation between the thought of Jesus and the exterior events of his life."

⁵⁹² Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:332-33: "But even when all this (exaggeration) has been taken into account there are still sufficient integral elements in the story to make us certain that Jesus exercised an influence over the people which went far beyond arousing a simple curiosity."

⁵⁹³ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:312.

⁵⁹⁴ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:310.

him king after the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:15);⁵⁹⁵ there was a “collapse of his influence over the masses” (John 6:66);⁵⁹⁶ the disciples confessed Jesus the Messiah (Mark 8:27-30). “The result of the Galilean crisis,” Goguel concluded, “was that Jesus was left with a very small group of loyal and faithful disciples.”⁵⁹⁷ Goguel further argued that Jesus’ teaching changed accordingly. He began speaking of division, casting fire on the earth, and the need for his “efficacious” death.⁵⁹⁸

For Goguel, therefore, form criticism challenged the rules of the game, but the game need not be abandoned. New questions about the reliability of the Gospel chronologies required not a retreat to skepticism, but simply a different approach. In his view, one could use slightly different historical means than those of the 19th-century Quest to achieve broadly similar ends. In this respect Goguel is notably more reserved in making claims about the order of events in the ministry (even though he is still quite confident), and in general he casts his net wider than earlier critics. His Galilean crisis is not one event but something of a blurry transition that finds witness in evidence of various kinds. In any case, the role of these particular episodes and themes for Goguel’s crisis has close parallels in many of the Lives of Jesus discussed in Chapter 4. Moreover, Goguel’s crisis also attempted to resolve tensions in the tradition, as he positioned some of Jesus’ polemical sayings and teachings about his death “after” the crisis. So there is much continuity here, both in terms of form and content.

⁵⁹⁵ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:144 (“a supreme attempt of Jesus to win the people. His efforts failed....The failure of the Galilean ministry was complete”).

⁵⁹⁶ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:377. See also 2:364, 369.

⁵⁹⁷ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:385. Cf. here also Ernest W. Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 229-32.

⁵⁹⁸ Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:387-92.

Goguel had close allies in Britain where many shared his skepticism of the form critical paradigm and its more radical implications for Jesus research. Three other prominent critics also responded to the German form critics, continued to write about the historical Jesus, and proposed some Galilean crisis in the ministry.⁵⁹⁹

(b) C. H. Dodd's work on Jesus and the crisis did not appear until late in his career, but the ideas were already taking shape in his famous 1932 article in *Expository Times*, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative."⁶⁰⁰ Dodd here responded to Schmidt's claim that Mark compiled his narrative from free floating pericopae and created *Sammelberichte* which tell us nothing about the historical ministry.⁶⁰¹ Dodd, as Goguel, accepted the basic assumption that "the main stuff of the Gospel is reducible to short narrative units."⁶⁰² But he questioned the further claim that Mark's order was arbitrary. Dodd noted that even Schmidt admitted that the Passion Narrative and the "Day at Capernaum" (Mark 1:21-39) "represent an original historical sequence."⁶⁰³ So there were some exceptions. Dodd also thought it likely, both on logical and evidential grounds, that broad outlines of the ministry were integral to the apostolic preaching.⁶⁰⁴ He further contended that certain thematic emphases in the narratives may well be historical and

⁵⁹⁹ Weaver, *Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century*, 144, put it nicely: in Britain form criticism was "being absorbed, but it was not merely being swallowed." Cf. R. H. Lightfoot, "Form Criticism and Gospel Study," *ExpT* 53 (1942): 51-54.

⁶⁰⁰ C. H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative," *ExpT* 43 (1931-32): 396-400.

⁶⁰¹ Dodd, "Framework of the Gospel Narrative," 396.

⁶⁰² Dodd, "Framework of the Gospel Narrative," 396.

⁶⁰³ Dodd, "Framework of the Gospel Narrative," 397.

⁶⁰⁴ Dodd, "Framework of the Gospel Narrative," 397, 399. Dodd here references Dibelius himself, who argued that 1 Cor 11:23-25; 15:1-7; Acts 10:37-41; 13:23-31 evidence the nature of the oral tradition.

preserve “an inner connexion...grounded in the facts themselves.”⁶⁰⁵ So, for instance, he thought it reasonable that Jesus would dwell on his passion when heading to Jerusalem for his final Passover, and that there was a time in the ministry characterized by “the obdurancy of the people of Galilee.” He wrote about the Galilean woes: “This utterance belongs to some particular occasion, and it looks back on a period of unfruitful work in Galilee which is now regarded as closed.”⁶⁰⁶

Dodd’s argument was not a plea to return to the 19th-century Quest, but only that one could justifiably trust the “broad lines” of Mark’s framework and be able to trace therein “movement and development.”⁶⁰⁷ His arguments found support in the work of T. W. Manson and others of his generation.⁶⁰⁸ Dodd would develop the implications of these ideas in *The Founder of Christianity*, which appeared some 40 years later. Here Dodd argued that Jesus, believing himself to be the Messiah of Israel as described in Isaiah’s “Servant” passages, began his ministry by proclaiming to Israel the presence of the kingdom of God.⁶⁰⁹ As he called individuals to participate in a new eschatological community, he demanded repentance and faith in him and

⁶⁰⁵ Dodd, “Framework of the Gospel Narrative,” 398.

⁶⁰⁶ Dodd, “Framework of the Gospel Narrative,” 398.

⁶⁰⁷ Dodd, “Framework of the Gospel Narrative,” 400.

⁶⁰⁸ See esp. T. W. Manson’s essay “Is it Possible to Write a Life of Christ?,” *ExpT* 53 (1941-42): 248-51. He argued in *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies in Its Form and Content* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967 [orig. 1931]), 13, that Jesus’ mission fell “into periods” around Peter’s confession, and that before Peter’s confession Jesus spoke of the Kingdom “coming,” but after he spoke of “entering” the Kingdom (205-06). In his *The Servant-Messiah: A Study in the Public Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 68-71, he endorses the notion of the “Galilean spring-time” and a “crisis” after the feeding of the five thousand. For a review of Manson’s contributions to the Quest, see Morna D. Hooker, “T. W. Manson and the Twentieth-century Search for Jesus,” *BJRL* 86 (2004): 77-98.

⁶⁰⁹ C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (Great Britain: William Collins Sons, 1971), 114, 134.

his mission. But despite initial popularity, he was routinely misunderstood to be a quasi-Zealot leader. For Dodd, opposition to Jesus' mission reached a tipping point after the feeding of the five thousand. This event, which Dodd described as "something like a last appeal to the Galileans to understand and embrace his true purpose," ultimately "failed."⁶¹⁰ Instead of embracing Jesus' vision for the kingdom, the people tried to make him king by force, which made it impossible for Jesus to continue his ministry in the same way.⁶¹¹ He did not abandon his appeal to Israel as a whole, "but it now had to be made on different lines."⁶¹² Jesus decided that he must leave Galilee to preach in Jerusalem, and he expected to lose his life doing so.⁶¹³

(c) Another interesting and largely ignored study is Cecil J. Cadoux's *Historic Mission of Jesus* (1941). Cadoux argued that Jesus began his ministry with the expectation that he would be successful and welcomed as the Messiah. But the failure of the people to accept his message changed this hope. Of the many arguments that Cadoux made throughout the work, most we have seen frequently in this study already. He argued, for instance: (1) it would be oddly fatalistic for Jesus not to expect success, given his belief to be the Messiah of Israel;⁶¹⁴ (2) there are clear statements of "optimism" in the tradition that likely reflect an early period of the ministry (e.g. the bridegroom is here [Mark 2:19]; parable of the Sower and abundance [Mark 4:8]; binding the strong man [Mark 3:22-27]; Satan falling from heaven [Luke 10:18]); (3) all the

⁶¹⁰ Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 141.

⁶¹¹ Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 143. Dodd calls this event "the crisis in Galilee." See also his discussion in *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 212-22.

⁶¹² Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 144.

⁶¹³ Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 145, 151.

⁶¹⁴ Cecil J. Cadoux, *The Historic Mission of Jesus* (London and Redhill: Lutterworth Press, 1941), 187.

references to the passion occur after Caesarea Philippi;⁶¹⁵ (4) there is evidence of growing opposition in the ministry;⁶¹⁶ (5) the Galilean woes and lament over Jerusalem make plain his disappointment: “Why the tears shed and the agonized regret...if the whole tragic event was from the first a foregone conclusion?”⁶¹⁷

To Cadoux’s mind, Jesus had hoped to inaugurate his kingdom on earth not by violence but by winning over the enemies of Israel by acts of love (“to submit meekly for the time being to servitude and injustice”).⁶¹⁸ But once this plan was rejected by Israel, Jesus expected a different outcome: he would be killed as a martyr. Cadoux believed that Jesus used Isa 53 to make sense of his rejection and impending death, which meant “His surrender to death was to effect in some way what his ministry among men had failed to effect.”⁶¹⁹ As had Goguel, and again betraying the influence of the form critics, Cadoux concluded that it was impossible to know exactly when the significant change of mind occurred. He figured that it was probably a gradual realization.⁶²⁰

(d) We must also mention here Vincent Taylor’s *Life and Ministry of Jesus*. Even more readily than Goguel (especially), Dodd, or Cadoux, Taylor shared the form critics’ skepticism of the Gospel framework. He concluded one essay by claiming that “every attempt to write a Life

⁶¹⁵ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 191, admits to two exceptions, but claims they were misplaced by the Evangelist.

⁶¹⁶ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 251-52.

⁶¹⁷ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 251.

⁶¹⁸ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 173.

⁶¹⁹ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 263.

⁶²⁰ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 184.

of Christ will be a failure.”⁶²¹ But there remained both incentive and reward for trying. Taylor resembled Goguel in his belief that some points in the ministry were better fixed than others and could serve as linchpins. Peter’s confession was one, which Taylor called “the watershed of the whole.”⁶²² Mark’s Gospel contained “many gaps” in its chronology, but he still regarded the general sketch to be “a convincing summary of the outstanding events in the life of Jesus.”⁶²³

Taylor’s proposal was that, despite a generally consistent proclamation about a present-yet-future kingdom,⁶²⁴ Jesus’ ministry and message had some twists and turns. Mark’s conflict stories in 2:1-3:6 are “a pre-Gospel topical compilation” and not in historical order, but they accurately portray the steady increase of opposition to Jesus from the religious leaders.⁶²⁵ Taylor highlighted Jesus’ rejection from Nazareth, which further showed “the tide of criticism and hostility to which he was exposed.”⁶²⁶ When Jesus sent out the Twelve, he predicted the imminent coming of the Son of Man and the setting up of the messianic community (Matt 10:23). But as Schweitzer had argued, this hope “failed” to materialize, which forced Jesus into

⁶²¹ Vincent Taylor, “Is It Possible to Write a Life of Christ?: Some Aspects of the Modern Problem,” *ExpT* 53 (1941-42): 61-65 at 65. Cf. idem, *The Life and Ministry of Jesus* (Nashville: Abingdon, n.d.), 14, 26 (Mark’s “outline is broken”).

⁶²² Taylor, “Is it Possible to Write a Life of Christ?,” 63.

⁶²³ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 49. The narrative peculiar to Matthew is “the least valuable part of the Synoptic tradition” (30). And of the historical value of John’s, there is “little indeed” (33).

⁶²⁴ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 73. However, Taylor thought that he could detect a subtle transcendentalizing of the Kingdom throughout the ministry: imminence in Mark 1:15; presence in Luke 11:20; prayers for the Kingdom to come in Matt 6:10; expectation that some will “not taste death” in Mark 9:1; and “no one knows the day or hour” in Mark 13:32. See esp. 83.

⁶²⁵ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 93 (“steadily the opposition of the hierarchy to Jesus grew”).

⁶²⁶ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 112.

“a deeper interpretation of the doctrine of the Son of man.”⁶²⁷ Jesus found his circumstances predicted in Isa 53 and determined it necessary to suffer and die.⁶²⁸ Taylor suspected that the use of Isa 6 to explain the teaching in parables (Mark 4:12), as well as the Galilean woes, may be from such a late period in the ministry.⁶²⁹ In the end, it was “the failure of the Galilean ministry” that drove Jesus to Tyre and then to Caesarea Philippi, where Peter’s confession emboldened him to travel to Jerusalem and proclaim his message there.⁶³⁰

To integrate these works into the wider aims of this study, a few summarizing comments are in order. First, the impact of form criticism is evident on all of these works and their proposals for a crisis in the ministry. This is most evident in the way that all accept, though to varying degrees, theories about the atomized nature of the Gospel tradition. Here Goguel was probably the least accepting, Cadoux the most. But we see in all a reticence, at least in word, to rely too much on any one Gospel chronology. Even though most followed Mark’s general outline and regarded the literary division of Mark at chapters 6-8 (esp. Peter’s confession) to have some historical traction, it was greatly toned down in comparison to earlier Lives of Jesus.

⁶²⁷ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 117-18. Further: “What Jesus expected, and what he sent forth the Twelve to announce, was the speedy coming of the rule of God and the setting up of the messianic community of the Son of man. It was this expectation, I think, that he assured the Twelve that they would not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of man would be [sic] come (Matt. 10:32)” (115).

⁶²⁸ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 122. Though Taylor disputed the notion that Jesus’ popularity declined. He found no evidence for this. The bigger problem, to Taylor’s mind, was that the people did not listen to Jesus’ message and transform their behavior accordingly: “We are right to take every circumstance into account which may bear upon an undeniable change in the plans of Jesus at this time; but we go seriously astray unless we place first in importance not his personal safety, nor counsels of prudence, but the failure of the people of Galilee to respond to the message and demand of the Kingdom as Jesus preached it” (127).

⁶²⁹ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 104. On the Galilean woes: “it is impossible, with any conviction, to assign these words to the period before the mission of the Twelve; they disclose the situation in Galilee as it was seen at some point after that event” (121).

⁶³⁰ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 139.

The most obvious indicator of change on this point is that Goguel and his colleagues found it necessary to mount further arguments (even if they were general or introductory ones) for their placement of particular pericopae in the ministry, whereas 19th-century critics such as Keim did not always offer such explanations.

Secondly, despite important changes in 20th-century historical criticism, we observe in these works a recycling of by now familiar interpretive moves. In particular, we find very similar portrayals (or caricatures) of Judaism and messianism that are instrumental in the disappointment of Jesus' hopes; we find the generalization of Jesus having early success and growing opposition throughout the ministry; we find critics inferring similar backstories to particular pericopae, especially the Galilean woes and many of the sayings about judgment; we find routine "psychologizations" of the gaps between pericopae in the attempt to forge connections among the movements of Jesus (esp. significant here is John 6:15, 66); and we find that a crisis often attempts to bridge tensions in the tradition. Most notable here is the way that some of these critics placed the reflections on and/or anticipations of Jesus' death—often informed by Isa 53 and some atonement theology—*after* the crisis and separate from his earlier and more optimistic ethical teaching about the coming/present kingdom.

Finally, and in a comparable line of thought, these works propose Galilean crises that, despite their differences, share with one another similar functions for their overall reconstructions. In particular, the notion of change or transition was helpful for ordering the ministry of Jesus and finding coherence in the seemingly diverse and potentially contradictory data in the Gospel tradition. At this point we find a rather striking parallel to the role of the crisis theory posed by Karl Hase. For Hase's periodization of the ministry, as noted in Chapter 4, responded to Reimarus' attempt to stratify Gospel material between the life of Jesus and the life

of the early Church. Hase argued, against Reimarus, that the change from a political to a spiritual conception of the kingdom could have occurred during Jesus' own ministry. Hase offered, in effect, a narrativel or biographical harmonization of these different traditions. One could say, then, that Goguel and his colleagues had their own Reimarus in Bultmann and other radical form critics who similarly stratified material between the life of Jesus and the life of the early Church. The upshot of their response, similar to that of Hase, was a narrative rearrangement of the tradition that included the necessary *Sitz im Leben Jesu* to accommodate contrariness and/or different theological emphases. In particular, what Bultmann and others identified as *dissimilarity* between Jesus and the early church over the theological significance of his death, these critics historicized in the ministry of Jesus via a Galilean crisis. There is, therefore, an interesting parallel between the way that Hase's crisis theory responded to Reimarus, and the way that these 20th-century works responded to form criticism.

Despite the high profile names attached to these four studies of Jesus, few found them convincing. What would win the day was Jesus research that focused on specific episodes in the Gospels and/or important themes in the tradition. Dodd and Taylor in particular, the most prolific of the bunch, would be remembered for other contributions to New Testament study, not for their ideas about a Galilean crisis.

But the front has not been all quiet since then. A handful of more recent studies have tried to resurrect the idea, though many of their arguments, as we can now clearly see, are hardly "new." Four in particular are worthy of discussion.⁶³¹

⁶³¹ A few additional studies will not be discussed here; see Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 1968), 364-65 (Excursus 9 on "Die Krise des galiläischen Wirkens Jesu"); Xavier Léon-Dufour, *The Gospels and the Jesus of History* (ed. and trans. John McHugh; New York et al.: Desclee, 1968 [1963]), esp. 221 (John 6:15 and antagonism from Herod are important, caused a change in Jesus' view); Edward

(a) In 1973, Franz Mussner wrote an important essay with a suggestive title: “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?”⁶³² Channeling Keim, and referring to a “Galilean springtime,” Mussner ultimately answered in the affirmative. He granted the atomistic nature of the tradition and the theological motives for the arrangement of Mark’s Gospel more readily than Goguel and those discussed above. But he still thought it conspicuous, and not entirely void of historical significance, that references to Jesus’ large following reduced after Mark 7.⁶³³ He also claimed to find evidence of success and failure. On the one hand, the announcement of salvation in Mark 1:15, he concluded, assumes that Jesus made an offer to Israel which was connected to the acceptance of his message.⁶³⁴ On the other, and in tension with this offer, the Galilean woes,⁶³⁵ and other sayings of polemic and judgment in Q, presuppose rejection. The tension must reflect some change in the external circumstances of Jesus’ career. Mussner further argued that the sending of the Twelve was an important transition in the ministry, since upon returning from this failed mission there was a “change in function” of the Twelve: they now appeared as the tribes

Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (trans. Hubert Hoskins; New York: Seabury Press, 1979 [orig. 1974]), 295-96 (some sayings of Jesus in Mark and Q “point in much the same direction of historically concrete experiences of failure”), 297 (on John 6:15), 306 (“There would have been an element of play-acting about his commitment to his message of *metanoia* and the rule of God, if he had thought and known from the very start that salvation would come only in consequence of his death. That death only comes in prospect as a result of his preaching and mode of life, which constituted an offer of salvation, having been rejected”), 364; Armand Puig I Tàrrach, *Jesus: A Biography* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), esp. 292-303.

⁶³² Franz Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” in *Orientierung an Jesus: Zur Theologie der Synoptiker* (ed. Paul Hoffmann; Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1973), 238-52.

⁶³³ Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 240-41.

⁶³⁴ Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 242.

⁶³⁵ Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 247 (the woe on Galilean cities dates after the commissioning of the Twelve, when Jesus’ ministry in Galilee was largely finished)

reunited and a “kernel of the coming saved community of the Messiah Jesus.”⁶³⁶ Finally, and similar to some of the studies above, Mussner identified a change in Jesus’ self conception: Jesus had a “neuen Bewußteinsstufe” in his final journey to Jerusalem;⁶³⁷ he began to predict further rejection; he referred to himself not just as an eschatological prophet of God (as in his initial activity of proclaiming the kingdom) but as the suffering Messiah. All of this, Mussner claimed, was probably not an immediate change that can be located chronologically, but was rather a process.⁶³⁸

(b) Ulrich Luz took a slightly different approach than Mussner in a significant essay on why Jesus went up to Jerusalem for his final Passover.⁶³⁹ He agreed that Jesus’ move away Galilee implied a situation of rejection. Luz inferred this backstory behind several logia—particularly Jesus’ words of judgment and his comments on hostility and martyrdom—which he claimed presuppose a deteriorating confrontation with Israel that was not possible at the beginning of the ministry.⁶⁴⁰ Here Luz nodded in approval to the 19th-century idea (as he says)

⁶³⁶ Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 248. The argument that Jesus formed his disciples into the remnant of Israel on account of his rejection was advanced in a series of studies by Ferdinand Kattenbusch. See “Der Quellort der Kirchenidee,” in *Festgabe von Fachgenossen und Freunden A. von Harnack zum siebzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1921), 143-72; idem, “Der Spruch über Petrus und die Kirche bei Matthäus,” *TSK* 94 (1922): 96-131. See also Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, 324.

⁶³⁷ Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 249. See also on this Ben Meyer, *Christus Faber: The Master Builder and the House of God* (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1992), 33-36.

⁶³⁸ Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 250.

⁶³⁹ Ulrich Luz, “Warum zog Jesus nach Jerusalem?,” in *Der historische Jesus: Tendenzen und Perspektiven der gegenwärtigen Forschung* (eds. Jens Schröter and Ralph Brucker; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2002), 409-429.

⁶⁴⁰ Luz, “Warum zog Jesus nach Jerusalem?,” 411.

that Jesus' ministry had "zwei kontrastierenden Epochen."⁶⁴¹ But Luz further proposed on the basis of Luke 12:49-53 (e.g. "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No! I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided...") that Jesus interpreted his rejection (and expected martyrdom) as participation in the eschatological tribulation.⁶⁴² His conclusion, then, expressly recalled Albert Schweitzer's idea that Jesus left Galilee for Jerusalem with "eine bestimmte Absicht"⁶⁴³ and expected to die "for many."⁶⁴⁴

(c) Barry Smith's monograph, *Jesus' Twofold Teaching about the Kingdom of God* (2009), also deserves mention here. While Mussner and Luz were aware of the parallel between their arguments and 19th-century Jesus research, Smith believed that his argument for two periods in the ministry set a new course for Jesus studies (as noted in the Introduction).⁶⁴⁵

Smith's thesis intended to correct the common practice of grouping all of Jesus' sayings about the kingdom of God together when trying to understand what he meant. Smith contended that Jesus' kingdom teachings need to be separated to reflect the two different "contexts" in which he spoke. He labeled an earlier period the "non-rejection context," and a later one the "rejection context." In the former, Jesus made a conditional offer to Israel. He saw the kingdom

⁶⁴¹ Luz, "Warum zog Jesus nach Jerusalem?," 416, 419. He also refers to Mussner.

⁶⁴² Luz, "Warum zog Jesus nach Jerusalem?," 424-25.

⁶⁴³ Luz, "Warum zog Jesus nach Jerusalem?," 426.

⁶⁴⁴ Luz here agrees with Schweitzer that Jesus interpreted his death in light of the coming messianic woes, but doubts that Jesus thought that he could force the end and save his followers.

⁶⁴⁵ However, Smith, *Jesus' Twofold Teaching*, 185 note 1, mentions Mussner. For a similar approach to Smith's, though on a smaller scale, see Saucy, *Kingdom of God*, 318-39.

of God as present in its “initial stages,”⁶⁴⁶ evident in his fellowship with sinners and the outcast, healings, and exorcisms. In the later “rejection context,” however, Jesus realized that his mission to Israel had failed. Here Jesus spoke of the temple’s destruction on account of the disobedience of “this generation,” established a new community among his followers, spoke of offering the kingdom to Gentiles, and began (for the first time) to anticipate his death and its soteriological significance. Throughout the study Smith betrays his assumptions about the atomistic nature of the Gospel tradition, since he routinely (and rather easily) readjusts the position of Jesus’ sayings and deeds to fit the “context” that he believes they presuppose.⁶⁴⁷

(d) We must also mention the recent contributions of the late Eckhard Rau, which have unfortunately received little notice in English speaking scholarship. In his 2000 monograph *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, Rau argued that the 19th-century Galilean crisis idea deserves more attention than it has been given.⁶⁴⁸ One reason was that, in his investigation of Jesus’ conflict with the Pharisees, he claimed to identify two kinds of sayings: some were amiable, while others held them liable for judgment. He thought it plausible that each presupposed different circumstances and stemmed from different situations in the ministry.⁶⁴⁹ He

⁶⁴⁶ Smith, *Jesus’ Twofold Teaching*, 108.

⁶⁴⁷ At one point Smith, *Jesus’ Twofold Teaching*, 57, concludes the Zacchaeus story (Luke 19:1-10) actually occurred in the “non-rejection context,” which renders Luke’s placement in Jericho right before Passover both entirely misleading and entirely inconsequential for historicity and interpretation of the episode. This will be considered more below.

⁶⁴⁸ See Eckhard Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern: eine methodenkritische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 159, where he mentions the “Notwendigkeit” “einer Neuaufnahme der Frage nach dem Leben Jesu ” from the 19th century.

⁶⁴⁹ Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 163, 165. Cf. idem, “Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung: Versuch eines Bruckenschlags,” *ETL* 84 (2006): 373-403 at 376 (the later sayings, which hold them responsible to judgment, address them as guilty). Rau’s view on conflict with the Pharisees as a key to Jesus’ rejection in Galilee resembles the earlier arguments

was also interested in the crisis idea for methodological reasons. His book challenged what he called the “kriteriologische Modell” of Jesus studies that marginalized the role of inference, imagination, and even the subjectivity of the interpreter in historiography.⁶⁵⁰ In some cases, he proposed, historical imagination was required to trace the biographical implications of Jesus’ words.⁶⁵¹ Rau would see the intuitive and narrativ reading strategies explored in prior chapters to contain a valuable lesson.

Rau further developed these insights in subsequent studies. He intended to present his full case in a monograph that he was unable to finish. His general case, however, was that several logia imply that Jesus experienced rejection in Galilee that prompted his departure to Jerusalem and initiated reflection on his impending death. Rau relied mostly on inferring backstories to the words of Jesus. In fact, he characterized as “Obsolet” the 19th-century attempt to reconstruct a Galilean crisis on the basis of the “Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu,” and yet “not obsolete is the construction of a framework which is at first achieved exclusively from analysis of the words of Jesus.”⁶⁵² He marshaled the usual evidence. He argued for the authenticity of the Galilean woes, and assumed the much repeated line that they make no sense at an early point in the Galilean

of Michael Grant on the “failure” of Jesus; see *Jesus: An Historian’s Review of the Gospels* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1977), 111-33.

⁶⁵⁰ Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 49, 74-75.

⁶⁵¹ Cf. e.g. Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 161, 163: he criticizes Marius Reiser and Jürgen Becker who, while giving much attention to Jesus’ proclamation of judgment, and even concluding that rejection may have intensified the message, do not fully integrate those insights into the rest of their work. For Reiser, Rau claims, it is “surprising” that his presentation of the judgment material “has no further consequences” for his overall portrait.

⁶⁵² Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 159. See also idem, “Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung,” 375, 397.

ministry.⁶⁵³ He also focused on the polemic against “this generation” in Q, arguing that these statements also go back to Jesus and presuppose “eine Zäsur” in the ministry.⁶⁵⁴ Rau’s interest in the “this generation” sayings extended to the profile of Jesus’ proclamation of judgment in Q, which he thought also presupposed a situation of rejection.⁶⁵⁵ Other data significant for the 19th-century Lives—such as weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 13:34-35 and par.; 19:41-44) and the Beelzebul controversy (Mark 3:22-27)—were also incorporated.⁶⁵⁶

Rau went beyond his predecessors in one important area. He alleged that both Mark and Q preserved the crisis in Galilee as a historical “event” in the sense proposed by Lucian Holscher: “the common reference point of many narratives that can be told about it.”⁶⁵⁷ Here memory of the “event” of Jesus’ rejection became the reference point for narratives in Q and in Mark in different ways: in Q the rejection is cause to seek new followers in Israel (Q 7:1-10),

⁶⁵³ See Eckhard Rau, “Die Ablehnung Jesu durch ‘dieses Geschlecht’: Ein tiefgreifendes Ereignis in der Sicht der Logienquelle und des Markusevangeliums,” *ETL* 87 (2011): 57-87 at 70 (“Die Ablehnung Jesu, auf die dabei direkt oder indirekt abgehoben wird, bezieht sich auf das Gesamtspektrum seines Wirkens”), 83 (the woes assume not a onetime event but a “process” “dessen Verlauf im Einzelnen prinzipiell unzugänglich ist”). See also idem, “Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung,” 378; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 241-44.

⁶⁵⁴ Rau, “Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung,” 374, also 388; idem, “Die Ablehnung Jesu,” 59, 85; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 21, 245-47.

⁶⁵⁵ Here Rau is deeply indebted to the work of Athanasius Polag, who will be considered below. Cf. Athanasius Polag, “Historische Bemerkungen zum Leben Jesu,” *Lebendiges Zeugnis* 26 (1971): 33-46. Cf. Rau “Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung,” 374-76, 401; idem, “Die Ablehnung Jesu,” 83; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 82-84, 91-94, 101-104.

⁶⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. Rau, “Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung,” 387 (Q 13:34 “looks back” at Jesus’ rejection and presents it “in continuity with the entire history of God with Israel”; it also provides “einen realistischeren Einblick” into the proclamation of Jesus); 391 (on Beelzebul).

⁶⁵⁷ See Lucian Holscher, “The New Annalistic: A Sketch of a Theory of History,” *History and Theory* 36 (1997): 317-335.

and in Mark it is cause to depart Galilee and minister to Gentiles (Mark 7:1-30).⁶⁵⁸ For Rau, then, our evidence for Jesus' rejection in Galilee is impressionistic and not precise, for our sources have taken the memory in new directions. Rau's pitch melded certain form critical perspectives (e.g. the affirmation of the atomistic nature of the tradition and skepticism about the reliability of the Gospel chronology) and postmodern developments in historiography and memory studies.

In addition to these studies, one could mention others which pose isolated reflections about the framework of his career and even the impact of rejection on his teaching.⁶⁵⁹ But few draw from these insights larger conclusions about the course of Jesus' Galilean ministry. So we can end with this: the Galilean crisis idea has not wholly disappeared from historical Jesus scholarship, even if its proponents are few.

5.3. THE CRISIS THEORY AND THE "Q PEOPLE"

In light of our interest in reception history and the interpretive moves behind the crisis theory, we must consider one final and rather striking case: New Testament scholarship has continued to mirror the crisis idea in the reconstruction of the document "Q" and the social history of the people/group that produced it.

It was emphasized above that form criticism contributed to the decline in popularity of the crisis theory in the 20th century to the present. But it was also adduced that, because form criticism was not fundamentally a tool for interpretation, the approach allowed for continuity with 19th-century questers concerning the treatment of certain pericopae and themes in the

⁶⁵⁸ See Rau, "Die Ablehnung Jesu," 59, 83; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 258-60. For Jesus, Rau believes, the crisis was cause to leave Galilee and travel to Jerusalem. He is unsure if Luz is correct in his view that Jesus went to Jerusalem expecting to die ("Die Ablehnung Jesu," 87).

⁶⁵⁹ These studies will feature into subsequent arguments as necessary.

Gospels. In fact, many 20th-century researches noted such parallels and charged that form critics had replaced the Quest of the historical Jesus with the Quest of the early Christian community. The point was often made in critique, as though it were disingenuous for skepticism of the Quest for Jesus to find solace in (an even more speculative) Quest for the community that consecrated him. T. W. Manson wrote: “It is not higher criticism but the higher credulity that boggles at a verse of Mark and swallows without a qualm pages of pure conjecture about the primitive Christians’ psychology and its workings on the pre-literary tradition.”⁶⁶⁰

In any case, form criticism deeply impacted research on Q, and so it is no coincidence, I submit, that Q studies evidence the same discontinuity and continuity with prior Lives of Jesus concerning a Galilean crisis. More specifically: Q researchers would shift their interest from Q as a witness to the historical Jesus to Q as a witness to an early Christian community, but, at the same time, the reconstruction of the beliefs and social history of that group would often trace the contours of old biographies of Jesus.⁶⁶¹

Again Bultmann looms large here. Earlier 19th-century and even early 20th-century studies of Q by the likes of Weisse, Holtzmann, Harnack, and even Jülicher had regarded the study of Q an asset for the Quest of the historical Jesus.⁶⁶² Unsurprisingly, then, Q was generally regarded as a collection of sayings of Jesus with little theological shaping or redactional

⁶⁶⁰ Manson, “Is it Possible to Write a Life of Christ?,” 249.

⁶⁶¹ For some reflections along these lines, see Allison, “The Problem of Audience,” *Resurrecting Jesus*, 27-55 at 54-55 note 75; idem, “It Don’t Come Easy: A History of Disillusionment,” in Keith and Le Donne, *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, 186-199 at 190.

⁶⁶² Cf. Weisse, *Die evangelische Geschichte*, 1:85-56, 83; H. J. Holtzmann, *Die synoptischen Evangelien: Ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1863), 128; Adolf Jülicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (5th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1906 [orig. 1900]), 311-16; Adolf von Harnack, *Sprüche und Reden Jesu* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907).

interference. But this approach and conclusion would bend over time to fit new paradigms,⁶⁶³ including form critical ones. An essay by Bultmann in 1913 bespeaks this development, wherein he characteristically focused on the community responsible for producing Q rather than the historical Jesus.⁶⁶⁴ Bultmann did not attempt to write a social history of the Q people, nor did he attempt to stratify Q—two later endeavors that would mirror the crisis theory. But his insights would contribute to such developments. For instance, Bultmann not only identified theological tensions in Q, he commented on precisely the same tensions that many late 19th-century questers had used to periodize the ministry of Jesus. Bultmann spied a troubled relationship between eschatology and wisdom in Q. He thought eschatology pervaded the document but in some material eschatology is “completely missing, or admonitions...are motivated purely by the idea of love.”⁶⁶⁵ His explanation was that Q reflected the conflicting and competing theological commitments of the early Church. Thus his historical solution differed from the Lives of Jesus not so much in its recognition of the problem (e.g. theological tensions in our sources), but in the proposed solution to it. For Bultmann, the tensions do not stem from different periods in the life of Jesus, or different redactional strata in Q, but simply messy ecclesiology after Easter. Also significant is this: some material in Q, Bultmann thought, was characterized by a “tone of

⁶⁶³ Important here: P. Wernle, *Die synoptischen Frage* (Leipzig; Tübingen: Mohr, 1899), 228-30 (Q was formed according to the catechetical interests of the later Church, and underwent a Judaizing redaction); Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, 73-89 (Q was dependent on Mark and presupposed Mark’s passion kerygma).

⁶⁶⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, “Was lässt die Spruchquelle über die Urgemeinde erkennen?,” *Oldenburgische Kirchenblatt* 19 (1913): 35-37, 41-44. I was unable to access an original copy of this article. An English translation has been made available by John Kloppenborg: “What the Saying Source Reveals about the Early Church,” in *The Shape of Q: Signal Essays on the Sayings Gospel* (ed. John Kloppenborg; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 23-35.

⁶⁶⁵ Bultmann, “What the Saying Source Reveals,” 28.

hostility”—such as the sending discourse and the Galilean woes—which “gives the impression of having arisen...from the sad experiences of resistance.”⁶⁶⁶

After Bultmann, critics would further focus the study of Q around the people who produced the text and outline more clearly that group’s theology, communal identity, and even social history. Something of a snowball effect ensued: focus on the community(ies) behind Q led to further study of that group(s)’s unique theological profile,⁶⁶⁷ which led to claims that Q had its own distinct kerygma (independent of the Pauline kerygma and the canonical Gospels),⁶⁶⁸ which led to even more detailed proposals about the social history of the Q people and the development of their theology. Parallels to the crisis theory sharpened.

A few studies are worth mentioning at this juncture. Helmut Koester, one of Bultmann’s last students, further investigated the “tension” between wisdom and eschatology in Q that Bultmann had noted and came to a different explanation. Whereas Bultmann pointed to diversity in the early Christian kerygma, Koester concluded that the eschatological material in Q constituted a “secondary redaction of an older wisdom book.”⁶⁶⁹ Thus he hypothesized that an earlier version of Q existed “in which the apocalyptic expectation of the Son of Man was

⁶⁶⁶ Bultmann, “What the Saying Source Reveals,” 32.

⁶⁶⁷ Cf. T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949), 39-148 (Q has a fourfold literary structure, and intends to supplement the passion kerygma with ethical teaching).

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. esp. Heinz E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. Dorothea M. Barton; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965 [orig. 1959]): Q had nothing to do with the Markan passion kerygma and developed its own distinctive Son of Man Christology. Tödt did not isolate any redactional stratum/a in Q. Cf. Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. Bertram Lee Woolf; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, n.d. [orig. 1919]), 243-45.

⁶⁶⁹ Helmut Koester, “Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels,” *HTR* 73 (1980): 105-30 at 113. Koester thought the “sayings gospel” was the “most original” genre of the Jesus tradition and closest to the historical Jesus. See idem, “GNOMAI DIAPHOROI: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity,” in *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 114-57 at 135.

missing, and in which Jesus' radicalized eschatology of the kingdom and his revelation of divine wisdom in his own words were dominant motifs."⁶⁷⁰ He supposed that the words about the coming of the Son of Man and the judgment on "this generation" in Q stem from post-Easter Christian prophets who were involved in disputes with their Jewish contemporaries. This solution is nearer the 19th-century crisis theory, in both form and content, as it breaks down a tension between wisdom and eschatology and puts one before the other sequentially in time.

Another important study was Dieter Lührmann's *Redaktion der Logienquelle*. Lührmann is sometimes credited, and not unfairly, with offering the most sophisticated redaction critical study of Q to date.⁶⁷¹ His objective was to investigate the collecting ("Sammlung") of earlier independent traditions by taking note of certain literary signals (seams, grammatical shifts, etc.), as well as to identify the more intentional redaction ("Redaktion") of those materials in the final form of Q.⁶⁷² Thus his argument was not about tradition-historical provenance (so he leaves open the possibility that the judgment material may come from Jesus),⁶⁷³ but rather the literary compilation of Q. In any case, the conclusion of his investigation was that "the most important redactional motifs are the opposition to Israel and the announcement of judgment."⁶⁷⁴ That is, in Lührmann's estimation, the polemic against "this generation" and the judgment material

⁶⁷⁰ Helmut Koester, "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels," *Trajectories*, 158-204 at 186. Cf. Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 133-71.

⁶⁷¹ See Christopher Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 54-57.

⁶⁷² Dieter Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle* (WMANT 33; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 15.

⁶⁷³ Cf. Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, 94.

⁶⁷⁴ Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, 93, cf. also 24-48, 59-64.

constitute a coherent, and posterior, theological framework.⁶⁷⁵ His criteria for reconstructing this secondary redaction were not exclusively thematic in nature, but he made use of oft-cited theological tensions in Q to make his case.

Almost a decade after Lührmann, Athanasius Polag would also highlight the unique profile of the judgment material in Q but offer a more historical (rather than literary) explanation for it. Polag claimed to identify two different manners of speech in Q: one that presupposed a situation of public proclamation and the announcement of salvation (characterized by promise and expectation), and another in which the message had been rejected.⁶⁷⁶ For explanation, Polag appealed to the historical Jesus. He argued that Jesus' message had developed: in the initial state of "offene Verkündigung," Jesus announced the advent of the kingdom with joy, but in the subsequent state of "Ablehnung," he announced coming judgment.⁶⁷⁷ Polag could not make sense of these different manners of speech except to suppose concrete historical situations for them (e.g. die Situation des Sprechenden).⁶⁷⁸ It is not surprising that both Franz Mussner and

⁶⁷⁵ Cf. Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, 93 (the Q group had given up hope for converting Israel and had turned to the Gentiles).

⁶⁷⁶ Athanasius Polag, *Die Christologie der Logienquelle* (WMANT 45; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-Verlag, 1977), 118 ("Einerseits liegt die Situation der offenen Verkündigung der Heilsbotschaft mit Zusage und Erwartung vor; andererseits muß vorausgesetzt werden, daß die Adressaten in ihrer überwiegenden Mehrheit die Botschaft abgelehnt haben und der Sprechende damit in einer Ablehnungssituation steht"). See in general 118-22.

⁶⁷⁷ Polag, *Christologie der Logienquelle*, 195 ("die Ablehnung durch das Volk ist bereits vor dem mit seinem Tod endenden Wirken in Jerusalem ein Tatbestand und modifiziert die Verkündigung Jesu bedeutend"), 198.

⁶⁷⁸ Polag, *Christologie der Logienquelle*, 118, although he thought there no "Anhaltspunkt" as to the moment of change. The best we can do, he claims, is suppose "Nacheinander."

Eckhard Rau (see above) found Polag's proposals insightful and further developed them for historical Jesus studies.⁶⁷⁹

Aside from Polag's historical approach, there have been many other proposals about the compilation and/or theological characteristics Q which resemble the second "period" of the ministry of Jesus in the earlier Lives. And some were bolder than Lührmann in offering historical explanations for the *cause* of this profile: in particular, disappointment generated by rejection of the Gospel message.⁶⁸⁰ Especially notable here is John Kloppenborg, whose proposal that Q evolved in three distinct stages of redaction has been hugely influential. His Q¹, which included Q 6:20-23, 27-49; 9:57-62; 10:2-11, 16; 11:2-4, 9-13; 12:2-7, 11-12; 12:22-31, 33-34; 13:24; 14:26-27, 34-35; 17:33, encompasses material used to create the "Galilean spring" in earlier Lives.⁶⁸¹ Q² framed the earlier recension with polemic against "this generation," eschatological utterances, and warnings of coming judgment. As it included texts such as Q 7:1-10, 31-35;

⁶⁷⁹ Mussner, "Gab es eine 'galiläische Krise'?", 243; Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 164-65 (he thinks Polag fails in the implementation of the details); idem, "Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung," 375; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 45-49.

⁶⁸⁰ Cf. e.g. Paul D. Meyer, "The Gentile Mission in Q," *JBL* 89 (1970): 405-17 ("the Q-community recognized the Gentile mission as legitimate and as the activity of God, but it was explained as God's response to Israel's impenitence" at 405); Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (NTAbh 8; Münster, Verlag Aschendorff, 1972), 169 (on the polemic against "this generation" and the missionary efforts of the Q-Gruppe, which, unlike Lührmann, Hoffmann saw [as well as Q 10:13-15] as a call to conversion at the last hour rather than a definitive statement of judgment), 288; Richard A. Edwards, *A Theology of Q: Eschatology, Prophecy, and Wisdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 148-49; Rudolf Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen der Logienquelle und des Markusevangeliums* (BBB 54; Königstein; Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1980), 278-94; M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 209-10, 214-16, 223-27.

⁶⁸¹ John Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007 [orig. 1987]), 171-245. Here "Significant blocks of Q are either untouched or only marginally influenced by" "Conflict and polemic against outsiders, motifs relating to the coming of the Son of Man and the judgment of the impenitent" (171). Cf. esp. 188 (the beatitudes "pronounce blessings on the community").

10:13-15; 11:14-26, 29-32, 39-52; 12:51-53, it resembles the post-crisis ministry of Jesus in earlier work. Q³ incorporated the Baptist traditions at the beginning of the document, as well as Q 11:42c and 16:17.

Already in *Formation of Q*, Kloppenborg moved from compositional history to communal history. Q² reflected “increasingly acrimonious relations between the synagogue and the community.”⁶⁸² Elsewhere the following comments on passages from Q² appear:

- Polemic against the Pharisees, such as Q 11:47-48, 52, “probably reflects scribal or Pharisaic opposition to the mission of the community... The Q community and the Pharisees stand in bitter confrontation.”⁶⁸³
- The “projected audience” of the preaching of judgment in Q “consists of the impenitent and the opponents of community preaching... One cannot help getting the impression that the redactor of this part of Q holds out little hope for Israel’s conversion. Original missionary fervor has turned into sectarian polemics.”⁶⁸⁴
- The judgment stratum of Q is “Shaped by the experience of the rejection of the preaching of the kingdom,” and relies on a deuteronomistic understanding of history “for the interpretation of this experience of failure.”⁶⁸⁵
- Q 6:23c (“for their fathers did the same things to the prophets”) its redactional in context because it foists upon the beatitudes an otherwise foreign “experience of rejection and opposition, an experience which appears to have been especially important in the consciousness of the redactor of the speeches characterized by the motif of the announcement of judgment over ‘this generation.’”⁶⁸⁶
- The Galilean woes are “directed not at the community but at its opponents” and they “reflect the experience of the rejection of Q’s preachers.”⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸² Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 147.

⁶⁸³ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 142-43.

⁶⁸⁴ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 167.

⁶⁸⁵ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 171.

⁶⁸⁶ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 190.

⁶⁸⁷ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 196.

- Q 10:21-22, 23-24 “offers comfort and legitimation to a community engaged in a mission which has met with opposition, rejection and persecution.” Further: “the preachers have experienced the failure of their preaching among their Jewish co-religionists.”⁶⁸⁸
- The Parable of the Great Supper (Q 14:16-24) “turns out to be quite in keeping with other Q texts, which react with anger and incredulity to Israel’s rejection of the preaching of the kingdom.”⁶⁸⁹
- Q 13:26-27 “not only looks back on the failure of Jesus’ contemporaries to respond, but probably also reflects the experience of the Q preachers described in 10:4-10 who understood themselves as representatives of Jesus.” The saying “reflects the general lack of success of those preachers.”⁶⁹⁰

Kloppenborg would develop this take on the communal history of the “Q-people” in subsequent publications.⁶⁹¹ But these basic insights have been, if anything, expanded.⁶⁹² In *Excavating Q*, he argued the group behind Q² was engaged in debates with the Pharisees and had drawn stark group boundary lines (including a self-identification as the true Israel) in response to the failure of others to receive the Gospel. In this proposal, as in some of the 19th-century Lives, the failure itself is not actually an event described in the text, but is rather an inference, an implied backstory, that aims to make sense of the assumptions of the texts.

I would further submit that Kloppenborg’s stratification of Q mirrors the crisis idea in some of interpretive decisions used to identify such strata. For Kloppenborg and the earlier

⁶⁸⁸ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 202, 203.

⁶⁸⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 230.

⁶⁹⁰ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 236.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. esp. John Kloppenborg, “Literary Convention, Self-Evidence and the Social History of the Q People,” in *Synoptic Problems: Collected Essays* (WUNT 329; Tübingen: Mohr, 2014), 237-65.

⁶⁹² After *Formation of Q*, Kloppenborg has preferred “Q people” or “group” to “Q community,” since “Q community” assumes more than we can reasonably know about “clear membership, identity rituals, and the means by which to distinguish its members from other persons residing in the same locale.” See *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 170-71.

questers had the same dilemma: the strata of Q, and the periods of the ministry of Jesus, have been mixed up in the final form of the texts. So how does one know what comes from which strata or period? Kloppenborg developed the approach of Lührmann to Q which prioritized the identification of certain literary details and formal structures in the text for this task. The Lives of Jesus are in another dimension on this point. But it is also true that Kloppenborg's stratification relied on the identification of thematic tensions in Q, including one between sapiential and eschatological material.⁶⁹³ He also emphasized changes in tone and implied audience, which were crucial for the 19th-century questers as well.

To be sure, Kloppenborg has thus far resisted the charge that his stratification of Q rests upon theological or thematic criteria. He has countered that his approach assumes "literary-critical" criteria: particularly the manner in which individual units are juxtaposed, the syntactical connections between them, and "jarring changes" in rhetorical perspective.⁶⁹⁴ It is a misunderstanding, he has claimed, for critics such as Collins, Horsley, Witherington, and Allison, to say that his stratification assumes an "artificial bifurcation" between "wisdom and apocalyptic."⁶⁹⁵ He wrote in response to John Collins:

⁶⁹³ Kloppenborg also regards the passion kerygma at odds with the soteriology of Q. See "'Easter Faith' and the Sayings Gospel Q," *Synoptic Problems*, 179-203.

⁶⁹⁴ See Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, xvii. Kloppenborg is strongly defended on this point by his student William E. Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes: Galilean Conflicts and the Setting of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 5.

⁶⁹⁵ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, xix. For these critiques see John J. Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility," 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), 165-85; Richard A. Horsley, "Wisdom Justified by all her Children: Examining Allegedly Disparate Traditions in Q," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1994 Seminar Papers* (ed. E. H. Lovering; SBLSP 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 736-51; Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1997), 4-5.

I did not argue that wisdom was incompatible with apocalyptic or prophecy and expressly rejected “generic purity” arguments. The argument for the stratification of Q does not rest on presumptions about the (in) compatibility of wisdom and apocalyptic...it depends on literary not theological factors.⁶⁹⁶

But the protests seem slightly disingenuous when one looks at his arguments in detail.⁶⁹⁷ For he regards the mere presence of prophetic or apocalyptic material as one indication that redaction has taken place, which cannot be if there were not some presumed tension here. Moreover, at times his arguments amount to little more than claims about “shifts in theology.”⁶⁹⁸ For instance, on the relation between Q 12:39-59 and 12:22-24, he observed that “the differences in tone and basic motif are immediately apparent,” and what is “hortatory...and sapiential” stands out against what is “aggressive and threatening...marked by warnings of judgment.”⁶⁹⁹ His argument for the redactional nature of 6:32c is typical: the phrase is the “only” aspect of the sermon that is “outside the scope of the sapiential idiom,” and because it “fits poorly” with the rest and “reflects” a deuteronomistic theology, it should be thought redactional.⁷⁰⁰ Dennis Ingolfsland has also made the incisive critique that Kloppenborg’s attempt to determine the redactional

⁶⁹⁶ Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 145-46; also 150-51.

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. esp. James D. G. Dunn, “Q¹ as Oral Tradition,” *Oral Gospel Tradition*, 80-108 at 106; Christopher Tuckett, “The Son of Man and Daniel 7: Q and Jesus,” in *From the Sayings to the Gospels* (WUNT 328; Tübingen: Mohr, 2014), 266-89 at 279.

⁶⁹⁸ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 97.

⁶⁹⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 149.

⁷⁰⁰ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 189-90. See also e.g. 166 (where “several common features” mean “these four blocks belong to the same redactional pattern”), 206 (the composite nature of Q 12:2-12 is “immediately evident”), 207 (“new motifs and interests”; “abrupt change in content, tone and form”), 211 (all thematic criteria).

juxtaposition of independent sayings assumes at the outset that prophetic and sapiential sayings were originally independent.⁷⁰¹

None of this is to downplay the important role that literary criteria play in Kloppenborg's stratification of Q. No doubt some critics of Kloppenborg have failed to appreciate that. But it is justified to conclude that the contours of Kloppenborg's first and second "strata" bear marked resemblance to our two "periods" in the ministry of Jesus. They rely on many of the same texts, they infer similar backstories, and they disassociate presumed theological tensions by a stratification or periodization technique.

In Kloppenborg's wake numerous studies of Q and the Q people have appeared that also infer some disappointing experience behind the batch of texts that Kloppenborg called Q².⁷⁰²

⁷⁰¹ See Dennis Ingolfsland, "Kloppenborg's Stratification of Q and Its Significance for Historical Jesus Studies," *JETS* 46 (2003): 217-32 at 225.

⁷⁰² Cf. e.g. Heinz Schürmann, "Die Redekomposition wider 'dieses Geschlecht' und seine Führung in der Redenquelle (vgl. Mt 23,1-39 par Lk 11,37-54): Bestand—Akoluthie—Kompositionsformen," *SNTSU* 11 (1986): 33-81 esp. at 73; R. J. Miller, "The Rejection of the Prophets in Q," *JBL* 107 (1988): 225-40 at 231 ("the pronouncement of final judgment on 'this generation' presupposes wholesale rejection of the message"), 232-33, 239-40; Migaku Sato, *Q und Prophetie: Studien zur Gattungs- und Traditionsgeschichte der Quelle Q* (WUNT 29; Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 44-46, 160, 197-201; Daniel Kosch, "Q und Jesus," *BZ* 36 (1992): 30-58 (the polemic in Q "ist mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit der Niederschlag eines sich verschärfenden Konfliktes des Trägerkreises der Q-Tradition mit dem übrigen Israel"); W. Schenk, "Die Verwünschung der Küstenorte Q 10,13-15: Zur Funktion der konkreten Ortsangaben und zur Lokalisierung von Q," in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (ed. Camille Focant; BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 477-90; Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity*, 196-207, 322-23, 426; Martin Ebner, *Jesus—ein Weisheitslehrer: synoptische Weisheitslogien im Traditionsprozess* (Herders biblische Studien 15; Freiburg: Herder, 1998), 425 note 94; Dieter Zeller, "Jesus, Q und die Zukunft Israels," in *The Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus* (ed. A. Lindemann; BETL 158; Leuven: Leuven University Press; Sterling: Peeters, 2001), 351-69 esp. at 360, 368; Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes*, 167 (deuteronomistic language used "to rationalize negative experiences"), 177 (on the Galilean woes), 245-46 ("The material in Q's second stratum certainly attests to conflict, dissension, and rejection but is quite straightforward in its expressions and rationalization of this phenomenon. Simple failure and consequent polemical rejoinder are sufficient explanations for this language"); Harry T. Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary* (BTS 1; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 165 ("Q looks back on a failed mission to Israel"); Sarah E. Rollens, *Framing*

Moreover, many have taken Kloppenborg's theories—despite his protests⁷⁰³—and applied them rather flatfootedly to historical Jesus research, identifying the sapiental Q¹ with the historical Jesus, and the apocalyptic and judgment-ridden Q² with the early Church.⁷⁰⁴ Despite the difference in argument, the logic and the parallel to the crisis theory is quite the same: periodization harmonizes a theological tension in the tradition as the time of Jesus and the time of the Church echo, respectively, the first and second periods of the ministry of Jesus in the Lives. For Burton Mack, John Dominic Crossan, and others, it is again an experience of rejection that prompted the judgment theology that now appears in Q. Mack has claimed that the Christian movement in Galilee “began with an early period of élan, general social critique, and experimentation with countercultural behavior” before envisioning Jesus a prophet of judgment on account of opposition and disputes of all kinds.⁷⁰⁵ And for Stephen Patterson, the judgment

Social Criticism in the Jesus Movement: The Ideological Project in the Sayings Gospel Q (WUNT 374; Tübingen: Mohr, 2014), 102-03, 163-67 (though she is cautious of using Q's rhetoric of marginalization as evidence of concrete realities), 189. This is not to say all these critics concluded the historical Jesus spoke nothing of judgment; the point is that those key texts that Kloppenborg and others have highlighted reflect some disappointment among the Q people.

⁷⁰³ Cf. esp. John S. Kloppenborg, “The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus,” *HTR* 89 (1996): 307-44. See also Helmut Koester, “Jesus the Victim,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 3-15 at 7.

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. Crossan, *Historical Jesus* (though he does not appeal directly to the stratification model); Leif E. Vaage, “The Son of Man Sayings in Q: Stratigraphical Location and Significance,” *Semeia* 55 (1991): 103-29; James M. Robinson, “The Critical Edition of Q and the Study of Jesus,” in Lindemann, *Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus*, 27-52 at 39, 42-43 (“Jesus’ vision of a caring Father who is infinitely forgiving...may have been lost from sight a generation later”), 45; Bernard Brandon Scott, “How Did We Get Here?,” in *Jesus Reconsidered: Scholarship in the Public Eye* (ed. Bernard Brandon Scott; Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2007), 47-64 esp. at 60; Douglas E. Oakman, *The Political Aims of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 119-23.

⁷⁰⁵ Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 44, also 134-47. Cf. idem, *A Myth of Innocence*, 53-77; idem, “The Kingdom that Didn’t Come: A Social History of the Q Tradents,” in *Society of*

sayings “represent a moment of frustration in the history of the Q community itself, when it realized that the wisdom of Jesus was not having as great an impact as it had originally hoped.”⁷⁰⁶

Of course, there is as much diversity and contestation in Q research as anywhere in New Testament studies, and we must not give the impression that there is some tidy agreement about the stratification of Q or the history of the Q people. The takeaway of our discussion is only this: modern critics are not unique to infer disappointing historical experiences behind several Q passages, as well as to recognize thematic tensions in this document and resolve them via some stratigraphic reorganization. Both points, we can now conclude, are rather old arguments in Gospel research and aim to resolve long standing problems. Here pre-modern Gospel exegesis, and especially the 19th-century Quest, is nearer current research than often thought.

5.4. THE 20TH- TO 21ST-CENTURY CRISIS THEORY: AN ASSESSMENT

Where do we stand, then, if we turn from this neglected history of scholarship to consider the value of these studies for our knowledge of the historical Jesus? What is valuable, what is troublesome, and what merits further attention in the final chapters of this study? This section will examine three issues, each corresponding to a section above: (i) the purport of the literary and theological nature of the Gospels and form criticism for the theory of a Galilean crisis; (ii) the various proposals in the past century of scholarship; (iii) the payoff of Q studies, especially stratification theories, for our topic.

Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers (ed. D. J. Lull; SBLASP 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 608-35.

⁷⁰⁶ Stephen J. Patterson, *The God of Jesus: The Historical Jesus and the Search for Meaning* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998), 172.

(i) It should go without saying that Wrede's fundamental insight was right: the Gospels are not open windows to the past but rather artfully constructed tapestries that demand attention in their own right. I would submit the following concrete implications for the crisis theory. First, it is clear that the Evangelists have constructed their narratives so as to show that the story of Jesus progressed according to the plan of God. From beginning to end, Jesus' ministry completed what it set out to accomplish. The plotline involved no unforeseen twists and turns. The Evangelists weave this common image with a number of different threads, as we can briefly summarize:

- Mark foreshadows the later "handing over" of Jesus at the beginning of the ministry with the "handing over" of his forerunner, John the Baptist (1:14). Jesus, who is fully aware of his coming fate, warns his disciples early on that "the bridegroom will be taken away" (2:20), even before the Pharisees and Herodians conspire "how to destroy him" (3:6). So too, before the passion, Jesus predicts precisely how the disciples will find a colt for the triumphal entry and a location to eat the last supper (11:1-6; 14:12-16). Most poignantly, Mark makes the crucifixion the climax of Jesus' messianic ministry as a whole, for here, at the moment of death, the elusive identity of Jesus is disclosed and recognized by another human agent (15:39).
- Matthew maintains much of Mark's presentation on these matters, but intensifies them. The deepening of the scriptural undertones of Mark's narrative shows that Jesus' ministry and death were predicted by the Scriptures (4:14-16; 13:34-35; 21:4-5; 26:31). Jesus' very name, according to Matthew, anticipates his crucifixion (1:21: "You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins"),⁷⁰⁷ and there is clear foreshadowing of the passion throughout the Gospel.⁷⁰⁸ Jesus acts, in *both* his ministry and passion, as Isaiah's "servant" (12:17-21), and his rejection has clear biblical precedent (e.g. 21:33-44; 23:29-36).
- Luke also has clear predictions of Jesus' rejection and death at the outset of the mission—notably in Simeon's words (2:35), and in the rejection at Nazareth

⁷⁰⁷ On the connection to the crucifixion scene here, see Tucker Ferda, "The Soldiers' Inscription and the Angel's Word: The Significance of 'Jesus' in Matthew's *Titulus*," *NovT* 55 (2013): 221-31 at 227-29.

⁷⁰⁸ See Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Foreshadowing the Passion," in *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 217-36.

(4:28-29)—which further his theme that all transpired according to the foresight of God. Luke’s preponderant use of *δεῖ* is apropos here.⁷⁰⁹ In Luke Jesus weeps over Jerusalem during the triumphal entry—that is, *before* he makes his final appeal to the city—as he prophesies its destruction on account of failure to recognize “the time of visitation” (19:41-44). He will later explain to the distraught Emmaus travelers, who fear the Jerusalem denouement thwarted the messianic plan of Jesus, that it was in fact “necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then enter his glory” (24:25-26).

- John goes to greater lengths for similar ends. The success of Jesus’ ministry is not contingent on the approval of others, for Jesus does not entrust himself to anyone (2:24-25). Jesus’ mission, rather, is to deliver God’s divine truth, as he was “in the beginning with God” (1:2). Moreover, Jesus is fully aware of his “hour” and the time of its arrival (2:4; 12:23; 17:1), and he explains openly how his crucifixion is a glorifying act (17:5) which will “draw all people to himself” (12:32). Jesus also refuses to be distraught at the prospect of death because, he claims, “for this reason I was sent into this world” (12:27). Opposition to Jesus stems not from some failure of pedagogy or strategy on his part, but “because their deeds were evil” (3:19).⁷¹⁰

These summaries sound familiar because we found similar ideas in Chapter 2 when discussing certain theological perspectives that *de facto* excluded any notion of crisis in the ministry.⁷¹¹ Such theologies developed, of course, in sustained conversation with these very texts. Their proponents cannot be accused of being careless readers.

The upshot for history is indubitably this: given the theological *Tendenzen* of our source material, we should expect that, if there were such a thing as a Galilean crisis, it is unlikely that the Evangelists would have preserved much of it. For the idea of rupture, break, or unforeseen

⁷⁰⁹ This is not to say that Luke’s narrative assumes some deterministic view of history. See Robert C. Tannehill, “Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 69-85; Joel Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22-37.

⁷¹⁰ See Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; AB 29; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966-70), 1:148: “the idea (of John 3:19) is that Jesus brings out what a man really is and the real nature of his life.” Further: “If there is a twofold reaction to Jesus in John, we must reemphasize that the reaction is very much dependent on man’s own choice, a choice that is influenced by his way of life, by whether his deeds are wicked or are done in God.”

⁷¹¹ See above pp 25-32.

change on Jesus' part is exactly contrary the general thrust of each Gospel plotline.⁷¹² The point needs to be stressed because, I would submit, 20- to 21st-century advocates of a crisis have not reckoned seriously enough with it. Our sources purposefully eliminate the very “problems” in the Jesus story that the crisis theory has claimed to resolve.

There are traditions in the Gospels that appear to conflict with these *Tendenzen*. We noted in Chapter 2 that several earlier exegetes adduced readings of select passages and themes that diverge from their plotlines (e.g. that Jesus had hoped for what did not come to pass; that he was disappointed and afraid; that his teachings responded to varied reception). Exegetes throughout the history of interpretation have routinely taken certain texts to imply a backstory of rejection or disappointment. Several of these texts will receive close consideration in Chapter 7. But what we can preliminarily conclude here is that, on the basis of such limited data, the prospect of determining much about some crisis in Jesus' career is rather dismal. And even more to the point, it needs to be asked if the “gist” of the Gospels on this matter—e.g. that Jesus was generally consistent in his aims and praxis—is not an apologetical spin on the Jesus story but is rather something that reflects the “impact” Jesus himself made on his followers.⁷¹³

⁷¹² Lorenz Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu: Zum Problem einer historischen Begründung* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1980), 103, mentions as a criticism of the crisis theory the “rückschauender Darstellung der Evangelien” (“smoothed-over presentation of the Evangelists”). A related point: Oberlinner considers it “nearly impossible” to find a twofold staging of the ministry in Mark, as one finds nothing of an “Umschlag” in the teaching of Jesus (82-83). See also Jacques Schlosser, *Jésus de Nazareth* (Paris: Agnès Viénot Éditions, 2002), 76, on the crisis idea in particular: “Mais ce modèle, qui apparaît d’ailleurs moins schématique dans Mc que ne le laisse penser ma présentation sommaire, peut difficilement être transposé à l’histoire. Il n’est décidément plus possible d’écrire une ‘vie de Jésus!’”

⁷¹³ On “impact” see Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 240-45.

A related issue: the way that the Evangelists literarily construct characters in their narratives.⁷¹⁴ Characterization is significant for the crisis idea because, quite simply, any proposal of development or change in the character of Jesus must reckon seriously with literary conventions of character that may have influenced the Gospels. Proponents of a Galilean crisis, from the 19th century to the present, have readily supposed the obvious that human character is influenced by external environment and context. But they have generally failed to ask a more important question: would the Evangelists, given their literary conventions, have maintained traditions that Jesus or his audience underwent some change of mind or attitude during the course of the ministry? The question is similar to that of plotline above: If there were some crisis in the ministry, would the literary shape of Jesus and other characters in the Gospels even permit historians to detect it?

The evidence, again, seems to be of a mixed nature.

For one, there is no monolithic concept of “character” in the ancient world. It was once common to claim that Greco-Roman historians and biographers thought of character as stable and unchanging.⁷¹⁵ Unlike the modern view, in which malleability and change are norms of

⁷¹⁴ The issue of characterization in Gospel research has received increased attention in recent years, spurred by the popularity of redactional and narrative-critical approaches since the 1970s, as well as the wide acceptance of the view that the genre of the Gospels approximates the Greco-Roman biography. Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*, 117, 139-40, 170-72, 222-23. The study of characterization in Greco-Roman history and biography is well established. Cf. esp. C. B. R. Pelling, ed., *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 32-59; L. V. Pitcher, “Characterization in Ancient Historiography,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. John Marincola; 2 vols.; Malden; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 1:102-17.

⁷¹⁵ See e.g. David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 28 (on a “static conception of the personality”); Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 18 (“From the beginning the hero appeared as a rounded personality, and the deeds and events of his youth illuminated his later destiny. It was not the hero himself, or his character, which changed, but at best the world around him. He could only become what he always had been”).

psychological development, ancient thinkers, it has been asserted, considered personality and abilities fixed. But this view has been challenged in recent years as there are, in fact, clear examples of developing/changing characters in such histories and biographies,⁷¹⁶ as there are “stable” characters too. Such diversity leads to the hypothesis that ancient writers shaped their characters according to the wider needs of their narratives, rather than their narratives according to the needs of “character.”⁷¹⁷ For instance, in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, already as a boy the sage was “a young eagle with wings undeveloped” (1.7). He lived in the temple of Asclepius (1.8), which befits his later activities as an adult (4.45; 6.43), and he is never rattled by controversy or contention (7.12; 8.4, 6). But it is improbable that he appears in this way because Philostratus adheres to some norm of characterization. Apollonius’ character rather advances Philostratus’ larger aim to present a noble philosopher and eminent role model for his readers, one who models Pythagorean virtues and is unmoved by the vicissitudes of life.⁷¹⁸

Moreover, the Gospels themselves do not sing in the same tune on the matter. On the one hand, their characters across the spectrum serve clear theological ends. And these theological ends, as with the plotlines of the Gospels as noted above, leave little that would require the hypothesis of a Galilean crisis to explain things. The Jewish leaders are two dimensional

⁷¹⁶ Cf. Christopher Gill, “The Question of Character-Development: Plutarch and Tacitus,” *CQ* 33 (1983): 469-87; idem, “The Character-Personality Distinction,” in *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, 1-31; Fred W. Burnett, “Characterization and Reader Construction of Characters in the Gospels,” *Semeia* 63 (1993): 3-28; Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*, 178-79; Cornelis Bennema, *A Theory of Character in New Testament Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

⁷¹⁷ See a similar proposal in David B. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke and Acts* (ESEC 2; Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1991), 85, who argues that it is best not to approach a text with some fixed conception of characterization.

⁷¹⁸ It could also be in response to criticism that Apollonius was, according to some, “a sorcerer, a hot-head, a braggart, a money-grubber, a person who looks down on the laws” (7.33; see also 1.2; 7.14; 7.17).

opponents of Jesus (though to various degrees, depending on which Gospel) who speak and act in stereotypical ways.⁷¹⁹ So it is difficult to chart any development in their reception of Jesus, if there was any. The same is true of the fickle crowds who welcome Jesus at one moment, make demands of him at another, and reject him the next. The crowds have often played an important role in the reconstruction of a crisis, but it is difficult to divine if their fickleness, or their enthusiasm for Jesus, are mere literary *topoi*.⁷²⁰ Finally, Jesus himself in each Gospel is a rather stable character, as studies have shown in detail the high level of agreement between his words and his actions. Such “indirect characterization” narratively communicates his honesty, reliability, and consistency.⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ Cf. Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 131-32; Anthony Le Donne, “The Jewish Leaders,” in *Jesus among Friends and Enemies: A Historical and Literary Introduction to Jesus in the Gospels* (eds. Chris Keith and Larry W. Hurtado; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 199-218; Michael J. Cook, “The Distribution of Jewish Leaders in the Synoptic Gospels: Why Wariness is Warranted,” in *Soundings in the Religion of Jesus: Perspectives and Methods in Jewish and Christian Scholarship* (eds. Bruce Chilton, Anthony Le Donne, and Jacob Neusner; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 61-80; Sherri Brown, “The Priests and Levites: Identity and Politics in the Search for a Messiah,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* (eds. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr, 2013), 110-15.

⁷²⁰ Cf. Warren Carter, “The Crowds in Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 54-67; Adaoma M. Okorie, “The Art of Characterization in the Lukan Narrative: Jesus, the Disciples and the Populace,” *R&T* 2 (1995): 274-82; Petri Merenlahti, “Characters in the Making: Individuality and Ideology in the Gospels,” in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (eds. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 49-72; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Disciples/Crowds/Whoever: Markan Characters and Readers,” in *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark’s Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 70-99.

⁷²¹ See David Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 103-16; Tom Thatcher, “Jesus, Judas, and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel,” *BSac* 153 (1996): 437-39; Mark Allan Powell, “Characterization on the Phraseological Plane in the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies* (ed. David R. Bauer and Mark A. Powell; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 161-77; Justin R. Howell, “The Characterization of Jesus in Codex W,” *JECS* 14 (2006): 47-75.

On the other hand, the Gospels are not pure fictions, and historical memory has shaped them in ways that both agree with and diverge from their agendas in characterization. The Jesus of the Gospels, or at least the Synoptics, belies some literary type. For instance, despite Jesus' confidence and authority during his ministry, despite his clear predictions of his coming passion and resurrection, he still finds himself at the end, in Gethsemane, questioning it all (Mark 14:32-39 and par.). Philostratus' mold for Apollonius would never allow for such a shape, and in fact neither did the Gospel of John, as the Fourth Evangelist expressly refashioned this memory.⁷²²

Also encouraging for the historian is this: Old Testament typologies inform characterization in the Gospels, especially of Jesus. Mark's Jesus is the secret "Son of Man" from Dan. 7, who exercises "authority" on earth and proclaims the imminence of his "kingdom" (Mark 1:14-15, 27; 2:10; 8:27-9:1; 13:26-27; 14:62).⁷²³ Matthew's Jesus speaks and acts like Moses (Matt 2:13-18; 4:2; 5:1; 11:29; 14:13-21; 26:28).⁷²⁴ Luke's Jesus assumes the role of Isaiah's εὐαγγελιζόμενος who appears in 40:9, 52:7, and 61:1 (Luke 4:16-21; 4:43; 6:20; 8:1; 9:2; 19:36-44; 24:25-26).⁷²⁵ Thus, the relative stability of the character of Jesus is due in part to an intertextual conversation with the Old Testament. And such typologies, while certainly bountiful resources for greater reflection on and elaboration of Jesus' identity, were probably not created *ex nihilo*. For if one grants with the majority of critics that Jesus engaged the Scriptures

⁷²²John 12:27 ("Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say, 'Father, save me from this hour?' No! It is for this reason that I have come to this hour") likely knows of and reacts to the tradition of Jesus' petition in Gethsemane, which appears in the Synoptics. See also John 18:11: "Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

⁷²³ See Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983).

⁷²⁴ See Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

⁷²⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSup 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).

of Israel to articulate his mission,⁷²⁶ then the various attempts to characterize Jesus in the Gospels may ultimately derive in some way from the behavior of Jesus himself as he modelled the heroes of the Bible and tried to contemporize various prophecies.

In all, however, our conclusion to this discussion of characterization is a messy one. Historians encounter the figure of Jesus and others in the Gospels first and foremost as literary characters, and the overall aims of the Evangelists leave little evidence of a crisis in the ministry or at least insufficient material to reconstruct some transition point in any detail. And yet the characterization practices of the Gospels have also been shaped by early memory. There is room for further work here in Chapter 6.

In addition to the literary and theological profile of the Gospels, we must also assess the impact of form criticism on the crisis theory. What are we to make of its influence on the declining popularity of the crisis idea in the last century of research?

In brief: form criticism has, for good reason, forever dismantled any reconstruction of Jesus that places great confidence in the chronological reliability of the Gospels. Even Richard Bauckham's book about the role of eyewitnesses in the preservation of Gospel tradition (e.g. a book highly critical of many form critical ideas) offered this assessment:

That the individual units of the Synoptic Gospels are close to the oral forms in which they previously existed and that in oral transmission they were not necessarily linked together as they are in the Gospels remain, in my opinion, the most significant insights of form criticism and have not been refuted.⁷²⁷

The evidence in support of this conclusion is just too compelling: Gospel pericopae, especially in the Synoptics, are rather self-contained, the narrative organization is episodic, and the

⁷²⁶ Cf. Steve Moyise, "Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2:1137-68.

⁷²⁷ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 243. See also Hultgren, "Form Criticism and Jesus Research," 1:670-71.

Evangelists easily reorganize one another.⁷²⁸ If Mark found in his sources a relatively fixed chronology of the ministry, then Matthew and Luke's use of Mark is inexplicable. Readers of Matthew and Luke were surely aware of Jesus traditions before encountering these later Gospels,⁷²⁹ and the Evangelists themselves have no qualms about disturbing some precedent with their chronologies. In fact, the point is strengthened with this observation: Matthew and Luke not only reorganize Mark's episodic narrative, they construct new narrative patterns out of material they *must have known* that their sources connected otherwise. In Matthew's case, we can consider two examples in Figure 2:

⁷²⁸ Cf. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 25, 53; E. P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM, 1989), 134-35; Jürgen Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. James E. Crouch; New York; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998 [orig. 1996]), 20 ("information about Jesus in the oldest layer of the material is shaped in an episodic, conventional way that has no interest in biographic continuity").

⁷²⁹ Cf. Dunn, "Altering the Default Setting," 66, 69, 75.

| Mark's position | Matthew's arrangement | Matthew's reconstruction |
|--|--|---|
| <p><i>pericope a</i>: Jesus in Capernaum synagogue (1:21-28)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “and immediately after going out from the synagogue they entered the house of Simon (Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς ἐξελθόντες ἦλθον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Σίμωνος)”</p> <p><i>pericope b</i>: Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law (1:30-31)</p> | <p>Matthew does not retain Mark 1:21-28)</p> <p>Matthew moves Mark 1:30-31 to a position after the Sermon on the Mount</p> | <p><i>pericope a</i>: healing of the centurion's servant (Matt 5:5-13, a Q text)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “and after entering into the house of Peter (Καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου)”</p> <p><i>pericope b</i>: Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-17)</p> |
| <p><i>pericope a</i>: in the country of the Gerasenes (5:1-20)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea, and one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came...”</p> <p><i>pericope b</i>: Jairus' daughter and woman with a hemorrhage (5:22-43)</p> | <p>Matthew retains, and places it after the calming of the Sea, as in Mark</p> <p>Matthew separates the Jairus/hemorrhaging woman episode from its Markan context and moves it to a position after the healing of the paralytic, call of Levi, discussion about fasting and wineskins (9:1-17)</p> | <p><i>pericope a</i>: in the country of the Gadarenes (8:28-34)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “and after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town, and behold some people were carrying a paralyzed man (Καὶ ἐμβὰς εἰς πλοῖον διεπέρασεν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικόν)”</p> <p><i>pericope b</i>: healing of the paralytic (9:2-8)</p> |

Figure 2. Matthew's rearrangement of Mark

The situation is rather baffling, especially if one believes that Matthew assumes the genre of Greco-Roman biography,⁷³⁰ or writes in the vein of the Old Testament historical narratives,⁷³¹ and thus has genuine historical interest.⁷³² For according to Matthew's new creations we have several absurdities. Matthew 5:1 to 8:17 is one day, and the next day is 8:18-9:9, which is far too much activity to be considered realistic. So too the Sabbath stories of 12:1-8 and 9-14 occur in Matthew on one day.⁷³³ There are only so many ways that one can explain the treatment of Mark here, and none bode well for the chronological reliability of the Gospel tradition as a whole. It could be that Matthew consciously corrected Mark because he thought a different sequence was historically preferable. Or it could be that Matthew was simply uninterested in the question of historical sequence and reordered Mark to fit his own theological scheme (more likely, in my view).⁷³⁴ In either case, his reordering of Mark could be due to his own conjecture, or due to his

⁷³⁰ Cf. Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); D. Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie: Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst* (Tübingen: Franke, 1997); Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*; Craig S. Keener, "Assumptions in Historical-Jesus Research: Using Ancient Biographies and Disciples' Traditioning as a Control," *JSHJ* 9 (2011): 26-58.

⁷³¹ See Adela Yarbro Collins, "Genre and the Gospels," *JR* 75 (1995): 239-46; Marius Reiser, "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der antiken Literaturgeschichte," *ZNW* 90 (1999): 1-27; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 443-44.

⁷³² See discussion in Robert A. Derrenbacker, Jr., *Ancient Compositional Practices and the Synoptic Problem* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), 253: "Luke's use of Mark and Q provides few problems in light of the compositional practices of writers in antiquity....Matthew, on the other hand, provides a unique set of problems for the source critic, particularly one who is cognizant of the compositional methods of Greco-Roman writers....Matthew rearranges his sources (particularly Q) and rebuilds them into alternating blocks of narrative and discourse." Although Derrenbacker sides with the Two Document Hypothesis as the most likely, he admits that Matthew's use of Mark and Q are the "most significant set of problems" for this theory.

⁷³³ Cf. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 351-55.

⁷³⁴ This is not to say, however, that Matthew's narrative arrangements should be considered "purely metaphorical." For this language see Marcus Borg, *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 57. For a good analysis see Ulrich Luz, "Fictionality and Loyalty to

awareness of different narrative presentations in other oral or written sources. It is near impossible to tell. However, neither scenario encourages confidence in the reliability of the tradition. For if Matthew readjusts Mark according to his own conjecture, whatever may inspire it, his accuracy would be pure chance. And if Matthew readjusts Mark according to his knowledge of other retellings, then we admit that such reorganizations were probably common in the transmission of Gospel traditions.

Luke is not nearly as drastic. He in general follows Mark's order more closely than Matthew, despite some reorganization (cf. esp. Luke 4:16-30; 5:1-11; 8:19-21; 22:24-27). However, he also creates more temporal distance between episodes that Mark conjoins, which is a reconstruction similar in overall historical consequence to that of Matthew if different in form.⁷³⁵ Figure 3 contains two examples:

Tradition in Matthew's Gospel in the Light of Greek Literature," in *Studies in Matthew* (trans. Rosemary Selle; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 54-79.

⁷³⁵ Henry J. Cadbury's discussion is still the best: *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (HTS 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), 105-10, 115-18.

| Mark's position | → | Luke's arrangement | → | Luke's reconstruction |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <p><i>pericope a</i>: Jesus heals a leper on a tour of the Galilee (1:40-45)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered...”</p> | | Luke retains Mark's general order | | <p><i>pericope a</i>: Jesus heals a leper on a tour of the Galilee (5:12-16)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “It happened one day while he was teaching (Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν διδάσκων) that Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting by...and some people came carrying a paralyzed man on a bed”</p> |
| <p><i>pericope b</i>: healing of the paralytic (2:2-12)</p> | | Luke retains Mark's general order | | <p><i>pericope b</i>: healing of the paralytic (5:17-27)</p> |
| <p><i>pericope a</i>: Jesus teaches in parables (4:1-34)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “On that day, when evening had come (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὀψίας γενομένης), he said to them: ‘Let us go across to the other side’”</p> | | Luke retains Mark's general order | | <p><i>pericope a</i>: Jesus teaches in parables (8:4-21)</p> <p><i>transition</i>: “It happened one day (Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν) that he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them: ‘Let us go across to the other side’”</p> |
| <p><i>pericope b</i>: calming of the storm (4:37-41)</p> | | Luke retains Mark's general order | | <p><i>pericope b</i>: calming of the storm (8:23-25)</p> |

Figure 3. Luke's rearrangement of Mark

The consistent practice probably betrays a distrust of Mark's presentation in the details of the sequence,⁷³⁶ an awareness of other retellings, and/or adherence to historiographical conventions.⁷³⁷

In sum, then, there is little reason to deviate from the current *status quo* on this point: the Gospel chronologies themselves are unstable foundations for further arguments about development, growing opposition, or any important break or transition in the ministry of Jesus.

(ii) What, then, can be said of the various proposals for some Galilean crisis in the past century of scholarship?

The studies by Goguel, Dodd, Cadoux, and Taylor all share fundamental assumptions and conclusions, and so their proposals either stand or fall together. To their benefit, the appropriation of essential form critical insights lifted the crisis theory as a historical hypothesis beyond its highly speculative nature in the 19th century (as criticized in Chapter 4).⁷³⁸ Cadoux here is probably the most helpful. Moreover, each offered more detailed and nuanced discussions of key motifs and passages in the Gospels that have been thought to imply a backstory of rejection. Cadoux even maintained that he could reconstruct some change of mind on Jesus' part solely from passages that express disappointment. He wrote:

⁷³⁶ Possibly relevant is Lucian, *How to Write History* (trans. K. Kilburn, LCL 430), 47: "as to the facts themselves, he [the historian] should not assemble them at random, but only after much laborious and painstaking investigation. He should for preference be an eyewitness, but, if not, listen to those who tell the most impartial story" (see also 48: "let him show shrewdness and skill in putting together the more credible story").

⁷³⁷ Clare K. Rothschild's discussion of "epitomizing rhetoric" (e.g.: "the style used by ancient historians to abridge longer accounts in the interest of truth...[it] offered an opportunity to make the impression that details were at hand, but purposely omitted in the interest of truth") may be helpful here, see *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography* (WUNT 175; Tübingen: Mohr, 2004), 231-40.

⁷³⁸ See above pp. 164-66.

Now if Jesus spoke in this way, [e.g. weeping over Jerusalem] and meant what he said, and was not simply indulging in meaningless stage-play or unintelligent fatalism, he was expressing real and passionate disappointment. No feasible alternative view is possible....to say that is to say also that Jesus had formerly and for some considerable time expected confidently that the children of Jerusalem would flock together under him, and that the city would realize that his ministry was a Divine visitation, and would eagerly accept his message as essential for her peace.⁷³⁹

Of course much depends here on whether or not such texts reflect the experiences of Jesus. But the basic insight is surely correct, and has been assumed again and again in the history of interpretation.

The arguments of Cadoux and the others also deserve fresh appraisal because contemporary Jesus study would generally agree with some of their starting assumptions. For instance, Cadoux offered several cogent arguments that Jesus initially hoped to be “successful” (e.g. accepted by the people), one of which was this: given Jesus’ conviction to be a key agent of God’s end-time scenario, it would be oddly fatalistic for him to suppose at the beginning of his ministry that he would be rejected and executed.⁷⁴⁰ This is an important issue that has not left us: was there any development in Jesus’ ministry that made his violent end a stark reality? Some recent critics have in fact argued that Jesus’ expectation of imminent death arose in response to new circumstances in his ministry.⁷⁴¹ Unlike Cadoux, Dodd, and the others above, however,

⁷³⁹ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 193.

⁷⁴⁰ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 187.

⁷⁴¹ Cf. Anton Vögtle, “Exegetische Erwägungen über das Wissen und Selbstbewusstsein Jesu,” in *Gott in Welt: Festgabe für Karl Rahner* (ed. Herbert Vorgrimler; Freiburg et al.: Herder, 1964), 608-67 at 624-25, 666 (in general: the urgency with which Jesus pursued the Umkehr of Israel is fundamentally at odds with the notion of his sacrificial or atoning death; the latter developed later in response to his rejection); Rudolf Pesch, *Das Abendmahl und Jesu Todesverständnis* (Freiburg et al.: Herder, 1978), 103-09; Albert Descamps, “Réflexions sur l’eschatologie de Jésus,” in *De la Tôrâh au Messie: Études d’exégèse et d’herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazalles pour ses 25 années d’enseignement à l’Institut Catholique de Paris* (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 431-45 at 437, 441; Heinz Schürmann, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geheimnis: gesammelte Beiträge* (ed. Klaus Scholtissek; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1994), 157-67

these scholars generally have not been as interested in the implications of this insight for our understanding of the remainder of Jesus' career.⁷⁴²

Aside from these prospects, however, all of these 20th-century proposals too easily fall prey to criticisms also leveled at the 19th-century Lives in Chapter 4. In general, all trust too much in the chronological reliability of Mark, such that it can be said the impact of form criticism did not go far enough.⁷⁴³ Vincent Taylor, for example, admitted that the "Markan outline is much less continuous than was formerly supposed," and aimed to use it "as a framework, recognizing that it is a sketch with many gaps."⁷⁴⁴ But the problem with Mark is not that it has a "less continuous" nature than formerly supposed; the problem with Mark is that there is no reason to trust *the order* in which he places the events. More to the point, even should we think the order is generally reliable, we would not be able to fill the chronological "gaps" (between juxtaposed pericopae) with any details. That did not prevent these critics from offering

(which discusses "Erfolgslosigkeit" and "Das Mißgeschick des Basileia-Engagements Jesu"). Even reconstructions of Jesus which highlight the overall consistency of Jesus' mission are typically careful on this point. Note Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*: Jesus' mission throughout was about "the messianic restoration of Israel" (202), but the possibility of death became more solidly impressed throughout the course of his ministry (252), and "the course of his destiny as he envisaged it remained a puzzle even to his disciples" (206). He is even more confident that the notion of Jesus' expiatory death arose from Israel's refusal in later works: *Christus Faber*, 34-36. Bolder is Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*, which clearly implies that death in Jerusalem was not the result of failure or a change in vision. It was, instead, "the inevitable result of his kingdom-inaugurating career" (466), the moment at which Jesus intended to "draw matters to a head in one particular visit to Jerusalem" (474), and was "consistent with the inner logic of his entire kingdom-praxis" (594).

⁷⁴² See here Scot McKnight, *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory* (Waco: Baylor, 2005), 48, who at one point asks (but never offers an answer) to this question: "at what point in his life did that (he would die) occur to him?"

⁷⁴³ For an incisive critique of Dodd's renowned *ExpT* article, which itself has become famous, cf. D. E. Nineham, "The Order of Events in St. Mark's Gospel: An Examination of Dr. Dodd's Hypothesis," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 223-39.

⁷⁴⁴ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 49.

many imaginative scenarios to fill these “gaps,” and their strained connections between pericopae—often in attempt to uncover the motives of Jesus’ movements throughout the Galilee—resemble 19th-century psychologizations. Taylor at one point even suggested that Jesus was snappy with the Syrophoenician Woman (Mark 7:25-30 and par.) because of the mental torment of grappling with the failure of his Galilean mission!⁷⁴⁵

There are other issues as well. Stereotypical descriptions of Judaism and messianism still abound and often fuel rising tension that lead to a Galilean crisis (e.g. in Dodd’s case, Jesus’ anti-*nationalistic* kingdom was rejected).⁷⁴⁶ The reconstructions at times betray an underlying attempt to maintain the historicity of as much of the Synoptic tradition as possible, which can make them appear as quasi-harmonies of the Gospels. And finally, one has to conclude that all four remain, despite improving the historiography of the 19th-century Quest, still too confident in their abilities to reconstruct the ups and downs of Jesus’ career. We cannot know as much as they claim to know.

In many respects the proposals by Mussner, Luz, Smith, and Rau avoid these criticisms. In particular, their Galilean crises depend even less on the chronology of any one Gospel (if at all), and more on the assumed backstories of individual sayings and units of material.⁷⁴⁷ These critics also went beyond their predecessors in approaching the crisis idea through Jesus’ Jewish

⁷⁴⁵ Taylor, *Life and Ministry of Jesus*, 143. For a similar criticism of Goguel, see E. F. Scott, “Recent Lives of Jesus,” *HTR* 27 (1934): 1-31 at 20-24. On Taylor and Dodd, see Tatum, *Quest of Jesus*, 85-86.

⁷⁴⁶ Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 100, 114, 148-49.

⁷⁴⁷ Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 159, even made this point plain: “Obsolet geworden ist die Orientierung am Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu, wie ihn die Evangelien bieten, nicht aber die Konstruktion eines Rahmens, der zunächst ausschließlich aus der Analyse der Worte Jesu zu gewinnen ist.” Cf. Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 234-35; also Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 239.

milieu. Ulrich Luz is especially noteworthy here. Whereas previous proposals relied almost entirely on the Gospels themselves to make their case, Luz proposed that certain Jewish expectations about the end-time make a crisis scenario plausible. Luz offered an updated version of Schweitzer's proposal that Jesus believed he and his contemporaries were about to suffer the messianic woes.⁷⁴⁸ For Luz, Jesus interpreted his rejection in Galilee as a symptom of the final time of tribulation, which precipitated his departure from Galilee and journey to Jerusalem in expectation of death. The proposal intrigues not least because a few other prominent critics have argued that some of Jesus' sayings and deeds assume the onset of the final tribulation.⁷⁴⁹

Despite these improvements, however, a number of questions and doubts remain. In Mussner's case, the proclamation of the kingdom, on the one hand, and the evidence of rejection, on the other, he termed a "binary."⁷⁵⁰ But, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the posing of theological contrasts can too easily ignore the incompleteness of our knowledge and the paucity of our evidence.⁷⁵¹ How one knows what constitute "binaries" in the tradition deserves more careful consideration. Moreover, important for Mussner's crisis was the supposition that the Galilean

⁷⁴⁸ Luz, "Warum zog Jesus nach Jerusalem?," 424-5. Though see already Max Maurenbrecher, *Von Nazareth nach Golgatha: Untersuchungen über die welt geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge des Urchristentums* (Berlin: Schöneberg, 1909), 226-36.

⁷⁴⁹ Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (trans. John Bowden; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971 [orig. 1971]), 127-31, 241-44; Richard H. Hiers, *The Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God: Present and Future in the Message and Ministry of Jesus* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 25-26; Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Q 12:51-53 and Mark 9:11-13 and the Messianic Woes," in *Authenticating the Words of Jesus* (eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 289-310; Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement* (WUNT 204; Tübingen: Mohr; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 163-76, 180-86, 212-16; McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*, 107-115, 118-19.

⁷⁵⁰ Mussner, "Gab es eine 'galiläische Krise'?", 243.

⁷⁵¹ For criticism of Mussner on the notion of a period of offer (Angebot) and a period of rejection (Ablehnung), see Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 79-80, 93-94, 96. Oberlinner also considers it absurd to think there an "end" to the period of offer (103).

mission of the Twelve was a failure, and that upon their return they became a “kernel of the coming saved community of the messiah Jesus.”⁷⁵² But it must be admitted that we have no evidence in the Gospels for either point. In fact, his proposal is contrary the witness of Mark and Luke, who indicate (Mark 6:30-31) or expressly claim (Luke 10:17-20 [on the mission of the Seventy]; see 9:10 [the Twelve]) that it was successful. Of course Mussner may still be correct, and it takes little imagination to entertain the possibility that Mark and Luke adapted the sending tradition to fit their own optimistic vision for the spread of the Gospel in the post-Easter period. But in the end, Mussner’s attempt to harmonize the Markan tradition of the sending with the woes over Galilean cities in Q assumes that the temporal situation of these episodes, and their inner connection, are clearer than is actually the case.⁷⁵³

A similar critique applies to Rau’s various studies on the topic. There is nothing particularly objectionable at this point in his treatment of the “this generation” sayings, the judgment material in Q, or even the controversies with the Pharisees. The question is whether or not Rau can successfully string all the important data together at the end of the Galilean ministry to explain Jesus’ departure for Jerusalem, his behavior when there, and his anticipation of death. For Rau argues that all three are interrelated and presuppose the failure of his Galilean ministry. But one wonders. There are numerous ways that one can, as have some, reasonably explain Jesus’ provocative acts in Jerusalem that do not require he was previously rejected in the

⁷⁵² Mussner, “Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 248. See here Anton Vögtle, “Der Einzelne und die Gemeinschaft in der Stufenfolge der Christusoffenbarung,” in *Sentire Ecclesiam: Das Bewußtsein von der Kirche als gestaltende Kraft der Frömmigkeit* (ed. Jean Daniélou et al.; Freiburg: Herder, 1961), 50-91 at 73 (the separation of the twelve from the rest of the disciples occurred *after* the failed Galilean mission of the disciples).

⁷⁵³ It should not be missed, however, that Mussner regarded his conclusions as “hypothetical and fragmentary” (“Gab es eine ‘galilaische Krise’?,” 250).

Galilee.⁷⁵⁴ A similar criticism would apply for Luz's thesis as well. That there was an "an objectively meaningful break" (eine sachlich belangvolle Zäsur) in the Galilean ministry is not evident, and it seems an overstatement to claim that Jesus' activities in Jerusalem stand as "ein starkes Moment von Diskontinuität" against his earlier work.⁷⁵⁵ Moreover, Rau's argument that the rejection and departure of Jesus from Galilee can be known as an "event" in the sense posed by Lucian Holscher ("the common reference point of many narratives that can be told about it")⁷⁵⁶ may be too subjective to carry much weight. If in Q the "crisis event" it is cause for seeking new followers in Israel, while Mark makes it cause to depart Galilee and minister to Gentiles, it is not apparent that we remain in position to glean the historical truth of the matter, which was actually something different entirely. Can Mark and Q in this case actually be considered *evidence* for the claim that rejection in Galilee caused Jesus to depart for Jerusalem?

For Mussner, Rau, and to lesser degree Luz, therefore, a number of reasonable insights about specific texts and themes are sometimes stretched to make too expansive conclusions.

Barry Smith's monograph is no different, but his argument also highlights one final and related issue. His proposal for the existence of two different "contexts" in Jesus' ministry (the "non-rejection context" and the later "rejection context," respectively) assumes that the presumed "context" behind each event or logion is rather straightforward. But it is not. The reader picks up his book to find the kingdom sayings already reorganized into their respective "contexts" while the logic for such reorganization, and the criteria by which Smith came to these

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. Tan, *Zion Traditions and the Aims of Jesus*, for a survey and proposal (e.g. that Jesus hoped God to restore Jerusalem to be the city of God's kingship, in accordance with the "Zion theology" of the Old Testament prophets). Cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 790-96.

⁷⁵⁵ Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 21.

⁷⁵⁶ See note 657 above.

determinations, are never disclosed. For him, it seems, there is no need to elaborate.⁷⁵⁷ Smith will often discuss a particular logion at length without ever explaining why the saying best fits a “non-rejection” or “rejection” context, or how the saying in question coheres with the other teachings that Smith has grouped in this context. For example, Smith places both Jesus’ teachings about becoming like a little child (Mark 9:33-37; Matt 18:1-5) and Jesus’ association with sinners in the “non-rejection context.” He discusses each in turn under separate subheadings.⁷⁵⁸ Not once does he explain why these require a “non rejection context,” or—an equally important issue—the nature of the connection (be it thematic or temporal) between the sayings and the association with sinners. What disqualifies the hypothesis that Jesus talked about becoming a little child and associated with sinners *after* he had been rejected by the religiously well-to-do, as several of his parables may presuppose? Such a simple question addresses what should be the most fundamental matter of a book of his scope, and Smith offers no guidance here.

The problem is that Smith underestimates what Dale Allison has called in one essay “The Problem of Audience”: given that the Gospels have tried to make the words of Jesus relevant to as many as possible, “our utmost endeavors can produce little more than modest speculations about the original audience(s).”⁷⁵⁹ Changing the context of a saying can change its meaning

⁷⁵⁷ Of all the proponents of a crisis considered in this chapter, Smith is by far least concerned with the frameworks of the Gospels. The narrative shape of the tradition plays no role in his treatment of particular sayings and deeds, and he never discusses the rough chronology of the ministry and the nature of the pre-written Gospel tradition.

⁷⁵⁸ Smith, *Jesus’ Twofold Teaching*, 42-45.

⁷⁵⁹ Allison, “Problem of Audience,” *Resurrecting Jesus*, 44. Manson, *Teaching of Jesus*, 320-27, was too optimistic in his ability to identify which of Jesus’ words were directed to the disciples, the general public, and the religious leaders, respectively.

entirely.⁷⁶⁰ To be sure, some logia will be more transparent than others, but nothing is so straightforward to preclude the need for further arguments about situation in the ministry. And even if one can reasonably infer the backstory of certain episodes in the Gospels, failure is likely to follow an effort such as Smith's to reorganize nearly every piece of the Synoptic tradition to its respective *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.⁷⁶¹

Despite these potential downsides, however, the 20th and 21st-century proposals leave important issues on the table. Several sayings in the tradition almost unavoidably imply that frustration, disappointment, and rejection lie in the background. If any of these sayings go back to Jesus, or represent the kinds of things he said in the Galilee, then we have an important aspect of his ministry that has been passed over by the plotlines of the canonical Gospels. This deserves a full discussion, as it is so strangely overlooked by contemporary historical Jesus scholarship. But we can also surmise that, in light of the above proposals, attempts to make larger claims about the course of Jesus' public career on the basis of these individual units and motifs is a task

⁷⁶⁰ See John S. Kloppenborg, "Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 97-132 (the placement of sayings with near identical lexical form in different contexts can change the meaning almost entirely). Cf. the argument of Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. S. H. Hooke; 2nd ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972 [orig. 1958]), 33-42, that the Gospels change parables that Jesus originally addressed to opponents into lessons for believers.

⁷⁶¹ It becomes more and more apparent to the reader of Smith's book that his "twofold teaching" proposal functions to harmonize seemingly disparate sayings of Jesus and also to explain away potentially troublesome sayings. He challenges the historicity of nothing. For instance, in Smith's view, Mark 9:1 ("there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power") stems from the "non-rejection context" and was a conditional prophecy (as was Matt 10:23), assuming the people of Israel would accept him. Because the "context" changed as Jesus was rejected, then, it is not really a failed prophecy after all. See *Jesus' Twofold Teaching*, 168-73 at 172 (italics mine): "Jesus holds that *so long as it is not rejected*, the Kingdom of God will continue to advance until it reached its culmination....The rejection of the message and its messenger, however, would render this conditional statement untrue."

fraught with difficulty.⁷⁶² If it is possible to attain some larger sketch of Jesus' ministry from such passages, then one must avoid what is too trusting and speculative in the above proposals. The method and assumptions behind such a task, so rarely discussed, deserve their own treatment.

(iii) Method is also the crux when we consider, as the final topic of this section, the import of Q studies and its stratification theories. The assumption here is not that the conclusions of Q scholarship are readily transferrable to Jesus study, as though the stratification of Q had direct bearing on the life of Jesus. As mentioned above, Kloppenborg himself has protested one spinoff of his work that has essentially applied the Q¹ material to the historical Jesus and everything else to the early Church.⁷⁶³ Kloppenborg and a host of others have rightly reminded us that, regardless of one's conclusions about stratification, material found in any of Q's strata may well represent the historical Jesus, just as there is surely some dominical material in the Gospel of John.⁷⁶⁴ Our question rather is this: given the striking parallels between the approach,

⁷⁶² Here the caution of John Meier in his response to Hollenbach (discussed below) is apropos in *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (vol. 2 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 125: "it stands to reason that Jesus the adult developed in his religious thought and practice. But again, what exact course that development took cannot be known a priori, and the Gospels give us almost no data by which we might plot its course. With a few possible exceptions (e.g., Jesus' having to face the possibility of a violent death), the Gospel material cannot be assigned to early or late stages in his career, and appeals to the general principle that Jesus must have developed do not change our state of ignorance about particulars." Cf. also Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 104-106.

⁷⁶³ See Kloppenborg, "Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest," 307-44.

⁷⁶⁴ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 245; idem, "Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest," 337 (though Kloppenborg is still cautious: "[one must exercise] great caution in attributing to the historical Jesus formulations that appear in the context of redactional expansions of Mark and Q"). Cf. Dale C. Allison, Jr., "A Plea for Thoroughgoing Eschatology," *JBL* 113 (1994): 651-68 at 662-63; Christopher Tuckett, "Q and the Historical Jesus," *From the Sayings to the Gospels*, 447-74 at 455-59.

method, and conclusions of the stratification of Q and the crisis idea, what do the prospects and problems of Q research lead us to expect about our own topic?

On the positive side, Q studies again confirm the observations above: several of the judgment sayings are difficult to understand without inferring some experience of conflict and disillusionment. Thus the impulse in Q research to move from interpretation to communal history is a natural one, and it parallels the move in Jesus studies from the implied backstory of some texts to their historical positions in the ministry. At this point the debate becomes only whether one links the rejection to the Q people or to the historical Jesus. It could also, of course, be both.⁷⁶⁵ Encouraging for Jesus critics in this respect are a few fairly recent studies—those by Reiser and Riniker, in particular—that have not only concluded that a good deal of the judgment material in the Gospels goes back to Jesus, but have also claimed, as more of a side note, that the experience of rejection in the ministry probably intensified this proclamation.⁷⁶⁶

Beyond that prospect, however, problems again arise quickly. The complexities noted above of gathering such texts together and weaving them into some conclusion about different “periods” in the ministry applies to proposals of different “strata” in Q. It is very difficult here to go from the micro to the macro. While it is not necessary for our project to offer a full assessment of the stratification of Q itself, we can admit the speculative nature of the endeavor, as it parallels the crisis theory in that regard. In many cases, I would argue, Kloppenborg’s

⁷⁶⁵ Cf. Kosch, “Q und Jesus,” 37: “Im Prozeß der Rezeption der Verkündigung Jesu [and esp. here the message of judgment] durch den Q-Kreis ist zwar mit Transformationsvorgängen und Akzentverlagerungen, nicht aber mit radikalen Diskontinuitäten zu rechnen.”

⁷⁶⁶ Cf. Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 229-30, 304, 322 (“the rejection of his message undoubtedly led him to emphasize the idea of judgment more strongly”); Christian Riniker, *Die Gerichtsverkündigung Jesu* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1999), 314-18, 332, 387-89, 458.

analyses of individual units themselves are less than compelling.⁷⁶⁷ But even if one were to grant that he has successfully demonstrated, for instance, that the “Baptist block” (Q 7:18-35) has been “controlled” by redaction to shape the opposition of Jesus and John to “this generation,”⁷⁶⁸ it is another matter entirely to infer that this redaction is one and the same with his discoveries in other units of material. The move from the identification of “several common features” among four blocks of material, to the claim that they “belong to the same redactional pattern,” is a leap not a step.⁷⁶⁹ The point is even clearer in his construction of Q³,⁷⁷⁰ where the temptation (Q 4:1-12), Q 11:42c (“it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others”), and Q 16:17 (“But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped”), despite being very different in literary form and style (e.g. hallmarks of Kloppenborg’s supposedly literary criteriology), are thought to comprise a third redactional “stage.” To detect coherence in this material, and, even more, that it is different enough from the Q¹ and Q² material to merit distinction as its own redactional layer, is a highly subjective judgment that may tell us more about starting points and assumptions than anything else. And

⁷⁶⁷ For notable criticisms, though not all of equal weight, see Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 179-80; Richard A. Horsley, “The Historical Context of Q” and “The Contours of Q,” in *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 46-60, 61-93; Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 133; Maurice Casey, *An Aramaic Approach to Q: Sources for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (SNTSMS 122; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29-31; Brian Han Gregg, *The Historical Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr, 2006), 25-27; Christopher Tuckett, “On the Stratification of Q,” *From the Sayings to the Gospels*, 143-52.

⁷⁶⁸ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 107.

⁷⁶⁹ Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 166. Cf. idem, *Excavating Q*, 148: Q 10:13-15 “cohere(s) with other elements of the main redaction of Q...(and) should be assigned to that redactional phase too.” He later mentions the “interruptive character” these sayings also share (150).

⁷⁷⁰ John Kloppenborg, “Nomos and Ethos in Q,” *Synoptic Problems*, 204-21.

then, even if he is right in the profile of each stratum, there is a further issue of knowing which came first and how the editorial development occurred.⁷⁷¹ It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the stratification of Q differs little from some of the bolder periodizations of the life of Jesus that we have encountered in this study so far, and thus it issues a similar warning.

To be clear, it would go too far to claim that the attempt to identify theological or thematic tensions in Q, any of the Gospels, or in the career of Jesus, is a foolhardy venture. Q researchers are right to affirm that the contents of this document are of varied nature, regardless of their further views on the origin, tradition history, and composition of Q.⁷⁷² As mentioned in Chapter 4, one benefit of the 19th-century crisis theory was that its proponents were *open* to finding inconsistency in the tradition (as evidence of change and/or development), even if they were not so explicit about what criteria qualified as such. Opponents of the crisis idea would often simply assert, rather than demonstrate, a unity of message and mind on Jesus' part. That is no more plausible, *prima facie*. So important questions for our topic arise that we also touched on in Chapter 4's assessment. If we are open to find tensions in the tradition, how do we know when we have found them? And if we find them, how do we explain them?

⁷⁷¹ Kloppenborg of course would argue that Q¹ is likely primary because the eschatological and polemical material in Q² "frames" these passages literarily. But others disagree, and have concluded nearly the reverse. For Siegfried Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), the first stage of Q framed Jesus as the Son of man, and the second, from a Hellenistic rather than Jewish context, added sapiential ideas. For Sato, *Q und Prophetie*, 406-11, Q is thought to resemble the prophetic books of the Old Testament, to which sapiential material was later added. Note also that Arland D. Jacobson, "The Literary Unity of Q," *JBL* 101 (1982): 365-89, concluded that an earlier apocalyptic focus on the imminent arrival of the Son of Man was supplemented by a Deuteronomistic and Wisdom perspective.

⁷⁷² But here too it should be recognized that—as Meier, *Message, Mentor, and Miracles*, 180 also observes—the attempt to identify various strata in Q is driven by the assumption that there must have been some earlier *coherence* in form, interests, and theology that was confused by later development.

Both questions are especially relevant in current Jesus scholarship. As noted in section 5.2 above, most historical Jesus study today operates with the assumption—rather than the express claim—that Jesus’ aims and teachings were largely consistent throughout his career.⁷⁷³ That is why the majority of studies the past fifty years have discussed particular themes and topics in the tradition synchronically with little to no concern for their original, diachronic placement in the ministry.⁷⁷⁴ Studies of “repentance” in the proclamation of Jesus, “the kingdom of God,” “healings and miracles,” and so on, proceed by gathering together material deemed relevant, analyzing it, and then drawing some conclusion.⁷⁷⁵ This process may lead to some reliable results, but the conclusions may also be misleading insofar as they give the impression of a fact that has been assumed, not demonstrated: that Jesus’ message was consistent, and that he meant the same things by the same words.⁷⁷⁶ Some critics have expressly challenged the notion

⁷⁷³ Though, for a “claim,” see Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York; Evanston: Harper & Row, 1967), 109: “Any division of the teaching of Jesus into various parts by subjects is an act of violence against that teaching, which is a constantly interrelating and interlocking whole.” His atomistic approach hardly validates the claim.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf. Meier, *Message, Mentor, and Miracles*, 237: “we must constantly remind ourselves of a basic rule: between Jesus’ baptism and the last weeks of his life, there is no before or after. The time frame and plot line of each evangelist are his own creation....Hence the major sayings and deeds of Jesus during his ministry must be studied topically.”

⁷⁷⁵ E.g. Eduard Schweizer, *Jesus* (trans. David E. Green; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1971 [orig 1968]); Leander E. Keck, *Who is Jesus? History in Perfect Tense* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000); Funk, *Honest to Jesus*; David Flusser, *Jesus* (3rd ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001 [orig. 1997]); Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

⁷⁷⁶ For instance, G. R. Beasley-Murray’s masterful *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Exeter; Paternoster, 1986). Beasley-Murray analyzes sayings individually and according to theme. He considers narrative context only when it suits his purposes, a few of which are akin to our interests (cf. e.g.: 95, 107 [deJesus spoke of “mystery” “at the end of his Galilean ministry, when it had become apparent that the majority of the people had rejected his proclamation”], 110, 274 [the saying about the Twelve on thrones “may be assumed to fall at a time in the ministry of Jesus when his message had been rejected by many in his nation”], 290 [Matthew 23 “belongs to a later period of time, when resistance to the message of Jesus had

that Jesus should be thought internally consistent on all matters,⁷⁷⁷ but these considerations rarely impact larger interpretive conclusions.

For us there is wisdom in the words of the English philosopher-historian R. G.

Collingwood:

you cannot find out what a man means by simply studying his spoken or written statements, even though he has spoken or written with perfect command of language and perfectly truthful intention. In order to find out his meaning you must also know what the question was (a question in his own mind, and presumed by him to be in yours) to which the thing he has said or written was meant as an answer.⁷⁷⁸

The insight should not be exaggerated to the point of absurdity. Even if we knew absolutely nothing about the course of his career and only had Paul's epistles, we could know some important matters rightly. The point is simply this: if Jesus' message underwent development throughout his public career, or if his aims changed in light of new circumstances, we would be unable to identify the fact if we treat the Gospels as pools of tradition from which we gather common motifs irrespective of the perplexing problem of placement and context.

increased"])). In any case, despite his synchronic discussion, he is comfortable making diachronic conclusions, as it is typical to find this sentiment: "(such and such is) characteristic of the instruction of Jesus that we have consistently noted in the course of our study thus far" (129).

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. Frederick Houk Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 355-60; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 88-97; Stephen J. Patterson, "An Unanswered Question: Apocalyptic Expectation and Jesus' Basileia Proclamation," *JSHJ* 8 (2010): 67-79. This will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

⁷⁷⁸ R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 31.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Our key conclusions about the role and character of the Galilean crisis in 20th-21st-century criticism are as follows:

- (i) the decline in the popularity of the crisis theory is largely due to two factors: a focus on the Gospels as creative theological documents in their own right and not mere portals to the past; form critical approaches which atomized the pre-written Gospel tradition and demolished the reliability of their chronological frames;
- (ii) historical Jesus studies beyond the early 20th-century would increasingly focus on individual sayings, activities, and themes in the tradition, irrespective of their chronological placement in the ministry;
- (iii) despite the paradigm shift of form criticism, many of the key texts that were influential in the construction of a Galilean crisis (such as the Galilean woes and other aspects of Jesus' teaching about judgment) were still thought to imply a backstory of rejection;
- (iv) there were mid 20th-century attempts to reframe the crisis theory, particularly by scholars from France and Britain; their studies attempted to respond to form criticism and salvage something of a rough chronology of the ministry from Mark or other sources;
- (v) more recent proposals since the 1970s for a crisis in the ministry have relied even less on the Gospel chronologies, instead focusing almost exclusively on particular words of Jesus and certain notable activities (esp. the sending of the Twelve and the departure from Galilee);
- (vi) the study of Q has mirrored the crisis theory in several notable ways: identifying the same theological tensions in Jesus' message, resolving those tensions with a stratification/periodization technique, and assuming that failure and disappointment inspired the inclusion of (or creation of) much of the judgment material in Q.

Our assessment of the crisis idea in this period was, as in Chapter 4, of a mixed nature. The 19th-century Galilean crisis could not withstand Wredean and form critical conclusions about the theological and episodic nature of the Gospels, and even more recent proposals for some crisis event remain too confident in the ability of the historian to piece everything together. From Maurice Goguel in the early 20th century to Eckhard Rau in very recent years, the step from the micro to the macro has been from the reasonable to the speculative. Nevertheless, we have

encountered throughout this study a number of praiseworthy aspects in the theory, and several more items that deserve further consideration. It is to such topics we now turn in Part III.

CHAPTER 6.0:

CONSISTENCY AND CHANGE

In the assessment sections of the last two chapters, a number of issues have surfaced that deserve further investigation. Two occupy the attention of this chapter. First, it has become apparent that the methodology at play in the identification and historical explanation of theological tensions in the Gospels deserves its own treatment. Even aside from the crisis theory, there have been numerous proposals that posing a change of mind on Jesus' part can explain such tensions. The topic is, then, of wider and immediate relevance to Jesus studies, and there has been, to my knowledge, no substantive engagement with it. The second issue is closely related: the question of the consistency (or lack thereof) in Jesus' aims and message throughout the course of his career. Should we think it likely, Galilean crisis or not, that some event or series of events changed his mind? This topic has been largely ignored in Jesus studies after form criticism. The hope here is to offer arguments in areas where arguments are typically lacking.

6.1. POSSIBILITIES

Before one can evaluate whether or not Jesus underwent a crisis that changed his views on some important matter, it is necessary to address what kind of historical approach would make that conclusion possible in the first place. This line of inquiry is important because the construction of a Galilean crisis has often hinged on the identification of various theological tensions in the

tradition, yet none of these studies have adequately addressed the deeper methodological question of what the identification (and resolution) of those tensions would require of the readers and of the texts themselves. Moreover, aside from the crisis theory, there have been numerous other claims in 20th- to 21st-century scholarship that Jesus changed his mind, and these too have often been attempts to resolve tensions in the tradition. A sampling:

- Robert Grant contended in a short essay that Jesus had two different eschatological expectations. He at first expected fulfillment/consummation in his lifetime, but once the kingdom failed to come in Jerusalem during the final week, he changed his view. The evidence for immediate fulfillment was the promise for a “hundredfold” in the present age (Mark 10:30), the promise “to come” before finishing the cities of Israel (Matt 10:23), seeing Satan fall from heaven (Luke 10:18), promising the Twelve thrones (Matt 19:28), and entering Jerusalem on an ass (Mark 11:1-10). The counter evidence was this: nothing happened in Jerusalem; Jesus now said he knew not “the day or the hour” (Mark 13:32).⁷⁷⁹
- Paul Hollenbach once argued that Jesus, after his baptism, continued to baptize with John as he had a “serious commitment” to his message. But then “something drastic” happened: Jesus discovered he could heal, and thought that such healings (and exorcisms) announced the *presence* of the kingdom of God. He broke with John.⁷⁸⁰
- George Wesley Buchanan wrote this: “Jesus and John may at one time have been confident that God wanted them to lead an open conflict against Rome as the two anticipated messiahs. That plan was partially frustrated, however, by the death of John the Baptist. This may have given Jesus an opportunity to rethink his role. It was at that time that he began to reorganize his program to include wealthy, Jewish businessmen and tax collectors. He expanded his program in size and financial support to be prepared for a war with Rome, if that seemed to be the will of God.”⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁹ Robert M. Grant, “The Coming of the Kingdom,” *JBL* 67 (1948): 297-303.

⁷⁸⁰ Paul W. Hollenbach, “The Conversion of Jesus: From Jesus the Baptizer to Jesus the Healer,” *ANRW* II 25 (1982): 196-219. For a similar proposal, though focusing on Jesus’ vision of Satan’s fall (Luke 10:18) rather than the sudden discovery of healing powers, see Ulrich B. Müller, “Vision und Botschaft: Erwägungen zur prophetischen Struktur der Verkündigung Jesu,” *ZTK* 74 (1977): 416-48.

⁷⁸¹ George Wesley Buchanan, *Jesus the King and His Kingdom* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 250.

- John Dominic Crossan claimed that Jesus shifted from an apocalyptic mindset as a follower of the Baptist to a sapiental teacher after John's death. He based his view on sayings of Jesus about John that seemed to him contradictory (e.g. either in favor of John or not). He concluded that both types of sayings are historical but stem from different perspectives of Jesus on the matter at different times.⁷⁸²
- Martin Ebner argued that at some point Jesus broke with the Baptist to engage his own public ministry, believing that the "Wende" that the Baptist expected in the near future had already occurred (Luke 10:18 is also significant for him). However, at the end of his life in Jerusalem, when faced with rejection, he returned to the apocalypticism of his forerunner.⁷⁸³
- Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz have proposed that, after the arrest of John the Baptist and the failure of his prediction of imminent judgment to occur immediately, Jesus came to a new realization: there had been a "delay" in the consummation of the end, and God had mercifully granted a brief time of grace. This divine "delay" inspired Jesus' ethical teaching and his understanding of forgiveness.⁷⁸⁴
- Fernando Bermejo-Rubio has recently wondered if one can hold together Jesus' command to love enemies with (what he believes) are Jesus' violent intentions in Jerusalem by positing "a spiritual evolution in Jesus." He claims that Jesus' seditious activities cluster around the end of his ministry, and Luke 22:35-38 "seems to witness a shift in Jesus' attitude."⁷⁸⁵

The brief descriptions make clear that the criteria used to identify a change of mind are thematic in nature, or content based. That is, the arguments hinge on proposed tensions in the tradition

⁷⁸² Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 236-38. The idea is not unprecedented. Cf. John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), 39 ("Similarly Jesus may, in the light of John's beheading, have abandoned the belief that God's justice will be demonstrated at the imminent judgment of John's 'stronger one' when those who repent will be vindicated"); Patterson, "An Unanswered Question," 78 (though for him Jesus continued to waffle).

⁷⁸³ Martin Ebner, *Jesus von Nazaret in seiner Zeit: Sozialgeschichtliche Zugänge* (SBS 196; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003), 103, 104, 190 ("wieder auf den Kurs seines Lehrers eingeschwenkt," which he describes as a "leicht pessimistischen Haltung"), 192-93.

⁷⁸⁴ Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, "The Delay of the Parousia as a Test Case for the Criterion of Coherence," *LS* 32 (2007): 49-66.

⁷⁸⁵ Fernando Bermejo-Rubio, "Jesus and the Anti-Roman Resistance: A Reassessment of the Arguments," *JSHJ* 12 (2014): 1-105 at 91. He proposes other possible explanations, however, including that Jesus was not always consistent.

that, in order to be resolved, require the hypothesis that Jesus' teaching changed. The interpretive move resembles that behind the stratification of Q, though the stratification, or periodization, occurs in the ministry of Jesus himself. It is also striking that most of these studies have to do with issues of eschatology and judgment in the tradition (and thus Jesus' relationship with John the Baptist, by extension)—that is, issues that have also inspired the idea of a Galilean crisis and were discussed as early as John Chrysostom.⁷⁸⁶

It is important to recall at the outset that the Assessment section in Chapter 4.4 listed the openness to finding inconsistency of the tradition as one positive characteristic of the 19th-century crisis theory. That point stands. It is dubious to assume at the outset a unity of message and mind on Jesus' part, even though that was often the position of many critics of the crisis theory and even characterizes much of Jesus scholarship today (discussed more below). In any case, it can be concluded that the constructing of periods in Jesus' career on the basis of theological tensions in the Gospels is a highly tenuous procedure. There are three reasons why: (i) there is an interpretive difficulty in reconstructing these synthetic tensions with the requisite clarity and precision, (ii) the nature of our extant sources make it difficult to succeed, and (iii) even if one grants that these tensions can be properly identified, the result lacks explanatory power for a historical reconstruction.

(i) The most fundamental problem with using theological or thematic tensions to divide the ministry of Jesus is that we have to admit, if we are honest, that we really do not know what Jesus expected to happen in his ministry. And if we do not know what Jesus expected to happen, then we can never identify some crisis that changed his views of what would happen. Critics are in unanimous agree, of course, that Jesus' ministry was devoted to proclaiming the kingdom of

⁷⁸⁶ See above pp 64-66.

God, and a good number further suppose that that kingdom was of an apocalyptic and/or eschatological character. But that generality actually tells us very little about what in particular Jesus saw when he peered into the future. To watch E. P. Sanders labor to address what Jesus hoped would come to pass is evidence enough.⁷⁸⁷ Our lack of knowledge troubles any attempt to periodize the ministry, for if we lack precise knowledge of the ends to which Jesus strove, then we cannot identify departures from those ends that could in any way be considered a “crisis.” Cecil Cadoux’s proposal, for instance, begins to fall apart if one challenges his assumption that Jesus had initially aimed to inaugurate the kingdom on earth by winning over the enemies of Israel by acts of love.⁷⁸⁸ If such was not Jesus’ aim, then certainly the failure to do so would not be cause for crisis.

Of course, to say that the ends are fuzzy does not mean that the rest is too. Identifying certain theological tensions in the tradition does not require absolute clarity on Jesus’ ultimate aims, and it would be foolish to deny the reality of what Mack has called “shifts in discourse” in Jesus’ teaching.⁷⁸⁹ But problems emerge once such tensions are synthesized into larger groupings that are compared and contrasted with others in the tradition.⁷⁹⁰ One difficulty was briefly

⁷⁸⁷ See Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 228-37. Sanders concludes that Jesus may not have had a practical strategy to achieve his goals; he ultimately left it up to God (pp. 226, 235, 332). Cf. Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 96 (“if we ask what overt result Jesus may have hoped for, the answer is not easy, because he issued no programme of religious or political reform, any more than he laid down precise regulations for individual behavior”).

⁷⁸⁸ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 173.

⁷⁸⁹ Mack, *Lost Gospel*, 203.

⁷⁹⁰ This is not a problem unique to historical Jesus studies. Two examples: (a) Douglas Campbell’s treatment of the history of Pauline exegesis in *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Re-Reading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) parallels some of the interpretive issues at play in the crisis theory. Much of Campbell’s book is his attempt to construct, and then deconstruct, a theological system which he calls “Justification theory.” He understands this system to be at fundamental odds with Paul’s true Gospel, such that he can offer

described in the Assessment section of Chapter 4.4: the identification and reconstruction of such tensions, and the periodizing of the ministry in turn, often tell us more about the readers and their interpretive categories than the texts. In the early 19th century, Hase's crisis theory aimed to resolve the binary between "spiritual" and "political" messianism that had emerged most forcefully in the work of Reimarus. But this binary was a creation of Christian interpreters largely due to caricatures of Judaism. Similarly, in the late 19th century, many crisis proposals aimed to resolve a tension between ethics and eschatology in the Gospels. But problems with this view have been shown in recent years via criticism of the stratification of Q—arguments which, as shown in Chapter 5, bear marked resemblance to the earlier crisis theory. The stratification of similar tensions in Q has been challenged with the observation that numerous texts from our period set these perspectives side by side with little issue.⁷⁹¹ Not only that, but as Kümmel

a radical re-reading of Romans 1:21-3:20 (which he sees not as Paul's own view but a rhetorical attack of his opponents) almost entirely on the basis of perceived theological tensions between these two systems. For a critique of Campbell's method and conclusions, see Barry R. Matlock, "Zeal for Paul but not According to Knowledge: Douglas Campbell's War on 'Justification Theory'," *JSNT* 34 (2011): 115-149. (b) Note also the attempt of Gabriele Boccaccini to distinguish between priestly, sapiential, and enochian strands of Judaism. See e.g. *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). His approach is devoted to the identification of theological themes and tensions in the sources. James C. VanderKam, "The Book of Enoch and the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 257-77 at 269, critiques Boccaccini on precisely his attempt to reconstruct whole theologies from documents ill-suited to that interest.

⁷⁹¹ Cf. J. G. Williams, "Neither Here Nor There: Between Wisdom and Apocalyptic in Jesus' Kingdom Sayings," *Forum* 5 (1989): 7-30; Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 372-80; Dale C. Allison Jr., "The Problem of Gehenna," *Resurrecting Jesus*, 56-99 at 67-73; George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism: Some Points for Discussion," in *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (eds. Benjamin G. Wright III and Lawrence M. Wills; SBLSymS 35; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 17-37; Grant Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (SJSJ 115; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007); Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 65-66; Andreas Grandy, *Die Weisheit der Gottesherrschaft: Eine Untersuchung zur jesuanischen Synthese von traditioneller und apokalyptischer Weisheit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 31-32.

reasoned concerning present and future eschatology in the Gospels themselves, "...it is impossible to assume that...though in the tradition these conceptions were placed *side by side*, yet in Jesus' thinking they belonged to periods following one after the other in time."⁷⁹² Thus, before we can get to Q, and certainly before we can get to the historical Jesus, we have to grapple with the one, clear fact of the matter: our earliest extant sources have no qualms placing adjacently many of those traditions that critics have thought belonged to different historical periods or literary strata.⁷⁹³ If such is true of our primary sources, we must ask why not for Q,⁷⁹⁴ and why not for the historical Jesus?

In fact, the problem goes deeper than the state of our extant data. Our *lack* of evidence is also a factor.⁷⁹⁵ As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, periodizing tensions in the tradition requires that one first reconstruct from the texts two more or less coherent theological perspectives that can be compared. But it is difficult when our sources are full of gaps and holes on precisely the kind of information we would need to do this.⁷⁹⁶ The Gospels provide only snapshots of the life and teaching of Jesus relevant to their overall theological purposes, and they do not share the modern historian's concern for systematic thought, interest in development, or curiosity about

⁷⁹² Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, 142-3 (italics orig.).

⁷⁹³ See here the cogent reflections of Ulrich Luz on Matthew in "Matthew's Interpretive 'Tendencies' and the 'Historical' Jesus," in Charlesworth and Rhea, *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions*, 577-99 at 597.

⁷⁹⁴ Cf. Richard A. Horsley, "Questions about Redactional Strata and Social Relations Reflected in Q," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1989 Seminar Papers* (ed. D. J. Lull; SBLSP 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 186-203.

⁷⁹⁵ The problem here is readily apparent when reading the argument of Descamps, "Réflexions sur l'eschatologie de Jésus," 441, where he contends that concern for judgment, the Son of Man, and apocalyptic are "absent" from the earliest teaching of Jesus.

⁷⁹⁶ For some thoughts along these lines see Craig A. Evans, "Reconstructing Jesus' Teaching: Prospects and Proposals," in *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration* (eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; AGSU 39; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1997), 145-78 at 146-55.

motive.⁷⁹⁷ Thus, historians are often prone to repeat the error of past theologians who, on account of their honest desire to know the full character of Jesus, would say things like this: Jesus never laughed.⁷⁹⁸ This example is rather extreme, but Chrysostom is not the only one who has failed to allow the lack of evidence we have about Jesus temper claims made about him.⁷⁹⁹ The study of John the Baptist has been plagued by a similar dilemma up to very recent times, since interpreters have routinely characterized John's ministry, and contrasted his "theology" to that of Jesus, by systematizing the very meager material we have about John.⁸⁰⁰ It has been common to claim that predictions of coming judgment characterized the whole of John's message to Israel, which *contrasts* Jesus' message of grace and the kingdom.⁸⁰¹ As in the sampling above, some have come to this conclusion by psychologizing John's arrest and/or execution, asserting that

⁷⁹⁷ Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching* (SNTSMS 27; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 123.

⁷⁹⁸ Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 6.8.

⁷⁹⁹ The predicament is probably a symptom of all reading, as Gadamer argued that readers read by projecting a "horizon" of meaning from the details they encounter, all the while revising that "horizon" as new information comes to light. Cf. e.g. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1989 [orig. 1960]), 302, 304. Here he builds on Husserl's work in *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson; London: G. Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1931 [orig. 1913]). The study of Jesus must intensify this reality, and provide less opportunity to revise, given that the Gospels have so many empty pockets that invite filling with historical imagination.

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. e.g. Eta Linnemann, "Jesus und der Täufer," in *Festschrift für Ernst Fuchs* (ed. Gerhard Ebeling et al.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), 219-36; Hollenbach, "The Conversion of Jesus," 196-219 (at 198 he caricatures John's ministry via wrath and judgment as a point of contrast with Jesus); Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 237.

⁸⁰¹ E.g. Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:314; Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 156 (Jesus' summons to repentance is "quite different" than John's), 157 (John threatens with judgment, Jesus motivates by appealing to the goodness of God). Cf. Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 139 ("the prophet of woe" and "the prophet of salvation"); Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 38-39 ("Nothing even approaching a promise of salvation crosses [the Baptist's] lips").

that event “disillusioned” Jesus and caused him to reconsider the Baptist’s fiery message.⁸⁰² But such reconstructions, aside from being speculative, presume to know much more about John’s ministry than can really be claimed.⁸⁰³

A counterfactual thought experiment: let us imagine that Jesus uttered Q 11:20 (“If I by the finger [or spirit] of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you”), but by some accident of history it was never included in the Gospels. That scenario is, in fact, an eminently plausible one, since Mark preserves the Beelzebul accusation but lacks this saying of Jesus in response.⁸⁰⁴ Had it not been included, I have no doubt that some critics would suppose that the preaching of the kingdom and Jesus’ exorcistic activity stem from different stages of his career.⁸⁰⁵ The reason is that this saying remains the only *explicit* link in the triple and double tradition between Jesus’ exorcisms and the advent of the kingdom of God. In fact, in the Gospel of Mark, there are pericopae devoted to Jesus preaching/teaching the kingdom, and pericopae

⁸⁰² See here Patterson, “Unanswered Question,” 76-78. Cf. also John Monro Gibson, “The Gospel of St. Matthew,” in *Jeremiah-St. Mark* (vol. 4 of *An Exposition of the Bible*; Hartford: S. S. Scranton Co., 1914), 744; S. H. Hooke, *Kingdom of God*, 104 (the crisis of John’s death leads Jesus to decide he needs to build his Church); Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 236-38; Laurent Guyénot, “A New Perspective on John the Baptist’s Failure to Support Jesus,” *Journal of Unification Studies* 1 (1997): 71-92; Theissen and Merz, “Delay of the Parousia,” 60.

⁸⁰³ For additional thoughts along these lines, see Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 140 (we cannot claim certain views “distinctively characteristic” of Jesus, “since we do not know everything that John the Baptist thought about his own mission”); Allison, “Excursus 2: The Continuity Between John the Baptist and Jesus,” *Constructing Jesus*, 204-20.

⁸⁰⁴ For discussion and literature on this saying as an isolated logion, see Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 407-30.

⁸⁰⁵ This is, in fact, close to what Morton Smith argued in *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 83: “the miracle stories in the synoptics are not usually connected with Jesus’ teaching, and when they are, the connections are usually secondary.” (He is thinking of the summary-statements). His historical conclusion: “Evidently the traditions were originally separate; this suggests that the activities were.” The recent study by Amanda Witmer, *Jesus, the Galilean Exorcist: His Exorcisms in Social and Political Context* (LNTS 429; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2014), does not attempt to draw out the connection between Jesus’ exorcisms and his teaching in any detail.

devoted to Jesus driving out demons, but never any specific episode that links the two in the manner of Q 11:20. Both appear only in a few *Sammelberichte* (1:39; 6:12-13), which so many have deemed Markan creations and thus dismissed as irrelevant for historical reconstruction.⁸⁰⁶ Of course there would be counter-arguments, and critics would assuredly muster background evidence that link the advent of God's end-time rule with the overthrow of Satan's dominion (e.g. T. Mos. 10:1; T. Levi 18:12; T. Sim. 6:6; T. Zeb. 9:8; T. Dan 6:1-14; Jub. 5:6; 48:15; 4Q174 1:10-13; 1QM 14:9, 15; 17:5-6; 18:1-3; 11Q13 2:13). But there would be debate about it, no doubt.

As it is, however, it cannot be that the exorcizing and the proclaiming stem from different periods of the ministry. The clearest reason is the simple and somewhat random fact that Q 11:20 has been preserved.⁸⁰⁷ Should it have been lost, a reconstruction based on the extant evidence alone could quite easily, and even unsuspectingly, imply knowledge that goes beyond that evidence, and hence distorts the historical truth.

Examples like this could be multiplied with ease. We could imagine, for instance, that Q lacked the so-called "Johannine thunderbolt" (Q 10:21-22). It would be easy to maintain that the verbiage of John's Jesus was a creation of that Evangelist. But because of Q 10:21-22 we know

⁸⁰⁶ Cf. Nineham, "Order of Events in St. Mark's Gospel," 233; Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 14 note 6, 175, 230.

⁸⁰⁷ Hence Q 11:20 occupies an important place in many discussions of Jesus' kingdom message. See Joseph Bonsirven, *Le règne de Dieu* (Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1957), 67-70; Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 64-65; Jacques Schlosser, *La règne de Dieu dans les dits de Jesus* (2 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1980), 127-54; Hans Weder, *Gegenwart und Gottesherrschaft: Überlegungen zum Zeitverständnis bei Jesus und im frühen Christentum* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 26-34. Ironically, however, sometimes these discussions make similarly extensive claims that overlook our lack of evidence, such as Graham H. Twelftree's claim in *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 54; Tübingen: Mohr, 1993), 224, that Jesus "was the first to make the connection between exorcism and eschatology" (*italics orig.*), largely based on this one saying. Twelftree's assertion is common.

that at least some of John's sonship language has traction in pre-existing tradition.⁸⁰⁸ One preserved saying demonstrates continuity where, in its absence, discontinuity may have suggested itself. Another: what would happen if we did not have the Baptist block in Q, where Jesus says so many affirming things about John? Or what if, befitting later Christian theological proclivities, we had only one saying from Jesus about John that made it into the tradition, and it happened to be the one that names John as the "least in the kingdom" (Q 7:28)? Perhaps the views of Hollenbach and Crossan on the discontinuity between Jesus and John would be standard fare. Or what if all that early Christians had preserved was some form of the passion narrative? Would we ever surmise that the one who cleansed the temple had formerly taught in synagogues in the Galilee? Would we ever presume that, before teaching in Jerusalem, Jesus had used "the kingdom of God" as one of his most characteristic expressions? Would we ever suspect that this teacher in the temple had won renown for his exorcisms and other deeds of power when in the Galilee?

The lessons learned from such counterfactual experiments can only go so far. But it is obviously true that the historical Jesus did and said much more than the Gospels have preserved, and that historical reconstructions which fail to account for that fact can mislead. It must be granted, then, that periodizing the ministry on the basis of perceived theological tensions can

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 59; Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 359-61; Andreas Lindemann, "Die Logienquelle Q. Fragen an eine gut begründete Hypothese," in Lindemann, *Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus*, 3-26 at 25; Michael Theobald, "Das sogenannte 'johanneische Logion' in der synoptischen Überlieferung (Mt 11,25-27; Lk 10,21f.) und das Vierte Evangelium: Erwägungen zum Ursprung der johanneischen Christologie," in *Studien zu Matthäus und Johannes: Festschrift für Jean Zumstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (eds. Andreas Dettwiler, Uta Poplutz, and Jean Zumstein; ATANT 97; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2009), 109-33.

only provide the illusion of having fit all the evidence together comprehensively, since our sources themselves are only pieces of a larger incomplete puzzle.⁸⁰⁹

(ii) Aside from the consequences of our lack of evidence, the very nature of the extant evidence is often too quickly disregarded in the quest to get to the history behind it.⁸¹⁰ That is to say, the plotlines, characterization techniques, and other stylistic and thematic features of the Gospels work to eliminate the kinds of historical clues that would lead historians to believe that some change of mind had occurred. Chapter 5.5 outlined ways that each of the four Gospels function as “passion narratives with extended introductions.”⁸¹¹ That is, the canonical four have been constructed so as to position Golgotha as the pinnacle and *telos* of the ministry.⁸¹² This presentation, while perhaps “historical” in the sense that Jesus did not find his execution a complete surprise, smooths over and normalizes what was clearly for the followers of Jesus a turbulent and troublesome series of events.⁸¹³ Thus, if these narratives could nearly dissolve the crisis of the cross, how much more, we should suppose, a Galilean crisis before the cross. This point has little to say about the Jesus of history; it merely states that since we can only access the

⁸⁰⁹ Alan Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony and Wisdom Redaction in Q* (NovTSup 91; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 400, wrote: “mixing of genres does not necessitate a redaction-history judgment if the genres in question are integrated with respect to each other and to the total textual *Gestalt*.” For the question of the historical Jesus, the issue is clear: we do not have the total *Gestalt*.

⁸¹⁰ A criticism that resembles what Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 5, said to his contemporaries: “*We are in too great a hurry to leave the terrain of the evangelists’ accounts (and run to the history behind it)*” (italics orig.).

⁸¹¹ Kähler, *So-Called Historical Jesus*, 80 note 1.

⁸¹² Again Kähler, *So-Called Historical Jesus*, 89: “everywhere we see that the evangelist’s purposes have determined how the materials at his disposal are to be employed.”

⁸¹³ See Hiers, *Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 107.

Jesus of history via the sources that commemorate him, reconstructions of some Galilean crisis are unlikely to get very far given the *Tendenzen* of these sources.

Since we already discussed Q 11:20 above, we can offer another case study on the Beelzebul controversy via Joel Marcus's essay "The Beelzebul Controversy and the Eschatologies of Jesus."⁸¹⁴ Marcus has argued that embedded in the Beelzebul controversy are two contradictory perspectives on the exorcisms. One ("Satan's house is not divided") assumes Satan's house has *not* been overthrown. The second (the strong man has been "bound" [as well as Q 11:20]), assumes that Jesus believed his exorcisms delivered a near fatal blow to Satan and his minions. Marcus contended that both sayings go back to Jesus, but the Gospels have distorted the historical reality by juxtaposing these contrary perspectives in the same pericope. The truth is that these sayings each come from different stages of the ministry, and presuppose some development in the thought of Jesus. Early in his ministry, before being baptized by John, Jesus was a miraculous healer and exorcist, but did not understand his individual episodes of exorcisms to be *paradigms* of the inauguration of the eschaton. But with time and success as an exorcist, and especially after his baptismal vision of Satan falling from heaven (Luke 10:18), Jesus began to see his exorcisms playing a unique role in the inauguration of the kingdom.⁸¹⁵

It is plain that Marcus's argument closely parallels the way that many have reconstructed a Galilean crisis, especially after form criticism. The atomistic approach to the pericope, the

⁸¹⁴ Joel Marcus, "The Beelzebul Controversy and the Eschatologies of Jesus," in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 247-278.

⁸¹⁵ Marcus claims as evidence of development in Jesus' thought (a) suggestions that Jesus' exorcisms were *not* unique (Q 11:19), (b) the saying about demons "returning" to formerly exorcised people (Matt 12:43-45, which he convincingly takes as a reflection on failed exorcism or relapse), (c) and more exclusive sayings like: "those who are not with me are against me" (Q 11:23).

identification of some thematic tension therein, the inferring of backstories behind the various sayings at hand, and the linking of these sayings to others in the tradition that are theologically similar, are all identical to the way that crisis proponents proceeded in the past. But it is the unexplored implications of Marcus's argument about the nature of our sources that cast doubt over this reconstruction, just as it does for the crisis theory. If Marcus were right, it would mean that in pre-Markan tradition sayings were so thoroughly detached from their original contexts that they assumed radically new meanings, and the harmonization of two originally contradictory perspectives on the exorcism by the Evangelists produce a distorted picture of the historical truth. Moreover, it would mean that, despite the fact that Matthew, Mark, and Luke seem to assume that the flow of the dialogue is logical, we remain in position not only to extract these sayings from their narrative contexts and infer their true and contrarian meanings, but to reconstruct the real historical contexts for them. All of these implications are possible, of course. But the argument requires herculean confidence in the ability of the historian to reassemble all of these pieces of Gospel tradition that the narrative presentations of the Evangelists have thoroughly disassembled.⁸¹⁶

Should it be correct, then, that the Evangelists have woven together stories about Jesus from a contradictory and free-floating sayings tradition, a more sober truth would avail itself: we know *less* about what Jesus actually thought, not that we can know *more* about, in Marcus's case, his different eschatologies. The same is true of a Galilean crisis. If indeed our sources have so distorted these different periods of Jesus' career—placing indiscriminately together sayings and actions that were historically separated by time, space, audience, and intention—the upshot

⁸¹⁶ This point is similar to some critiques of the early 20th-century form-critical attempt to reconstruct "tradition history." Cf. Dale C. Allison Jr., *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 29; Law, *Historical-Critical Method*, 177-81.

should be that we find the career of Jesus more opaque than before, and our possible reconstructions less forthcoming.

(iii) For the sake of argument, however, let us grant that a critic could reconstruct with sufficient clarity some tension in the Gospel tradition that required diachronic resolution (via, e.g., periodization or stratification). A final difficulty follows: change of mind is only one possible explanation of the evidence among many others.

Marcus's article above again demonstrates the point. One could grant that Marcus successfully identified different eschatologies in the Beelzebul controversy. But agreement on that point does not require one to agree with Marcus's additional conclusion that Jesus' worldview developed in the particular way that he describes. His evidence, if you agree with his interpretation, is merely that we find contradictory perspectives on the exorcisms in the same pericope. Indeed, armed with the same evidence as Marcus, one could reverse the direction of development and say that Jesus' period of success as an exorcist actually preceded a period of disappointment. That explanation may in fact be preferable to Marcus's, since we know nothing of a pre-baptismal ministry of Jesus, and the latter halves of the Synoptics are conspicuously lacking in miracles and exorcisms.

In any case, the point is that the evidence mustered by Marcus in his essay, or by many of those proposing some Galilean crisis in the ministry, rarely requires the historical narrative that is constructed around the evidence. One could spy development in a number of directions, or even pose, on the basis of the same evidence, that Jesus did not gradually "develop" from A to B but rather changed his mind rather dramatically from A to B. Or one could say that A and B do not represent discreet periods or stages of Jesus' career but simply reflect diverse experiences that were characteristic throughout the whole of his ministry. It is difficult to know how to

decide which narrative is preferable, because the evidence so often lacks explanatory force.⁸¹⁷

The same is true the stratification of Q, as noted above. One can agree that certain passages and even groups of passages in the final form of Q are redactional and do not square with the earlier recension. But to admit that point takes us no closer to Kloppenborg's stratification theory than it does to any other proposal.⁸¹⁸

Some would even challenge the implicit assumption that Jesus was consistent within the particular period or stage of life that he found himself. So there is another possibility still.

Numerous critics the past 20 to 30 years have thought it only reasonable that Jesus, like most people, contradicted himself from time to time.⁸¹⁹ E. P. Sanders wrote "people who think and talk in pictures may use apparently self-contradictory ones."⁸²⁰ Jack Sanders made an interesting case in a 1998 *NTS* article that Jesus had a certain "randomness" about his activity which was

⁸¹⁷ Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment*, 142, was thinking along these lines when he wrote concerning the eschatology of Jesus that "detached sayings" cannot provide evidence for development, because "more or less convincing reasons can be produced for assuming both a gradual weakening and also a gradual strengthening of Jesus' imminent expectations, so that the two arguments cancel each other out."

⁸¹⁸ Cf. Tuckett, "On the Stratification of Q," 143-52. Note here, e.g., Maurice Casey's "chaotic model of 'Q'" as argued for in his *An Aramaic Approach to Q: Sources for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (SNTSMS 122; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) (which aims to account for differences in theological outlooks but mostly intends to explain both the verbatim agreements between Matthew and Luke and those that share little in word choice, syntax, and order). Another alternative among the legions possible: what is it about Q that excludes the hypothesis that it developed in much the same way that April DeConick has suggested for the *Gospel of Thomas*: a "rolling corpus"? Cf. *Rediscovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and Its Growth* (LNTS 287; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007).

⁸¹⁹ Or not just Jesus, but early Christians in general. C. F. D. Moule argued in an important essay that Jesus followers never created a systematic eschatology because their terminology and concepts were fashioned situationally and in response to different questions. See "The Influence of Circumstances on the Use of Eschatological Terms," *JTS* 15 (1964): 1-15.

⁸²⁰ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 236.

essential to his charisma.⁸²¹ Stephen Patterson concluded in one essay on the Son of Man, already cited above, that Jesus never fully made up his mind about John's eschatological program, and his vacillation is reflected in the tradition.⁸²² James Charlesworth claimed Jesus was "inconsistent regarding the time of the coming of God's Rule."⁸²³ And Dale Allison contended, in defense of his eschatological portrait of Jesus, that "Consistency is the hobgoblin of nonapocalyptic minds."⁸²⁴ The increasing frequency of such suggestions in recent times no doubt reflects our postmodern *Zeitgeist*, just as 19th-century critics were prone to see "development" everywhere they looked. But these studies would recognize the same dilemma in our sources that others use to periodize the ministry—theological tensions—and offer a radically different explanation.

All of these difficulties which complicate the reconstruction of a Galilean crisis are not unique to Jesus research but are rather shared with the study of any ancient figure who can only be accessed via fragmentary literary remains. There is a parallel between the attempt to pinpoint the coherence and inner-tensions in the thought of Jesus and the attempt of Pauline scholars to systemize Paul's "theology" on the basis of his occasional epistles. There is always the risk that a researcher will unintentionally include or exclude material that is essential to the matter at hand. There is the possibility that she will underdetermine or overdetermine the significance of that material. We learn both of the inevitably subjective nature of historical interpretation, and of the patchy nature of our sources, when one critic's Paul can have a coherent narrative theology

⁸²¹ Jack T. Sanders, "The Criterion of Coherence and the Randomness of Charisma: Poring Through some Aporias in the Jesus Tradition," *NTS* 44 (1998): 1-25.

⁸²² Patterson, "Unanswered Question."

⁸²³ James H. Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 101.

⁸²⁴ Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 96. See in general 87-97.

with room for every jot and tittle in the epistles,⁸²⁵ another's can develop in important ways throughout the course of his ministry,⁸²⁶ and still another's cannot be saved from irreconcilable theological contradictions.⁸²⁷ And even then, the parallel to our topic is not exact, for historical Jesus scholars probably have it worse than Pauline critics.⁸²⁸ Paul was not a systematic theologian by any means, but he was probably more systematic than Jesus, or at least his ideas have come down to us in more systematizable media.

In all, therefore, the attempt to reconstruct a Galilean crisis in the manner attempted by those critics in Chapters 4 and 5, in addition to other proposals that Jesus changed his mind in some drastic way during his ministry, are unlikely to succeed.

6.2. EARLY PERCEPTIONS OF JESUS

The above conclusion does not in any way imply, however, that Jesus was consistent in his aims and message. The discussion thus far has concerned not the Jesus of history, but rather the ways that our sources remember the Jesus of history. It is possible that Jesus changed his mind numerous times throughout his ministry and found "crises" around every bend. The point is that, should that be true, our sources do not permit us to know much about it.

⁸²⁵ Cf. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

⁸²⁶ Cf. J. W. Drane, *Paul, Libertine or Legalist? A Study in the Theology of the Major Pauline Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1975).

⁸²⁷ Cf. Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen: Mohr, 1983).

⁸²⁸ See here Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 236 note 7 ("figures who think less systematically, including Jesus, probably have at least as many contradictions in their utterances as does Paul, if not more").

But with that negative side of the argument complete, we now turn to make a positive case concerning the question of the consistency of the historical Jesus. As mentioned numerous times in this study, criticism of the Galilean crisis idea throughout history has often retreated to a position that merely assumes or asserts a unity of intention on the part of Jesus. Paul Hollenbach complained:

There is an assumption, again usually based on theological commitments, that Jesus, at least in his mature years and certainly throughout his public career, did not change, grow, or develop in his thought and strategy in response either to inner psychological or outer environmental factors.⁸²⁹

Hollenbach is on point here about calling this view an “assumption.” He is also likely correct in stating the impact of theology on it, though in a different way than he intends. It is probably not due to overt theological agendas, but is rather a legacy of earlier Christian exegetical practices and “habits of reading” which have generally assumed Jesus to be the stable in the midst of the unstable; the eternal Word in the midst of changing culture. In the 20th century, it would become even harder to dislodge this assumption given the atomization of Jesus research following form criticism, which left subsequent study with synchronic discussions of discreet sayings, events, and themes in the Gospels. The outcome of such topically oriented studies has been, intentionally or not, to relegate questions of development, change, and consistency to the antiquated 19th-century Quest.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁹ Hollenbach, “The Conversion of Jesus,” 202. Note also Henry J. Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1937), 139: “The modern age, even without reference to the gospel, tends to believe that Jesus must have so lived (deliberately working out a plan). Every good man is expected now to have such a unity, definiteness and consciousness of purpose. Even if we cannot discover it we assume it in Jesus, and mostly we can read such unity, definiteness and consciousness of purpose into the gospel story.”

⁸³⁰ Though there have been some recent attempts to reintroduce psychology to the study of Jesus. See Bas van Os, *Psychological Analyses and the Historical Jesus: New Ways to Explore Christian Origins* (LNTS 432; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011); Donald Capps,

I will advance my view on the matter, which is twofold. On the one hand, we can hardly deny that Jesus “developed” in the sense that new experiences shaped his outlook.⁸³¹ The next chapter will offer more suggestions on this front. On the other hand, the evidence is strongly suggestive that Jesus was on the whole consistent in aims and message throughout the course of his brief public career,⁸³² such that the notion of “crisis” as change of mind is improbable.⁸³³ The remainder of this chapter will defend this view.

“Beyond Schweitzer and the Psychiatrists: Jesus as Fictive Personality,” in Charlesworth and Rhea, *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions*, 399-435.

⁸³¹ Memorable here are Sanders’s reflections on “development” in Paul in his essay for Richard Hays’s Festschrift: “Did Paul’s Theology Develop?,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays* (eds. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kevin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 325-50. He explores the question in more detail in his recent book *Paul: The Apostle’s Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015). His ideas are not unrelated to our project, and are worth quoting in full:

Discussions of Paul’s theology often make him too bookish or academic. He spent years of his life on the road, carrying (presumably on pack animals) his tent, clothing, and tools—not many scrolls, if any. He carried the Bible safely tucked away in his head, where it belongs. As an apostle, he often supported himself by plying his trade. He was busy, traveling, working with his hands, winning people for Christ, shepherding or coping with his converts, responding to questions and problems. He was very human... Paul the completely confident academic and systematic theologian—sitting at his desk, studying the Bible, working out a system, perfect and consistent in all its parts, unchanging over a period of thirty years, no matter how many new experiences he and his churches had—is an almost inhuman character, either a thinking machine or the fourth person of the Trinity. The real Paul knew anger, joy, depression, triumph, and anguish; he reacted, he overreacted, he repented, he apologized, he flattered and cajoled, he rebuked and threatened, he argued this way and that: he did everything he could think of in order to win some. *Naturally* his mind matured, his thinking grew (347, italics orig.).

See also Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 126: “That there was some development during this relatively short time, I do not doubt.” His view is this: “What and how much it was, I do not know, nor does anyone else.”

⁸³² On the brevity of Jesus’ career as a potential reason to doubt significant development or change, see Loisy in Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 122; Campbell, *Life of Christ*, 150. Semler, *Beantwortung der Fragmente eines Ungenannten*, 188-92, had raised a similar criticism of Reimarus’ reconstruction.

⁸³³ Of interest to us is not whether or not Jesus *actually was* consistent. After all, we are not dealing with mathematical formulas here but theological “language games.” The phrase “the kingdom of God,” which stands at the center of Jesus’ public proclamation, is itself a polyvalent

We should note, as an initial point, just how difficult a task it is to address the question of the consistency of Jesus. The main problem with the “criterion of coherence” in Jesus studies is not that its application is too subjective (though it contains, like all historiography, a degree of subjectivity).⁸³⁴ It is rather the way it has been commonly applied by critics: we clarify what Jesus says here by means of what he said there.⁸³⁵ That approach will not do for a question like ours. The whole discussion and application of the “criterion of coherence” occurs within the synchronic space that the Gospels have constructed for us—where our terms and stories have been fixed, and the Aramaic-to-Greek determined—and thus begs the very question of whether or not Jesus was in fact consistent.⁸³⁶ There is nothing objectionable about using Jesus’ teaching on one topic to clarify his views on another, and this chapter and the next will use that approach

and evocative expression. Other critics remind that the thought-world of first century Judaism is a blend of ideas, motifs, and concepts, not readily given over to system. Cf. Daniel J. Harrington, “The Jewishness of Jesus: Facing Some Problems,” in *Jesus’ Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus within Early Judaism* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 123-36 at 130-31, 136; Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 162 (“A search for concretization of imagery and internal consistency, coherence of ideas, motifs, and conceptions, is foreign to the apocalyptic authors”); Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 248.

⁸³⁴ Cf. Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals* (JSNTSup 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 81-82; Allison, “How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity,” 1, 12.

⁸³⁵ This is, of course, not unknown to many of the skilled historians who use the criterion of coherence, such as John Meier. Meier contends that coherence “can be brought into play only after a certain amount of historical material has been isolated by the previous criteria” which he calls a “data base.” See *Roots of the Problem and the Person*, 176-77.

⁸³⁶ Cf. Le Donne, “Criterion of Coherence,” in Keith and Le Donne, *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, 110 (“it assumes Jesus must always have been consistent within his public career”). However, Le Donne’s problem with the criteria of coherence is elsewhere: he thinks it encourages historians to think in terms of “binary (or ternary) contexts” for Jesus tradition (111). Le Donne writes that we can “assume that Jesus was generally coherent and allow for the possibility of randomness” (110).

often.⁸³⁷ But when it comes to our interests here in establishing the likelihood that Jesus was generally consistent in aims throughout the course of his ministry, we cannot proceed by forging conceptual and thematic linkages in the extant Gospel tradition.⁸³⁸ Our analysis must go deeper so that the forging of such linkages actually becomes possible, and that is a more challenging task that requires a different approach.

A first attempt at this involves early Christian perceptions of Jesus, and particularly the assumptions at play in the way that Jesus' later followers told stories about his life. We have already said that the collective *Tendenz* of the Gospels is to present the ministry of Jesus as a unified whole, focused on Golgotha,⁸³⁹ and this indeed raises legitimate questions about their reliability on the matter. But this presentation, I would propose, is not historically insignificant.

On the topic of the narrative plotlines of the Gospels in particular, Chapter 5.5 sampled the ways that each Evangelist drives the narrative action forward to the cross.⁸⁴⁰ The mere weight of attention paid to the last week in Jerusalem—nearly one third of Mark, and one half of John—makes this plain. But herein is a striking fact. On the topic of the crucifixion, the Gospels protest too much, and it is not difficult to see why: it was possible to view that denouement differently. For some, insiders and outsiders alike, the ending in Jerusalem was a failure.⁸⁴¹ It is no secret that in the post-Easter preaching of the Church, the cross was a primary obstacle of Christian

⁸³⁷ See the thoughts of Matti Kankaanniemi, "Mission as Reaction: Exhausted Jesus at the Well of Sychar," in Byrskog and Hägerland, *Mission of Jesus*, 161-76 at 175-76.

⁸³⁸ Perrin, *Rediscovering*, goes no further than this, though he confidently asserts without further argument "Any division of the teaching of Jesus into various parts by subjects is an act of violence against that teaching, which is a constantly interrelating and interlocking whole" (109).

⁸³⁹ Cf. Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 84.

⁸⁴⁰ See above pp. 226-27.

⁸⁴¹ See Brendan Byrne, "Failure: A New Testament Reflection," *Way* 29 (1989): 117-29.

missionizing to Jews (e.g. 1 Cor 1:23),⁸⁴² for no one before Passover in 30/33 CE expected that the Messiah would end his career under Rome's thumb. It may well be that Jesus anticipated rejection and execution in Jerusalem, and even have made some sense of it theologically before it happened.⁸⁴³ But whatever his expectations, it cannot be denied that the disciples were caught off guard by his arrest and some tried to prevent it violently in Gethsemane (to the dismay of Matthew, Luke, and John).⁸⁴⁴ It is also almost certain that Jesus was betrayed by one of his closest followers,⁸⁴⁵ which was surely a striking and unexpected turn of events.⁸⁴⁶ Moreover, some of these disciples fled from Gethsemane and, after the crucifixion of Jesus, probably never

⁸⁴² See discussion in Matthew Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 160-64.

⁸⁴³ See e.g. Raymond E. Brown, "How Much did Jesus Know?—A Survey of the Biblical Evidence," *CBQ* 29 (1967): 315-45 at 323; Pesch, *Das Abendmahl und Jesu Todesverständnis*, 103-09; Helmut Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), 131-44; McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*, 105-19; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 427-33; Joel B. Green, "The Death of Jesus," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 3:2383-2408 at 2403-07; Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 119-20, 409.

⁸⁴⁴ See Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the* (AYBRL; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1:308-10. For a recent study that makes (too) much of this, see Martin, "Jesus in Jerusalem: Armed and Not Dangerous," 3-24.

⁸⁴⁵ Cf. James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 14; John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995), 71 ("He [Judas] is too bad to be false").

⁸⁴⁶ The Gospels try to shirk this in different ways. Luke has Jesus pray all night before selecting the twelve, so as to make clear that he did not make a mistake (6:12). John explains as an editorial aside to his reader that Jesus "knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him" (6:64). Both of these Gospels also share the tradition that Judas betrayed Jesus by Satan's instigation (Luke 22:3; John 13:2), an idea perhaps implied in Mark.

returned to the fold.⁸⁴⁷ The plotlines of the Gospels, therefore, are apologetic in one key respect: they defend a particular view of Jesus' ministry that upholds the cross as the true climax of his activity, and they oppose competing views that would call that end an unexpected failure.⁸⁴⁸

There is another pertinent example. The Gospels disagree about when the mission to the Gentiles began.⁸⁴⁹ That itself may not be that unexpected, but it is striking to note that in the midst of the disagreement, all of the Gospels aim to show that that later mission to the Gentiles (which they ultimately approve of in general) was *not* a change or deviation from Jesus' own intentions.⁸⁵⁰ They achieve this presentation in different ways. For Mark, the mission started already during the ministry of Jesus (3:8; 5:20; 7:31; 11:17), albeit in muted form (7:24-27). Matthew withholds the call for inclusion until after the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt 27:54; 28:19), but foreshadows it in many ways (1:5; 4:15-16; 8:10-11; 24:14) so that the Great Commission is best understood as a realization or fulfillment than a break from Jesus' initial aims for "the lost

⁸⁴⁷ As seems to be the implication of Matt 28:17: "When they saw him (the risen Jesus), they worshipped him; but some doubted." See discussion in Gerd Lüdemann, *Jesus after Two Thousand Years: What He really Said and Did* (Amherst: Prometheus, 2001), 22.

⁸⁴⁸ On the passion narrative in this respect see Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 18, 80-84; Wolfgang Reibold, *Der älteste Bericht über den Tod Jesu: literarische Analyse und historische Kritik der Passionsdarstellungen der Evangelien* (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1994), 205-07; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27A; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 925; Gerd Theissen, "Das Leiden und Sterben des historischen Jesus und deren Transformation in der Passionsgeschichte," *JCBS* 10 (2012): 177-201.

⁸⁴⁹ So Florian Wilk, *Jesus und die Völker in der Sicht der Synoptiker* (BZNW 109; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2002), 238-86; Boris Repschinski, "Die Heidenmission in den synoptischen Evangelien," *ZKT* 130 (2008): 423-44.

⁸⁵⁰ So too Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 2.15 (FC 117:183): "He is not saying (in Matt 15:24, sent to lost sheep of Israel) that he was not also sent to the Gentiles, but that he was sent first to Israel. In that way the transference to the Gentiles would be just, since Israel did not receive the Gospel."

sheep of the house of Israel.”⁸⁵¹ Luke also maintains a Jewish focus during the ministry of Jesus (cf. 9:39 with Mark 5:20) with foreshadowing similar to Matthew’s, if not bolder (2:32; 3:6; 4:25-27; etc.).⁸⁵² Luke abolishes the food laws only in Peter’s vision in Acts 10. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus anticipates a Gentile mission (10:16: “I have sheep that do not belong to his fold. I must bring them also”), and experiences the firstfruits at the triumphal entry (12:20-21: some “Greeks” at the festival seek Jesus).⁸⁵³ Thus, as with the crucifixion of Jesus, the Evangelists here betray awareness of the problem of unexpected outcome and the dilemma of change in theological message. Their narratives preempt any such criticism.⁸⁵⁴

The treatment of the crucifixion of Jesus and the Gentile mission in the Gospels are relevant to the issue of a Galilean crisis because we do not find anything in the Gospel plotline that is similarly responsive or apologetical about different “readings” of the Galilean ministry. It is apparent that Paul had to defend himself against the charge that he was a theological flip

⁸⁵¹ Compelling on this point is the thesis of Matthias Konradt, *Israel, Kirche, und die Volker im Mattausevangelium* (WUNT 215; Tübingen: Mohr, 2007).

⁸⁵² So the thesis of T. J. Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission: Gospel Anticipates Acts* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1996). See also Elizabeth V. Dowling, “‘To the Ends of the Earth’: Attitudes to Gentiles in Luke-Acts,” in *Attitudes to Gentiles in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (eds. David C. Sim and James S. McLaren; LNTS 499; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2013), 191-208 at 192-201.

⁸⁵³ On this latter text esp. see Mary L. Coloe, “Gentiles in the Gospel of John: Narrative Possibilities—John 12:12-43,” in Sim and McLaren, *Attitudes to Gentiles*, 209-23.

⁸⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that most of these attempts to foreshadow the later Gentile mission are of very dubious historicity, no doubt because there surely *was* a significant development in movement toward the Gentiles that was not read straight out of Jesus’ message. On development regarding the Gentile mission see Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 300-03; Charles Guignebert, *Jesus* (trans. S. H. Hooke; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935 [orig. 1933]), 317-18; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 218-21; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 251, 315; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 537-39; Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 389-90.

flopper,⁸⁵⁵ but nowhere do we suspect that the Gospels are reacting to embarrassing claims that Jesus transformed his message about the kingdom of God. The Gospels, unlike the Qu’ran, contain no rationalizations along the lines of Sura 2:106: “Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We exchange it with a better or similar one; do you not know that God can do anything?”⁸⁵⁶ We do not find criticism, like Plutarch’s of Zeno, of inconsistency or incoherence in his teaching.⁸⁵⁷ On the issue of criticism in particular, it cannot be said that we fail to find it because the Gospels omit all reproach levelled at Jesus. To the contrary, they preserve a good deal of it: Jesus was considered league with Satan (Mark 3:22 and par.), possessed by a demon (John 8:48), a “glutton and drunkard” (Q 7:34), a false-prophet (Mark 15:29 and par.; Luke 22:64), among much else.⁸⁵⁸ These criticisms not only fail to imply some

⁸⁵⁵ Cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23; 2 Cor 1:17 (“ready to say ‘yes, yes’ and ‘no, no’ at the same time”). The Galatians were apparently aware and wary of the fact that Paul had “formerly preached circumcision” (Gal 5:11). For an argument that this preaching of circumcision was characteristic of Paul’s *early* ministry as a Christ-follower, and thus Paul had some dramatic change of mind on this topic, see Douglas Campbell, “Galatians 5.11: Evidence of an Early Law-observant Mission by Paul?” *NTS* 57 (2011): 325-347.

⁸⁵⁶ See also 16:101; 25:32 (“The unbelievers say: ‘If only the Qur’an had come down to him all at once!’”); 17:106 (“We have fragmented this Qur’an so that you recite it to the people more slowly”). There are different perspectives on drinking and gambling in 2:219, 4:43, and 5:90, and on widows at 2:234, 240 and 2:180, 4:11-12, and 65:4-7. For exegetical devices to explain such contradictions and other matters, see Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 141-72; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, “The Tasks and Traditions of Interpretation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur’ān* (ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 181-209 at 184-85 (on common questions like: was this recitation revealed in Mecca or Medina, or, what prompted it?); Michel Cuypers, *The Composition of the Qur’an: Rhetorical Analysis* (trans. Jerry Ryan; London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2015), 1-4.

⁸⁵⁷ *De stoicorum repugnantiis*, 7-10.

⁸⁵⁸ Cf. Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1998); Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, eds., *Who do My Opponents Say that I Am? An Investigation of the Accusations Against the Historical Jesus* (LNTS 327; London: T & T Clark, 2008).

inconsistency in message, they assume that one could summarize what Jesus was up to with insults that generalize his activity.

This insight is important because it means that, when using the Gospels as sources for reconstructing the course of Jesus' career, to conclude that Jesus was largely consistent in aims does not require us to trust their theological plotlines that point toward Golgotha. The idea is that the Gospels betray no awareness of, or anxiety about, significant change in Jesus' message in the Galilee.

One could object at this point that the argument fails to account for the lack of our evidence, precisely as stressed in the section above. But another consideration suggests that the Evangelists do not mislead us here: the presuppositions at play in the transmission of Gospel tradition. Chapter 5 affirmed the insight of the form critics that the Gospel frameworks are unreliable bases on which to reconstruct the career of Jesus. The primary evidence for this view is the incontestable fact that the Evangelists freely change the order of events in their source material. There is more to be said here, however. It is, in fact, the very unhistorical freeness with which the Gospels reorganize each other that suggests early Christians did not remember (or try to forget) any notable crisis in Jesus' Galilean ministry. All of the Synoptics have reorganized their sources (both oral and written) with attention to matters of audience, reception, and the theological emphases of the teaching of Jesus.⁸⁵⁹ These are all matters that have been important in the crisis theory. But not one of these redactional processes (which may at times be aware of other oral retellings of the Jesus story, and hence not purely "redactional")⁸⁶⁰ function to create

⁸⁵⁹ Cf. Raymond Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 111-22; Martin Ebner and Stefan Schreiber, eds., *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008), 67-228.

⁸⁶⁰ See here Dunn, "Altering the Default Setting," *Oral Gospel Tradition*, 48-49, 63-66, 74-79.

the impression of consistency or coherence in Jesus' teaching, or to downplay or eliminate some idea that Jesus' teaching changed.⁸⁶¹ Those issues are not on the radar. Routine changes to the audience of Jesus' teaching,⁸⁶² as well as the ordering and content of that teaching,⁸⁶³ do not have as their concern the historical question of how that teaching unfolded. The interest is rather a theological question of what that teaching entailed and required of his followers.⁸⁶⁴ In sum, the manifold ways that the Evangelists edit, update, and criticize their sources leave no reason to think that they were even aware of counter-claims about change of mind in Jesus' ministry.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶¹ And this is to grant, of course, that there was "performative diversity" at the start, see Kloppenborg, "The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus," 334.

⁸⁶² See Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 258.

⁸⁶³ Birger Gerhardsson, "Illuminating the Kingdom: Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. Henry Wansbrough; JSNTSup 64; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 266-309.

⁸⁶⁴ See Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 238 (*italics orig.*): "The variations in the reteaching indicate a readiness to group material differently, to adapt or develop it, and to draw further lessons from it, consistent with the tradition of initial impact made by Jesus himself and in the light of the developing circumstances of the churches which treasured the teaching....the tradition was *living* tradition..."

⁸⁶⁵ It would not do to say that the lack of awareness is because the Gospel tradition was transmitted episodically before the written Gospels, and thus nobody was interested in telling stories of Jesus' life before this point. On the narrative nature of pre-written Gospel tradition, see C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (New York; Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), 13-35; Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity*, 24; James D. G. Dunn, "Jesus-tradition in Paul," in Chilton and Evans, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 155-78 (at 156-57: "it would be surprising if those who claimed to have put their faith in this Christ were not a little curious about the character and content of his life and ministry prior to his death"); Jens Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon* (trans. Wayne Coppins; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013 [orig. 2007]), 91, 121-22; idem, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT 76; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997), 439-51 (on stories of Jesus starting with John the Baptist). There have also been subsequent defenses of C. H. Dodd's famous position, though with slightly different arguments: Otto A. Piper, "The Origin of the Gospel Pattern," *JBL* 78 (1959): 115-24; Richard Bauckham, "Kerygmatic Summaries in the Speeches of Acts," in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed. Ben Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 185-217. I find the interesting argument of Stephen Hultgren, *Narrative Elements in the Double Tradition: A Study*

It is, moreover, the presupposition that Jesus' message was consistent on the whole that allowed for the kinds of reorganizations that we do find. Matthew can create the Sermon on the Mount out of isolated sayings and blocks of tradition from Q and other sources because he believes that Jesus was about the same task, whenever or wherever he may have said what he said. He assumes that; the Sermon has no interest in asserting it.⁸⁶⁶ The same viewpoint undergirds collections of Jesus sayings by catchword or common theme, such as we find in Mark 4:21-25, 9:42-50; Q 12:33-34, 39-40; Luke 11:33-35; and other places.⁸⁶⁷ This must have happened very early, as some of these collections may assume an Aramaic *Vorlage*.⁸⁶⁸ In addition, it is evident that early Christians spliced originally independent parables together (e.g. Matt 22:1-14; Luke 6:43-45, 13:24-30),⁸⁶⁹ and interpreted certain teachings of Jesus by means of other teachings. For instance, Matthew explains the analogy of the good and the bad tree with the saying about the good and the evil treasure (12:33-37); Mark unravels the significance of the bridegroom's presence with the analogies of cloaks and wineskins (2:18-22); and Luke clarifies "the law and the prophets were until John" with "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away

of Their Place within the Framework of the Gospel Narrative (BZNW 113; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2002), for "a common, coherent, and primitive narrative-kerygmatic framework" behind the canonical Gospels that "ran from the baptism of Jesus to his passion, death, and resurrection" (310) a helpful corrective to minimalist understandings on the pre-written tradition, but ultimately not compelling in the details.

⁸⁶⁶ Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 337, does not mention this important fact when discussing the "binding the whole of the material into a coherent presentation..."

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. Dieter Zeller, *Die weisheitlichen Mahnsprüche bei den Synoptikern* (Würzburg: Echter, 1977), 147-51, 160-63, 184-88; Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 90-92 (on "coherent or topical groupings"); Armand Puig i Tàrrach, *Jesus: An Uncommon Journey: Studies on the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 288; Tübingen: Mohr, 2010), 28-29; Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament*, 88.

⁸⁶⁸ Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967 [orig. 1946]).

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 94-96.

than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped” (16:16-17).⁸⁷⁰ Even the sporadic and somewhat *ad hoc* appearance of Jesus tradition in Paul’s epistles show no concern to situate each logion in a particular context in the ministry, for he assumes that “word(s) of the Lord” are a coherent enough body of material that he can even regard the *lack* of some saying (e.g. 1 Cor 7:25: “I have no command of the Lord...”) to be a relevant consideration.⁸⁷¹

There is nothing inevitable about any of this. Graham Stanton wrote:

Familiarity with the canonical gospels can easily blind us to their distinctive features. The early church need not have retained traditions about Jesus in the form in which they have come down to us: the traditions might well have looked rather more like *Pirqe Aboth* or the *Gospel of Thomas* than in fact they do. The gospels are kerygmatic documents, but their deeply embedded “historical” and “biographical” stamp is so unexpected against the background of comparable ancient documents that we are left with a problem: Why do the traditions about Jesus take this form?⁸⁷²

Stanton was interested in the “biographical” nature of the Gospels in penning this statement, yet his insight applies for our focus here as well. We can imagine that Christians had pious reasons to wish that Jesus, as their “one Teacher, the Messiah” (Matt 23:10), did not abandon one course to take up another. But if, in fact, he did, we should expect to find some “memory refraction” in this direction, even should it be an attempt to subvert that disconcerting memory.⁸⁷³ The Gospels, taken together, affirm that stories about Jesus were important (hence their narrative structure), but do not indicate there was any one way to tell the story (hence their dramatic

⁸⁷⁰ Cf. S. Llewelyn, “The Traditionsgeschichte of Matt. 11:12-13, par: Luke 16:16,” *NovT* 36 (1994): 330-49.

⁸⁷¹ For a discussion of the Jesus tradition in Paul and secondary literature, see David E. Aune, “Jesus Tradition and the Pauline Letters,” in *Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity* (WUNT 303; Tübingen: Mohr, 2013), 303-30.

⁸⁷² Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching*, 136.

⁸⁷³ This language is from Le Donne, *Historiographical Jesus*, 13: “the multiple (and sometimes contradictory) interpretations of Jesus found in the Gospels allow the historian to chart trajectories of memory refraction that have been propelled forward by the initial perception of Jesus by his contemporaries.”

reorganizations).⁸⁷⁴ They disagree, at times radically so, on the order of events and the meaning of those events. But as to asserting or correcting the charge of change of mind or mission, they leave nothing, and that seems also to be the case for the tradition they inherited. That interpretive posture requires some historical explanation.⁸⁷⁵

A comparison with the treatment of Muhammad's recitations by the early Muslim community might provide some perspective on these facts. The claim even during Muhammad's lifetime was that he, as the Messenger of God, was the passive recipient of God's very speech. The recitations were not Muhammad's own ideas but rather messages delivered from Allah. Given such claims, which are unlike what early Christians said about the teaching of Jesus, it is clear that there would be a natural push to synchronize the recitations irrespective of the historical time and place in which Muhammad received them. And this in fact happened. The Qur'an was soon organized according to the length of the Suras rather than historical situation.⁸⁷⁶ But *still*, despite the high claims about Muhammad's recitations and their divine origin, there were early attempts in the *tafsir* tradition to divine the particular historical contexts of the recitations, and this happened because it was well known that Muhammad's life circumstances had changed so substantially: from the young and despised "poet" in Mecca, to the leader of his

⁸⁷⁴ This is true also on the micro-level, as attention to "original wording" does not seem to have been a major concern, at least for certain parts of the tradition. See here the helpful concept of "originating structure" (rather than "original words") in Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 18-19.

⁸⁷⁵ The frequent reminder of proponents of the so-called "Memory Approach" that the Gospels' "interpretations" must be accounted for is apropos here. Cf. Rodríguez, "Authenticating Criteria," 152-67; Chris Keith, "Memory and Authenticity: Jesus Tradition and What Really Happened," *ZNW* 102 (2011): 155-77.

⁸⁷⁶ On this complicated process, see Claude Gilliot, "Creation of a Fixed Text," in McAuliffe, *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, 41-58.

Companions in Medina, to at last the champion of Mecca and the Ka'ba.⁸⁷⁷ We do not find such attempts in the early Christian movement, even though, we can presume, the urge to synchronize the teachings of Muhammad would have been more pressing than for the teachings of Jesus.

These observations about early Christian perceptions are inferential, to be sure, and have nothing definitive to say about the life of Jesus. But they are important and overlooked by contemporary scholarship. The point is this: not only was Jesus remembered to have been consistent in his message, early Christians assumed that and did not argue for it, despite the fact that early Christian groups held diverse and disagreeing perspectives on what the message of Jesus was all about. Moreover, and in contrast to the way that the canonical Gospels are careful to weave the death of Jesus into his larger kingdom praxis, they betray no reaction to or even knowledge of alternative scenarios about change of mind in the Galilean ministry. That interpretive presupposition, we might say, requires a historical explanation, and is not just a hermeneutical obstruction.

6.3. JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

Jesus' relationship to his forerunner affords more pointed reasons to believe that Jesus' message was more consistent than some crisis scenarios would presume.

There is no reason to depart from the consensus of scholarship that Jesus was baptized by John, which indicates that, at least initially, Jesus found John's eschatological teachings

⁸⁷⁷ For more on the life of Muhammad see F. E. Peters, *Jesus & Muhammad: Parallel Tracks, Parallel Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 29-32, 74-75, 82, 113-23, 137-38, 155. On the assemblage of the Qur'an and interest in the "occasions of revelation" (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), see Theodor Nöldeke et al., *The History of the Qur'ān* (ed. and trans. Wolfgang H. Behn; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 48-54, 213-34, 320-30, 361-62.

attractive.⁸⁷⁸ We do not know the whole of John's message, but we do know at the very least that he expected the imminent judgment and called for repentance in light of it.⁸⁷⁹ The baptism of Jesus is important for this consistency question because all our sources agree—and in some cases begrudgingly so—that Jesus' ministry emerged out of the baptizing activity of John, and even may have been contemporaneous with it for some time (John 3:22-24). As such, Jesus' affiliation with the Baptist is clearly what Bas van Og has termed a "formative event."⁸⁸⁰ If there were changes in Jesus' mindset, they would have been deviations from what he initially held in common with the Baptist.

What we do not find is any clear indication that Jesus self-consciously departed from John's message. The evidence rather indicates that there was much in common between the two men even after Jesus parted ways with John, and that the Baptist continued to influence Jesus up to the end of his life.⁸⁸¹ Initial evidence in support of this contention has already been mustered in an important essay by Dale Allison. Allison points to three particular points of "continuity" between John and Jesus. The first is the notion that simply being a descendant of Abraham is

⁸⁷⁸ Robert L. Webb, "Jesus' Baptism: Its Historicity and Implications," *BBR* 10 (2000): 261-309.

⁸⁷⁹ Cf. Carl H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist* (New York; London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 34-64; G. E. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 31-44; Josef Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation, Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte* (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1989), 268-348; Robert L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (JSOT 62; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 183-205; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 27-39; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 362-71; Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 132.

⁸⁸⁰ See van Os, *Psychological Analyses and the Historical Jesus*, 23.

⁸⁸¹ For insights on approach and method in discussion of Jesus relation to John, see Robert L. Webb, "Methodological Reflections on John the Baptizer's Influence on Jesus," in Charlesworth and Rhea, *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions*, 769-801.

insufficient to enter the world to come (Matt 3:9//Luke 3:8; and Mark 10:15).⁸⁸² The second is a large stock of “shared images” between Jesus and John, such as the notion of bearing fruit (Matt 3:8-9//Luke 3:8; cf. Matt 7:16-21; 12:33-35// Luke 6:43-45), cutting down trees (Matt 3:10//Luke 3:9; cf. Luke 13:6-9), being “thrown” into judgment (Matt 3:10//Luke 3:9; cf. Matt 13:40; Mark 9:47-50), eschatological “fire” (Matt 3:11//Luke 3:16; cf. Luke 12:49-50), and harvest motifs (Matt 3:12//Luke 3:17; cf. Matt 9:37-38//Luke 10:2; Matt 13:24-30; Mark 4:1-9; etc.).⁸⁸³ Third is John’s expectation for “the coming one” and Jesus’ claim, in Q 7:18-32, to be that figure.⁸⁸⁴ Given the fact of Jesus’ baptism by John and, probably, additional association with him before and/or after, it is reasonable to assume that such seeming points of contact are not coincidence but rather suggest extensive borrowing of the former from the latter. To Allison’s list one could also add the New Exodus typology that runs parallel in both Jesus and John’s ministries (for John, in particular: baptism by the Jordan, calls for “repentance”)⁸⁸⁵ and also, as I have argued elsewhere, the expectation for the ingathering of the exiles that John’s use of Isaiah 40

⁸⁸² Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 213-16.

⁸⁸³ Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 216-18.

⁸⁸⁴ Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 219. The authenticity of the prediction of a (human) coming one has been challenged by some. For a review of interpretive options see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988-97), 1:312-14. But in my view Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 216, still compels: “the appearance of Jesus is made more comprehensible by the supposition, that John had introduced the idea of the proximity of the Messiah’s kingdom.”

⁸⁸⁵ Cf. the excellent essay by Colin Brown, “What Was John the Baptist Doing?” *BBR* 7 (1997): 37-50. See also W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 36-48; 318-20; Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 116-20; Jeremy M. Hutton, “Topography, Biblical Traditions, and Reflections on John’s Baptism of Jesus,” in Charlesworth and Rhea, *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions*, 149-77.

anticipates and that Jesus' call of the Twelve appears to inaugurate.⁸⁸⁶ All of these parallels, coupled with the clear statements of Jesus' approval of John throughout the tradition (e.g. "the greatest born of women" at Q 7:28), suggest that traditions some have identified as points of dissimilarity to John (esp. the proclamation of the "Kingdom of God," and Jesus working miracles), were understood by the Jesus movement as fulfillments of and/or expansions on John's ministry.⁸⁸⁷

Neither Allison's case nor these further examples demonstrate continuity throughout the ministry of Jesus itself. Synchronic sampling from the tradition cannot, in this case, tell us much about consistency. There are additional considerations, however, that probably do.

Mark records a rumor about Jesus' activity as follows:

And King Herod heard, for Jesus' name had become known. And he was saying, "John the Baptizer has been raised from the dead, and on this account the powers are at work in him." But others said that he is Elijah, and others that he is a prophet, as one of the prophets. But after Herod heard he kept saying, "This is John, whom I beheaded. He was raised from the dead." (Mark 6:14-15; cf. Matt 14:1-2; Luke 9:7-9)

This rumor⁸⁸⁸ has theological benefit for the Evangelists (e.g. to highlight the blindness of Herod and others on "the outside" [cf. 4:11]), and it is not clear how early Christians would be privy to

⁸⁸⁶ Tucker S. Ferda, "John the Baptist, Isaiah 40, and the Ingathering of the Exiles," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 154-88. On Jesus' hope for ingathering, see John P. Meier, "Jesus, the Twelve, and the Restoration of Israel," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (JSJSup 72; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 365-404; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 42-43, 71-76.

⁸⁸⁷ Contra John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 47-48. See Meyer, *Christus Faber*, 30-33; Flusser, *Jesus*, 48-53; Taylor, *Immerser*, 303.

⁸⁸⁸ Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, 82; D. M. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), 172-73; Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:468; Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 564.

Herod's personal feelings on this matter.⁸⁸⁹ But it is difficult to see early Christians making up this rumor, and it stands alongside others (e.g. that Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets) that likely have some historical traction in the ministry of Jesus.⁸⁹⁰ The connection also emerges elsewhere (cf. Mark 8:26-27: "Who do people say that I am?...John the Baptist"). Significant for our purposes is what this rumor implies about Jesus' relationship with John the Baptist. The rumor does not attest directly to any known "apprenticeship" of Jesus to John, but rather assumes that the profile of Jesus' ministry was similar enough to John's that one could wonder if the former was a reincarnation of the latter.⁸⁹¹ The rumor may or may not imply that John himself worked miracles;⁸⁹² but even if not, in the absence of other links between these men, there is no reason to think specifically of John when trying to make sense of Jesus' miracle working activity. The rumor is nothing but a popular recognition of some level of continuity between the ministries of these two figures, and this, importantly, after John had been arrested and executed.

Also relevant is the so-called Question of Authority (Mark 11:27-33 and par.). As the temple elite question Jesus about his "authority to do these things" (e.g., in Mark's context, his

⁸⁸⁹ Cf. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, 82. Though, possibly, Joanna is relevant here, as mentioned in Luke 8:3, since she was the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza. Note also that, according to Acts 13:1, a certain Manaean was associated with the Jesus movement, and he was a "member of the court of Herod."

⁸⁹⁰ So Knut Backhaus, *Die "Jüngerkreise" des Täufers Johannes: Eine Studie zu den religionsgeschichtlichen Ursprüngen des Christentums* (PTS 19; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991), 89-95.

⁸⁹¹ Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.30, thought that Jesus and John looked alike, and that is why the people misidentified him.

⁸⁹² Bultmann, *History*, 24: "does not Mk. 6.14 imply that reports of the Baptist's miracles were current?" For a recent investigation and affirmative answer to Bultmann's query, see the forthcoming article of Daniel Frayer-Griggs, "'More than a Prophet': Echoes of Exorcism in Markan and Matthean Baptist Traditions," in *Matthew and Mark across Perspectives* (eds. Kristian Bendoraitis and Nijay Gupta; LNTS 224; Bloomsbury: T & T Clark, 2016).

temple action, which is historically probable; cf. John 2:18),⁸⁹³ Jesus appeals to “the baptism of John” (Mark 11:30).⁸⁹⁴ Obviously the appeal to τὸ βάπτισμα τοῦ Ἰωάννου somehow functions to affirm that Jesus does, in fact, have the authority to do “these things.” The meaning is obscure, and intentionally so it seems.⁸⁹⁵ But regardless of the precise import, the key point is that the appeal to John here makes no sense had Jesus at some point broken from John’s vision. To the contrary, it assumes that, even at the very end of his ministry,⁸⁹⁶ John had some bearing on what Jesus continued to do.

⁸⁹³ Cf. Jürgen Roloff, *Das Kerygma und der irdische Jesus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 91-92; William Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark’s Gospel and its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 39-49 esp. at 47. It has been argued that the Question of Authority was once part of a pre-Markan collection of conflict stories (cf. Mark 2:1-3:6). See Martin Albertz, *Die synoptischen Streitgespräche* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1921), 16-36, 107-08, 113-14.

⁸⁹⁴ A main reason why critics contend early Christians would not have invented this exchange. Cf. C. S. Mann, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 1986), 457; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (2 vols.; AB 28-28A; New York: Doubleday, 1981-85), 2:1272-73; Konrad Huber, *Jesus in Auseinandersetzung: exegetische Untersuchungen zu den sogenannten Jerusalemer Streitgesprächen des Markusevangeliums im Blick auf ihre christologischen Implikationen* (FB 75; Würzburg: Echter, 1995), 112-13; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 163-67. See also Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 798-99; Collins, *Mark*, 538-39.

⁸⁹⁵ A number of proposals have been suggested (see other references in Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, 2:213): Jesus claims the same divine authority John had in baptizing, so Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 19-20; Jesus points to the common practice of baptism that he shared with John, so Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 163-167; Jesus appeals to John as Elijah to indicate he is the Messiah, so Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 495-497; Jesus appeals to John as Elijah, which means that he is like Elisha, so Joel Marcus, “John the Baptist and Jesus,” in *Christianity in the Beginning* (vol. 1 of *When Judaism and Christianity Began: Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini*; eds. Daniel Harrington, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and Jacob Neusner; JSJSup 85; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 179-97.

⁸⁹⁶ Contra Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Jesus and the Money Changers (Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-17),” *RB* 107 (2000): 42-55 at 53-54 (the episode occurred early in Jesus’ life while he was still associated with the Baptist movement).

Of course, Jesus could have continued John's eschatological message, resembled him in some form in the public eye, and even recalled John's ministry to defend his own, and still changed his mind on notable topics.⁸⁹⁷ But these indications that Jesus took up John's cause throughout the remainder of the ministry are important because they show that those particular features of the Jesus tradition that some have thought instigators of crisis or change of mind are less evidently so. That is, because of Jesus' starting point with John, and because of the general points of continuity with John that we find throughout his career, we can grasp Jesus' announcement of judgment, opposition to certain Jewish leaders, and even expectation of death without appeal to a Galilean crisis or other hypothesis about change of mind. These aspects of the Jesus tradition make the most sense on one of two levels: either as specific expectations that Jesus assumed as he began his autonomous ministry, or as general aspects of a theological framework that Jesus had inherited from John.

On judgment, it cannot be denied that an important aspect of John's baptismal ministry was warning people of the nearness of God's "visitation," as the imminence of that event motivates the urgency of John's activities (e.g. "the axe is already laid at the foot of the tree!"). And as countless studies have shown, the profile of John's judgment proclamation is hardly an innovation in Jewish tradition.⁸⁹⁸ Jesus, in giving voice to the same expectations in his ministry,

⁸⁹⁷ Apropos is the recent observation by Kari Syreeni, "From John's Ministry to the Mission of Jesus: The Question of Continuity and Change in a Psychological Perspective," in Byrskog and Hägerland, *Mission of Jesus*, 77-92 at 77: "continuity in no way precludes change." The "reconstruction" of John's message after his arrest that Syreeni has in mind may be correct (though he ventures into total speculation; see 88-89, 91) and would not challenge the conclusions drawn here.

⁸⁹⁸ Cf. Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer*, 300-08; Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 190-93; Meier, *Mentor, Message and Miracles*, 28-40; Christian Stettler, *Das letzte Gericht: Studien zur Endgerichtserwartung von den Schriftpropheten bis Jesus* (WUNT 299; Tübingen: Mohr, 2011), 185-97.

could not be fundamentally different, and thus his announcement of judgment was not a product of rejection but rather part of a larger theological framework. To use Schweitzer's terminology, the message of judgment is essential to Jesus' eschatological "dogma," and as such it invariably helped organize his experience; it did not result from his experience. The approaching judgment of God, one could say, was the indicative that created the imperative of his message.⁸⁹⁹ The message of the Baptist and Jesus resembled that of Paul in Thessalonica (to paraphrase): "The judgment is coming. *Therefore* turn to God, put your trust in Jesus, and you will be saved from the wrath" (cf. 1 Thess 1:9-10).⁹⁰⁰ Jesus' experience of rejection may have intensified his message or tone in regard to the judgment (discussed more below), but in light of Jesus' Jewish background, and especially in light of his association with the Baptist, we can confidently say that the rejection itself did not create the expectation.⁹⁰¹

The activities of the Baptist also make it improbable that Jesus began his ministry with rosy hopes that the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders would accept him and his message with open arms. While some of Jesus' polemical words against the Pharisees and others probably reflect particular issues that arose during his ministry (discussed in the next chapter), the Baptist already had some contention of his own. We find the following in the tradition:

⁸⁹⁹ One could say that this view is taken to an extreme in the treatment of Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, who argued that John the Baptist believed Israel was lost ("die Verlorenheit Israels") and that judgment was inevitable. Jesus, unlike John, offered a way out: the proclamation of the Kingdom began the process of salvation for lost Israel. See Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 82-83.

⁹⁰⁰ Cf. Helmut Merklein, "Die Umkehrpredigt bei Johannes dem Täufer und Jesus von Nazaret," *BZ* 25 (1981): 29-41 at 33.

⁹⁰¹ Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, briefly addressed the question of where Jesus' judgment proclamation came from. He offered three suggestions: the ubiquity of the motif in Jewish eschatology, the message of the Baptizer, and Jesus being rejected by the people. His conclusion, that "each of these three possibilities has an aspect of truth" (322), is compelling.

- John 3:25: “Now a debate (ζήτησις) about purification arose between John’s disciples and a Jew.”⁹⁰²
- Q 3:7-9: “John said [Luke: to the crowds; Matt: to the Pharisees and Sadducees] ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come!’”
- Q 7:33: the same group that accused Jesus of being a “glutton and drunkard” and a “friend of tax collectors and sinners” said that John “has a demon.”
- Mark 9:11-13: the scribes say that Elijah will restore all things, but John the Baptist was rejected by them.
- Mark 11:27-33: rejection of John by the chief priests and scribes is the subtext to Jesus’ reply in the Question of Authority.
- Mark 12:1-12: John was rejected by the tenants of the vineyard as were the other prophets, as well as the owner’s own son.
- Matt 21:28-32: the “tax collectors and prostitutes” will go ahead of chief priests and elders because John “came in the way of righteousness,” and ‘you did not believe him.’”

It could be that only a fraction of these tradents accurately capture the antagonism that existed between John and these groups, and the particular identities of the opponents shift in accordance with the Evangelists’ preferences.⁹⁰³ One could see why early Christians, anxious about the fact that Jesus was by and large rejected by the religiously well to do, was preceded in ministry by John who found the same reception. But there must have been some friction here historically (cf. Luke 7:30).⁹⁰⁴ John proclaimed that failure to submit to his baptism put one at risk of divine

⁹⁰² Reconstructing John 3:25 is difficult; I find this the most plausible.

⁹⁰³ On this see Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 52-54.

⁹⁰⁴ Matthew’s “Pharisees and Sadducees” may well be redactional; so Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 30. Pace Ben Witherington III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 39-40. But I doubt Q 3:7-12 was targeted at John’s sympathizers. On opposition to John, see Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 57; Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet*, 370-72; Michael Tilly, *Johannes der Täufer und die Biographie der Propheten: die synoptische Täuferüberlieferung und das jüdische Prophetenbild zur Zeit des Täufers* (BZANT 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), 224-35; Taylor, *Immerser*, 199-201 (on the Pharisees).

judgment, and there can be no doubt that the religious elite in Jerusalem were among those who massively failed to heed his call.⁹⁰⁵ Claims that John set up his baptism as a rival to the temple cult are, to my mind, unsubstantiated.⁹⁰⁶ But from the perspective of outsiders, and no less outsiders who were the heirs to the upkeep and maintenance of the temple, John's ministry was nothing more than a populist movement along the lines of similar such movements in the first century mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.97-98; *War* 2.258-60 [*Ant.* 20.167-8]; *War* 2.261-63 [*Ant.* 20.169-71]; *Ant.* 20.188; *War* 6.437-50).⁹⁰⁷ It is doubtful that the religious establishment in Jerusalem cared much about what John was doing, and if at all it was concern that his movement could spur a revolution (which was precisely Antipas's worry as well). It is equally doubtful that Pharisees were flocking to the Jordan out of genuine interest in what John had to say.

It cannot be, then, that Jesus began his ministry with a *tabula rasa* about these groups that he would, according to numerous Gospel stories, eventually come into conflict with. So too, it cannot be that conflict with any of these groups would catch him by surprise or itself cause some crisis of confidence. What else should we expect, if indeed his work arose out of a preexisting movement that had already clashed with the religious learned and leaders of first century Judaism?

⁹⁰⁵ Hence Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 48-49, may be wrong to assert flatly that Q 3:7-12 was intended for the priestly aristocracy, but his general point cannot be easily discounted. Cf. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet*, 175-78, on John targeting the priestly aristocracy.

⁹⁰⁶ Cf. Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 116; Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet*, 203-06; Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 210; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 359. In any case, to my mind Taylor, *Immerser*, 111, and Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 190-92, go too far in the other direction by claiming John demanded his hearers go offer the requisite sacrifices in the temple.

⁹⁰⁷ Cf. P. W. Barnett, "The Jewish Sign Prophets—A.D. 40-70—Their Intentions and Origin," *NTS* 27 (1981): 679-697; Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 114-44.

One final and related point. Not only should John's ministry have prepared Jesus for opposition and rejection, but Jesus evidently had heard of John's arrest and execution. In multiple Gospels, John's arrest is an important trigger for Jesus' entry into the Galilee (Mark 1:14; Matt 4:12; cf. John 3:22-24). All of this has been much studied. For our topic, however, the significance is this: John's arrest and execution leave little chance that the possibility of Jesus' own death would have created a crisis in his mind.⁹⁰⁸ It could be that "the external course of his ministry must have compelled Jesus to reckon with the possibility of a violent death."⁹⁰⁹ But for Jesus to continue or begin an autonomous ministry after John's death, to repeat themes in the Baptist's message, and perhaps to intensify some of those themes via imitations to be some sort of messianic figure, was a risky move. This is not to say that Jesus had everything planned out ahead of time.⁹¹⁰ Ben Meyer's assessment is reasonable that, while Jesus had always reckoned

⁹⁰⁸ Cf. here Rudolf Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man: A Study in the History of Religion* (trans. Floyd V. Filson and Bertram Lee-Woolf; rev. ed.; Redhill: Lutterworth Press, 1943 [orig. 1934]), 247-48; Augustin George, "Comment Jésus a-t-il perçu sa propre mort?" *LumVie* 20 (1971): 34-59 at 49; Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 83 ("Entscheidung führt notwendig zur Scheidung"); Joachim Gnllka, "Wie urteilte Jesus über seinen Tod?," in *Der Tod Jesu: Deutungen im Neuen Testament* (eds. Johannes Beutler and Karl Kertelge; QD 74; Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 13-50; Heinz Schürmann, "Wie hat Jesus seinen Tod bestanden und verstanden? Eine methodenkritische Bessinung," in *Orientierung an Jesus*, 325-63 at 334-35; idem, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geheimnis*, 161-62 ("Zu behaupten ist, was auch in der Kritik kaum je bestritten, nur von Skeptikern in Frage gestellt wird, daß Jesus angesichts dieses seines Engagements mit der *Möglichkeit* eines gewaltsamen Todes realistisch rechnen mußte und—im Dialog mit der Geschichte—am Ende [spätestens beim letzten Mahl] sein Martyrium auch für höchst wahrscheinlich oder für gegeben halten konnte."). See also McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*, 90-91.

⁹⁰⁹ Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 278-79. That seems preferable to the thesis of Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 67 (Jesus knew from the time of his baptism the whole plan of salvation, including his death as God's servant).

⁹¹⁰ Cf. Schürmann, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geheimnis*, 159. Alexander Wedderburn, *The Death of Jesus: Some Reflections on Jesus-Traditions and Paul* (WUNT 299; Tübingen: Mohr, 2013) has argued that different attempts to make theological sense of Jesus' fate reflect Jesus' own lack of clarity about it, since he left his followers with seeming tensions in outlook: e.g. self-surrender in Gethsemane, the cry of dereliction.

with the possibility of death, it “became more solidly impressed” throughout the ministry.⁹¹¹

Moreover, good arguments can be made that Jesus hoped for an alternative outcome in Jerusalem during his final Passover.⁹¹² Given the eschatological connotations of Jesus’ triumphal entry and temple action—especially if both were staged in light of the final chapters of Zechariah (e.g. 9:9-17 and 14:1-9)—it may have been Jesus’ sincere wish that “the Kingdom of God will be realized.”⁹¹³ Even here, however, the words of Benjamin Bacon a century ago would still apply: “He did not go up to Jerusalem in order to be crucified, however ready, if need be, to meet crucifixion.”⁹¹⁴

⁹¹¹ Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 252. Cf. Bousset, *Jesus*, 14; Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 155.

⁹¹² For Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 333, to think Jesus went to Jerusalem with a death wish is “weird.” See also here Loisy, who claimed it is “historically and psychologically absurd” to contend that Jesus expected the kind of outcome in Jerusalem that happened. See Hoffmann, *Les vies de Jésus*, 125-26. It may be that the hope Luke assigns to the followers of Jesus—e.g. “(because Jesus) was near Jerusalem...they supposed the kingdom of God was to appear immediately” (19:11)—actually captures what the historical Jesus had expected to occur. Cf. Hiers, *Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 73-74; Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 244-45, 251, 257 (Jesus had predicted the kingdom would come on the Passover); Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*, 138; Per Bilde, *The Originality of Jesus: A Critical Discussion and Comparative Attempt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 150-51.

⁹¹³ This phrase from Dibelius, *Jesus*, 62. Important for this question is the interpretation of Mark 14:25 (“Amen I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new in the kingdom of God”). The saying can express (a) Jesus expects the kingdom to arrive in the near future (see Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* [3rd ed.; London: SCM, 1966 (orig. 1935)], 207-18; Heirs, *Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 96-97); (b) Jesus here anticipates his imminent death and predicts a reunion with his disciples (Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3:968; Schürmann, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geheimnis*, 161-62). For various views see Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 430-31; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 340-41; Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 482-512.

⁹¹⁴ Bacon, *Story of Jesus*, 217. Cf. Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 216-17. Noteworthy here is the argument of Joachim Gnllka, *Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History* (trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), that sometime during Jesus’ final week he “was made to realize that his ministry in Israel had failed” (284). This realization did not lead him to despair, however, since he decided to speak of his death symbolically as having salvific significance: “Jesus interpreted his death symbolically and maintained his offer of salvation to

The takeaway of the above discussion is that those experiences which so many have called new or even unexpected in Jesus' ministry—and hence occasion for change of mind—were probably not so new or unexpected in light of his relationship with the Baptist.

6.4. JESUS AND ISRAEL'S SCRIPTURE AND TRADITIONS

Henry Cadbury once argued, contra Albert Schweitzer, that it was a distinctly modern perspective that a person's "aim" "is to be deduced from his recorded words and actions." He claimed that "to plot a career *de novo* would occur to almost nobody," and that to suppose that Jesus "had no definite, unified, conscious purpose...is *a priori* likely and...suits well the historical evidence."⁹¹⁵ But, against Cadbury, the activities of the early Church provide strong evidence that Jesus did indeed "plot" some "career."⁹¹⁶ Early Christians ministered to Gentiles in an eschatological setting, believing that their labors fulfilled the expectations of the prophets (e.g. Isa 45:15; 49:6; 60:5-16; 61:6; cf. Tob 13:11; 1 En. 48:7-10; 63:1-12). They claimed to witness the outpouring of God's spirit as prophesied by Joel (2:28-32), Ezekiel (36:22-32), and

Israel. To the disciples he leaves a meal in which people share in God's eschatological kingdom through the covenant with God that was opened up by virtue of his death; in this meal he remains among them in the symbol of the bread. Thus Jesus attributed salvific effectiveness to his death, though this effectiveness has to be seen in its focus on the kingdom of God" (287). Cf. also Craig A. Evans, "Did Jesus Predict his Death and Resurrection?," in *Resurrection* (eds. Stanley E. Porter, Michael A. Hayes, David Tombs; JSNTS 186; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 82-97 (Jesus did not speak of his own death until his final week in Jerusalem).

⁹¹⁵ Cadbury, *Peril of Modernizing Jesus*, 123, 141.

⁹¹⁶ See here Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 239 (he speaks of an "ecclesial self-understanding" that, he contends, corresponds with Jesus' own goals); Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 20, 93-95 (he notes that Paul in Rom. 9-11 must assume the existence of some eschatological scenario in order to revise it by saying the Gentiles will be included first). Also relevant here is the main thesis of Allison, *End of the Ages has Come*, that the realized eschatology of the early Church tells us something about Jesus' own eschatological agenda.

others (cf. e.g. Isa 44:3; Zech 12:10; cf. 1QS 4:21; 4Q385; Num. Rab. 15:25).⁹¹⁷ The “pillars” James, Peter, and John base in Zion⁹¹⁸ (Gal 2:9) with the belief that Peter was “entrusted with the Gospel for the circumcised” (Gal 2:8).⁹¹⁹ The apostles organized missions throughout the Greco-Roman world (1 Cor 9:5), and claimed that Jesus himself had said they deserve compensation from the people to whom they minister (1 Cor 9:14). How could all this come about if Jesus had “no definite, unified, conscious purpose?” The intentionality with which Jesus’ earliest followers engaged in actions typically associated with the construct “restoration eschatology” confirms again the insight of Sanders and many others: “the church and John the Baptist, one pointing backward and the other forward, tell us the same thing about the life and work of Jesus: they were set in a framework of Jewish eschatological expectation.”⁹²⁰

That eschatological framework, and more specifically the Scriptures and traditions of Israel that produced it, constitute an important and overlooked stabilizing feature of the original Jesus movement. In this respect, Jesus’ use of Scripture affords a perspective on his ministry that is similar to that of his relationship to the Baptist. I limit myself to two significant observations.

⁹¹⁷ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951 [orig. 1948]), 41; Finny Philip, *The Origins of Paul’s Pneumatology: The Eschatological Bestowal of the Spirit upon Gentiles in Judaism and in the Early Development of Paul’s Theology* (WUNT 194; Tübingen: Mohr, 2005), 32-121; Preston M. Sprinkle, *Paul and Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013), 95-121.

⁹¹⁸ Sean Freyne, “Jesus and the ‘Servant’ Community in Zion: Continuity in Context,” in *Jesus from Judaism to Christianity: Continuum Approaches to the Historical Jesus* (ed. Tom Holmén; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 109-124.

⁹¹⁹ Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple—Apostle—Martyr* (trans. Floyd V. Filson; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953 [orig. 1952]), 56-57.

⁹²⁰ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 91. See also Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 239-40; idem, “Appointed Deed, Appointed Doer: Jesus and the Scriptures,” in Chilson and Evans, *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, 155-76.

The first involves the Baptist once again. It hardly merits argument that Israel's sacred writ informed the message of John. Numerous studies have investigated the influence of the prophets, the psalms, and other legal texts on his message.⁹²¹ Important here is that John very likely saw himself and his wilderness ministry as a literal fulfillment of Isaiah 40. Here is why. (a) All four Gospels associate Isa 40 with the ministry of John (Mark 1:2; Matt 3:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23), and the citation of Isa 40:3 in the Fourth Gospel is not dependent on the Septuagint. C. H. Dodd was likely correct in his assessment that the Fourth Gospel is independent of the Synoptics on this point, and it attests to an earlier, pre-Greek form of the citation.⁹²² (b) John's message of repentance and the coming judgment appears elsewhere to be influenced particularly by Isaiah (cf. esp. Isa 30:27-28). (c) The Targum of Isaiah 40 claims that the sins of Jerusalem "are forgiven" (from שָׁבַק), rather than the MT's "her (Jerusalem's) penalty is paid" (נִרְצָה עֹנָה), which connects with an intriguing and otherwise enigmatic aspect of the Baptist's proclamation.⁹²³ (d) As is well known, the Qumran sect used Isa 40 to explain their sojourn "in the wilderness" (1QS 8:12-14; 9:19-20; 4Q176), which shows it was not only possible, but

⁹²¹ Cf. J. A. Trumbower, "The Role of Malachi in the Career of John the Baptist," and James D. G. Dunn, "John the Baptist's Use of Scripture," in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* (eds. Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 28-41 and 42-54; Richard Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 2 Baruch and the Preaching of John the Baptist," *DSD* 2 (1995): 202-16; Tilly, *Johannes der Täufer und die biographie der Propheten*, 146-235; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 173-76; Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 211-12.

⁹²² C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1952), 40. See also M. J. J. Menken, "The Quotation from Isa. 40, 3 in John 1, 23," *Bib* 66 (1985): 190-205. Mark's triple citation is important here as well, since the connection between Isa 40's "prepare the way" (פְּנֵה דֶרֶךְ) and Malachi 3 is possible only in Hebraic or Aramaic form. Here see Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 17.

⁹²³ On John's baptism of repentance "for the forgiveness of sins," see Merklein, "Die Umkehrpredigt," 31; Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer*, 334-36; Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet*, 190-93; G. R. Schafer, "John the Baptist, Jesus, and Forgiveness of Sins," *PEGLMBS* 26 (2006): 51-67.

actually a contemporaneous reality, to read Isa 40's "in the wilderness" literally and act out its fulfillment.⁹²⁴ (e) A good case can be made that some of the so-called "sign prophets" were also inspired by Isa 40, as they promised "signs of liberty" for all who followed them "into the wilderness."⁹²⁵ (f) These particular Isaianic verses do not appear elsewhere in the New Testament literature apart from discussions of the Baptist, with the exception of the use of "the way" in Acts (cf. Acts 1:5; 18:6; 28:8). It is unlikely, then, that early Christians invented this connection, and especially at such an early stage to make the impact it did on the Gospels. (g) In numerous Jewish texts from this period, Isa 40 is associated with the eschatological hope for the ingathering of the exiles, and a number of John's other activities seem to harbor this expectation as well.⁹²⁶ In sum, the intertextual thread is early, widespread, fitting in a first century Jewish context, and makes sense of John's activities. There is no reason to doubt it.⁹²⁷

⁹²⁴ Cf. Walter Grundmann, *Evangelium nach Markus* (ThHK 2; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1984), 36; James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 11-12; George J. Brooke, "Isaiah 40:3 and the Wilderness Community," in *New Qumran Texts and Studies: Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992* (ed. Brook and Florentino García-Martínez; STDJ 15; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 117-32; Alison Schofield, "The Wilderness Motif in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Israel in the Wilderness: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 37-54 at 49.

⁹²⁵ See Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 149-58; idem, *The Way of the Lord*, 11; D. R. Schwartz, "Temple and Desert: On Religion and State in Second Temple Period Judaea," in *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity* (WUNT 60; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992 [orig. 1987]), 29-43. Bruce Longenecker, "The Wilderness and Revolutionary Ferment in First-Century Palestine: A Response to D.R. Schwartz and J. Marcus," *JSJ* 29 (1998): 322-36, fails to note the connection between Isaiah 40 and Exodus/Conquest traditions. The decision is not *either* Isaiah 40 *or* Exodus/Conquest. Cf. George Wesley Buchanan, "Isaianic Midrash and the Exodus," in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; JSSNTS 154; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 89-109.

⁹²⁶ For texts and discussion see Ferda, "Isaiah 40, John the Baptist, and the Ingathering of the Exiles," 174-86.

⁹²⁷ Others who conclude that John used Isa 40: Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 47-48; Willi Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 20-22, 26-29;

Why does this matter? John's use of Isa 40 matters because it strongly suggests that Jesus, at the outset of his ministry, had already found his place in the prophetic story of Israel. Not only is this true because he submitted to John's water-baptism "in the wilderness," but because so many of his activities also enact prophecies from Isa 40 and the subsequent chapters of Deutero-Isaiah.⁹²⁸ Interestingly, several of these enactments are clear but quite subtle, which makes it unlikely that they were invented by the Evangelists to create some semblance of continuity between Jesus and John or to serve some other overt theological purpose. That subtlety is due in large part to the fact that the parallels between Jesus' message and Isaiah are sometimes clearer in Aramaic than Greek. The opening of Mark is a good example. Immediately upon Jesus' baptism and temptation, Mark has Jesus proclaim "the Gospel of God" (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ) and declare that "the time has been fulfilled" and "the kingdom of God has come near" (ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ). Some might hear behind this summary of Jesus' message MT Isa 40:9: "Get up to a high mountain, O herald of good news (מבשרת) to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings to Jerusalem, lift it up, do not fear! Say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God' (הנה אלהיכם)!" The LXX is not particularly close to Mark

Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 245-47; W. H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (ed. Krister Stendahl; New York: Harper, 1967), 33-53 at 34-36; Rudolf Pesch, "Anfang des Evangeliums Jesu Christi," in *Die Zeit Jesu. Festschrift für Heinrich Schlier* (eds. Günther Bornkamm and Karl Rahner; Freiburg: Herder, 1970), 108-44 at 116-18; Tilly, *Johannes der Täufer und die biographie der Propheten*, 159; Knut Backhaus, "Echoes from the Wilderness: The Historical John the Baptist," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2:1747-86 at 1776-77.

⁹²⁸ On the influence of Deutero-Isaiah on Jesus, see Archibald M. Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975 [orig. 1950]), 93-94; Descamps, "Réflexions sur l'eschatologie de Jésus," 439; Werner Grimm, *Die Verkündigung Jesu und Deuterjesaja* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1981); Bruce Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible: Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of His Time* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984), 148-98; Otto Betz, "Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom," in *The Gospel and the Gospels* (ed. Peter Stuhlmacher; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 53-74; Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 100-20.

linguistically. But in the Targum the parallel to the Gospel is striking: “the kingdom of your God is revealed (אתגליאת מלכותא דאלהכון).”⁹²⁹ Research on the Isaiah Targum the past century has shown that, at the very least, a number of exegetical traditions in the Targum are much earlier and appear presupposed in the teaching of Jesus.⁹³⁰ This, we can say with good confidence, is one such tradition.⁹³¹

Mark 1:14-15 is a summary statement about Jesus’ public proclamation, and it may have been composed by Mark himself. On these grounds Bultmann was suspicious of it and he is not lacking in company.⁹³² But even should it be a summary statement and hence “redactional” in that sense, it likely captures the kinds of things Jesus said upon parting ways from the Baptist.⁹³³

⁹²⁹ A connection noted in many commentaries on Mark, see e.g. William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 64-65; Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1:8-26* (WBC 34a; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 43-45. See also Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenance of the Isaiah Targum* (JSOTSup 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 77-81.

⁹³⁰ Cf. Martin McNamara, *Targum and New Testament: Collected Essays* (WUNT 279; Tübingen: Mohr, 2011), 480-517.

⁹³¹ Meyer, “Appointed Deed, Appointed Doer,” 171 thinks Jesus’ proclamation “the kingdom of God has come near” would evoke as well the *Qaddiṣ*: “May he allow his reign to reign” (יְמִלוּךְ מַלְכוּתִיָּה), and that makes sense because the *Qaddiṣ* probably intentionally recalls the language of Isa 52:7 and similar texts.

⁹³² Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 341, wrote that here Mark is “under the influence of the terminology used in Christian missionary preaching,” which is a remarkable assertion considering we know next to nothing of such activity, far less its “terminology.” For a similar claim see Wolfgang Trilling, *Christusverkündigung in den synoptischen Evangelien* (Munich: Kösel, 1969), 54 (the passage “entspricht nicht der konkret-unsystematische Art der Rede Jesu”); Wilhelm Egger, *Frohbotschaft und Lehre: die Sammelberichte des Wirkens Jesu im Markusevangelium* (Frankfurt: J. Knecht, 1976), 50-53 (in brief: Jesus’ offer was unconditional, the church added the condition of repentance). Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 109, claims that Mark 1:15 is “misleading as a pointer to the thrust of Jesus’ message.” To explain he cites Bultmann. See also Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 345.

⁹³³ Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 407, compels when he writes “it almost does not matter whether we can recover the precise words of Jesus” here. “What matters is that this form of words had become fixed and established in the re-preaching of the earliest missionaries and churches as the central summary of Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom.” See also Vincent Taylor,

In support we should note, as a first point, how dubious it would be to suppose that early Christians began to talk about their message as “Gospel” only after Jesus’ death.⁹³⁴ We know that the term was used by Christians of various stripes, as Paul admits in Gal 1:6-9 that his opponents proclaimed a “Gospel” too (though he quickly clarifies that it is really “no Gospel,” v. 7). And also, in Romans 10:14-17, Paul links the proclamation of “the gospel” not with his own particular ministry but with the wider Christian movement of which he is a part. Here Paul himself makes recourse to Deutero-Isaiah: “how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” (52:7).⁹³⁵ The best explanation for the widespread usage of “Gospel” by Christian groups that disagreed about its precise import is that Jesus himself had adopted the term to characterize his own message, and early Christians continued to use it for theirs.⁹³⁶ Moreover, the intertextuality with Isaiah is important for grasping Jesus’ announcement of the “kingdom of God,” since not only does “Gospel” appear frequently in Isaiah, the text several times conjoins the announcement of God’s kingly rule (Tg.: “kingdom of your God”) with forms of “good

The Gospel According to St. Mark (2nd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1966 [orig. 1952]), 165-67; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 71-75.

⁹³⁴ See Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and the Gospel* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13-20 (on the likelihood that Jesus spoke of “gospel”). On the availability, and significance, of “gospel” language for Jesus, see the excellent study by William Horbury, “‘Gospel’ in Herodian Judea,” in Bockmuehl and Hagner, *Written Gospel*, 7-30.

⁹³⁵ For discussion see J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul ‘In Concert’ in the Letter to the Romans* (NovTSup 101; Leiden; Boston, MA; Köln: Brill, 2002), 170-79. Paul is likely the one who made the messenger of Isa 52:7 plural (“the *feet* of those proclaiming”) in reference to post-Easter preachers of the Gospel, and his innovation even impacted later mss. of the LXX. See Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* [SNTMS 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 134-41.

⁹³⁶ Contra Schlosser, *Le règne de Dieu*, 104-05 (“the time is fulfilled” and “believe in the Gospel” of Mark 1:15 stem from Hellenistic-Jewish Christianity; the “kingdom drawn near” and “repent” come from Jesus). Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 168.

news” or “good tidings” (Hebrew: בשר; Aramaic: בסר; LXX: εὐαγγελίζω). The same connection appears in the Jesus tradition.⁹³⁷ It can hardly be coincidence that Jesus, after working independently of John, assumed Scriptural language that appeared only a few short lines away from the inspiration for John’s ministry “in the wilderness.”⁹³⁸ The intertextual subtext implies that Jesus is taking up John’s mantle, perhaps to further stages of fulfillment.⁹³⁹

There is more. Other Jewish texts from this period attest to the reading of Isaiah eschatologically, and speculating about who the figures mentioned therein might be. It appears that other readers linked the “anointed” figure of Isa 61 to the “one proclaiming good news” in Isa 52 and 40. These passages, it was thought, all referred to the same person.⁹⁴⁰ This is significant because there is a good deal of evidence that Jesus regarded himself as the figure “anointed” by the Lord in Isa 61. Too often critics have supposed that this intertextual linkage is a creation of Luke, since it occupies the centerpiece of his masterful, and clearly redactional,

⁹³⁷ In addition to Mark 1:14-15, cf. Matt 4:23 (κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας); 9:35; 24:14; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16. On the importance of the linkage between “evangelizing / good news” and “kingdom of God” for the historical Jesus, see Bruce D. Chilton, *God in Strength: Jesus’ Announcement of the Kingdom* (SNTSU 1; Freistadt: Plöchl, 1979); Craig A. Evans, “From Gospel to Gospel: The Function of Isaiah in the New Testament,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997), 651-91; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 113-15.

⁹³⁸ Though we should not assume John himself had announced the kingdom (see Matt 3:2), perhaps inspired by these very traditions. That is the view of Taylor, *Immerser*, 136-38.

⁹³⁹ After writing this I discovered that such was precisely the view of Grotius, as referenced in Matthew Pool’s *Synopsis Criticorum* (1669-78).

⁹⁴⁰ On esp. Isa 52 and 61, see 11QMelch 2:15-20; 1QH^a 23:12-14. Cf. James A. Sanders, “The Old Testament in 11QMelchizedek,” *JANESCU* 5 (1973): 373-82 at 380 note 12 (for additional rabbinic sources); David Seccombe, “Luke and Isaiah,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 252-59 at 254; Johannes Zimmerman, *Messianische Texte aus Qumran: Königliche, priesterliche und prophetische Messiasvorstellung in den Schriftfunden von Qumran* (WUNT 104; Tübingen: Mohr, 1998), 410-12; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of the Book of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 96, 269.

Nazareth episode (4:17-21). But while Luke may have fashioned this opening synagogue scene for his own theological purposes,⁹⁴¹ the exegetical roots from which it grows run deep into the Jesus tradition.⁹⁴²

- Jesus is reported to have said, “Blessed are the poor” (Luke 6:20; Matt 5:3) and mentioned “inheriting the land” (Matt 5:5); cf. Isa 61:1, 5, 7.
- In another beatitude, Jesus claimed “blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matt 5:4; see Luke 6:21b); cf. Isa 61:2: לַנְּחָם כָּל אֲבֵלִים.⁹⁴³
- Jesus talks about being “sent” by God (see e.g. Mark 9:37 and par.; 12:6 and par.; Q 10:16); cf. Isa 61:1: שְׁלָחִי.⁹⁴⁴
- In one parable, Jesus chastises the man who shows up for the wedding feast without the wedding robe (Matt 22:11-13); cf. Isa 61:9-10.⁹⁴⁵

⁹⁴¹ Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (trans. Geoffrey Buswell; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 [orig. 1954]), 31-38; Meier, *Roots of the Problem and the Person*, 269-71.

⁹⁴² Note Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 516-17: “Even if Luke’s portrayal of Jesus reading the passage and explicitly claiming its fulfillment (Luke 4.16-21) is an elaboration of the briefer tradition in Mark 6.1-6a, we can still be confident that this elaboration was based on a strong remembrance of Jesus making clear allusion to the passage on more than one occasion.” For some fuller studies of Isa 61 in the ministry of Jesus see J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 41-67; A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 140-53; Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, “Jesus der Messias Israels,” in *Der messianische Anspruch Jesu und die Anfänge der Christologie: Vier Studien* (WUNT 138; Tübingen: Mohr, 2001), 1-80 esp. at 42; Steve Moyise, “Jesus and Isaiah,” *Neot* 43 (2009): 249-70 at 263-66; Tobias Hägerland, *Jesus and the Forgiveness of Sins: An Aspect of His Prophetic Mission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 194-99, 220-25, 250-54.

⁹⁴³ On Isa 61 in the beatitudes, see Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 104-07.

⁹⁴⁴ I find this explanation preferable to the hypothesis of Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-Existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 178: “the sending statements do not in themselves indicate preexistence, but...they should be interpreted in this way in the light of the strong evidence for preexistence in the ‘coming’ sayings, to which they are closely related.”

⁹⁴⁵ On this parable and its relation with Matt 22:1-10, see Dan O. Via, *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 128-32.

- Jesus tells the messengers of John: “the poor have the good news preached to them” (Q 7:22); cf. Isa 61:1: לבשר עניים.

It is also relevant to note the sending of the twelve on an evangelizing mission.⁹⁴⁶ Memory of this event is preserved by Mark, Q, and probably Paul in 1 Cor 9:1-14.⁹⁴⁷ Paul clearly understood the spread of the Gospel in his time as enacting Isa 52:7 (cf. Rom. 10:15), and it may be that Jesus himself did as well when he sent out his own followers (perhaps on more than one occasion). The precise details of Jesus’ mission charge are lost to us, though these items emerge in our different accounts: imitation of Jesus’ own activity, proclamation of the “gospel,” announcing the “kingdom of God,” and speaking of “peace.” Augustine was put in mind here of Isa 52:7.⁹⁴⁸ The connection would find further support if Mark is right to report that the disciples were told to take a staff and wear their sandals, just like the Israelites before the Exodus.⁹⁴⁹ That would pick up the new-Exodus undertones that begin in Isa 40 and extend well beyond Chapter 52.⁹⁵⁰ We cannot know when the sending occurred during the ministry, but we can at the very

⁹⁴⁶ On the reliability of this memory, see Rainer Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer: eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (WUNT 7; Tübingen: Mohr, 1981), 453-54; Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 154-63. For discussion of the variances between Mark and Q, see Schröter, *Erinnerung an Jesu Worte*, 211, 236-37.

⁹⁴⁷ On Paul’s knowledge of the mission discourse, see Dale C. Allison Jr., “The Pauline Epistles and the Synoptic Gospels: The Pattern of the Parallels,” *NTS* 29 (1982): 1-32 at 12-13; idem, *Jesus Tradition in Q*, 105-111; David Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 190-199. Contra Nicholas Walter, “Paulus und die urchristliche Jesustradition,” *NTS* 31 (1985): 498-522. It may be that Paul “presupposes, in terms of content, the instruction of Jesus developed in the synoptic discourses,” but was not actually aware of the Q or Markan forms. So Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament*, 80-81. Cf. Christopher Tuckett, “Paul and the Synoptic Mission Discourse,” *From the Sayings to the Gospels*, 309-315.

⁹⁴⁸ Augustine, *Corrept.* 46. See also *Enarrat. Ps.* 68.30.

⁹⁴⁹ See here Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 388-90. See also Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 41-43.

⁹⁵⁰ Cf. Walther Zimmerli, “Der ‘neue Exodus’ in der Verkündigung der beiden großen Exilspropheten,” in *Gottes Offenbarung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament* (ed. Walther Zimmerli; Munich: Kaiser, 1963), 192-204 at 197-98; Rikki E. Watts, “Consolation or

least say that it occurred at some point *after* Jesus had parted ways with John and gathered his own band of disciples. Thus the intertextuality attests to some kind of continuity over time.

Finally, we should mention and endorse here the attempt of A. E. Harvey in *Jesus and the Constraints of History* to make sense of Jesus' miracle working activity. Harvey argued that Jesus found opportunities to perform particular cures that were "characteristic of the new age."⁹⁵¹ In particular, his miracles echo the catena of images mentioned in Isa 35:5-6, a passage expressly recalled by Jesus in his reply to John the Baptist according to Q 7:18-23.⁹⁵²

What all this means for the consistency question is that Jesus, like John, styled himself as one who fulfilled prophecies of Isaiah. More than that, it appears that Jesus, like John, read the "hidden things" of Isaiah (cf. Sir 48:24-25)⁹⁵³ as a kind of blueprint for his ministry.⁹⁵⁴ Jesus did

Confrontation? Isaiah 40-55 and the Delay of the New Exodus," *TynBul* 41 (1990): 31-59. Øystein Lund, *Way Metaphors and Way Topics in Isaiah 40-55* (WUNT 28; Tübingen: Mohr, 2007).

⁹⁵¹ Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History*, 113 (on 113-15 he contends that the motivation was neither solely to express compassion nor to generate fame). Cf. Jub. 1:29; 23:30; 1 En. 96:2; 2 Bar. 29:7; 73:2. See also Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 59; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 428-29; George J. Brooke, "Shared Exegetical Traditions between the Scrolls and the New Testament," in *Oxford Handbook to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 565-91 at 584; André LaCocque, *Jesus the Central Jew: His Times and His People* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 55.

⁹⁵² Sanders disagreed with Harvey in *Jesus and Judaism*, 163-64. He wrote that the "influence of Isaiah need not be excluded from (the) picture, but it would be, at least at the outset, more coincidental than determinative." That is because Sanders thinks it more likely that Jesus "found that he could heal." But it is unlikely that Jesus accidentally "discovered" that he could heal. If cross-cultural parallels between Jesus and traditional folk-healers are of any value, then it is probable that Jesus' healing ministry was intentional on his part. Cf. Pieter F. Craffert, *The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective* (Eugene: Cascade, 2008); Justin Meggitt, "The Historical Jesus and Healing: Jesus' Miracles in Psychosocial Context," in *Spiritual Healing: Scientific and Religious Perspectives* (ed. Fraser Watts; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 17-43.

⁹⁵³ "(Isaiah) saw the future, and comforted (παρεκάλεσεν) the mourners in Zion. He revealed what was to occur to the end of time, and the hidden things (τὰ ἀπόκρυφα) before they happened."

not leave John and start making it up from scratch, and he certainly did not begin his ministry with a question about what he was to do that was open to confirmation or disapproval by the whims of popularity or the disappointments of rejection. Jesus began with a conviction that his mission was anticipated by Scripture. This conviction had already survived John's arrest and the opposition that he had faced. It withstood even the queries of the Baptist himself when he wondered, with self-evident skepticism, whether or not Jesus was indeed "the coming one."⁹⁵⁵ It could anticipate that Jesus' disciples would face rejection in various villages with injunctions not to change plans but to leave that place and head to the next, leaving behind the dust on their sandals. And it may even have inspired Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, since clearly the impression of the texts in Isa 40 and 52 is that the message of the good news and the kingly rule of God is to be proclaimed in Jerusalem.⁹⁵⁶ One also finds in this connection the tradition in Zech

⁹⁵⁴ On Scripture as "script," cf. McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*, 177-204.

⁹⁵⁵ I would dispute the common claims that Jesus in his reply to John intentionally avoided language of judgment to correct John's understanding of "the coming one" or the timing of the judgment. Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (SBT 24; rev. ed.; London: SCM, 1967 [orig. 1953]), 46; Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 67, 76; Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 65; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 81; Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:245-46; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 133-34; Smith, *Jesus' Twofold Teaching*, 92; Steve Moyise, "Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel," 1158. Jesus speaks quite a lot of judgment elsewhere and his important role in it, and there is no reason to think these Isaianic images are "at odds" with John's message of judgment. I would contend there is more continuity here than discontinuity: Jesus alludes to memorable images of Isaiah as John was also inspired by that great prophet. Jesus tells John that the eschatological restoration he predicted is in fact beginning to take place.

⁹⁵⁶ See here Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi*, 59-60. Tan, *Zion Traditions and the Aims of Jesus*, argued that Jesus had a "Zion theology" and saw the holy city as the focus of God's eschatological blessing and the center of God's universal rule. He argued that Jesus' activity in Jerusalem, hoping to set in motion the restoration of Zion, was fully consistent with his ministry prior to "that fateful journey (if not its crowning explanation)" (5). Tan's thesis, while intriguing, is constructed rather precariously on the authenticity of three individual sayings (Matt 5:34-35; Luke 13:32-33; Luke 13:34-35), and does not note this connection.

14:9 that God's kingly rule will be manifest on Mount Zion,⁹⁵⁷ which squares with Jesus' other activities in Jerusalem that seem inspired by the final chapters of that book.⁹⁵⁸

The second point: the Scriptures not only provided Jesus with an agenda, they evidently supplied a lens through which he could view and make sense of opposition, struggle, and rejection. As types of God's activities in the past, as well as prophecies about what was to come in the future, the Scriptures had a story that was big enough to contain the unfortunate realities of Jesus' ministry without creating radical discontinuities in aims and message.

We begin with the impression left by our sources. The Gospels are incredibly adept at framing the current experiences of Jesus in parallel to the past experiences of Israel and its heroes.⁹⁵⁹ In the Gospel of John, for instance, "the Jews" "grumble" (γογγύζω) at Jesus during his Bread of Life discourse (John 6:41), which evokes the wandering narratives and Israel's disobedience to God and Moses.⁹⁶⁰ This episode, and the many others like it that fill the Gospels, function to normalize what Jesus is doing and to show that he stands on the side of God. But where did this widespread hermeneutical tactic come from? Surely it was advantageous for early Christians to present their leader in this light, but the general inspiration must have come from

⁹⁵⁷ Tg. Zech. 14:9: "and the kingdom of the Lord will be revealed" (ותתגלי מלכותא דיין). Cf. also Tg. Oba. 21.

⁹⁵⁸ Cf. Hiers, *Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 77-86; Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 107; Cecil Roth, "The Cleansing of the Temple and Zechariah," *NovT* 4 (1960): 174-81; Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and Zechariah's Messianic Hope," in Chilson and Evans, *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, 373-88; Le Donne, *Historiographical Jesus*, 195-96.

⁹⁵⁹ Cf. John J. O'Rourke, "Possible Uses of the Old Testament in the Gospels: An Overview," in Evans and Stegner, *Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, 15-27; Richard B. Hays, "The Canonical Matrix of the Gospels," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* (ed. Steve Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53-75.

⁹⁶⁰ See Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:270.

Jesus himself. The main reason is simple: this is conventional stuff. Josephus,⁹⁶¹ the Dead Sea Sect,⁹⁶² and many other writings from our period bolster their privileged positions and persons with these kind of Scriptural language games. Such was a standard model for identity construction and meaning-making in first century Judaism. It is almost inconceivable Jesus *did not* do this, even should we be uncertain about the historicity of this or that episode above.

This interpretive praxis makes it highly unlikely, then, that Jesus would have encountered realities during his ministry that he did not know what to do with, and thus required a drastic reorganization of his ministry goals. Not only was Jesus freshly baptized by the incarcerated (and executed) Baptizer, his Scriptures contained the stories of Moses and others who were opposed by the people of Israel. Jesus apparently found such prototypes fitting as circumstances required (discussed more in the next chapter).

The best example of Jesus making Scriptural sense of his experiences, that also stands on firm historical ground, are his interactions with the expectation of the “messianic woes.” This view is not strictly Scriptural per se, although Jesus’ contemporaries surely thought that it was. As numerous studies have shown, it appears to have been a more or less conventional belief that

⁹⁶¹ E.g. Josephus frames the revolutionaries in Jerusalem as the opposition Jeremiah faced *redivivus*; cf. Tucker S. Ferda, “Jeremiah 7 and Flavius Josephus on the First Jewish War,” *JSJ* 44 (2013): 158-73.

⁹⁶² Cf. *Defining Identities: We, You, and the Other in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Florentino García Martínez and Mladen Popović; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008); G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “The We and the Other in the Worldview of *I Enoch*, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Other Early Jewish Texts,” in *The ‘Other’ in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins* (ed. Daniel C. Harlow et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 262-78; Shanai Tzoref, “The Use of Scripture in the Community Rule,” in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* (ed. Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 203-34.

things were going to get a lot worse before they got better.⁹⁶³ It is striking in this light that Jesus is reported to have said the following (Q 12:51-53):

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword! For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will be those of his own household.⁹⁶⁴

As Jeremias suggested and Dale Allison has shown convincingly,⁹⁶⁵ this is clearly messianic woes language. Jesus here interacts with Mic 7:6, which is also taken by b. Sanh. 97a and m. Sota 9:15 to depict the final tribulation. The saying of Jesus sits squarely within a larger interpretive tradition.⁹⁶⁶ In effect, then, Jesus says, "the division of families, which is controversial to some of my hearers, is in fact not strange or unexpected, but rather stands in full continuity with what Scripture has said would happen before the age to come."⁹⁶⁷

Other sayings scattered throughout the tradition also show that Jesus placed the possibility of his death in the context of the messianic woes.⁹⁶⁸ Most recently Scot McKnight has shown this with reference to "the cup" (Mark 10:38; 14:36), a "baptism" of suffering (Luke

⁹⁶³ For discussion see Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 200; Hiers, *Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 25-26; Allison, *End of the Ages has Come*, 5-25; idem, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet*, 145-47; Stanley E. Porter, "Tribulation/Messianic Woes," *DLNTD*, 1179-1182; Pitre, *Jesus, Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 41-130.

⁹⁶⁴ I have opted to follow Matthew here (10:34-36) rather than attempt to reconstruct Q. Cf. James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 380-86.

⁹⁶⁵ Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 242; Allison, "Q 12:51-53 and Mark 9:11-13 and the Messianic Woes," 289-310.

⁹⁶⁶ Cf. Jub. 23:16-19, 29; Sib. Or. 8:84; 2 Bar. 70:1-7; 4 Ezra (Armenian) 5:9; Tg. Mic. 7:6; 1 En. 56:7; 70:7; 99:5; 100:1-2; CD^b 19:16-17.

⁹⁶⁷ See also Mark 13:12.

⁹⁶⁸ Meyer, *Christus Faber*, 116.

12:49-50), the “hour of darkness” (Luke 22:53), and other sayings.⁹⁶⁹ Earlier Jeremias offered a compelling assessment that Jesus expected that suffering was a necessary prelude to the realization of the kingdom.⁹⁷⁰ It should not be missed that several of these passages of interest assume language that resembles that of the Baptist.

At this point one might wonder how this analysis differs at all from the crisis theory of Albert Schweitzer (who thought that Jesus attributed the failure of the kingdom to come [so Matt 10:23] to the necessity of suffering the messianic tribulation), or that of Ulrich Luz (who argued that Jesus identified rejection in his ministry as a sign of the woes, which compelled him late in his ministry to leave Galilee for Jerusalem).⁹⁷¹ The difference is one of timing and outlook. Schweitzer and Luz both assumed that Jesus adopted the woes idea to make sense of challenges at some later point in his ministry. I believe, instead, that this expectation was there and active at the outset, indeed perhaps already at or even before the arrest of John the Baptist. Jesus was, then, expecting struggle and opposition from the very beginning, and making sense of that through the Scriptural lens of the Messianic tribulation.

Two observations support this contention. The first, to my mind, is quite strong. The reality to which Jesus’ reference to Mic 7:6 points is without a doubt his call to discipleship. People were leaving their families to follow Jesus, and in some quarters this was understandably

⁹⁶⁹ McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*, 124-29, 144-47. Cf. Pitre, *Jesus, Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 381-508.

⁹⁷⁰ Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 127 (Jesus’ saw his ministry as “the prelude to the coming of the eschatological time of distress”), 129 (“the kingdom of God comes through suffering and only through suffering”).

⁹⁷¹ See above, pp. 207-08.

controversial.⁹⁷² We have other statements of Jesus, surely historical, that also reflect on this, and will be discussed more in the following chapter. Many of these sayings have harsh implications for the family, e.g. hating one's parents (Q 14:26), and leaving the dead to bury the dead (Q 9:59-60).⁹⁷³ Even Peter is reported to have complained about his sacrifices, concerning which Jesus promised future rewards for those who left brother and sister and father and mother and children (Mark 10:29). It is likely that Jesus' statements about new "family" also stem from these activities (Mark 3:31-35). All of this matters because Jesus' call to discipleship is probably an aspect of his mission that began at its outset.⁹⁷⁴ The Gospels of course give this impression. Mark and Matthew make the call of the four Jesus' first action in the Galilee (Mark 1:16-20; Matt 4:18-22). In John, Jesus gleans his first disciples from the Baptist movement, which may be the more plausible historical scenario (1:35-51). In any case, we do not need perfect clarity on the process to affirm what our sources hold in common: Jesus right away started calling disciples to follow him. As such, some of these left their homes and their families, which is precisely the reality to which the above statements refer. It may be that such familial separation was already characteristic of the Baptist movement. Perhaps Jesus and other people had "left" their families to attend the prophetic call of John in the wilderness. Though it could also be that this was something new when Jesus departed from Nazareth for Capernaum, and may be partly to blame for the familial antagonism that surfaces in Mark (3:21). We do not know. The only clear and

⁹⁷² Some have wondered if Mark's note that there were "hired hands" left in the boat (1:20) was an attempt to make clear that the Zebedee boys had not left their father wholly stranded. See Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 1:402; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 181.

⁹⁷³ See Appendix below.

⁹⁷⁴ Cf. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 213-17, 570; Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 46, 51-52.

important thing is that by virtue of Jesus' early call to discipleship, we have at the outset of his mission the signs of the messianic tribulation.

The second insight is not as decisive because it concerns a highly ambiguous saying. But it is worth mentioning still. Matthew and Luke record a striking saying of Jesus as follows:

Matt 11:12-13: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent ones seize it."

Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets were until John. From thereafter the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed and all enter it violently."

The so-called "men of violence" saying has been one of the most perplexing of all the sayings of Jesus.⁹⁷⁵ If there is any scholarly agreement it is that Jesus probably said something like this. What exactly he said, however, and, further, what he may have meant, is a different story.⁹⁷⁶ In any case, to my mind Brant Pitre offers a very reasonable hypothesis.⁹⁷⁷ Pitre argues that the notion of the kingdom suffering "violence" is notable because "the eschatological tribulation in Jewish literature, if it is characterized by anything, is characterized by *violence*."⁹⁷⁸ He draws attention to several texts (e.g. in 1 En., 4Q171, and 1QH), to which I would add 4Q246.⁹⁷⁹ He

⁹⁷⁵ As is commonly noted. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 630; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 157.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. F. W. Danker, "Luke 16.16—an Opposition Logion," *JBL* 77 (1958): 231-243; S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1967), 200; P. W. Barnett, "Who were the Biastai?," *RTR* 36 (1977): 65-70; David Catchpole, "On Doing Violence to the Kingdom," *JTSA* 25 (1978): 50-61; Barbara Thiering, "Are the Violent Ones as False Teachers?," *NovT* 21 (1979): 293-297; P. S. Cameron, *Violence and the Kingdom: The Interpretation of Matthew 11:12* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1984); Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:253-55; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 2:157-61.

⁹⁷⁷ See Pitre, *Jesus, Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 159-76.

⁹⁷⁸ Pitre, *Jesus, Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 166.

⁹⁷⁹ The mention of "trampling" and other negative images *after* the introduction of the enigmatic "son of God" figure makes sense if the notion of the tribulation is a thematic backdrop, and hence does not indicate that the fragment here describes a negative character. I did

concludes: “in this saying, Jesus is interpreting John’s rejection and execution as the inauguration of the period of violence that would characterize the final tribulation.”⁹⁸⁰

I find this the most compelling treatment of the saying, though there is plenty of room for disagreement. In any case, Pitre does not have to be entirely correct, but only somewhere near the truth, to affirm that Jesus here attributes the onset of the woes to the very beginning of his autonomous ministry: the Baptist’s imprisonment.⁹⁸¹

None of the points made in this section imply that Jesus read his ministry straight out of the Scriptures, or that he saw everything laid out before him.⁹⁸² Indeed, the next sections will argue against such an idea. The takeaway is that in view of Jesus’ association with John the Baptist and his use of Scripture, we know that he had a theological framework that could accommodate new and unexpected experiences, challenges, opposition. His eschatological mindset could not only make sense of, but very likely anticipated, dire circumstances before the kingdom would come. It is hard to imagine what in the ministry could have caused a theological

not think of that argument when I wrote “Naming the Messiah: A Contribution to the 4Q246 ‘Son of God’ Debate,” *DSD* 21 (2014): 150-75.

⁹⁸⁰ Pitre, *Jesus, Tribulation, and the End of Exile*, 168.

⁹⁸¹ A further possible connection here: there is good reason to think that Jesus labeled John Elijah *redivivus* (cf. Mark 9:11-13; Q 7:26-27). See Casey, *Aramaic Approach to Q*, 105-45. Moreover, as we have seen, he evidently spoke of conflict amongst neighbors and families after parting ways with John. The two may be connected via interpretive tradition about Elijah and his task. In 4 Ezra 6:24-28, Elijah is expected to come in the midst of familial conflict (in order to resolve it; cf. also Mal 4:6; Sir 48:10). So, when the Baptist, the eschatological Elijah, was arrested and executed—*rather than*, as Sir 48 indicates, “restore the tribes of Jacob”—might the inverse of that expectation also ensue? Note that in Mark 9:11 Jesus seems to be reversing some “scribal” interpretation of the eschatological Elijah on the basis of what happened to John. See here the important thesis of Joel Marcus, “Mark 9,11-13: ‘As It Has Been Written,’” *ZNW* 80 (1989): 42-63. Thus, there may be further reason to link the onset of the woes to the beginning of Jesus’ career, after the arrest/execution of John.

⁹⁸² See here Schürmann, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geheimnis*, 165-66 (Jesus did not deduce the certainty of his death as an ideology detached from history, e.g. from the belief of the persecution of the prophets or something else).

paradigm shift, even assuming that certain unfashionable bumps and bends in the road have been left out of our narrative Gospels.⁹⁸³

6.5. CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this chapter are modest, but important. They have immediate relevance for the theory of a Galilean crisis, but extend beyond that. We found:

- (i) it is difficult if not impossible to identify, systematize, and then periodize theological tensions in the Gospels;
- (ii) this difficulty is due to the nature of our extant sources, the fact we lack so much information about Jesus' life and thought, and the relatively weak explanatory power of insights based on individual passages;
- (iii) the assumptions at play in the way early Christians told stories about Jesus imply that they were unaware of any notable change in his message or aims;
- (iv) Jesus' relationship with the work of John the Baptist appears to be characterized by a general continuity that persisted over time, even after John's arrest and execution;
- (v) Jesus' use of Israel's Scriptures shows that he engaged his ministry from the start with something of a script for his task;
- (vi) traditional eschatological expectations, as well as Jesus' concrete experiences with the Baptist, make it unlikely that opposition and the prospect of death would have required Jesus to revise his scenario for ministry.

To be clear, in no way do these arguments constitute a blanket critique of the crisis theory. As we have seen, several of the proposals discussed did not so much pose two discontinuous periods in the ministry, but rather conceived of a gradual development throughout. In this case, Jesus may

⁹⁸³ Relevant here is Rudolf Hoppe on the implications of the parable of the sower in "How did Jesus Understand His Death? The Parables in Eschatological Prospect," in *Jesus Research: An International Perspective* (eds. James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 154-69 at 162-63: "we can conclude that the Nazarene had not only been consistent in maintaining his claim to stand for the coming of the *basileia* of God in word and practice, but had emphatically underlined that claim. Based on the parable of the sower, we nowhere see for Jesus any qualitative reorientation in the tense relationship between, on the one hand, the enforceability of God's will for salvation that he had represented and proclaimed, and, on the other, the experience of the failure of his own mission."

have ended in a different place than he began, but it would be a mischaracterization to think him theologically “inconsistent.” C. H. Dodd’s proposal comes immediately to mind. In his case, failure in Galilee led Jesus not to a new theological program, but to search the Scriptures more deeply, and find therein a fitting response to his new circumstances. My arguments here do not work so well against that view, and so I simply rely on criticisms already voiced in the Assessment sections of prior chapters.

It is, in any case, important to make that admission because the arguments of this chapter in no way flatten the ministry of Jesus into two dimensional space, such that he becomes, like the Jesus of too many movies, impervious to real human experience. The crisis idea, despite its problems, has encouraged historians to think of Jesus as a complex person who struggled, doubted, questioned, and reacted to his social situation. There is more to be said here. The next chapter will aim to resurrect some of the interpretive moves of the crisis theory for contemporary scholarship.

CHAPTER 7.0: FAME AND FAILURE

“Jesus also, for a certain time, was very popular, and look at how that turned out.”

--Pope Francis

In this final chapter I wish to argue that the Jesus movement, albeit generally consistent in aims (Chapter 6), also bears the marks of having worked through successes and failures of various kinds. We hear often that the early Church was a contingent movement whose profile was intimately bound up with different types of reception that it found among various audiences. Rarely do we find interest in claiming the same for the historical Jesus. My contention in this chapter is that Jesus too was forced to respond to opposition and make theological sense of the rejection of his message. Jesus too was likely disappointed by the response of some to his proclamation. The interpretive moves that undergird the crisis theory still have something positive to contribute to contemporary scholarship on the historical Jesus.

The argument is important because it raises questions that current Jesus study has been largely content to ignore.⁹⁸⁴ One has to look hard to find studies of the impact of Jesus’ reception on his message. Neglect here is no doubt due to the form critics, because the idea of addressing

⁹⁸⁴ See here Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 21. Note also the essay by Baasland, “Fourth Quest? What Did Jesus Really Want?,” 1:31-56, which claims that we are “in need of a new method” and in fact a “fourth quest” (56) to address the relationship between Jesus’ “intentions” and “incidental situations” (43).

Jesus' reception sounds too much like charting development in the ministry. I agree with much of the response of form criticism to 19th-century Jesus research, as should by now be clear. Nonetheless, I suggest in what follows that there is a dynamic and reactionary character to some of the Gospel material that crisis theorists were right to emphasize, even if they overemphasized it. The old diachronic approach to Jesus may have failed. But the reproof of the form critics should not (because it could not), inspire confidence in the project that has taken its place: to treat the tradition as a synchronic whole and reconstruct Jesus' "views" of fill-in-the-blank.

The following sections take up different aspects of a generalization encountered numerous times in this study, that Jesus' ministry found "early success and growing opposition." I will argue, on the whole, that the characterization is not only generally likely, but that we can say some specific things about it that are similar to what crisis theorists have concluded in the past.

7.1. A "GALILEAN SPRING"?

"Some things about the beginning of Jesus' public career can never be known."⁹⁸⁵ It seems a general rule that the further one tries to go back into the life of Jesus the blurrier things become. The end of his career is clear on at least three big events, which helpfully situate themselves in a rough chronology: temple action, last meal with his disciples, crucifixion.⁹⁸⁶ The beginning of the ministry is not like that. We know he was baptized by John, but little else. He may for a

⁹⁸⁵ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 159.

⁹⁸⁶ See here Dibelius, *Jesus*, 29; Robin Scroggs, "Reflections on the Question: Was there a Pre-Markan Passion Narrative?" *SBLSP* 2 (1971): 503-85; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 926. See also Till Arend Mohr, *Markus- und Johannespassion: Redaktions- und traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchung der Markinischen und Johanneischen Passionstradition* (AThANT 70; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982), 404-28.

while have been a disciple of the Baptist. Or perhaps John was arrested shortly after Jesus' baptism, as the Synoptics seem to assume. All we know is that at some later point John was dead, and Jesus had his own movement in the Galilee.

There are, however, a few important features of this early ministry we can illuminate that harken back to the crisis theory.

First, there must have been a significant increase in Jesus' popularity after John's arrest, which would change the situation of his ministry. This is not an obvious conclusion. Given the results of Chapter 6 on the general continuity between Jesus and John, one might think that the Fourth Gospel provides a reasonable scenario for the growth of Jesus' popularity: he borrowed it from John. After all, the Fourth Gospel is unique in having Jesus and John conduct contemporaneous baptizing ministries, which may be reliable.⁹⁸⁷ John's disciples eventually tell him "the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him" (3:26). The Pharisees also hear that "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John" (4:1). This process is aided by John's own "testimony": "He who has the bride is the bridegroom...he must increase, I must decrease" (3:29-30).

Yet this portrait fails to compel historically. It is not because we must doubt the reliability of Fourth Gospel (though I am much less optimistic than some recent work in this area).⁹⁸⁸ The

⁹⁸⁷ On Jesus continuing to baptize, see Richard T. France, "Jesus the Baptist?," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 94-111; Joan E. Taylor and Federico Adinolfi, "John the Baptist and Jesus the Baptist: A Narrative Critical Approach," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 247-84.

⁹⁸⁸ Cf. James G. Crossley, "John's Gospel and the Historical Jesus: An Assessment of Recent Trends and Defense of a Traditional View," in *'Is This Not the Carpenter?': The Question of the Historicity of the Figure of Jesus* (eds. Thomas L. Thompson and Thomas S. Verenna; Durham: Acumen, 2012), 163-84; Paul Foster, "Memory, Orality, and the Fourth Gospel: Three Dead-Ends in Historical Jesus Research," *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 191-227 at 212-27.

reason is that we can say with confidence that Jesus did *not* get much help from John the Baptist in terms of his popularity.

We should say first that there is no reason to doubt that John the Baptist had generated a far-reaching reputation and had amassed a large following.⁹⁸⁹ The Gospels surely exaggerate this effect, as Mark reports that “the entire region of Judea and all of the Jerusalemites were going out to him” (1:5). But Josephus corroborates the gist of it:⁹⁹⁰ many people gathered around John and were greatly moved by his words (*Ant.* 18:118).⁹⁹¹ Against the claim of Mark and Matthew that Herod executed John only on account of the scheming of wily women (cf. Mark 6:17-29 and par.), Josephus presents the more plausible historical picture: on account of the attention John was getting, Herod feared insurrection.⁹⁹² So he took care of the Baptist.⁹⁹³

⁹⁸⁹ Cf. Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 212.

⁹⁹⁰ I find unconvincing some recent attempts to question the authenticity of Josephus’ short write-up about John; so Rivka Nir, “Josephus’ Account of John the Baptist: A Christian Interpolation?” *JSHJ* 10 (2012): 32-62. Cf. Étienne Nodet, “Jésus et Jean-Baptiste selon Josèphe,” *RB* 92 (1985): 497-524; John P. Meier, “John the Baptist in Josephus: Philology and Exegesis,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 225-37; H. Lichtenberger, “Josephus über Johannes den Täufer, Jesus und Jakobus,” *BK* 53 (1998): 67-71; Robert L. Webb, “Josephus on John the Baptist: Jewish Antiquities 18.116-119,” *Forum* 2 (1999): 141-68.

⁹⁹¹ Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 58-59, suspects that, for Josephus, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων at the beginning of 18:118 may refer to “the larger group of ordinary people,” as opposed to a smaller number of “exceptionally religious persons” “already cultivating a life of virtue.” If he is right, it would tell us only about Josephus’ perspective on the matter, and probably again his attempt to attribute revolutionary sentiment to a segment of the population. Cf. Louis Feldman, “Josephus’ Biblical Paraphrase as a Commentary on Contemporary Issues,” in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (ed. Craig A. Evans; JSPSup 33; SSEJC 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 124-201 at 159-69.

⁹⁹² Josephus, *Ant.* 18:118 (LCL): “When others too joined the crowds about him, because they were aroused to the highest degree by his sermons, Herod became alarmed. Eloquence that had so great an effect on mankind might lead to some form of sedition, for it looked as if they would be guided by John in everything that they did.”

⁹⁹³ This is by now the standard historical reconstruction. See Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 234-35; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 171-76. On the theological function of John’s

When we turn to consider Jesus, we can be sure that there was no widespread and well known link between the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John in the sense that the former was thought a simple continuation of the latter. It is true that Jesus was in contact with those who were formerly attracted to John. He may have culled some of his first followers from the Baptist's circle (John 2:35-51). It is also apparent that, at least on occasion, Jesus preached to people who knew of John's message and had presumably attended his call to the wilderness (e.g. Q 7:24: "what did you go out to the wilderness to look at?"). But over and over again we find that the linkage between these two ministries is a question, not an accepted fact. Differentiation is implied by a number of episodes:

- "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (Mark 2:18 and par.).
- "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).
- "Among those born of women none is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Q 7:28).
- "John came eating no bread and drinking no wine...the Son of Man has come eating and drinking..." (Q 7:33).
- John sends his disciples to ask Jesus "are you the coming one or shall we wait for another?" (Q 7:19).

Early Christians would not be eager to invent the idea that John sent to ask if Jesus is truly "the coming one."⁹⁹⁴ The most straightforward explanation for this is that John did not previously

death for Mark, see Christos Karakolis, "Narrative Funktion und christologische Bedeutung der markinischen Erzählung vom Tod Johannes des Täuflers (Mk 6:14-29)," *NovT* 52 (2010): 134-55.

⁹⁹⁴ For more on this encounter and its reliability, see Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 103-05; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 80-83; Walter Wink, "Jesus' Reply to John," *Forum* 5 (1989): 121-27; Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 109-14; Hengel and Schwemer, "Jesus der Messias Israels," 72-73; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 181-82. Contra Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 131 (who attributes it to later "scribal reflection").

point to Jesus directly.⁹⁹⁵ Mark, in failing to provide any explicit link between Jesus and John, probably leaves a reliable scenario: the Baptist did not direct his audience to Jesus as the continuation or fulfillment of his work.⁹⁹⁶ The preservation of a Baptist movement in the first century makes sense on that supposition (cf. Acts 19:3-4).

The differing social realities of the movements of Jesus and John leads to an important conclusion: Jesus did not simply absorb John's reputation and following. He thus had to forge his own path with the people. He had to grow his own acclaim.

The behavior of Jesus and Herod Antipas, respectively, confirm this historical reconstruction. Given Herod's fear that John's crowd could start an insurrection, we should doubt the reliability of the claim that even during John's ministry "the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, is baptizing, and all are going to him" (3:26; see also 4:1). Jesus may have had a contemporaneous ministry for some time with John.⁹⁹⁷ But he could not have been more popular than John at this point.⁹⁹⁸ It is inexplicable that Antipas, after singling out John, would leave Jesus running around the Galilee with an equally large contingent of admirers. Moreover, it would be absurd for Jesus, after John's arrest, to move to the Galilee—the seat of Herod's jurisdiction—and camp only a few miles north of Herod's new Tiberias at

⁹⁹⁵ Cf. Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 222; Scobie, *John the Baptist*, 147. Acrobatic attempts to establish the contrary in the history of interpretation demonstrate that in their own way; cf. Jacques Dupont, "L'ambassade de Jean-Baptiste (Matthieu 11,2-6; Luc 7,18-23)," *NRT* 83 (1961): 805-21 at 806-13.

⁹⁹⁶ Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 201, wrote of Mark 2:18 and par. "This text also suggests that the Baptist after his baptism of Jesus still had his own circle of disciples, and that his group and the Jesus movement to some extent had each their own religious practices."

⁹⁹⁷ Cf. Graham Twelftree, "Jesus the Baptist," *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 103-25.

⁹⁹⁸ Pace Hunter, *Work and Words of Jesus*, 51-52; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 133; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 351.

Capernaum.⁹⁹⁹ Instead, the Synoptics are in agreement, and on this likely reliable, that at some *later* point in the ministry Herod caught word of Jesus “because his name had become known” (Mark 6:14 and par.). Herod, in other words, did not know of Jesus at the time of John’s arrest, because there was not much of Jesus to be known. It was only later, after Jesus had grown his own movement and gained his own acclaim, that Herod became aware of it. It is at this point that a strange tradition unique to Luke makes good sense, and may well be historical: “some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, ‘Get out of here! For Herod wants to kill you’” (Luke 13:31).¹⁰⁰⁰

What all this means is that there must have been a significant development in Jesus’ public perception after John’s arrest and during the time of his early Galilean ministry. One could, of course, question the impression of the Gospels that Jesus was a popular figure. But that will not do. The Gospels have surely exaggerated the excitement that Jesus generated (e.g. Mark 6:53-56; Luke 12:41),¹⁰⁰¹ and in this respect the presentation of each Gospel is not unlike the

⁹⁹⁹ On Jesus’ early activities in and around this area, see Peter Busch et al., “‘Er predigte in ihren Dörfern und Synagogen’ – Die archäologische Forschung am See Gennesaret und die frühe Jesusbewegung,” in *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region* (ed. Gabriele Fassbeck et al.; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), 153-63. More on this below.

¹⁰⁰⁰ See Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:355.

¹⁰⁰¹ The locations from which the crowds stream are also of theological benefit for the Evangelists, and they are willing to be creative here. For instance, Matthew and Luke change the list of territories from which Jesus gathered admirers (Mark 3:7-8; Matt 4:24-25; Luke 6:17) and change Mark’s story of the exorcism in the Decapolis (Luke changes Mark 5:20; Matt omits it entirely). The theological aim is clear: Matthew’s Jesus, sent “only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:5), finds admiration among the same, and Luke, who holds open the door for Gentiles even before the ministry of Jesus begins (e.g. 2:32), nevertheless withholds the extension of that offer until Peter’s apocalyptic vision in Acts 10. Matthew and Luke, therefore, redact their source material to fit their own theological vision. On Matthew see Matthias Konradt, “Die Sendung zu Israel und zu den Völkern im Matthäusevangelium im Lichte seiner narrative Christologie,” *ZKT* 101 (2004): 397-425. We should assume that Mark did the same with his; cf. Eric K. Wefald, “The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark: A Narrative Explanation of

idealistic sketch of the early Jerusalem Church in Acts (2:47; 4:4).¹⁰⁰² The general impression of popularity should be thought reliable, however, even if we can say little concrete about size and comparability to the movements surrounding Theudas, the Egyptian, and even John the Baptist.¹⁰⁰³ The main reason to trust, which I will explore further later, is that Jesus' popularity was a contributing factor to his execution in Jerusalem. Jesus became like his forerunner after all.

On the basis of these rather secure pieces of evidence I am led to think that it is not wholly inapt to describe this early period of the ministry as "the Galilean Spring." Half of this argument will have to wait until the next section (and esp. the Appendix), where I propose that some of the opposition Jesus faced presupposes his *prior* successes. But there is another angle to take here, which has to do with how Jesus got his start in the Galilee after leaving John. On this question the Gospels give three different answers, though they are all, of course, uninterested in cause and effect.¹⁰⁰⁴ Matthew and Luke have Jesus begin an itinerant ministry throughout the Galilee, spreading the news of himself by himself, as it were. He finds immediate acclaim.¹⁰⁰⁵

Markan Geography, the Two Feeding Accounts and Exorcisms," *JSNT* 20 (1995): 3-26. In the Fourth Gospel, note Jesus' favorable reception among Samaritans (4:39-42), and his encounter with "Greeks wanting to see" him in Jerusalem (12:20-21).

¹⁰⁰² Cf. Conzelmann, *Theology of St. Luke*, 213-15; Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 69-70; James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 185-206 (who also cites Barrett to the effect that, despite the idealization, "there is no ground for doubting the outline").

¹⁰⁰³ See Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:332-33. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 226, 239-40, 289, thinks Jesus' impact may have been smaller than John the Baptist's, and "certainly smaller" than the Egyptian's. Cf. Meier, *Companion and Competitors*, 27.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 159: "It is not to be supposed that Mark or any of the other evangelists knew the actual interconnections among Jesus' fame, his intention, his healing and his preaching."

¹⁰⁰⁵ Matt 4:23-25; Luke 4:14-15. For Matthew, it is clear, this is nothing less than the miraculous fulfillment of Isaiah 9 (4:12-16), which he adds to Mark's account.

The portrait advances their theological interests and cannot be historical in the details. The reason is that both are dependent upon Mark for the opening of Jesus' ministry, and there is no indication that their summary statements depend on independent material.¹⁰⁰⁶ John, which has already been discredited in this area (see above), claims that Jesus found approval in the Galilee *because* of his prior work in Judea and Jerusalem (which the Synoptics do not report).¹⁰⁰⁷

It is only Mark who cares to chart a gradual development in Jesus' popularity, beginning from Capernaum. Mark does not win by process of elimination, of course. But his portrait is inherently more plausible than the others.

+ Jesus enters Galilee (1:14-15)

+ Jesus calls four disciples (1:16-20)

+ Jesus amazes the attendees of the Capernaum synagogue (1:27)

+ the "whole town" gathers at Peter's house (1:33)

+ Jesus could no longer enter a town, people flock "from every direction" (1:45)

+ hearers travel from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, Tyre and Sidon (3:7-12)

There is a lot of theology here, to be sure. The spread of Jesus' ministry embodies the message of his parables: a single sower sows the seed that eventually yields "thirty and sixty and a hundredfold" (4:8); the seed produces "first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head" (4:28). In addition, Mark's presentation cannot be historical in the particulars of the

¹⁰⁰⁶ As commentators have noted, Matthew's summary statement is a patchwork of edited statements that appear much later on in Mark, including 3:7-12. See Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:411-12. Luke betrays knowledge of the fact that the Nazareth episode was preceded by Jesus' activity in Capernaum (4:23: "Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum"), and his summary statement also abounds with Lucan terminology. Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIB 9; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 104.

¹⁰⁰⁷ John 4:45: "When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen what he had done in Jerusalem at the festival."

sequence, as it leaves many gaps and surely exaggerates Jesus' instant fame. He probably did not leave the Baptist's circle alone.¹⁰⁰⁸ But we are probably in touch with something reliable here, even if much of the detail has been stripped away by Mark's terse and fast-paced narrative. The reason is simple: Mark did not make up the significance of Capernaum for Jesus' early ministry.¹⁰⁰⁹ He found it in tradition. Consider:

- The so-called "Day at Capernaum" sequence is marked by tight transitions and even temporal markers ("as soon as they left," "that evening," "in the early morning"), which is a kind of specificity we do not find in Mark except in the passion narrative. It is no surprise, then, that many critics, even Karl Ludwig Schmidt, have thought that Mark was working with some pre-existing tradition here.¹⁰¹⁰
- Mark also highlights the significance of Capernaum for Jesus' early activities, as most of the events in Jesus' career before Chapter 6 occur in or around Capernaum. Many of these betray local knowledge.¹⁰¹¹
- Mark probably placed originally independent pericopae in contexts that suggest they happened at Capernaum (cf. e.g. 9:33-37), which may have created historical falsities. That is strange because Mark does not do this with any other location in

¹⁰⁰⁸ Meier, *Companion and Competitors*, 21. Meier otherwise thinks that Mark and John are the most reliable in suggesting that Jesus started with a smaller group of stable disciples, before attracting larger crowds.

¹⁰⁰⁹ On place names in Mark and reliability, see Paul Barnett, *Finding the Historical Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 210-47; Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament*, 121-23. On Capernaum see Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 166-67.

¹⁰¹⁰ Schmidt thought the same about a few other sequences (e.g. Mark 4:35-5:43 [storm, Gerasenes, Jairus]; Mark 6:30-52 [feeding story, walking on the water]). See *Der Rahmen*, 67-68, 208, 397 (one can at times find "die Trümmer eines Itinerars").

¹⁰¹¹ Mark (a) calls Capernaum Jesus' "home/residence" (2:1; 3:19; 9:33; cf. Matt 4:13; 9:1), (b) knows that Peter's and Andrew's house is there (1:29), (c) and has a story about, of all people, Peter's mother-in-law (1:30-31). (d) Mark knows that Capernaum has a synagogue, (e) and records an encounter with the ἀρχισυνάγωγος (5:22-24, 35-43), who is even named (Jairus). (f) He assumes that Capernaum is a fishing village, (g) and that custom taxes were collected there (2:13-14). Cf. Eric F. F. Bishop, "Jesus and Capernaum," *CBQ* 15 (1953): 427-37; Juyrgen Zangenber, "Kapernaum—Zu Besuch in Jesu 'eigener Stadt'," in *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region* (ed. Gabriele Fassbeck; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), 99-103.

the Galilee, as he often prefers “a mountain,” “a village/villages,” “a crowd” or other unprecise descriptors (cf. 1:39; 3:13; 6:56; 7:17; etc.). The Second Gospel was not written in the Galilee, knows little of Palestinian geography, and Capernaum was probably meaningless to most of his audience. So the best explanation for the prominence of Capernaum for Mark is to suppose that it was important in his tradition for the early events of Jesus’ ministry.

- The healing of the centurion’s servant in Q (7:1-10) was said to occur in Capernaum and it is placed quite early in the document: after the Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49) and before the Baptist block (7:18-35). Placement in a quasi-narrative document like Q does not mean much, but the early position is paralleled in the Gospel of John, which records another version of this Capernaum healing as only the “second” of Jesus’ signs in the Galilee (John 4:46-54).¹⁰¹²
- The Fourth Gospel also records an otherwise meaningless transition after the miracle of water to wine at Cana, which reads: “he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples (ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ [αὐτοῦ] καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ); and they remained there a few days” (2:12). This is inexplicable as a creation of the Fourth Evangelist.¹⁰¹³

In sum, the role of Capernaum in Jesus’ early activities is firmly established in the tradition. It is difficult to contest that there is something historical here. Palestinian cities and place-names were soon irrelevant for the majority of Gospel readers, and one can watch them either drop from the tradition as time goes on or receive explanatory comments (see e.g. Luke 4:31 [on Capernaum];

¹⁰¹² See Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 191, 194; Peter J. Judge, “The Royal Official and the Historical Jesus,” in *Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel* (vol. 2 of *John, Jesus, and History*; eds. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 83-92.

¹⁰¹³ Cf. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 235 (“[2:12 is] not the product of any particular interest of the evangelist”). It may, in fact, respond to a tradition that appears in Mark 3:21, 31-35 that John does not like (e.g., Jesus’ relatives come to restrain him, and his “mother and his brothers” [ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ] are replaced by those who do the will of God). Even if not, however, note Richard Bauckham, “The Family of Jesus,” in Keith and Hurtado, *Jesus among Friends and Enemies*, 103-26 at 122: “That Capernaum was the base for Jesus’ Galilean ministry is probably one of those items of information that John assumes to be generally known to his readers and hearers, even though he himself does not explicitly say so.”

8:26 [on the “country of the Gerasenes”]; 9:10 [on Bethsaida]). The Gospels preserve a surprising number of very precise claims about an otherwise inconspicuous place.¹⁰¹⁴

The relevance of the discussion is this: that Jesus was able to root there (e.g. Mark 2:1 [ἐν οἴκῳ]; Matt 9:1 [ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν]), all while teaching, healing, and calling disciples in the area, implies that he was well received in Capernaum, at least for a time.¹⁰¹⁵ Cities that did not want him around could drive him out, as happened elsewhere (Mark 5:17). Jesus’ itinerancy does not conflict with this view, but likely represents a second-stage development after his successes in Capernaum.¹⁰¹⁶ The Gospels indicate that Capernaum served as a home base for Jesus, which would not be possible had the local population been generally opposed to him.

In my view we cannot say much more about Jesus’ early ministry with confidence. There have been a few recent attempts to explain *how* Jesus’ popularity grew, but they are one-sided and overly schematic. There is no reason to think that it was only on account of the exorcisms that Jesus grew crowds, which he then began to teach, and only later was believed by some to be the Messiah.¹⁰¹⁷ We can presume that John the Baptist grew crowds largely on the basis of his message. Cannot the same be true for Jesus? Even then, however, there is no justification for creating such sequential stages of activity in his public career, as they have no basis in the

¹⁰¹⁴ Cf. Eve-Marie Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie* (WUNT 194; Tübingen: Mohr, 2006), 286-96.

¹⁰¹⁵ As Matthew Henry observed in *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1217, “at Capernaum, it should seem, he was welcome.”

¹⁰¹⁶ Contra John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan Reed, *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 94-96 (who marginalize Capernaum and believe Jesus was constantly itinerant). Contra also Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 103 (Capernaum became important in the post-Easter period on account of it being Peter’s hometown).

¹⁰¹⁷ Smith, *Magician*, 11, 23-44. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 164, has many positive things to say about Smith’s view.

Gospels or in Smith's claims about cultural background.¹⁰¹⁸ It is important to ask the question of *why* Jesus was able to grow the reputation he did, and most historians do not even address it.¹⁰¹⁹ But unfortunately we cannot say much in answering it. For whatever the cultural or sociological reasons, Jesus' message and actions resonated with people.¹⁰²⁰

We are not yet finished with this topic, as we have yet to address the question of opposition to Jesus and what it entailed. But we have done enough to show that the 19th-century trope of a Galilean spring is not easily dismissed as a relic of interpretive tradition (which we saw already in Epiphanius) or due to romantic and colonial fantasies about the distant "oriental" Palestine (as we find in Renan and others).¹⁰²¹ Its proponents may have read the Gospels selectively and credulously, but they were reading the Gospels.

¹⁰¹⁸ E.g. Smith, *Magician*, 16: "Teachers of the law were not, in this period, made over into miracle workers." How would one ever demonstrate that?

¹⁰¹⁹ Perhaps the foremost historian asking such questions is James Crossley; see his "Writing about the Historical Jesus: Historical Explanation and 'the Big Why Questions,' or Antiquarian Empiricism and Victorian Tomes?" *JSHJ* 7 (2009): 63-90. We ought not to forget Klausner here, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 192: "if Jesus successfully taught of the kingdom of heaven, it was simply and solely because of the disordered condition of life in the country, and the bad economic conditions generally."

¹⁰²⁰ For one possibility see Catherine Hezser, "The Jesus Movement as a 'Popular' Judaism for the Unlearned," in *Jesus—Gestalt und Gestaltungen: Rezeptionen des Galiläers in Wissenschaft, Kirche und Gesellschaft. Festschrift für Gerd Theißen zum 70. Geburtstag* (eds. Petra von Gemünden, David G. Horrell, and Max Küchler; NTOA 100; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 79-104 (though she overstates her case, especially with assertions like the later tradition "turned [Jesus] into a Torah teacher who competed with Pharisees and scribes").

¹⁰²¹ The latter is surely significant, as more recent studies have identified. Cf. e.g. Halvor Moxnes, "The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus: The Heritage of the Nineteenth Century," in Whitlam, *Holy Land as Homeland?*, 1-18.

7.2. GROWING OPPOSITION

It is obviously false that Jesus first proclaimed an “acceptable year” and was “opposed by no one.”¹⁰²² There must have been numerous Galileans who heard of Jesus and did not give him a second thought, and an equally large number who thought him dangerous, idealistic, or, like his own family, “crazy” (Mark 3:21). We will deal with the reception of Jesus’ message among the Galilean masses in the next sections. At issue here is the opposition that Jesus faced from certain Pharisees, scribes, and others learned in the Law of Moses.¹⁰²³ This conflict factored prominently in many reconstructions of a Galilean crisis, as we have seen, and I contend that it does indeed confirm the narrative of “early success, growing opposition.” In particular, several controversies presuppose that Jesus was already a popular figure and respond to that. Thus the popularity of Jesus—the concrete social reality of his movement—is essential to the controversy that developed, and not just Jesus’ *ideas* about law or love.

To fully make this case it is necessary to delve into issues that would distract from the main thrust of this chapter. Thus, I will only summarize here my conclusion and refer readers to the Appendix for the full case.¹⁰²⁴ The fundamental point is that there must have been some reason that Jesus was worth paying attention to and taking the effort to oppose. New Testament critics have by and large neglected to address an important question that Chris Keith has raised in his recent study: “Why did the authorities care at all what Jesus thought or did? Why did they not

¹⁰²² Epiphanius, *Inc.* 2.5-6.

¹⁰²³ Identifying the precise opponents of Jesus in many of these cases is difficult. For an excellent layout of the problem, see Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 332-36. The aim here, however, is not to reconstruct the relationship between Jesus and any one particular group.

¹⁰²⁴ See pp. 400-32 below.

dismiss him as a harmless madman?”¹⁰²⁵ A good hypothesis that attends to the entirety of the evidence better than other proposals is that Jesus was perceived by some to be a lawbreaker on account of his early activities, and that he had begun to develop a public reputation and amass a number of sympathizers. The conflict developed, therefore, because there was concern about a movement growing around a person who associated with “tax collectors and sinners” and had called disciples to do radical things for the sake of his mission. We have here a response to Jesus’ “Galilean spring.”

None of this overturns one of the important conclusions of Chapter 6: namely, that since Jesus emerged from the controversial Baptist movement, it is unlikely that he expected at the outset to win everyone to his cause, including the religious learned of his day. We should doubt that opposition to Jesus from certain sectors of Jewish society was sufficient to rattle his initial expectations and cause him to change his mind in some fundamental manner. To make that point, however, is not to imply that the controversy that developed between Jesus and the sages was inevitable, nor that such controversy was typical of his ministry as a whole from beginning to end. We have some development here that is not wholly unlike the plotline of a 19th-century Life of Jesus.

7.3. THE GALILEAN WOES

The effect of the opposition of Pharisees and scribes to Jesus is not clear. We have already seen that in the 19th-century it was common to contend that that opposition was instrumental in bringing about “the Galilean Storms”: a swift and unexpected decline in public enthusiasm about

¹⁰²⁵ Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 13.

Jesus.¹⁰²⁶ But that view, it is safe to say, is a fiction of the 19th-century, as it depends on at least two fatal assumptions. One is the belief that the Pharisees controlled first-century Judaism and could easily manipulate the masses. The Pharisees were not in control of anything, even if they were popular and influential in some quarters,¹⁰²⁷ and “the Galileans” were all too often the victims of Christian stereotypes about a fickle and “nationalistic” Judaism. The second problem is more significant. It is unlikely that attempts to discredit Jesus were that successful, or successful enough to have a serious, crisis-inducing effect. The Gospels do indeed contain sayings that would confirm the idea that certain opponents actively tried to prevent people from

¹⁰²⁶ Cf. Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 236. In addition to the discussion in prior chapters, note Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 279, on Mark 3:6 (“the Pharisees went out and hastened to take council with the Herodians as to how they might destroy him”):

This furnishes an important landmark in Jesus’ career. Not only was he viewed with disfavor by the Pharisees and the civil authorities, but the people, also, began to cool towards him. The people venerated the Pharisees, the leaders of Jewish democracy, and it was as a Pharisee that they had venerated Jesus also... The Pharisees instilled into the people a dislike of Jesus: they said that he was a transgressor and a friend of transgressors—publicans, sinners, hysterical women—and that his cures were due to unholy powers.

¹⁰²⁷ I do not think we can simply dismiss Josephus in *Ant.* 13:298 (the Pharisees “have τὸ πλῆθος on their side”; see also *Ant.* 13:401-06; 18:15, 17; *War* 2:162), even if Josephus had an interest in bolstering the reputation of the Pharisees in the post-70 world. (For doubts about this common theory, however, see Steve Mason, “Josephus’s Pharisees: The Narratives,” in *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* [eds. Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton; Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007], 3-40 at 39). The influence among common folk is also implied in 1QH^a 12:11; 4Q169 3:5-8. For (perhaps overzealous) attempts to reassert the influence of the Pharisees, pace Sanders’s view (see *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE* [London: SCM Press, 1992], 395-412), see Hengel and Deines, “E. P. Sanders’ ‘Common Judaism’, Jesus, and the Pharisees,” 1-70. See also Joachim Schaper, “The Pharisees,” in *The Early Roman Period* (vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of Judaism*; eds. William Horbury et al.; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 402-27 esp. at 412, 419; Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001 [orig. 1988]) (on the Pharisees as the “retainer class”).

sympathizing with Jesus,¹⁰²⁸ and if they represent the kinds of things Jesus said, they corroborate the contention above (and more fully in the Appendix) about concerns over Jesus' popularity. But it would venture into total speculation, and that against our extant evidence, to say that Jesus lost his audience to his critics. Historians who have staked this claim either make mountains out of single passages (esp. John 6:66),¹⁰²⁹ or they infer the reality of mass rejection on the basis of some other theological tension they claim to find in the sources (here see Chapter 6.1). Franz Mussner thought that there was a conspicuous reduction in references to the crowd after Mark 7, but this simply is not true, unless one ignores Mark 8:1; 9:14; 10:1, 46.¹⁰³⁰ Apart from a highly selective reading, Matthew, Luke, and John do not give this impression either.¹⁰³¹ The social dynamics of the Jesus movement were probably akin to that of the sign prophets whose contingency of adherents were dismantled not by bumps and bends along the way (and we could assume there were several, especially when family members started packing up their belongings

¹⁰²⁸ Cf. Matt 23:13: "you (scribes and Pharisees) do not go in yourselves (to the kingdom of Heaven), and when others are going in, you stop them." See also Mark 8:15; 9:42 (?); Matt 10:16, 25; 12:30. See here Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 101-42, 159-66.

¹⁰²⁹ Overstatements like this abound: e.g. Campbell, *Life of Christ*, 302-03 (John 6:66 evidences a "serious and widespread" defection); Léon-Dufour, *Gospels and the Jesus of History*, 221; Grundmann, *Matthäus*, 365. It is interesting that, in earlier times, this defection was commonly seen to be not of the crowds but of Jesus' 70/2 *disciples* (for the text does, after all, say disciples). Cf. e.g. Augustine, *Hom. Jo.* 1.12; *Ep.* 173.30.

¹⁰³⁰ Mussner, "Gab es eine 'galilaische Krise'?", 240-1. Contra also Edersheim, *Life and Times*, 2:25 ("great crisis in popular feeling"); Burgess, *Life of Christ*, 149; Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:304, 377, 385 ("Jesus was left with a very small group of loyal and faithful disciples"); Dufour, *Jesus of History*, 221 (on John 6:15: "When this moment came, he retired to the hill country and gave up public preaching in Galilee"); Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 295. Cf. Schweitzer, *Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, 59-64; Monnier, *La mission historique*, 262; Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 83.

¹⁰³¹ Cf. Albert Descamps, "Aux origines du ministère: La Pensée de Jesus," *RTL 2* (1971): 3-45 at 4 note 2.

to follow Theudas to the Jordan), but when the leader of the movement was executed. That was “the crisis.”¹⁰³²

Moreover, the end of Jesus’ career makes the best sense on the supposition that he had in Jerusalem a notable contingency of sympathizers, large enough, at least, to worry the Jewish leadership there and involve the Romans.¹⁰³³ Jesus was arrested stealthily at night, rather than during the day in full view of the people. That makes sense if the temple authorities were concerned there would be a “θόρυβος among the people” (Mark 14:2; Matt 26:5). Jesus’ following also appears to be at issue in John 18:14 (συμφέρει ἓνα ἄνθρωπον ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ). A few decades later, Jesus ben Ananias had a controversial message about the temple and was arrested, questioned, and flogged before being released (Josephus, *War* 6:300-09). A host of factors are likely in play as to why Ananias found more lenient treatment— notably, his temple prediction was much less dramatic than Jesus’ temple action, and there were no messianic undertones to his activities. But one other such factor, maybe the most important to my mind, is that Ananas was a loner, and thus not much of a political threat.¹⁰³⁴

¹⁰³² See here Bruce J. Malina, “Criteria for Assessing the Authentic Words of Jesus: Some Specifications,” in Chilton and Evans, *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, 27-46 at 35-37 (on the “adjourning” of a social activity group).

¹⁰³³ Cf. Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973), 154; Smith, *Magician*, 38-44; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 288-89, 303 (though Sanders doubts popularity was a major factor, and also believes Jesus’ temple action would have led to “a degree of popular rejection”); Ellis Revkin, “What Crucified Jesus,” in *Jesus’ Jewishness*, 226-57 at 240-45; Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 270; Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 151; Meier, *Companion and Competitors*, 24-26 (“Jesus’ power to attract crowds must still have been fairly strong toward the end of his ministry”).

¹⁰³⁴ Theodore Weeden, “Two Jesuses, Jesus of Jerusalem and Jesus of Nazareth: Provocative Parallels and Imaginative Imitation,” *Forum* 6 (2003): 137-341, does not compel with his adventurous thesis that the story of Jesus ben Ananias was also known to the Evangelists, who used it to compose certain details of Jesus’ last week.

In any case, I am sympathetic to something in the historical logic of “the Galilean Storms,” and it is a simple fact that has been attested in page after page of this study: certain passages in the Gospels are hard to understand unless one posits a backstory of rejection. Particular sayings of Jesus have struck in similar ways Ante- and Post- Nicene exegetes, theologians, and critics of Christianity, the writers of harmonies from the Middle Ages through the Reformation periods, the Enlightenment-era paraphrasers of the Gospels, thinkers all throughout the modern quest for Jesus, and even the most recent reconstructors of Q. The final form of the Jesus tradition bears the clear impression of having wrestled with and made theological sense of a disappointing rejection. Some of this impression must mirror unfortunate experiences of the early followers of Jesus as they tried to spread the kingdom message. Yet unless we attribute all of this reflection to the later Church, the notion implicit in the idea of the Galilean Storms that Jesus too had a dynamic encounter with opposition to his cause, and that that encounter impacted his teaching, must not be an entirely deceptive one.

Of course, contemporary criticism is not adverse to or ignorant of the notion that Jesus met rejection in Galilee. Every critic must deal with the Nazareth episode in one way or another (Mark 6:1-6),¹⁰³⁵ an event that not even Luke’s artful rewriting could fundamentally alter. Bart Ehrman had a little two-page section of his *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet* where he dealt with rejection, even claiming that Jesus “was not at all well received” and that “he was rejected by the vast majority of the people.”¹⁰³⁶ But in general the investigation of the rejection of Jesus by the people of Galilee has received little attention apart from those who have proposed some crisis in the ministry. When mentioned in monographs on Jesus, rejection is more or less a footnote to

¹⁰³⁵ See Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 101-03.

¹⁰³⁶ See Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet*, 200-02.

Jesus' public ministry. I wish to contend, in this section and the next, that that underappreciates its significance for understanding Jesus' public career.

Of obvious significance for this topic is one particular saying that has by now in our study received considerable attention: the so-called Galilean woes. It has been reconstructed by the *Critical Edition of Q* as follows:

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the wonders which were performed among you had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Yet for Tyre and Sidon it will be more bearable in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will be exalted up to heaven? You will go down to Hades!¹⁰³⁷

If this saying reflects in any way on the ministry of the Jesus, it certainly merits greater attention than placing it in a catalogue on “repentance” and “judgment” so that it becomes “perfectly natural,” given “the prophetic vocation and role was to announce to Israel that she was pursuing a path that led to ruin.”¹⁰³⁸ I do not see how we understand this saying any better by placing it alongside general maxims about repentance and judgment in the tradition such as “the first will be last and the last first,” and “unless the tree bears fruit this year it will be cut down.”¹⁰³⁹ The passage is not just a general warning about future judgment (though it does, of course, speak of future judgment), but is clearly occasioned by some concrete experience of rejection in these Galilean cities.¹⁰⁴⁰ In other words, the saying looks back on past experience as much as it looks

¹⁰³⁷ Matt 11:23b-24 may be in Q also.

¹⁰³⁸ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 252, 184. On 329-30 he reads the logion to mean that these cities will be destroyed by the Romans if they do not accept Jesus' message.

¹⁰³⁹ So Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 183-84, 252-53.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Cf. Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 191-92; Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (2 vols.; HTKNT 3; Freiburg: Basel, 1969-1994), 2:83 (“die negative Erfahrungen spiegeln”); Buchanan, *Jesus the King and His Kingdom*, 110; Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 229; Riniker, *Gerichtsverkündigung Jesu*, 314-18; Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 148 (“10:13-15 looks back on impenitence and unresponsiveness as an accomplished fact, not as

forward to the final judgment.¹⁰⁴¹ This is not to say that the logion is in theological tension with other sayings in the tradition, just that we should not ignore or flatten its implied backstory by immediately conflating it with other sayings that touch on similar theological topics.¹⁰⁴²

There is, as we have seen, widespread *interpretive* agreement about the backstory of this saying, even if the particular historical scenarios constructed on the basis of that interpretation differ significantly (e.g. rejection of the historical Jesus, some unnamed prophets, the “Q people,” and so on).¹⁰⁴³ The reason is plain: it is hard to read the logion and not think that its speaker is disappointed about this response to the Gospel. Davies and Allison wrote in their Matthew commentary, “The text is a testimony to dashed expectations.”¹⁰⁴⁴ I see no reason to

something that is to be anticipated”); Zeller, “Jesus, Q und die Zukunft Israels,” 368; James M. Robinson, “The Matthean Trajectory from Q to Mark,” in *The Sayings Gospel Q: Collected Essays* (eds. Christoph Heil and Jozef Verheyden; BETL 189; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 599-628 at 623 (“presuppose a very minimal success”); Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 247 (“die Erfahrungen in den drei galiläischen Städten für Jesus besonders enttäuschend waren”).

¹⁰⁴¹ E.g. Burkitt, *Expository Notes*, 47: “Our Saviour having gone through the cities of Galilee, preaching the doctrine of repentance, and confirming his doctrine with miracles, and finding the multitudes, after all his endeavours, remain in their impenitence, he proceeds to upbraid them severely for that their contempt of gospel-grace.”

¹⁰⁴² Careful here was Riniker, *Gerichtsverkundung Jesu*, 8, who argued that Jesus spoke of judgment throughout the ministry, yet there was still “development” in “two phases.” In the latter, Jesus had come to think that a change of behavior among his hearers was not possible (458).

¹⁰⁴³ On the ambiguity of that backstory and the notion of “persecution,” see Sarah E. Rollens, “Persecution in the Social Setting of Q,” in *Q in Context II: Social Setting and Archaeological Background of the Sayings Source* (ed. Markus Tiwald; BBB 173; Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2015), 149-64.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:270. Cf. the summary statement from Alan Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source*, 339: “Most place the formation of the speech on extended diachronic trajectories following the course of various social histories, frequently that of the ‘wandering itinerants’ to ‘settled communities,’ itself not infrequently coordinated with an ‘optimistic’ to ‘pessimistic’ shift in mood and a shift in mission to Israel to reflection on failure of that mission.”

disagree, and the pathos of the saying requires some historical explanation. Sanders, following Bultmann, contended that this saying is a piece of “early Christian polemic” on account of its tone,¹⁰⁴⁵ which is precisely the same interpretive basis that crisis theorists and others have placed the saying late in the ministry of Jesus. Thus, the more important and divisive question before us is not the question of interpretation but of historical origin. From where does this saying come, and of whom is the rejection that it laments?

To begin, we must note just how awkwardly this saying fits into its immediate literary context in Matthew, Luke, and the final form of Q.¹⁰⁴⁶ Matthew (11:20-24) has conjoined the woes to the Baptist Block (Q 7:18-35) after the saying about Jesus and John being rejected by “this generation.”¹⁰⁴⁷ That makes for a nice thematic consistency. The recipients of the saying, however, are crowds otherwise interested in Jesus who also attended to the call of John in the wilderness (11:7). On account of the rather drastic shift in implied audience, Matthew provides an introductory statement that he likely wrote himself: “Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent” (11:20).¹⁰⁴⁸ But

¹⁰⁴⁵ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 110 (“the anti-Jewish polemic seems clear enough”).

¹⁰⁴⁶ Hence one of the arguments for regarding 10:12-15 as redactional in Q; cf. Sato, *Q und Prophetie*, 176; David Catchpole, “The Mission Charge in Q,” *Semeia* 55 (1991): 147-74 at 162 (“The secondariness of Q 10:13-15 in their present (Luke/Q) context is beyond doubt”); Arland D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1992), 143-46; Jonathan L. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Reexamination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 185; Allison, *Jesus Tradition in Q*, 35 (“has struck almost everyone as being out of place”); Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes*, 177; John Kloppenborg, “Discursive Practices in the Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest for the Historical Jesus,” *Synoptic Problems*, 366-406 at 404 (“almost universally regarded as a secondary insertion into Q’s mission instructions”).

¹⁰⁴⁷ For a good study see Joseph Comber, “The Composition and Literary Characteristics of Matt 11:20-24,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 497-514.

¹⁰⁴⁸ A common view. See e.g. Robinson, Hoffmann, and Kloppenborg, *Critical Edition of Q*, 180-81.

the saying remains, in this context, out of place and uncalled for, as Lapidé attests in extrapolating on Matthew's "then" (v. 20): "namely, when He sent the Apostles to preach throughout Galilee, and He preached by Himself, though with little fruit and few conversions."¹⁰⁴⁹ Luke is more awkward still, as Jesus delivers the woes in his mission charge to the Seventy (10:1-16). That is, Luke has Jesus speaking to his ambassadors *about to* go on mission to proclaim the Gospel. Bengel recognized the difficulty of this placement with his suggestion that "it is intimated that these Seventy ambassadors are to go to other cities rather than to these, and that others are to take warning from the example of these."¹⁰⁵⁰ If Luke has been faithful to the order of Q here—which I see no good reason either to affirm or deny—then it is no less awkward there.¹⁰⁵¹ In sum, there is no way to take the logion as a literary creation in

¹⁰⁴⁹ Lapidé, *Great Commentary*, 2:65. See also Augustine, *Cons.* 2.32.79 (NPNF¹ 6:140): Matthew "has kept by the order of his own recollections."

¹⁰⁵⁰ Bengel, *Gnomon*, 2:91. Cf. Priestley, *Harmony*, 90, 94; Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, 344 ("These commands and exhortations have been justly pronounced by critics to be unsuitable to the first mission of the twelve, which, like the alleged mission of the seventy, had no other than happy results...they presuppose the troublous circumstances which supervened after the death of Jesus, or perhaps in the latter period of his life"); Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 285, 295 ("Such bitterness shows clearly that his condition was becoming worse; he saw no progress in his work: he is indignant and curses").

¹⁰⁵¹ I do not see the reason for confidence that Luke preserves the correct placement of this saying in Q. See Schulz, *Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, 361; Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:265; Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary*, 416, 434-35. It is clear that Luke's sending of the Seventy foreshadows the subsequent Gentile mission. In this context, the woes probably function for him to link the mission to the Gentiles to the failure of the Gospel among Jewish cities. See here Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament*, 226. But that move is typically Lucan, and is exactly what happens in the Nazareth episode (which foreshadows the mission to Gentiles). And there, Luke was willing to modify the order of his sources (e.g. bring Mark 6:1-6 up in his document) to achieve that effect, as is well known, cf. J. B. Tyson, "The Jewish Public in Luke-Acts," *NTS* 30 (1984): 574-83; R. J. Shirock, "The Growth of the Kingdom in Light of Israel's Rejection of Jesus: Structure and Theology in Luke 12:1-35," *NovT* 31 (1993): 15-29. The issue is not unlike the placement of Q 22:28-30 (sit on twelve thrones). This late appearance in Luke is often taken to reflect its placement in Q. See discussion in Jozef Verheyden, "Documenta Q: The Reconstruction of Q 22,28-30," *ETL* (76):

the double tradition. As numerous form critics, Q experts, and historical Jesus scholars have concluded, this saying, whatever its origin, was once independent of its present contexts,¹⁰⁵² and probably circulated orally at one time as an isolated logion that the author(s) of Q incorporated into a new discursive context.¹⁰⁵³ In this respect the Galilean woes are akin to the troublesome temple saying (cf. Mark 14:57-58; 15:29-30; John 2:18-22; cf. Acts 6.14; *Gos. Thom.* 71), which also circulated independently and was used in different ways by the Evangelists.¹⁰⁵⁴ The woes do not raise any noticeable theological or christological difficulties as the temple saying apparently did (Mark 14:57: ἐψευσδομαρτύρουν, cf. Matt 26:60), but it does seem that the Evangelists do not know exactly what to make of this judgment logion, and so they do the best they can.¹⁰⁵⁵ They never provide the backstory—never mind Jesus even ministering in Chorazin—that the saying requires. The saying is clearly directed to opponents who have not repented, not to Jesus sympathizers, even if it may originally have had some “edifying” effect for the righteous. In

404-32. But, in the immediate context, Luke has moved up Mark’s dispute about greatness (9:33-35) to 22:24-27. Why think he did not do the same with the very next pericope?

¹⁰⁵² See Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, 62-63; Dieter Zeller, “Redaktionsprozesse und wechselnder ‘Sitz im Leben’ beim Q-Material,” in *Logia: Les Paroles de Jésus* (ed. Joël Delobel; BETL 59; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 395-409 at 404 (the verses originally had a different *Sitz im Leben*).

¹⁰⁵³ Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 224 (the context in Q is “unsuitable”); Rau, “Die Ablehnung Jesu,” 63; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 242.

¹⁰⁵⁴ See discussion in Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 31; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 143-158; Jacques Schlosser, “La parole de Jésus sur la fin du Temple,” *NTS* 36 (1990): 398-414; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 328-30.

¹⁰⁵⁵ General patterns of exegesis in the history of interpretation support this. Few exegetes have found the woes to be of great significance, and so many interpreters simply skip over them. Origen and Cyril of Alexandria do not mention the woes in their homilies on Luke, and neither does Bonaventure in his commentary on Luke. Cf. Luz, *Matthew*, 2:154: “Although our text appears at a decisive location in the Gospel of Matthew, it has attracted little attention in the history of interpretation.” Insightful is Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 76: the woes “are not strictly relevant to the work of the disciples” in the mission discourse.

Matthew and Luke the woes become a remarkable exemplar of what Jeremias called the “hortatory tendency” in his study of the parables of Jesus: sayings once meant for enemies of the Gospel were made by the later Church to have relevance for its friends.¹⁰⁵⁶

We can infer a few additional things about this saying in its former independent state. One is that it assumes there are no Christian communities in Tyre and/or Sidon,¹⁰⁵⁷ and perhaps even that Jesus did not minister there (which may contradict Mark, who is already historically suspect in this area: Mark 7:24, followed by Matt 15:21).¹⁰⁵⁸ The idea is that these Gentile cities did not receive the same opportunity to repent because the Gospel was not announced there, so their fate on the judgment will be less severe. Moreover, there is no reason to call this saying “pro-Gentile.” Tyre and Sidon are notoriously wicked Gentile cities in Israel’s Scriptures (Isa 23:1-12; Jer 47:4; Ezek 26-28; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10; Zech 9:2-4), and it is not denied here that they will be judged. The point is a rhetorical one that their judgment will be less severe (ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται)—a perspective foreign to Protestants but common in Second Temple Judaism. The use of Tyre and Sidon, then, is not to pit “Gentiles” versus “Jews,” but rather to

¹⁰⁵⁶ Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 42-47. He also recognizes that there was “a strong tendency to add conclusions to the parables in the form of generalizing logia... (which provided the) widest possible application” (110). It seems that Matthew’s prefatory v. 20 tries to do something similar.

¹⁰⁵⁷ As noted by Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 52. Since there was a Christian community in Tyre in the fifties—Acts 21:3-6—and Christians in Sidon as well—Acts 27:3—this saying should be thought to originate before that.

¹⁰⁵⁸ This is one reason why, in many harmonies of the Gospels old and new, the harmonist has Jesus travel to regions of Tyre and Sidon *after* delivering this woe. That move was also made easy by the conflict over handwashing which immediately precedes that journey in Mark.

recall these historic enemies of Israel in a provocative manner.¹⁰⁵⁹ That interpretation finds support in the interesting way that Q 10:15 (“And you, Capernaum, will be exalted up to heaven? You will go down to Hades!”) interacts with Isa 14:13,15, an oracle of judgment against Babylon.¹⁰⁶⁰ The prideful intimation of this once fearful enemy of Israel (“you say in your heart, I will go up to heaven...but now you will go down to Hades [νῦν δὲ εἰς ᾗδου καταβήσῃ]”), is here applied to the little fishing village of Capernaum. Such would not be a novel use of this text, as George Nickelsburg has identified a much wider interpretive tradition that adopts the language of Isa 14:14-17 to castigate opponents.¹⁰⁶¹ Also relevant is T. Mos. 10:9-10, which takes the “exalted to heaven” language literally to indicate that, after the judgment, God will elevate Israel to look down in triumph over its enemies.¹⁰⁶² Both points lead to the same conclusion: this saying in no way requires the later pro-Gentile mission as its *Sitz im Leben*.¹⁰⁶³

¹⁰⁵⁹ And the allusion may not have been purely literary, since numismatic studies have shown that Tyre had an important influence on the Galilean economy. See here literature cited by John Kloppenborg, “Q, Bethsaida, Khorazin and Capernaum,” in Tiwald, *Q in Context II*, 61-92 at 65 note 10.

¹⁰⁶⁰ As is well known: see e.g. Christopher Tuckett, “Isaiah in Q,” in *Isaiah in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel* (eds. Steve Moyise, Maarten J. J. Menken; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 51-62 at 58-59; Gregg, *Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q*, 114-15.

¹⁰⁶¹ See George W. E. Nickelsburg Jr., *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 56; rev. ed.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006 [orig. 1972]), 91-93, 97-98, 99-106.

¹⁰⁶² See Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 227.

¹⁰⁶³ See Gregg, *Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q*, 119. Meyer, as noted by Catchpole, “Mission Charge in Q,” 173 note 26, concludes that the Q people were on board with the Gentile mission, yet “It does not seem to immediately reflect the Gentile mission but only (the) parenetic use of Gentiles to condemn Jewish obduracy.” See also Risto Uro, *Sheep among the Wolves: A Study on the Mission Instructions in Q* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987), 172-73; David Catchpole, *The Quest for Q* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 173; Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:267; Paul Foster, “Is Q a ‘Jewish Christian’ Document?” *Bib* 94 (2013): 368-94 at 388; Christopher M. Tuckett, “Q and the ‘Church’: The Role of the Christian Community within Judaism according to Q,” *From the Sayings to the*

Given the specificity of the place names, and the unlikelihood that this text arose as a literary fiction,¹⁰⁶⁴ the number of possibilities for the origin of the logion are limited.¹⁰⁶⁵ It is unlikely that the saying stems from the sphere of the “Q community” or “Q people,” and in response to the rejection of their message. On the one hand, the case for the Galilean provenance of Q and its original recipients rests almost entirely on this logion.¹⁰⁶⁶ That reconstruction may satisfy what seems required by any interpretation of this passage—e.g. that it assumes local knowledge of these areas and reflects an experience of rejection. But why a single saying like this should be taken to represent the provenance of the entire Q document and its hearers, and not

Gospels, 219-31 at 222-23. Contra Edwards, *Theology of Q*, 105; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 114 (“reflect the Gentile mission”). On Q as a product of Gentile Christianity, see Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary*, 164-66.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Contra Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary*, 435-36.

¹⁰⁶⁵ This is not to deny the formal standardization, literary polishing, and other changes that must have accompanied the transition from Aramaic to Greek. Our interest here is not in *ipsissima verba*.

¹⁰⁶⁶ A point admitted by Tuckett, *Q and the History*, 102: “(the evidence) is virtually confined to one unit, the woes in Q 10:13-15. Hence the place names there may indicate that only that individual tradition, rather than [sic] the whole of Q, stems from such a locale.” On Q in the Galilee see Patrick J. Hartin, “The Religious Nature of First-Century Galilee as a Setting for Early Christianity,” *Neot* 27 (1993): 331-50; Leif E. Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts: Jesus’ First Followers According to Q* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994); Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 171-5; 255-61; Jonathan L. Reed, “The Social Map of Q,” in *Conflict and Invention: Literary, Rhetorical and Social Studies on the Sayings Gospel Q* (ed. John Kloppenborg; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995), 17-36; idem, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 182; Milton C. Moreland, “Q and the Economics of Early Roman Galilee,” in Lindemann, *Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus*, 561-75; James M. Robinson, “Judaism, Hellenism, Christianity—Jesus’ followers in Galilee until A.D. 70,” in Heil and Verheyden, *Sayings Gospel Q*, 193-202; Wolfgang Schenk, “Die Verwünschung der Küstenorte Q 10,13-15: Zur Funktion der konkreten Ortsangaben und zur Lokalisierung von Q,” in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (ed. Camille Focant; BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 477-90 (argues Q was written in Tiberias). For criticisms see Nicholas H. Taylor, “Q and Galilee?,” *Neot* 37 (2003): 283-311; Birger A. Pearson, “A Q Community in Galilee?,” *NTS* 50 (2004): 476-89 at 489-93; Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary*, 160-61; John P. Meier, *Law and Love* (vol. 4 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*; New York: Doubleday, 2009), 330 note 138.

just the provenance of one or more of the traditions available to the compiler of Q, is not clear, especially for critics who contend that Q underwent several editorial stages.¹⁰⁶⁷ Q as a whole does not display any conspicuous interest in the Galilee, despite assertions to the contrary.¹⁰⁶⁸ On the other hand, the Galilean woes are often taken by critics to have been inspired by the rejection of the Gospel “by Israel.”¹⁰⁶⁹ Yet this saying is not about “Israel” as a whole, but rather three Galilean cities, two of which we hear little to nothing about in the rest of the Jesus tradition.¹⁰⁷⁰ It may well take on that more expansive meaning in the final form of Q, but it is the larger context of Q, and particularly passages such as Q 7:9 (“not even in Israel have I found such faith”), that would provide that gloss, nothing in the logion itself. The woes retain a scandal of particularity.¹⁰⁷¹ (Two related considerations from the history of interpretation: [1] It is noteworthy that, as far as I can tell, the Galilean woes do not feature prominently in later

¹⁰⁶⁷ In other words, how can Q 10:13-15, which was not even included in Q¹, tell us about the provenance of the whole? To my knowledge, arguments about social continuity throughout the literary stages of Q is more assumed by critics than argued.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Contra Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes*, 159-64. He has three weak arguments. (a) Q has “links” with Matthew and *Gos. Thom.* (and not Luke, who is most faithful to its wording and order?), which are from Syria, so this “might” indicate Galilean provenance. (b) Q mentions Jonah, who was a northern prophet (and Matthew and Luke’s incorporation of this tradition, and perhaps Matthew’s “intensification” of it [since he mentions it 2x], tell us only about the provenance of their *traditions*?). (c) Q’s placement of the healing of the centurion’s boy in Capernaum (7:1) is a “redactional creation.” Arnal fails to note that a variant of this miracle appears also in the Fourth Gospel, where it is also in Capernaum (4:46). So it is certainly not a redactional creation.

¹⁰⁶⁹ So Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, 93; Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 91 (the accusation of guilt implies Israel generally); Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 167; Lüdemann, *Jesus after Two Thousand Years*, 174; Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary*, 165.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Bethsaida: Mark 6:45; 8:22; Luke 9:10; John 1:44; 12:21. Chorazin: nothing.

¹⁰⁷¹ If one were to invent a saying intended to condemn all Israel, why not pick some better cities? Cf. Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 51 (“What a ‘small world’ is visible here!”). See also Rau, “Die Ablehnung Jesu,” 65

Christian anti-Jewish readings of the Gospel.¹⁰⁷² That is, later Christians will use the woes as opportunities to reflect on the question of God's providence and the fate of the unevangelized, but rarely the damnation of "Israel" for rejecting the Gospel.¹⁰⁷³ That is natural, for the text is ill suited to that agenda. [2] One finds in the pre-critical commentary tradition great interest in allegorizing the names of these cities. Of course names in general were commonly regarded repositories of divine secrets, but there is a practical motive here too related to the reader's experience (or lack thereof): who cares about Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin? They must be allegorized to be made relevant.)

There are, as I see it, only three real possibilities for the origin question. One is that the saying emerged shortly after Easter as one or some of Jesus' followers spoke with the authority of the Lord in pronouncing judgment on those who had rejected the preaching of the Gospel and the working of wonders. This would have to be very early if the saying was then transmitted in isolation before being incorporated into Q. A second scenario is that the logion emerged from the circle of Jesus' disciples before Easter as a response to the results of their evangelizing

¹⁰⁷² Though see *Opus Imperfectum* 26; Hilary, *Comm. Matt.* 2.10.

¹⁰⁷³ Cf. e.g. Augustine, *Trac. Jo.* 89, who discusses the text in the context of a larger issue: do people who do not hear the Gospel receive a different judgment than those who hear and reject it? See also Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 2.22-23 (ACCS 1a:227-28) ("The wise reader may inquire and say: 'If Tyre, Sidon and Sodom could repent at the admonishment of our Savior and at his wonderful miracles, they are not to blame because they did not at first believe. But the fault of silence rests in the one who did not want to preach even to those who were likely to repent.' To this charge the response is easy and clear: We do not fathom the decisions of God....Chorazin and Bethsaida were condemned because they did not want to believe in our Lord even when he was with them in person... So do not try to fathom the precise time or place when you may expect the salvation of the believers."); Rupert of Deutz, *De Gloria et Honore Filii Homini super Mattheum* (ed. Hrabanus Haacke; CCCM 29; Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 281-84; Anonym. *Comm. Matt.* (11th century), ad loc. (ed. Bengt Löfstedt; CCCM 159; Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 108. In his own study, Luz, *Matthew*, 2:154, also notes the logion is "scarcely" used as polemic against unbelieving Judaism. "The possibilities of parenetic interpretation are very limited."

mission(s) in the Galilee.¹⁰⁷⁴ To my knowledge this option has not been seriously considered. The woes, then, assume that what Jesus had warned them might occur had occurred: “if any place will not welcome you...leave, (and) shake off the dust of your feet.” By accident or intention the saying was later placed on the lips of Jesus. And the last is that Jesus said something like Q 10:13-15 because he perceived himself rejected in these coastal cities. The inherently retrospective nature of the logion would require that it stems from some later point in the ministry, as it presupposes prior activities.

I am not sure we can distinguish between the merits of these scenarios, or I am at least less confident than others who typically make arguments in only one of two ways: either authentic (from Jesus)¹⁰⁷⁵ or inauthentic (from the post-Easter Church).¹⁰⁷⁶ What the saying seems to require of its speaker could, in theory, fit all three: working knowledge of these

¹⁰⁷⁴ On the importance of the pre-Easter activity of the disciples for the sayings tradition, see Heinz Schürmann, “Die vorösterlichen Anfänge der Logientradition,” in *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus: Beiträge zum Christusverständnis in Forschung und Verkündigung* (eds. Helmut Ristow and Karl Matthiae; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960), 342-70; Samuel Byrskog, “The Transmission of the Jesus Tradition,” in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2:1465-94 at 1476-77.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Cf. Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 76-77; Hoffmann, *Theologie der Logienquelle*, 303 note 53; Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 47-52; Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 224-30; Gnlika, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 194; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 61-62; Riniker, *Gerichtsverkündigung Jesu*, 315-29; Gregg, *Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q*, 123-27; Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet*, 201; Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 243-44.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Cf. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 112; Ernst Käsemann, “The Beginnings of Christian Theology,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W. J. Montague; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 82-107 at 95; Lührmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle*, 64; Schulz, *Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, 362-63; Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 90-93; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 110, 114; Uro, *Sheep among the Wolves*, 185-99 (on a pessimistic, redactional layer to the mission charge); Sato, *Q und Prophetie*, 197-201; Bernd Kollmann, *Jesus und die Christen als Wundertäter: Studien zu Magie, Medizin, und Schamanismus in Antike und Christentum* (FRLANT 170; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 318; Lüdemann, *Jesus after Two Thousand Years*, 174; Boring, *Continuing Voice of Jesus*, 209-10; Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary*, 437.

cities,¹⁰⁷⁷ some kind of itinerancy,¹⁰⁷⁸ a call for repentance, the working of miracles, the requisite authority that rejection could put one in danger of the final judgment. I would be inclined to decide against the anonymous itinerant thesis since we know nothing concrete about the when, where, and how of such preachers, while we do know that Jesus and his disciples ministered in precisely these areas.¹⁰⁷⁹ Since we can only weigh relative probabilities, it is not apparent how one could find the former more probable than the latter. The stress laid on miracles also seems better suited to a situation during the public career of Jesus than after his death,¹⁰⁸⁰ and the same could be said of the authority vested in the utterance.

With that said, I am also not sure that one's decision about the original speaker of this utterance matters as much as critics have thought that it does. The reason is that the saying reflects on a social reality that puts the identity of the speaker in a position of secondary importance.¹⁰⁸¹ It should be obvious that distinguishing between Jesus and his disciples during

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cf. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen*, 211 ("eine persönliche Bekanntschaft mit Chorazin und Bethsaida ist unerlässlich").

¹⁰⁷⁸ Cf. Gerd Theissen, *Das Neue Testament* (Munich: Beck, 2002), 25-29.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Cf. Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 64; Jens Schröter, "Jesus of Galilee: The Role of Location in Understanding Jesus," in Charlesworth and Pokorný, *Jesus Research*, 36-55. Relevant here is Bultmann's comment, cited in Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 82 note 46: "we have...no real parallel for Jewish or Gentile Christian missionaries cursing entire cities when their message was rejected." Dunn has offered some perceptive criticisms of the notion that early Christians prophets frequently spoke in the name of the risen Christ, see "Prophetic I-Sayings and the Jesus Tradition," *Oral Gospel Tradition*, 13-40.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Contra Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 91-92 (he thinks the reference to miracles the most serious objection to their historicity). What of Q 7:22-23; 11:20? I also cannot second his "impression" that the woes reflect on the "*ferneren Vergangenheit*" (90, italics mine).

¹⁰⁸¹ There is something right about the logic of Gerd Theissen's *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), in that he does not distinguish sharply between Jesus and later itinerants. He uses "the Jesus movement" inclusively, such that textual material dealing with rejection informs us both about Jesus and his earliest followers. Recently Crossley, *Chaos of History*, has taken a similar approach for what he

his ministry is of no significance whatsoever. Jesus and his followers constituted a movement, such that responding to the disciples was the same as responding to Jesus himself.¹⁰⁸² We know this from some of the controversy stories (cf. Mark 2:18, 24) and other sayings (e.g. Q 10:16; John 13:20).¹⁰⁸³ Moreover, it is likely that Jesus gave his followers “authority” to speak and act in his stead (Mark 6:7 and par.; Matt 18:18; John 13:20).¹⁰⁸⁴ To conclude that Q 10:13-15 originates from the missionary experience of the disciples, then, would tell us almost as much as if Jesus himself were the speaker. Here the categories of “authentic” and “inauthentic” are of little help.¹⁰⁸⁵ There is more room for discontinuity between the original Jesus movement and later itinerants in the Galilee. But if indeed the saying has a post-Easter genesis, it does not follow, simply as a matter of argument, that reception of the original Jesus movement in these same areas was notably different. Critics who would posit some stark distinction here would not do so on the basis of our great knowledge of Galilean Christianity in this period.¹⁰⁸⁶ The

calls the “earliest Palestinian tradition,” though his interest is not in our question. See also the helpful study by Tom Holmén, “Knowing about Q and Knowing about Jesus: Mutually Exclusive Undertakings?,” in Lindemann, *Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus*, 497-514 (to which he answers “no,” e.g.: “it is possible to know about Q while at the same time knowing about Jesus” [513]).

¹⁰⁸² On Jesus’ disciples using Jesus’ material in their teaching, see Polag, *Christologie der Logienquelle*, 121; E. Earl Ellis, *Christ and the Future in New Testament History* (NovTSup 97; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 3-19; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 285; Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 25-26; Tobias Hägerland, “The Role of the Disciples in the Prophetic Mission of Jesus,” in Byrskog and Hägerland, *Mission of Jesus*, 177-202 esp. at 190, 194-97.

¹⁰⁸³ Cf. Matt 10:25: “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!” Luke 10:16: “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

¹⁰⁸⁴ Paul seems to assume this: 1 Cor 9:1-14; 2 Cor 2:10; Gal 2:7.

¹⁰⁸⁵ On this binary, see Le Donne, *Historiographical Jesus*, 5, 65-92.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Indeed, we know very little about it. Cf. Jürgen Zangenberg, “From the Galilean Jesus to the Galilean Silence: Earliest Christianity in the Galilee until the Fourth Century CE,” in *The Rise and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries of the Common Era* (eds.

conclusion would rather stem from assumptions about a dramatic situational change caused by the Easter event, which does not appear justified.

I would contend, then, that regardless of the speaker, the Galilean woes attest to a situation of importance for the ministry of the historical Jesus: there were familiar audiences that remained unresponsive to the call for repentance and intractable in the face of “deeds of power.” We could also say that even should the wording of woes not go back to the original Jesus movement, there is reason to think that Jesus’ response to such rejection would be much the same.¹⁰⁸⁷ It is notable that the call for repentance (which the woes presuppose has already been

Clare K. Rothschild and Jens Schröter; WUNT 301; Tübingen: Mohr, 2013), 75-108. Moreover, a contrary narrative may emerge, if Capernaum eventually became something of a hub for Christianity in the Galilee. Cf. *Ecccl. Rab.* 1.8 (on a Jewish-Christian community there, perhaps early 2nd century); 7.26 (on Christian heresy in Capernaum). The argument could only hinge on the assumption that certain changes to the Gospel message due to the Easter event and its aftermath precipitated a drastic change in the movement’s reception in the Galilee. But that typical Bultmannian line of argument only turns Easter into a magic wand that “being waved, somehow explains things” (so Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 244; cf. Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 177 [“magic top hat”]). It is also a somewhat ironic contention, given scholarship on Q and Galilean Christianity that has sometimes argued, though not persuasively, that Galilean followers of Jesus had little interest in cross and resurrection and simply continued to take up his teachings about the kingdom. For more on Christianity in the Galilee, see Howard Clark Kee, “Early Christianity in the Galilee: Reassessing the Evidence from the Gospels,” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. Lee I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 3-22; Seán Freyne, “Christianity in Sepphoris and in Galilee,” in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays* (WUNT 125; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000), 299-307; idem, *The Jesus Movement and Its Expansion: Meaning and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 244-72; Eve-Marie Becker, “Jesus and Capernaum in the Apostolic Age: Balancing Sources and Their Evidence,” in Byrskog and Hägerland, *Mission of Jesus*, 113-40.

¹⁰⁸⁷ See Polag, *Christologie der Logienquelle*, 122. Jacobson, “Literary Unity of Q,” 106, wrote that Q and Mark share a tradition about “sending of messengers to call Israel to repentance and, should that fail, to announce judgment upon Israel.” That is exactly right. The upshot is that the Galilean woes in Q, while perhaps “at home” in Q’s distinct theological profile of judgment, are also quite “at home” in that tradition Mark holds in common with Q. It should also be noted that many Q scholars have thought Q 10:13-15, even if redactional in context, has that same message of judgment intimated in the mission charge itself; see e.g. Hoffmann, *Theologie der Logienquelle*, 63, 289; Polag, *Christologie der Logienquelle*, 70; Uro, *Sheep among the Wolves*, 157-58.

issued), and the warning of coming judgment, are not matters of interest only for later Christians—they are rather topics that, like restoration eschatology in general, bind Jesus together with his forerunner and the movement that emerged after his death. Bracketing Jesus are John the Baptist's demand to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" because "the axe is already at the foot of the trees" (Matt 3:8, 10), and Paul's message to "turn to God from idols" and trust in Jesus to be saved "from the coming wrath" (1 Thess 1:9, 10).¹⁰⁸⁸ The Galilean woes capture the scope and urgency of the message of one who claimed that response to him in the present decided one's fate on the last day.¹⁰⁸⁹

At this point we can draw two conclusions that bear marked resemblance to the crisis theory. First, there must be some development here in terms of Jesus' reception on the northern shore of the Sea.¹⁰⁹⁰ The woe over Capernaum is particularly striking considering the positive traditions about Capernaum for Jesus' early ministry as discussed above, since it is clear that the

¹⁰⁸⁸ On Jesus and the preaching of repentance, cf. Riches, *Transformation of Judaism*, 87; Martin Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* (trans. James Greig; New York: Crossroad, 1981), 59-62; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 498-500; James Crossley, "The Semitic Background to Repentance in the Teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus," *JSHJ* 2 (2004): 138-57; idem, *Chaos of History*, 108-09.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 158: "the final decision will turn on himself." See also John Downing, "Jesus and Martyrdom," *JTS* 14 (1963): 279-93 at 286-87; Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*, 229; Gnllka, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 149, 158; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 58-59; Jens Schröter, "Zeichenhandlung angesichts des Reiches Gottes in der ältesten Jesusüberlieferung," *BTZ* 20 (2003): 157-78; Stettler, *Das letzte Gericht*, 206-19.

¹⁰⁹⁰ As recognized already by Otfried of Weissenberg, *Ex. Matt. ad loc.* (9th century) (ed. B. Löfstedt), 162 (my translation): "the Lord laments those cities which once had the mystery of God (que quondam mysterium Dei tenuerunt) and were hesitant to generate the fruit of virtue, in whom also spiritual messengers had been sent..." Note also that, in the mid-17th century, John Trapp, *Matthew to Revelation* (vol. 5 of *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; repr. Eureka: Tanski, 1997 [orig. 1662]), 163, had explained that the rejection of Jesus implied in the Galilean woes was due to the work of the Pharisees, who "made less account of our Saviour's doctrine or miracles." See also Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:334; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 351.

fishing village functioned for some time as his home base. We have some change in situation, even though we cannot know when the woes were delivered, or precisely why. It is tempting to turn to the sixth Chapter of John for illumination, which is a move that many crisis theorists also made, though on different grounds.¹⁰⁹¹ John 6 evidences several points of contact with traditions that were also available to Mark, and even in the same sequence: feeding the multitude, the walking on the water, the demand for a sign, Peter's confession (cf. Mark 6:33-46; 6:47-52; 8:11-13; 8:27-30).¹⁰⁹² It is in this context that John witnesses to a conflict between Jesus and the

¹⁰⁹¹ Especially attractive to many crisis theorists, as we have seen, was the tradition of the attempt to make Jesus king after the feeding story, which caused Jesus to run away (John 6:15). It is difficult to know what to do with this tradition historically. While Mark does not mention it, he may betray that there was something like it in his tradition he shares with John for the feeding and walking on the water sequence, since Jesus oddly, and rather inexplicably in Mark's narrative, "compels" (ἡνάγκασεν, Mark 6:45) his disciples into the boat after the feeding. Does this presuppose the scenario that John mentions? Moreover, given Mark's attempt to distance Jesus from violent messianism, it would not be surprising if he did in fact leave out traditions that complicated that portrait. See discussion in Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:363-69; Hugh Montefiore, "Revolt in the Desert? (Mark vi. 30ff)," *NTS* 8 (1961): 135-41; Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 213-22; Ernst Bammel, "The Feeding of the Multitude," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (eds. Ernst Bammel and C. F. D. Moule; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 211-40; Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 138-40; Michael J. Wilkins, "Peter's Declaration concerning Jesus' Identity in Caesarea Philippi," in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (eds. Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb; WUNT 247; Tübingen: Mohr, 2009), 293-382 at 327-29; D. Moody Smith, "Jesus Tradition in the Gospel of John," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 3:1997-2040 at 2005-06. I think Dodd is right, in general, that it is more likely to find "the toning down of apparently political features if the tradition originally contained such features, than to find reasons why they should be given enhanced importance in the development of a tradition originally innocent of them" (215). Nevertheless, given John's motif of misunderstanding Jesus on a physical or earthly plane (e.g. 2:19-21; 3:4; 4:14; 7:35; etc.), and of Jesus' kingdom being "not of his world" (18:36), Dodd overstates matters when he says he knows of "no plausible theological motive for such an addition" (215). For doubts about historicity, see Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium* (4 vols.; HThKNT 4; Freiburg: Herder, 1965-84), 2:23-27. There is no substantive engagement with this tradition in the 2009 *Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*.

¹⁰⁹² On these comparisons see Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 196; François Vouga, "Le quatrième évangile comme interprète de la tradition synoptique: Jean 6," in *John and the Synoptics* (ed. Adelbert Denaux; BETL 101; Leuven: Leuven University Press,

locals in the Capernaum synagogue, after which “many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him” (John 6:66). The setting in Capernaum is odd because John otherwise makes little of Jesus’ presence of Capernaum, and when he does, he is likely in touch with earlier tradition (cf. John 2:12 and Mark 3:21). Of course the immediate cause of the offense in v. 66 is John’s bread of life discourse, which cannot be traced to the historical Jesus. But as is often the case with John, there are likely bits of preexisting material here that the Evangelist has used in crafting this discourse.¹⁰⁹³ We know, at the very least, that a “bread” motif binds together the middle chapters of Mark that contain these parallels with John 6.¹⁰⁹⁴ It is plausible, then, that John’s tradition memorialized in some way Jesus’ rejection in Capernaum at a later point in his ministry (e.g. after or around the time of the feeding of the five thousand), and John has made of that what he could. This argument would find support in the editorial comment that the Evangelist provides to explain the rejection: “For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him” (6:64). This comment, like others in the Gospel, corrects possible misinterpretations of what is going on (e.g. 4:2 [“it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized”]). The Evangelist says, to paraphrase: “do

1992), 261-79; Roger David Aus, *Feeding the Five Thousand: Studies in the Judaic Background of Mark 6:30-44 par. and John 6:1-15* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 169-76.

¹⁰⁹³ See Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:275: “the skeleton of the discourse...may well have been supplied by the tradition” (see also 263). In Brown’s later work, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 73-74, he seems to be less confident than in his commentary (cf. pp. 1:300-01) that John 6:66 reflects some historical event in the ministry of Jesus. See also J. Painter, “Tradition and Interpretation in John 6,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 421-50.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Also note this: we know that John here intertwines elements of the rejection story at Nazareth with the Capernaum synagogue speech. Cf. Mark 6:3 with John 6:42: “And they were saying, ‘Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How now does he say that he has come down from heaven?’” John is aware of the rejected prophet logion associated with Nazareth in 4:44 (cf. Mark 6:4).

not think that this rejection took Jesus by surprise; he rather knew it from the first.”¹⁰⁹⁵ Are we to suppose that John invented the rejection, only then to explain it away immediately with this editorial comment? That strains credulity. If this line of argument is at all on target, then the Galilean woes, preserved only in Q, may indeed reflect on some painful experience of rejection that was also memorialized in another Gospel tradition, albeit in muted form.¹⁰⁹⁶

The crisis theory has also been attractive in its recognition that the Galilean woes give voice to disappointment about rejection. As Chapter 6.3 argued, proposals about a Galilean crisis may have too often forgotten that Jesus got his start under John the Baptist who had opponents of his own, was “rejected” by certain hearers, and was eventually arrested and executed. Jesus surely did not embark on his ministry with a naïve optimism about winning all Israel to his cause.¹⁰⁹⁷ But Jesus also believed in God and probably saw himself as a key player in the end-time drama. Just as well, then, he must have conducted his ministry, and sent out his disciples, with the prayerful hope that his proclamation of the kingdom would be met with repentance, and that the people would respond positively to his message.¹⁰⁹⁸ As Cadoux rightly remarked, anything else would be oddly fatalistic.¹⁰⁹⁹ Rejection would not require Jesus to change his

¹⁰⁹⁵ And has been read thus. Cf. e.g. Hilary, *Trin.* 9.59: “Jesus Christ knows the thoughts of the mind...by its virtue his nature could perceive the unborn future and foresee the awaking of passions yet dormant in the mind.” See also Augustine, *Tract. Jo.* 27.8.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 221, offered this cogent observation: that we have sayings in the Gospels like Luke 22:28 (which speak of the disciples “remaining with Jesus in his struggles”), warnings about being “scandalized,” or “ashamed” of him before people, or the danger of backsliding, make sense “if there had been numerous actual instances of such conduct—and critics would not have to assume that such sayings are invariably a reading back of the experience of the early Church.”

¹⁰⁹⁷ As discussed above, pp. 293-94. Cf. Salvatorelli, “From Locke to Reitzenstein,” 303.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, 302 note 2: Jesus “complains that he has labored in vain” and “we must ascribe to him those emotions without which a human heart cannot live on earth.”

¹⁰⁹⁹ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 187.

theological program, but it must have been disappointing all the same. The call for repentance, in general, demands a rather paradoxical joining of both pessimism and hope: pessimism that things are bad enough the call is needed, hope that change for the better is possible. There is a necessary open-endedness.

There is another side to Jesus' call for repentance that would no doubt add to the disappointment, and that is its eschatological background.¹¹⁰⁰ Almost as common as the expectation for the ingathering of the lost tribes is the expectation that the end (and, for many writers, the ingathering itself) would be preceded if not occasioned by¹¹⁰¹ mass repentance.¹¹⁰² I have discussed the idea elsewhere in the context of understanding John's baptism "of repentance," which I contend was inspired by this hope.¹¹⁰³ It probably also motivated Paul's work to effect the "turning" of the Gentiles to God in the last hour, as the Scriptures foretold.¹¹⁰⁴

¹¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hiers, *Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 52-53; Dale C. Allison Jr., "Romans 11:11-15: A Suggestion," *PRSt* 12 (1985): 23-30 at 24-26.

¹¹⁰¹ E. C. Dewick, *Primitive Christian Eschatology: the Hulsean Prize Essay for 1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), contended that Jesus' call for repentance was intended to meet the conditions necessary for the kingdom to come. On the conditionality of the end, see Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History*, 70; Allison, *Jesus Tradition in Q*, 192-204.

¹¹⁰² This view appears presupposed by Acts 3:19-21 (μετανοήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὅπως ἂν ἔλθωσιν καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀποστείλῃ τὸν προκεχειρισμένον ὑμῖν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν). Cf. Zech 12:10-13:2; Bar 2:30-34; Tob 13:5; Jub 1:13, 15 (cf. 1:22-25); 23:26-30; Pss. Sol. 18:4-7; T. Dan. 6:4; T. Sim. 6:2-7; T. Zeb. 9:7-9; T. Jud. 23.5; T. Iss. 6:3-4; T. Benj. 10:7, 11; T. Mos. 3:4-6; 2 Bar. 78:6-7; 84:2; 4 Ezra 13:9-13; Apoc. Ab. 29; Sib. Or. 4:152-70; Philo, *Praem.* 162-65; CD 4:2, 6:4, 8:16, 15:7-17, 20:17; 1QS 3.2-12, 10.20; 1QH 2.9; 14:24; b. Sanh. 97b-98a ("If Israel were to repent, they would straightaway be redeemed" [as one of several views on the question]); b. Yoma 86b ("Great is repentance which hastens the redemption").

¹¹⁰³ Ferda, "John the Baptist, Isaiah 40, and the Ingathering of the Exiles," 159-63, 167-74.

¹¹⁰⁴ Cf. Paula Fredriksen, "Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apocalyptic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2," *JTS* 42 (1991): 532-64; Jürgen Becker, "Endzeitliche Volkermission und antiochenische Christologie," in *Eschatologie und Schöpfung: Festschrift für*

Since Jesus most likely shared this view as part and parcel of his larger program of eschatological restoration,¹¹⁰⁵ how could it not have intensified his expectation and hope that people would heed his call to “repent and believe in the Gospel?” When it turned out that people did not advance his cause as that eschatological vision might have lead one to believe—particularly in cities where he devoted considerable time and effort—would not disappointment follow?¹¹⁰⁶ We should note that this contention turns Schweitzer’s ideas about “eschatological dogma” on its head. It could in fact have been Jesus’ expectation to find repentance in the final

Erich Grässer zum siebzigsten Geburtstag (eds. Martin Evang, Helmut Merklein, and Michael Wolter; BZNW 89; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 1-22; J. C. Miller, “The Jewish Context of Paul’s Gentile Mission,” *TynBul* 58 (2007): 101-15.

¹¹⁰⁵ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, is inconsistent when he claims “there is very little evidence which connects Jesus directly with the motif of collective, national repentance in view of the eschaton” (108), yet says confidently that John the Baptist had “a message with one basic thrust”: “to repent in view of the coming judgment” (239, see also 109, 112-15, 206). He doubts the connection with Jesus only because of what he calls a “relative lack of material” on the question (113). That judgment is up for debate; see Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 172-73; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 282-84. But a more important point: do we really have more material on John the Baptist that would inspire his confidence? It is only because so little of John’s message has been preserved by the evangelists that their few mentions of “repentance” stand out proportionally. A quantitative approach to this question is not a fruitful way to proceed.

¹¹⁰⁶ To say this is not to imply that Jesus had a “realistic” strategy to attain his goals. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 226, rightly doubts the “effectiveness of Jesus’ tactics if he intended to be widely accepted.” See also here Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 402; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 516. In any case, Jesus did call disciples with the intent of sending them out on mission, which shows some calculation. See Bousset, *Jesus*, 60-61. His choice to root in Capernaum may also have been strategic. On this see Bruce J. Malina, *Windows on the World of Jesus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 91. Moreover, there were most likely live hopes that the ingathering of the tribes would begin in the Galilee: e.g. precisely the home of the “lost” tribes of Israel. Cf. Lev. Rab. 9. Also interesting here is a Jewish-Christian interpretation of Isa 8-9 known to Jerome (*Comm. Is.* 130 [on 9:1] [PL 24:128]) that expected the work of salvation to begin in the north where the exile first began. See here A. F. J. Klijn, “Jerome’s quotations from a Nazorean interpretation of Isaiah,” *RSR* 60 (1972): 241-55 at 251-52. If true, this tradition would offer a good albeit circumstantial explanation for why Jesus moved to the Galilee after leaving John, since the Baptizer’s location by the Jordan in the wilderness was also theologically evocative. Jesus had positioned himself.

hour that opened him to a more bitter experience of disappointment, rather than shielded him from it. Schweitzer, we recall, used the notion of “eschatological dogma” to criticize the 19th-century Lives that had Jesus develop and change his perspective on the basis of his experiences.

Far too many critics have been unable to resist the temptation to say more, but anything beyond this point is either exaggeration or speculation. There is no reason to infer from the Galilean woes that Jesus was rejected “by Israel,” nor that his work in the wider Galilee is “completed,”¹¹⁰⁷ and far less that this constituted a definitive rejection-event that prompted him to leave Galilee and travel to Jerusalem for the last time.¹¹⁰⁸ We can affirm that the Galilean woes are a response of the Jesus movement to new developments, and disappointing developments at that, without taking the woes as evidence of a crisis in the ministry or some change of mind on Jesus’ part. It is precisely here, after all, that Jesus sounds like John the Baptist.¹¹⁰⁹ The woes attest not to a “situation of rejection,” but rather occasions of rejection, albeit particularly striking and significant ones.

¹¹⁰⁷ Contra Bacon, *Story of Jesus*, 102 (“his ministry of mighty works among them is over”); Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 398 (“This utterance belongs to some particular occasion, and it looks back on a period of unfruitful work in Galilee which is now regarded as closed”); Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 476; Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 229; Riniker, *Gerichtsverkündigung Jesu*, 458. The same criticism would apply for those reconstructing the attitude of the Q people to their contemporaries, so Schulz, *Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, 365 (impenitence “bedingt den definitive Ausschluß aus der Basileia”).

¹¹⁰⁸ Contra Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 240. I concur with Oberlinner, *Todeserwartung und Todesgewißheit Jesu*, 103, that it is dubious to suppose a “period of rejection” (Ablehnung) replaced a “period of offer” (Angebot), such that Jesus ceased the offer: “Kann und muß man sicherlich Erfahrungen Jesu annehmen, daß seine Botschaft neben Zustimmung auch Ablehnung gefunden hat, diese Erfahrung sich vielleicht im Lauf seines öffentlichen Wirkens verstärkt zeigte und damit auch das Bewußtsein und die Erwartungen Jesu bestimmte, so kann man doch wohl in keener einzigen Situation vom einem ‘Ende der Angebotszeit’ sprechen.” For this criticism see already Rudolf Bultmann’s essay, “Die Frage nach der Echtheit von Mt 16, 17-19,” *TBl* 20 (1941): 265-79. See also Meyer, *Christus Faber*, 83 (“Jesus never gave up on his mission to all Israel”).

¹¹⁰⁹ So Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 439.

In confirmation of this final point it should be recognized that the woes are not without parallel in the Gospels. The best analogy to the Q saying is the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth, which was also a significant and painful memory that has been softened in its reception by the Evangelists. Rejection in Nazareth was not cause for a change of mind, a new period of the ministry, or reason for him to leave the Galilee. As far as we can tell, he simply did not go back there, which tends to agree with Jesus' practice elsewhere as the Gospels attest in both narrative and sayings material (Mark 6:10-11; Q 10:10-12; Luke 9:52-56).¹¹¹⁰ We should probably infer no more from the Galilean woes.¹¹¹¹ For some reason the rejection at Nazareth was not considered a significant enough moment in the ministry for 19th- and 20th-century critics to periodize their Lives of Jesus around it, and that was probably wise.

7.4. THEOLOGIZING REJECTION

One particularly interesting feature of the rejection at Nazareth episode is the multiply attested saying that reads, according to Mark, “a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his own kin, and in his house” (6:4).¹¹¹² Rejection at Nazareth, we should presume, did not cause Jesus to think of himself as a prophet for the first time. Nor did it prompt a sudden interest in the Scriptures of Israel and the relevance of its heroes for his own career. But we

¹¹¹⁰ On the sayings see Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 2:329: “we cannot imagine that the activity of Jesus would differ greatly from the method which he told his disciples to use on their missionary tours.”

¹¹¹¹ Though it should be noted that, while the Synoptics do not record Jesus entering Nazareth after his rejection there (probably because he did not), Matthew records Jesus there again later in his Gospel (17:24-27). It is not apparent, however, that Matthew was interested or concerned with such narrative matters. In Luke Jesus does not again enter Capernaum, as he is by this time on his way to Jerusalem (9:51).

¹¹¹² The wording differs according to each Gospel, but it is not of much consequence. Matt 13:57 omits Mark's ἐν τοῖς συγγενεῦσιν αὐτοῦ, Luke 4:24 reads that no prophet is δεκτός in his hometown, and John 4:44 reads that a prophet does not have τιμὴν in his hometown.

would not have the prophet saying had Jesus not in fact been rejected there. The saying is a rationalization of an unfortunate event. To one's surprise in hearing that Jesus was rejected among people who knew him well, it responds, "Well, that is how it is with prophets. It should be expected."

The history of Christian theology is filled with attempts to make theological sense of the rejection of the Gospel. The New Testament itself was of crucial influence here. Paul wrote that non-Christian Jews do not understand the true import of the Scriptures because "a veil" lies over their minds (2 Cor 3:14). Acts has the stoners of Stephen, in a highly symbolic gesture, "cover their ears" at his claims to see Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:57). The "scoffers" in 2 Peter "willfully ignore" the nature of God's created order (2 Pet 3:5). More starkly defined boundary lines between "Jews" and "Christians" in later centuries accentuated such perspectives.

- Justin Martyr: "you are a people hard of heart, and without understanding, and blind, and lame, and sons in whom there is no faith."¹¹¹³
- Tertullian: "That they should not believe the first coming—but they would have believed had they understood, and would have attained salvation had they believed—that was the result of their sins."¹¹¹⁴
- Athanasius: opponents of Jesus "when convicted by the Truth, and unable to confront it, used evasions."¹¹¹⁵
- Cyprian: God had foretold that the Messiah would come, but he was rejected on account of "their blindness of wisdom and intelligence."¹¹¹⁶
- Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus was rejected at Nazareth because their "violence was irrational and their envy untamed."¹¹¹⁷

¹¹¹³ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 27.4 (trans. A. Lukyn Williams; London: SPCK, 1930), 54-55.

¹¹¹⁴ Tertullian, *Apol.* 20.14 (ANF 10:64).

¹¹¹⁵ Athanasius, *Decr.* 1.1 (NPNF² 4:150).

¹¹¹⁶ Cyprian, *[Idol.]* 6.12 (ANF 5:468).

¹¹¹⁷ Cyril of Alexandria, *Hom. Luc.* 12 (ACCS 3:82).

- Cornelius Lapide: Concerning Luke 2:33 (rising and falling of many in Israel), “God did this *directly* with the intention of drawing all the Israelites to the faith of Christ, that He might so bring them into His church and save them; but He *foresaw* that a great part of them would, by reason of their wickedness, speak against Christ when He came, and would strike against Him as on a stone of offence, and that so they would be broken, and fall into ruin both temporal and eternal. Yet He would not change His resolve of sending Christ, but would permit this rebellion and speaking against Him on the part of the Jews in order that it might be the occasion for S. Paul and the Apostles to transfer the preaching of the Gospel from them who resisted it to the Gentiles.”¹¹¹⁸

There are generally two different strategies adopted in these selections: the failure is due to some moral deficiency on the part of the detractors, or the failure is actually part of God’s mysterious divine plan.¹¹¹⁹ All are inherently retrospective. They look back to explain why a seemingly unfortunate event was actually not unexpected.

Critics have been less eager to say that the historical Jesus advanced similar rationalizing strategies.¹¹²⁰ That is somewhat justifiable given the Gospels expend a good deal of effort to theologize the scandal of the cross—the pinnacle moment of the “rejection of Jesus” from the view of the post-Easter Church.¹¹²¹ That perspective was not possible during the life of Jesus.

¹¹¹⁸ Lapide, *Great Commentary*, 3:117 (italics orig.).

¹¹¹⁹ For a detailed study of Alfonso de Espina, see S. J. McMichael, “Did Isaiah Foretell Jewish Blindness and Suffering for not Accepting Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah? A Medieval Perspective,” *BBR* 26 (1996): 144-51. Such strategies are not unique to the Christian movement, of course. Cf. Cf. Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 155: at Qumran “concepts such as dualism, individual predestination and self-segregation strengthened the identity and unity of the group, provided a way of explaining the suffering of the chosen and the opposition of outsiders, and targeted the adversaries as the devil’s party.”

¹¹²⁰ Unless I have missed something, I do not recall a single instance in Bultmann’s *History of the Synoptic Tradition* where he claims some rationalization of rejection stems from the historical Jesus. For him it is a signature of the early Church.

¹¹²¹ As the speeches in Acts show: when there is talk about Jesus being “rejected,” his death is in mind. See 2:23; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:27. On these speeches see Robert C. Tannehill,

Moreover, it is true that a number of sayings seem to assume the rejection of the mission of later communities of believers rather than Jesus' own. These are particularly frequent in the Gospel of John: people reject Jesus because they "love darkness rather than light" (3:19; cf. 7:7; 8:43; 12:43), do not know the Father (5:37-38; 8:19), do not believe the Scriptures (5:46-47), and were actually never chosen by God in the first place (6:65, 70; 10:14, 26; 17:6).¹¹²²

Nevertheless, something is wrong when critics can take sayings about "this generation" or statements about "blindness" to function differently depending on nothing more than the subject doing the talking. For the form critics or others interested in the life of the early Church, these sayings are almost always thought to reflect on some disappointing set of circumstances. They are taken as a kind of reactionary, contextual theology. For the critics who think these traditions stem from Jesus, however, they are often taken (or assumed) to be stable features of his kingdom message. For Jesus they are anticipatory and forward looking; for the Church reactionary and backward looking.

I think it highly unlikely in principle that the Jesus tradition has been overlain here with a later theological construct. I wish to suggest that what we find in the Gospels, the New Testament, and later Christian theology at large is a continuation and intensification of something begun by Jesus himself as he wrestled with the significance of opposition to his

"The Functions of Peter's Mission Speeches in the Narrative of Acts," *NTS* 37 (1991): 400-14. See also Sib. Or. 8.269-335; Apol. Arist. (Syriac) 2.

¹¹²² John 6:64: "'But among you are some who do not believe,' for Jesus knew from the first who were the ones who did not believe him, and who was the one that would betray him." Gregory the Great once claimed that Jesus sent the disciples to Israel first so that, when they refused to be heeded, they could call the Gentiles (*Hom. ev.* 4.1).

cause.¹¹²³ This contention is not new, obviously, but rather reframes that which is old. Sayings that have surfaced numerous times in this study as purported evidence for a Galilean crisis or otherwise unknown crises in the life of post-Easter churches (esp. the Q people) are the primary evidence here. My hope is to show that there is more material relevant to this topic than recent critics have assumed.

To contextualize the argument, it should be noted at the outset that a number of Jesus' teachings are easily taken as responses to questions or criticisms about his activities, whether actual or expected.¹¹²⁴ The Parable of the Sower has often been taken this way by interpreters.¹¹²⁵

¹¹²³ So Rau "Q-Forschung und Jesusforschung," 401, is probably right that Jesus' own experience of rejection, and the memory of that, provided the focus for Q on this matter. See also Tuckett, "Q and the Historical Jesus," 470-71 (on the polemic of Q² and the Jesus of history).

¹¹²⁴ See here Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 88-89; Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 84-86; Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching*, 153-55 ("gospel traditions which point to Jesus' rejection by sections of the society in which he was active; these traditions also draw attention, indirectly, to the unpropitious outward circumstances of the ministry of Jesus. There is a striking contrast between the claims of Jesus and the response they drew"); William Farmer, "Reflections upon 'the Historical Perimeters for Understanding the Aims of Jesus,'" in Chilson and Evans, *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, 59-82 at 69-80; Tàrrrech, *Jesus: An Uncommon Journey*, 225-27; Michael Wolter, "Jesus as a Teller of Parables: On Jesus' Self-Interpretation in His Parables," in Charlesworth and Pokorný, *Jesus Research*, 123-39.

¹¹²⁵ Cf. e.g. Adolf Jülicher, *Auslegung der Gleichnisreden der drei ersten Evangelien* (vol. 2 of *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*; 2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1910 [orig. 1888-89]), 537 ("waren es auch eigene Erfahrungen Jesu, die er da rechtfertigte"); Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 181 ("He is in effect thinking aloud about the fortunes of His work in Galilee, with its mixture of failure and success"); Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 151 (responding to "apparently ineffectual preaching...bitter hostility...increasing desertions"); Nils A. Dahl, "The Parables of Growth," *ST* 5 (1951): 132-65 at 154 ("his work might seem to be a mis-achievement, having no, or no enduring results"); Hans Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu als Metaphern* (3rd ed.; FRLANT 120; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1984 [orig. 1978]), 110 (the parable refers to the "Geschick" of Jesus' proclamation); Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, 361-62; Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet*, 202 ("the implication of many of his parables is that the reason the Kingdom has such a small and inauspicious beginning is that most of his proclamation is falling on deaf ears"); Hoppe "How did Jesus Understand His Death?," 158-63.

For these traditions we may not need to posit a backstory of rejection per se, but we nevertheless see, again, the dynamic nature of Jesus' teaching.

| implied question/criticism: | response: |
|--|---|
| <i>"the 'kingdom' doesn't look as impressive as your teachings imply, Jesus"</i> | <p>(a) the kingdom is like a mustard seed: it is small and inconspicuous now, but it will soon grow (cf. Mark 4:30-32 and par.).</p> <p>(b) the kingdom is like leaven, it will soon spread throughout the whole dough (Q 13:20-21).</p> |
| <i>"why do you associate with those who have separated themselves from Israel's covenant?"</i> | <p>(a) it is the sick who need a doctor, not those who are well (Mark 2:17 and par.).</p> <p>(b) it is the character of God to seek the single lost sheep apart from the ninety nine others (Q 15:4), or to rejoice over a lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).</p> <p>(c) God welcomes the repentant sinner like a father would welcome his prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).</p> |
| <i>"why do you not root out the sinners and unrighteous persons among your following?"</i> | <p>(a) the final judgment will sort out the weeds from the good crop (Matt 13:24-30)</p> <p>(b) the final judgment will sort out the good fish from the bad (Matt 13:47-50).</p> |

Figure 4. Teaching and Response

There is no reason to think that the questions *created* the theology of the responses, and it is not the objective here to offer a reductionist account of the origins of Jesus' teaching. I do not want to be misunderstood. The point is this: even if Jesus is simply clarifying what he thought about the kingdom, such statements seem to assume questions about his activity as their *Sitz im Leben*. Sometimes the contexts of these passages in the Gospels are helpful for recovering that implied

question (cf. e.g. Mark 2:16-17), while in other cases the tradition has decontextualized and made static what was originally reactionary.

There must be a number of other things in the Gospels that are responsive like this. The itinerant nature of Jesus' ministry makes his teachings, like the Epistles of Paul, occasional. That is, Jesus taught particular audiences in particular settings for particular purposes. As such, we may expect that there are a number of things in the Gospels that are only there because some situation in the ministry of Jesus required it, just as we have Paul's thoughts on resurrection in 1 Cor 15 only because of confusion in Corinth on the matter. The Galilean woes were delivered, we may presume, not because they constituted some essential and repeatable feature of Jesus' kingdom message, but because a very contingent series of events summoned them forth.¹¹²⁶

I am intrigued here by the crisis theory because of the contention that a number of Jesus' teachings about the judgment and other matters were occasional in this manner. There would be no foolproof way to determine this, of course. It would have to be, like all interpretation,

¹¹²⁶ When critics discuss the use of the teachings of Jesus in the pre-Easter period, what is typically of interest is the probability that Jesus and his disciples re-used teachings on different occasions. See already Augustine, *Cons.* 2.30.77. This need not be as extreme as the view of Riesenfeld and Gerhardsson that Jesus had his disciples "memorize" his teachings. See Harald Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition: Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (trans. Eric J. Sharpe; Lund: Gleerup, 1961). See instead e.g. Ernest Findlay Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 24; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 359-61 (on "Lehrsummarien"); Robert W. Funk, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 2 ("followers of Jesus no doubt began to repeat his witticisms and parables during his lifetime. They soon began to recount stories about him"); Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 170-71; Jacobus Liebenberg, *The Language of the Kingdom and Jesus* (BZNW 102; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), e.g. 350-414 (on different "performances" of the parable of the sower); Gerd Theissen, "Jesus as an Itinerant Teacher: Reflections on Social History from Jesus' Roles," in Charlesworth and Pokorný, *Jesus Research*, 98-122 (Jesus' disciples would have unintentionally committed to memory the "gist" of his teachings by hearing them repeated on itinerant missions); Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 305-86 (on something of a "stock sermon" that interacts with Lev 19). All of that can be affirmed, but our focus here is a different issue.

inferential, and the results probabilistic. Yet given the situational nature of Jesus' ministry in general, we ought to think it inherently likely that such responsive traditions exist, and probably in greater number than synthesizers of "the teaching of Jesus" are wont to assume. Here I wish to suggest that a harsh response to the Gospel, if not open challenge or rejection, stands in the background of certain sayings of Jesus.¹¹²⁷ After listing the possibilities, we will offer some reflections on the wider implications for understanding Jesus' career and what, if anything, it has to do with a Galilean crisis.

(i) Jesus is often reported to have said negative things about "this generation." The function of the phrase in the Gospels is to recast opposition to Jesus by evoking an analogous situation in Israel's story. The point defends Jesus against the charge that disapproval invalidates him or his ministry, since Israel similarly resisted God's chosen leaders in the past. From this theologizing perspective, opposition to Jesus says something about the character of those doing the opposing.

In Q the phrase appears multiple times, which explains why Q critics have found the expression so fundamental for their stratification theories and/or reconstructions of the history of the Q people:¹¹²⁸

Q 7:31: "To what will I compare this generation (τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην; Luke: τοὺς ἄνθρώπους τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης)?"

¹¹²⁷ Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 256, was right to note that, although the Gospels readily create new audiences for Jesus' teachings, sometimes the "content shows to whom a logion, a metaphor, a parable was originally spoken. For instance, it is as clear from the content that the controversies were carried on with opponents as it is that the messengers' instructions were given to disciples." To be sure, Jeremias may have been a bit too cavalier in reconstructing the original contexts of Jesus' sayings, especially in his *Parables of Jesus*, but the general point stands.

¹¹²⁸ E.g. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 193-95, 198; Markus Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity: Reconstructing Judean Ethnicity in Q* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2007), 294-97.

Q 11:29: “This generation is an evil generation” (ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη γενεὰ πονηρά ἐστίν. Matt: γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς).

Q 11:30: “As Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so the Son of Man shall be to this generation” (τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ)

Q 11:31-32: “The queen of the South will be raised at the judgment with this generation (μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης. Luke: μετὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης) and condemn it...The people of Nineveh will be raised at the judgment with this generation (μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης) and will condemn it.”

Q 11:50-51: “The blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation of the world will be required of this generation” (ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης. Matt: “all this will come upon τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην”).

If indeed we should think of Q as a Gospel with particular audience(s) in mind (which is a separate issue), I see no reason to dispute the conventional wisdom of Q scholarship that it was the confounding experience of rejection that caused the “this generation” motif to be emphasized.¹¹²⁹ The language self-evidently adopts a biblical idiom to forge a parallel with the “generation” that opposed Moses in the wilderness and was not able to enter the Promised Land (see below). The anticipation is for judgment.

This maneuver probably goes back ultimately to Jesus. The profitable theological function of the motif for Q should not be confused with origin. The popularity of this or other themes is not evidence for their creation, in Q or any other text. That is a mistake Bultmann often made.¹¹³⁰ Kloppenborg himself has insisted that material appearing in Q² may well be historical,

¹¹²⁹ Though that interpretation is not, of course, limited to discussion of Q. Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 114 (the sayings against “this generation” “probably also mirror the Jewish rejection of the gospel”); Funk, *Five Gospels*, 188; Stephen J. Patterson, “The End of Apocalypse: Rethinking the Eschatological Jesus,” *ThTo* 52 (1995): 29-48 at 36.

¹¹³⁰ Cf. Burton Scott Easton, *The Gospel before the Gospels* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1928), 12 (in criticism of Wellhausen on the same point); Goguel, *Jesus and the Origins of Christianity*, 1:166 (on the problem of taking “function” for “creation”). See also Gregg, *Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q*, 7 (on judgment sayings in general).

since literary stratification cannot be equated with tradition history.¹¹³¹ In the case of the sayings about “this generation” we should probably assume that we have here something of the perspective of Jesus, even if the sayings themselves have been shaped by later reception.¹¹³² The idiom is also well attested beyond Q, where it often assumes the same intertextual force:

Mark 8:12: “Why does this generation (ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη) seek a sign?” (Matt 16:4: γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς, “an evil and adulterous generation”)

Mark 8:38 and par.: “Those who are ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation (ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἀμαρτωλῷ), of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes...”

Mark 9:19: “You faithless generation (ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, Matt 17:17 and Luke 9:41 add “you faithless and perverse generation”), how much longer must I put up with you?”

Luke 17:25: “It is necessary first for him to suffer many things and be rejected by this generation” (ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης).

Matt 12:44-45: “Then it (a demon) goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation” (τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ. Luke [Q?] lacks this).

Minor differences in phraseology are actually important because they suggest that what these sources have in common with each other and with Q is not the borrowing of a lexical formula but a shared intertextuality. On the one hand, the phrase ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη (note the postpositive

¹¹³¹ Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 244-45: “To say that the wisdom components were formative for Q and that the prophetic judgment oracles and apophthegms describing Jesus’ conflict with ‘this generation’ are secondary is not to imply anything about the ultimate tradition-historical provenance of any of the sayings. It is indeed possible, indeed probable, that some of the materials from the secondary compositional phase are dominical or at least very old, and that some of the formative elements are, from the standpoint of authenticity of tradition-history, relatively young.” See also *Excavating Q*, 151.

¹¹³² The evidence fits what Riches, *Transformation of Judaism*, 53, stated in anticipation of much recent historical Jesus work: “It is not simply a matter of finding individual sayings which are beyond doubt authentic and moving out from these to those which are closest to them. What one is looking for is a *group* of sayings sufficiently distinctive that, although one cannot be sure of the authenticity of any one of them, one can say with some confidence that, taken as a group they present characteristic features of Jesus’ teaching” (*italics orig.*).

pronoun) translates הדור הזה, which appears only twice in the biblical text. The first refers to the “generation” of Noah (Gen 7:1), the second to that of Moses (Deut 1:35). On the other hand, adjectival references to the “perverse,” “crooked,” and “evil” -ness of “this generation” evoke other texts, in particular:

Deut 32:5, 20: “(God’s) degenerate children have dealt falsely with him, a perverse and crooked generation (דור עקש ופתלתל; LXX: γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ διεστραμμένη)... I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation (דור תהפכת).”

Num 32:13: “And the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord had disappeared.”

Ps 78:8: “(the next generation) should not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation (דור סורר ומרה; LXX: γενεὰ σκολιὰ καὶ παραπικραίνουσα) whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.”

What we have, then, are different lexical means to evoke the same intertextual subtexts: notoriously recalcitrant generations in the past, either that of Noah and the flood or Moses and the Exodus. That is a rather striking agreement among different sources and layers of tradition, especially since we do not find “this generation” language particularly prominent in the New Testament outside from the Gospels (cf. Phil 2:15; Acts 2:40).¹¹³³ The fact that Jesus elsewhere appears to use Mosaic-like expressions for himself and adopt New Exodus motifs from the Pentateuch and Second Isaiah would only further imply that we are in touch with the Jesus of history.¹¹³⁴

¹¹³³ On this see Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 209 note 134.

¹¹³⁴ Contra Richard A. Edwards, “The Eschatological Correlative as a *Gattung* in the New Testament,” *ZNW* 60 (1969): 9-20. See Dale C. Allison Jr., “Q’s New Exodus and the Historical Jesus,” in Lindemann, *Sayings Source Q and the Historical Jesus*, 395-428 at 423-28. Cf. Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 217 (“Jesus probably did adopt this manner of speaking, which is not very widely attested”), 219 (“In all probability, there is scarcely a word in the Jesus tradition that we can more confidently regard as authentic, even to its easily reconstructed wording”).

What is the significance? If we conclude that the sayings about “this generation” were not created by the Q circle, but rather stem from pre-existing tradition and probably even the original Jesus movement, may we not, by the same historical logic that produced the communal history of the Q people, infer that Jesus himself was lead to this way of speaking not by a theological system but rather by concrete experiences of rejection? I not only think we can, but we should.¹¹³⁵ (a) Even in the Gospels the sayings have been placed in contexts where Jesus is speaking to crowds or opponents. That is, the “hortatory tendency” of the Gospels could not transform these sayings into general teaching about the state of Jesus’ contemporaries. They have retained their polemical edge, and it is hard to imagine that they at one time functioned differently. (b) In addition, it is unlikely that Jewish eschatological expectations are sufficient to explain the state of the tradition as it stands. To be sure: one finds in Second Temple texts the idea that lawlessness would increase as birth pangs of the Messianic age (4 Ezra 5:2; m. Sot. 9:15).¹¹³⁶ Jesus may even have inherited a belief in “the dismal state of Israel in the time preceding the final judgment” (see 1 En. 93:9; Jub. 23:14).¹¹³⁷ However, those notions cannot sufficiently explain the Jesus tradition, since what we find is not general commentary on “this

¹¹³⁵ Steven M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel’s Traditions of Judgment and Restoration* (SNTSMS 117; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), claims the phrase is “a moral and salvation-historical designation” (81). In his view, Jesus seeing “Israel” guilty of “covenant unfaithfulness” (85) is “heavily informed by traditions” (87). He thinks Jesus started his ministry with the idea that “Israel had failed to be the faithful vineyard. The guests invited to the eschatological banquet refused to come” (86). I do not deny that tradition was a factor here. But I find the phrase more readily understandable when that “unfaithfulness” Bryan speaks of has a concrete referent: rejection of Jesus’ own person and mission. And that is only something that could develop throughout the course of his ministry.

¹¹³⁶ See Allison, *End of the Ages has Come*, 5-25; Mark Dubis, *Messianic Woes in First Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12-19* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2002), 130-41.

¹¹³⁷ Gregg, *Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q*, 275. I do not find that motif to be as prominent as Gregg implies, however. He seems to take any mention of God judging the unrighteous in Israel as evidence for his generalization.

generation” and its depravity, but rather sayings that have opposition to and/or rejection of Jesus in view. For instance: why is “this generation” worse than the Ninevites? Because the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah, whereas “this generation” *has not*. Even if Jesus entered his ministry with some eschatological expectation about a sinful generation preceding the end, these sayings imply it was his own rejection that triggered him to speak about it.¹¹³⁸

(c) We also know from rabbinic literature and other sources that the notorious depravity of the generation of Noah (the “*dor* of the flood”) and also the “*dor* of the wilderness,” that is, of Moses, were topics of exegetical conversation (cf. CD 2:14-21; 3:5-9; Jub. 5:3-5; 7:20-21; Tg. Neof. Gen. 6:3; b. Nid. 61a; Gen. Rab. 30:1; Num. Rab. 19:12).¹¹³⁹ These discussions focus on the nature and extent of the sins of these generations, and also their respective fates at the final judgment.¹¹⁴⁰ As such, the function of the discussions is not to foreshadow the final generation to come, but rather to serve as a warning about the consequences of sin. What this means is that there existed an interpretive tradition of speaking of “the *dor* of the wilderness” and “the *dor* of the flood” in the context of extreme sinfulness, but that tradition would not explain why Jesus linked those generations to his own. The latter move makes sense as Jesus’ own attempt to link his experiences with an exegetical tradition. (d) Finally, we need to remember that Jewish texts from the Second Temple period that negatively describe future generations are helpful for us not

¹¹³⁸ As a parallel I would point here to the *Damascus Document* at Qumran, which says that “(God) raised up for them a teacher of righteousness, in order to guide them in the path of his heart. And he made known to the last generations what he had done for the last generation, the congregation of traitors. These are the ones who stray from the path” (CD 1:11-13). There may be some preexisting eschatological ideas at play here, but this *dor* is termed traitorous precisely because of the rejection of the teacher (see also 1QSb 3:7).

¹¹³⁹ See Evald Lövestam, *Jesus and ‘this Generation’: A New Testament Study* (CB 25; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 8-20.

¹¹⁴⁰ Cf. m. Sanh. 10:3.

just insofar as they help reconstruct an eschatological thought system. These texts have their own *Sitz im Leben*, and often the writers' projections about the future, and future sin in particular, are responses to concrete realities in their own time. So there is a parallel here.

Should these insights be near the truth, the sayings about “this generation” would have functioned for not just Q or later Christian communities, but for Jesus too, as attempts to theologize opposition.¹¹⁴¹ Moreover, it is not apparent that the referent necessarily be the religious leaders who opposed Jesus, even though the Gospels often make it appear so (Mark 8:12; Matt 12:39-42; 16:4). The description and its intertextual subtext are better suited to characterize the crowds of people who heard Jesus and responded to him favorably or unfavorably (as the Gospels also indicate, see Mark 8:38; 9:19; Matt 11:16 [?]; Luke 11:29-32).¹¹⁴² It is likely that the Gospels have focused attention on Jesus' learned opponents, as is their wont, whereas for Jesus the expression may have had a wider purview. Of course, none of this means we have uncovered “the Galilean storms,” nor that Jesus changed his mind on some important matter. In speaking about “this generation” and pronouncing judgment Jesus sounds, again, like John the Baptist. But there is no reason to think that Jesus would adopt this idiom if it were not confirmed in some way in his own experience. It is, in content, form, and use, responsive.

(ii) Another important consideration is the presentation of Jesus as a rejected prophet.

This is not a tradition that the Gospels have preserved with enthusiasm. In a number of sayings

¹¹⁴¹ For continuity here (and not just discontinuity), see Uro, *Sheep among the Wolves*, 162-68; Kosch, “Q und Jesus,” 37.

¹¹⁴² Though this is not to say that “this generation” means “Israel” or all of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries but, rather, as Tuckett, *Q and the History*, 201, has written, a “non-representative part of the Jewish people.” See also Simon J. Joseph, *Jesus, Q, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Judaic Approach to Q* (WUNT 333; Tübingen: Mohr, 2012), 41-42, 92 (though I disagree that it is just “scribes, Pharisees, and Temple elite” in mind—a strange universalizing of its own kind).

that mention rejection and prophets together, the prophetic class is made subordinate to Jesus. In Q 6:22-23, Jesus says, “Blessed are you when (people) revile you and persecute and say all manner of evil against you on account of the son of man. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for thusly they persecuted the prophets before you.” Here it is the rejection of later followers of Jesus that is compared to the prophets, while Jesus is set apart as the son of man on whose account the persecution comes. In Q 11:49-51, Jesus reveals the intent of the Wisdom of God to “send prophets and wise men (Luke: apostles)” which will be persecuted and killed. For Q, as well as Luke and Matthew, the death of Jesus is clearly in mind here, though the accent remains on the experiences of Jesus followers. In Matthew’s version, Jesus speaks not as a prophet among prophets, but rather assumes the voice of Wisdom herself (Matt 23:34: “Therefore I send you prophets....”). In Q 13:34-35, where Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, it is evident that the statement “you kill the prophets that are sent to you” is meant include Jesus. But Jesus speaks not merely as a prophet among other prophets, but rather as God’s Shekinah—one so significant that his rejection results in the abandonment of God’s presence from the holy house. It is clear, in all, that the later Church has clearly used the rejected prophet motif to explain the death of Jesus as well as to predict, *ex eventu*, its own struggles in later times. I find all of these sayings suspicious and probably secondary.¹¹⁴³

¹¹⁴³ For exegetical studies see Michael Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew’s Gospel: The Rejected Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction* (JSNTSSup 68; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993); C. Comblet Galland, “De Jésus prophète au soufflé prophétique de l’évangile: L’impact d’une figure,” in *L’intrigue dans le récit biblique: quatrième colloque international du RRENAB* (eds. Anne Pasquier, Daniel Marquerat, and André Wénin; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 141-56; Jocelyn McWhirter, *Rejected Prophets: Jesus and His Witnesses in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

Yet two further things are clear. The first is that we know Jesus was considered a prophet by some of his contemporaries during his lifetime.¹¹⁴⁴ Speculations to this effect have been preserved in the Gospels (e.g. Mark 6:15; 8:28; Matt 21:11). On account of Josephus' description of Theudas, the Egyptian, and others, we know that "prophet" was a live category in the first century. Jesus also engaged in prophetic-sign acts,¹¹⁴⁵ probably modeled the actions of famous prophets like Elijah and Elisha,¹¹⁴⁶ spoke of the future,¹¹⁴⁷ and resembled John the Baptist, whom he himself called a prophet (Q 7:26; Mark 9:11-13). So the connection is natural.

The second is other sayings of Jesus assume the typology of a rejected prophet. A tradition unique to Luke reports the following:

Some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here because Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, listen, I cast out demons and I perform cures today and tomorrow and on the third day I reach my goal. And it is necessary for me to continue today and tomorrow and in the coming day, because it is not possible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem." (Luke 13:31-33).

¹¹⁴⁴ On Jesus as prophet see Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 1043-47; Morna D. Hooker, *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); Scot McKnight, "Jesus and Prophetic Action," *BBR* 10 (2000): 197-232; Craig A. Evans, "Prophet, Sage, Healer, Messiah, and Martyr: Types and Identities of Jesus," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2:1217-44 at 1219-22; Bond, *Historical Jesus*, 94-95.

¹¹⁴⁵ See Hooker, *Signs of a Prophet*.

¹¹⁴⁶ Cf. e.g. John A. T. Robinson, "Elijah, John and Jesus: An Essay in Detection," *NTS* 4 (1957): 263-81; Marcus, "John the Baptist and Jesus," 179-97; J. Severino Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher like Moses in Luke-Acts," *JBL* 124 (2005): 451-65; Craig S. Keener, "Jesus and Parallel Jewish and Greco-Roman Figures," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 85-112 at 97-98.

¹¹⁴⁷ On the importance of foretelling for the understanding of a "prophet," see Gerhard Dellling, "Die biblische Prophetie bei Josephus," in *Josephus-Studien: Untersuchungen zu Josephus, dem antiken Judentum und dem Neuen Testament Otto Michel zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet* (ed. Otto Betz et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 109-21; L. Stephen Cook, *On the Question of the "Cessation of Prophecy" in Ancient Judaism* (WUNT 145; Tübingen: Mohr, 2011), 123.

“It is not possible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.” It is not clear what interpretive tradition this saying assumes, but it is clear that Jesus here associates his end with the violent fate of the prophets in the past. The situation in which Luke places this saying intrigues, since it comes at the end of Jesus’ Galilean ministry and en route to Jerusalem. That would make excellent sense.¹¹⁴⁸ I already discussed above that Herod likely became aware of Jesus’ reputation at some later point, and if he made a connection between Jesus and the Baptist, then it is understandable that he would have it out for Jesus. As it is, however, there is too much Lucan terminology and theology in this pericope to say anything definitive about it for the historical Jesus. It evokes the resurrection and participates in Luke’s *dei* theme. I am not sure what to make of it.

In any case, if only on account of the Nazareth episode, we should conclude that the impression left by Luke 13 started with Jesus. The prophet saying at Nazareth (“a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown”) almost certainly goes back to Jesus. The function of the saying is to decrease the scandal of rejection among his peers by reframing it as an experience common to “prophets.” The old-fashioned criteria of authenticity do not mislead here.¹¹⁴⁹ The saying is multiply attested, even appearing in the Gospel of John in a variant form.¹¹⁵⁰ It employs a very humble description of Jesus. It is placed by the Synoptics in a particular situation that the

¹¹⁴⁸ See here Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 155.

¹¹⁴⁹ Contra William John Lyons, “A Prophet is Rejected in His Hometown (Mark 6.4 and Parallels),” *JSHJ* 6 (2008): 59-84, which shows only that one can find reasons to be skeptical of anything.

¹¹⁵⁰ John 4:44, in fact, is the only saying in the Gospel of John that the Jesus Seminar considered authentic. See Robert W. Funk and Roy W. Hoover, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 412. It may be that John understood Jesus’ *πατρις* to be Jerusalem, rather than Nazareth. Cf. J. Willemse, “La Patrie de Jésus selon Saint Jean,” *NTS* 11 (1965): 349-64. This, however, is not clear. See Gilbert van Belle, “The Faith of the Galileans: The Parenthesis in Jn 4:44,” *ETL* 74 (1998): 27-44.

later Church would never have created if it had the choice. We should also think that the rejected prophet category was otherwise known to Jesus. He evidently called John a prophet—actually “more than a prophet” (Q 7:26)—and probably also labeled him Elijah *redivivus* (cf. Q 7:27; Matt 11:14; Mark 9:13). That is striking because John was arrested and executed. Thus, for Jesus, the “rejection” (and, at some point, execution) of John did not usurp his prophetic credentials. He remained a prophet, even “the greatest of those born of women” (Q 7:28).

So how do we arrive at this impression of Jesus as a rejected prophet historically? It is possible that Jesus began his ministry by talking about himself as a rejected prophet, since he followed the Baptist and surely anticipated some opposition of his own. However, anticipating opposition is not the same thing as assuming the type of a rejected prophet, just as expecting the final judgment to come soon is not the same as pronouncing judgment on certain individuals/groups for failure to repent.¹¹⁵¹ Moreover, as much as Jesus tried to link his ministry with John’s, Jesus was not John. As already argued, Jesus did not simply absorb the crowds that attended John’s call to baptism. Jesus rather started his own ministry in the Galilee and had to grow his own reputation. In this respect, Q 7:31-25 is surely correct, dominical or not, in its estimation that John did one thing (“eating no bread and drinking no wine”), Jesus another (“the Son of Man has come eating and drinking”), and that both were rejected *in turn*. It is true that there existed by the first century an interpretive tradition of the biblical prophets that emphasized if not exaggerated their rejection and sufferings at the hands of their contemporaries. This is well attested in the *Lives of the Prophets* and other writings.¹¹⁵² But as with the eschatological

¹¹⁵¹ See here Polag, *Christologie der Logienquelle*, 121-22.

¹¹⁵² The seminal study here is still Odil H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1967). See also Schürmann, “Wie hat Jesus seinen Tod bestanden und verstanden?,” 333; Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi*, 136; Tilly, *Johannes der Täufer und die Biographie der Propheten*, 236-47; David L. Turner, *Israel’s Last*

background of the sayings about “this generation,” interpretive background cannot in itself explain the presence of this typology in the ministry of Jesus. It would make the type available for Jesus, and for his followers as well, but it would not explain its activation.

The Nazareth episode, as an important snapshot of Jesus’ Galilean ministry, provides the clearest explanation for why he would take on the form of a rejected prophet. It was to make sense of a concrete experience of rejection.¹¹⁵³ Mark 6:1-6, just as much as the Galilean woes, has a ring of disappointment to it, and how could it not? Are we to expect that Jesus went to Nazareth expecting full well to be rebuffed (though Luke has made it so)?¹¹⁵⁴ We may well imagine that, as with his work in Capernaum, Jesus went to Nazareth with the sincere hope that his message would be welcomed and that people would “repent and believe in the Gospel.” As such, Jesus’ “rejected prophet” persona, of which we only have fragmentary reminiscence in the Gospels, attests to developments that occurred after Jesus’ ministry was in full swing. As Cadoux once helpfully observed, other cases of rejected prophets in Israel’s collective memory talked about their rejection being pre-determined *after* that rejection had already occurred.¹¹⁵⁵

Prophet: Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew 23 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 13-54.

¹¹⁵³ Cf. Franz Schnider, *Jesus, der Prophet* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), 139-42.

¹¹⁵⁴ For affirmative answers, see Aquinas’s *Catena* on Mark 6:1-6 (trans. Newman, 2:105-06).

¹¹⁵⁵ Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 188. Also relevant here is Sura 3:52: “When Jesus became aware that they [still] did not believe, he said, ‘Who will help me in God’s cause?’ The disciples said, ‘We will be God’s helpers; we believe in God—witness our devotion to Him. Lord, we believe in what You have revealed and we follow the messenger: record us among those who bear witness [to the Truth].’ The [disbelievers] schemed but God also schemed; God is the Best of Schemers.” Why emphasize the rejection of Jesus, and the devotion of a small band of disciples? Because it mirrored Muhammad’s own experience. The typology befitted his circumstances.

(iii) The rejected prophet motif implies that Jesus' opponents do not actually perceive the truth of what is being said. There are, in turn, multiple ways to explain that failure of perception. As evident above, it was popular in the later Church to assert that that lack of understanding was not due to anything inherent in the Christian message, but is rather due to the inability of those opposed to grasp it.¹¹⁵⁶

According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus said to his disciples and associates (οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα):

to you (ὁμῖν) has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those on the outside (ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω) all things come in parables, in order that (ἵνα) “while seeing they may see and not perceive, and while hearing they may hear and not understand, lest (μήποτε) they turn and it be forgiven them.” (Mark 4:11-12)

Mark has left many of his fingerprints on this saying and the corresponding allusion to Isaiah 6:10-12, as exegetes have known for a long time. Jan Lambrecht and many others have contended that Mark inserted vv. 10-12 into his source material.¹¹⁵⁷ This must be right. After this aside to the disciples “in private” (v. 10), Mark has forgotten to reintroduce the crowds which are the presupposed audience for the rest of the parable chapter (cf. vv. 33-34). The insertion also functions to advance Mark's special interest in “spiritual sight” which surfaces throughout the remainder of the Gospel. The striking result is that, despite many attempts to explain it

¹¹⁵⁶ A view which, of course, is common in the history of religion, and especially in apocalyptic movements. Note 1QS 3:13-24 (Treatise of the Two Spirits) indicates that God enables one to hear and see. Cf. Joel Marcus, “Mark 4:10-12 and Markan Epistemology,” *JBL* 102 (1984): 557-74 at 559, 561. See also 1QH^a 21:4-5, 19-21; 22:6-7; CD 2:13; 1 En. 41:8. Cf. Michael Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Magnalia Dei, the Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (ed. Frank M. Cross et al.; New York: Doubleday, 1976), 414-52; Shane Berg, “Religious Epistemology and the History of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community,” in Harlow et al., *The ‘Other’ in Second Temple Judaism*, 333-49.

¹¹⁵⁷ Jan Lambrecht, “Redaction and Theology in Mk, IV,” in *L'Évangile selon Marc: Tradition et Redaction* (ed. M. Sabbe; 2nd ed.; BETL 24; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 269-308.

otherwise,¹¹⁵⁸ Mark's Jesus teaches in parables *so that* people do not understand and *lest* they turn and be forgiven.¹¹⁵⁹ Thus the parables, for Mark, intentionally deceive those "on the outside" (even if the Evangelist has not consistently applied the idea). Why would Mark use Isa 6 in this manner? Joel Marcus argued in his commentary:

As with the other quotations of Isa 6:9-10 in the New Testament, it stems from a desire on the part of early Christians to trace back to God's will the perplexing rejection of the gospel by the Jewish people as a whole. That rejection induced a deeply disturbing case of cognitive dissonance among Christians such as the members of the Markan community: Israel had been expected to welcome her Messiah with open arms, yet Jesus was the Messiah and Israel had rejected him... The sharp dualism of Mark 4:11-12... probably reflects the Markan community's bitter experiences of powerlessness, marginalization, and persecution even to the point of death.¹¹⁶⁰

It should be obvious at this point that if one substituted "Jesus" for "early Christians/Markan community," this quotation would fit seamlessly into 19th-century Lives of Jesus or any other work that has proposed a Galilean crisis in the ministry.

As it is, however, it remains the majority opinion in current scholarship that Isa 6 was used to rationalize later failures, and was not adopted by Jesus himself.¹¹⁶¹ There have been

¹¹⁵⁸ See e.g. Origen, *Princ.* 3.1 (where Origen responds to precisely this view).

¹¹⁵⁹ So Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 300; Collins, *Mark*, 249; C. Clifton Black, *Mark* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 121. Contra Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 160-61; Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 163.

¹¹⁶⁰ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 306-07. On the use of Isa 6 elsewhere in the NT to explain rejection, see Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus (Mk 1-8:26)* (EKKNT; Köln: Benzinger, 1978), 163.

¹¹⁶¹ Cf. e.g. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 325 note 1 ("In my view Mk. 4¹⁰⁻¹² is an editorial formulation of Mark"); Dodd, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 13-14; Gunter Haufe, "Erwägungen zum Ursprung der sogenannten Parabeltheorie Markus 4, 11-12," *EvT* 32 (1972): 413-21; Eduard Schweizer, "The Question of the Messianic Secret in Mark," in *The Messianic Secret* (ed. Christopher Tuckett; IRT 1; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 65-74 at 69; Maarten J. J. Menken, "Fulfillment of Scripture as a Propaganda Tool in Early Christianity,"

counter arguments,¹¹⁶² to be sure, though most recent works on Jesus have simply not raised the question, and by their neglect imply that it is not that important for understanding Jesus' public career.

I dissent from the majority view on Isa 6, though not with total confidence. It is at least clear that Mark's use of Isa 6:9-10 is not his own creation, but rather relies on tradition, and very ancient tradition at that. Mark's citation of Isa 6 agrees in part with the Septuagint, but also contains striking agreements with the Aramaic Targum, including the shift from second person to the third person (e.g. Mark's βλέποντες, ἀκούοντες, etc.), as well as the reference to being "forgiven" (ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς, Tg.: וישתביק להון) rather than "healed" (MT: רפא). This probably indicates that the form of Isa 6:9-10 available to Mark was used before him by Aramaic speaking Christians, and thus near the beginning of the Christian movement. That would also explain why the verses appear in John 12:40, on the assumption that John is independent of the Synoptics.¹¹⁶³

It is also worth observing that Mark's redactional tendency to have the disciples ask questions of Jesus in private (as in 4:10) functions elsewhere as a means for Mark to present traditional material, even though this setting is clearly his own device. For instance:

in *Persuasion and Dissuasion in Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism, and Hellenism* (ed. Pieter W. van der Horst et al.; Leuven: Peters, 2003), 179-98 at 181.

¹¹⁶² Manson, *Teaching of Jesus*, 75-80; Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi*, 97-98; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, 106-07; Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*, 103-06 (though the focus of his book is the NT texts); Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 358 ("could," and only "to move hardened hearers to repentance"); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 494 ("[Isa 6] certainly reflects the subsequent puzzlement at the failure of the disciples' post-Easter mission to their fellow Jews. But that fact should not be allowed to exclude the possibility that Jesus himself was remembered as echoing Isaiah's own depressing commission when he spoke of his own").

¹¹⁶³ Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 327, also heard a shared tradition with Mark 4:12 in John 9:39 (εἰς κρίμα ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἦλθον, ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέποντες τυφλοὶ γένωνται), which interestingly also has ἵνα.

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| 7:17: “entered the house” | → | 7:20: “it is what comes out of a person that defiles” (cf. Matt 23:25-26) |
| 10:10: “in the house” | → | 10:11-12: “whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery...” |
| 13:3: “on the Mount” | → | 13:4-37: predictions of the temple’s destruction, the coming of the Son of Man ¹¹⁶⁴ |

Isaiah 6 in Mark 4 would be akin to this situation, in which Mark’s redactional device introduces ancient material. It is a good hypothesis, then, that the Evangelist has inserted into his parable chapter a traditional saying of Jesus to advance his own unique view of the parables. It is improbable that in Mark’s tradition Isa 6 was used in the context of the parables,¹¹⁶⁵ and it probably referred to Jesus’ actions and deeds more broadly, as John 12 assumes.¹¹⁶⁶

Unfortunately we cannot go much further than this. Moreover, if indeed Jesus used Isa 6, we would have no way to know the exact form of the citation that he adopted. Versions of Isa 6:9-10 vary significantly, and even within the New Testament there are key variations that reflect differences in interpretation. For Matthew and Luke, who follow Mark, the citation has been significantly softened, such that the parables are given no longer to deceive, but rather have that

¹¹⁶⁴ Mark 13 clearly reflects on later events in the post-Easter period, as biblical scholars have long noted: the coming of false prophets and messiahs (vv. 5-6, 21-22), famines and earthquakes (v. 8), persecutions (v. 9-13), and some desolating sacrilege in the temple (v. 14). But the discourse is surely constructed around memories of things Jesus had said about the end. For differing views see Franz Mussner, *Was lehrt Jesus über das Ende der Welt?* (Freiburg: Herder, 1987); Robert H. Stein, *Jesus, the Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2014).

¹¹⁶⁵ Contra Frank Eakin, “Spiritual Obduracy and Parable Purpose,” in *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays* (ed. James M. Efird; Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 87-107; H. Yoshimura, *Did Jesus Cite Isa. 6:9-10? Jesus’ Saying in Mark 4:11-12 and the Islamic Idea of Hardening and Remnant* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁶⁶ So Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 257-58; Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 15-17; Joachim Gnllka, *Die Verstockung Israels: Isaias 6,9-10 in der Theologie der Synoptiker* (Munich: Kösel, 1961), 26-27, 198-205.

effect among those who have, of their own volition, already rejected Jesus.¹¹⁶⁷ Matthew also achieves this meaning by moving the parable chapter much later in his narrative (13:14-15), such that Isa 6 is a response to the rejection of the Gospel in Chapters 11-12. Luke's withholding of Isa 6 until the end of Acts (28:26-27) takes a similar view. It may be that this softening actually returns to the original form of the tradition that Mark used, since the Third Evangelist had intensified it for his own theological reasons.¹¹⁶⁸ We cannot know.

Yet it is necessary at this point to take a wider perspective on the issue. Authentic or not, and in this particular form or that, Isa 6 adopts the motifs of blindness and deafness to explain why God's message is not received by certain people. That is true whether that blindness and deafness result from divine or human agency, or some mixture of both. It is important to observe, therefore, that similar blindness, deafness, and hiddenness motifs run throughout the Gospels, in multiples sources and in all layers of tradition.¹¹⁶⁹

(a) In Q 10:21, Jesus exclaims, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you hid (ἀπέκρυψας) these things from the wise (σοφῶν) and the learned and revealed (ἀπεκάλυψας) them to infants. Yes, Father, that is pleasing before you."¹¹⁷⁰ There may be an allusion here to Isa 29:14 ("The wisdom of the wise [LXX: σοφῶν] will perish, the discernment of the discerning [LXX: συνετῶν] shall be hidden [LXX: "I will hide," κρύψω]"), which would

¹¹⁶⁷ Luke omits "lest they turn and it be forgiven them," so there is no hardening indicated here.

¹¹⁶⁸ For discussion see Robert H. Stein, *Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1981), 27-35.

¹¹⁶⁹ For some context here, see André Gagné "Sectarianism, Secret Teaching, and Self-Definition—Relational Features between Jesus, the Disciples, and the Outsiders," in *Jesus in Continuum* (ed. Tom Holmén; WUNT 289; Tübingen: Mohr, 2012), 223-42.

¹¹⁷⁰ Cf. Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 157-58, 161-64.

be striking indeed because Isa 29:13 (“this people honors me with their lips...”) appears in Mark 7:6-7 (par. Matt 15:8-9) in the context of a debate with the Pharisees over handwashing.¹¹⁷¹ This would only make plain what one would probably assume imply anyway, that the “learned”/ “wise” refer to particular opponents of Jesus who had some advanced knowledge of the Torah, while the “infants” refer to Jesus’ own following. He appeals to God to explain why the “wise/“learned” do not get it. (b) In corroboration of this point, Jesus is elsewhere said to have called people, particularly religious leaders, “blind” (Luke 6:39; Matt 15:14; 23:16, 17, etc.; John 9:39-41). (c) In an M tradition, Jesus says to opponents, “You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you are unable (οὐ δύνασθε) to interpret the signs of the times” (Matt 16:3). The meaning is the same.

(d) On the flipside, the Gospels report that Jesus sometimes said, “he who has ears to hear let him hear” (ὃς ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω, cf. Mark 4:9, 23; Matt 11:15; 13:43; Luke 14:35; etc.), which means that only some are able to truly “hear” his message. (e) The ability to “see and hear” is necessary for John’s emissaries to know if Jesus is, truly, “the coming one” (Q 7:22).

(f) Given these traditions which focus so much on “sight” language and other faculties of perception, it is likely that the saying “the eye is the lamp of the body” (Q 11:34) has some bearing here as well. It goes on: “if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be radiant (φωτεινόν), but if your eye is evil, your whole body will be dark (σκοτεινόν).” This statement

¹¹⁷¹ The form of this allusion resembles the Septuagint, but that fact itself in no way justifies Meier’s sweeping conclusion in *Law and Love*, 400. Cf. Thomas R. Hatina, “Did Jesus Quote Isaiah 29:13 against the Pharisees? An Unpopular Appraisal,” *BBR* 16 (2006): 79-94.

presupposes a pre-modern theory of vision,¹¹⁷² but the point is not medical. The point is that one's ability to perceive depends on the light within.

That is a lot of material. Chances are high that even if the use of Isa 6 is secondary after all, that passage was ascribed to Jesus by his followers because it was well known that he had advanced similar notions about his message. Everything listed above makes good sense in the context of a first century, inner-Jewish disputation. Efforts to pin the whole on the later Church only serve to shield Jesus from the unfashionable views of his followers.

It would be possible to argue that such traditions were not responsive but rather capture what Jesus had intended to do all along. That is the perspective of N. T. Wright, who wrote that Jesus used Isa 6:9-10

by way of *telling the story of Israel as the story of rejected prophets, consequent judgment*, and renewal the other side of judgment, and by way of describing Jesus' own ministry as the culmination, and hence encapsulation or recapitulation, of that prophetic heritage. For Jesus, Isaiah was *both* an earlier part of the story, one of his predecessors in the long line, one (moreover) whose own commission contained a most striking statement of the inevitable rejection of his message—and one whose ministry, and its results, were being climatically recapitulated in his own work.”¹¹⁷³

For Wright, then, Isa 6 functions predictively: “The son would come to the vineyard, and the tenants would reject him. They would look and look, but never see.”¹¹⁷⁴ I do not doubt that Jesus, having started with John, thought it “inevitable” (Wright's term) that some would reject his message. He may even have believed some “blind” from the beginning. But I doubt that

¹¹⁷² See Allison, *Jesus Tradition in Q*, 135-43.

¹¹⁷³ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 236-37 (italics orig.).

¹¹⁷⁴ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 237. See also Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 216; Bryan, *Traditions of Judgment and Restoration*, 124-28 (“Jesus' message about the mystery of the kingdom abets his proclamation of Israel's impending judgment, for it serves as the beginning of judgment by acting as a catalyst which promotes the nation's obduracy”); Donald E. Hartley, *The Wisdom Background and Parabolic Implications of Isaiah 6:9-10 in the Synoptics* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2006).

everything transpired as Jesus had planned when it came to the rejection of his message. The history of religion is full of examples of leaders and groups offering similar explanatory measures to make sense of disappointing circumstances, even if they expected, at the outset, doors slammed in their faces. Wright's view strikes me as similar, though perhaps not as extreme, as that of Fuchs, who explained "the severity of (Jesus') demand" as well as his "threats and calls of woe" on the basis of Jesus' desire and expectation that "suffering" would be the necessary prelude to new life.¹¹⁷⁵

I would make three further points here. First, according to Wright, Jesus was rejected by those who really could not comprehend or accept the good thing he was about.¹¹⁷⁶ I do not wish to deny that Jesus' message was startling, convicting, and full of surprises. But I doubt that Jesus was rejected because his message was radically innovative, or because it was so beyond his audience.¹¹⁷⁷ Jesus' call of the twelve, his exorcisms and healings, and his teaching about God's coming rule were all children of Jewish restoration eschatology. So too, Jesus' ethical demands were uncompromising in their rigor, but they were not incomprehensible. Several of Jesus' parables told profound stories about God's mercy and love for the forsaken, but they did not, as Mark believed, intend to deceive. They were messages to be heard and acted on, to "go and do

¹¹⁷⁵ Ernst Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus* (SBT 42; Naperville: Allenson, 1964), 61.

¹¹⁷⁶ See also here James D. G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," in Tuckett, *Messianic Secret*, 116-131 at 119: "it is more plausible to recognize in the motif (of the messianic secret) a historical reminiscence of the very natural and unexceptional slowness of unlettered men whose rigid and closed system of thought made it difficult for them to adjust to new teaching" (see also at 128).

¹¹⁷⁷ The motif of "misunderstanding" has an interesting history of interpretation in its own right. Christian exegetes and historians throughout the centuries have routinely explained the rejection of Jesus by stating that his contemporaries (and often his disciples) misunderstood his true intentions. The maneuver functioned to set Jesus apart from his context as unique and original; in the modern period: a religious genius too advanced for his time.

likewise” (Luke 10:37). Mussner was at least right in this: Jesus’ public ministry issued an “offer” for his contemporaries that was genuine and not simply a means of dividing the righteous from the wicked. Recourse to blindness, deafness, and hiddenness motifs, then, make the most sense as defensive mechanisms to explain the rejection of that activity by certain people, not as an underlying objective of his work.

A second point supports this. The earliest Christians believed that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit fulfilled the expectations of the prophets and signaled the inauguration of the end of days. But this view goes back to the pre-Easter period, since Jesus himself probably claimed to have been anointed by the Spirit of God (perhaps at his baptism by John?),¹¹⁷⁸ and pointed to God’s spirit as the active agent in his exorcisms.¹¹⁷⁹ This claim, however, has implications for the reception of his message. In prophetic expectation, as well as in wider Jewish tradition, the Spirit was conjoined with the increase in wisdom, knowledge, and obedience in Israel. In Ezek 36, the outpouring of the Spirit of God produces the ensuing obedience of Israel (v. 38).¹¹⁸⁰ The Spirit of the Lord that rests on the figure mentioned in Isa 11 is given understanding *and* counsel, and the prophet expects that “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (v. 9). In *Pss. Sol.* 17, David’s heir will discipline Israel by the power of God’s Spirit, “to direct people in righteous acts” (18:5), and in Philo’s non-eschatological discussion of Abraham, “the divine Spirit, which, having been breathed upon him from on high, made its lodging in his soul, invested his body with a singular beauty, his words with persuasiveness, and

¹¹⁷⁸ Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 52-56; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 376; Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 393.

¹¹⁷⁹ Cf. Graham Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 54; Tübingen: Mohr, 1993).

¹¹⁸⁰ See here Deut. Rab. 6:14; Tg. Ezek. 36:25-26; b. Ber. 31b-32a.

his hearers with understanding.”¹¹⁸¹ The Acts of the Apostles, then, presents matters as they should be: Peter’s hearers are “cut to the heart” and ask “what should we do?” (Acts 2:37). If Jesus thought himself a Spirit-endowed agent of God, if not more, the Messiah of Israel, then it would only force the question of rejection more strongly, just as it did for the early Church. We see a particularly harsh reaction in Jesus’ claim that those who “blaspheme the Holy Spirit” active in his ministry will not find forgiveness (Mark 3:29 and par.). That is because such criticism should not happen; the blasphemer must be utterly lost.

Third, Jesus did not initiate his ministry with a sectarian identity. John the Baptist had harsh things to say about those who confided in their status as children of Abraham (Q 3:8), and Jesus does not seem to have backed down from that position. But neither John, nor Jesus, established a sectarian form of Judaism with carefully constructed boundaries between those “in” and “out.” As many other critics have divined, Jesus addressed all Israel,¹¹⁸² and the call of the Twelve was surely a point about Israel’s restoration. This is relevant because, for Jesus, categories such as the “wise” and the “infants” or the referents behind “blessed are *you* who see” came into being as people responded either positively or negatively to his call.¹¹⁸³ Even though

¹¹⁸¹ Philo, *Virt.* 217 (italics mine). Not unrelated is Philo’s claims that the spirit of God ascends the philosopher’s mind, so *Plant.* 18-26. Cf. also *Somn.* 2.252, *Spec. Leg.* 3.1-6, *Cher.* 27-29; *Fug.* 53-58.

¹¹⁸² Cf. E. P. Sanders, “Jesus and the Kingdom: The Restoration of Israel and the New People of God,” in *Jesus, the Gospels, and the Church: Essays in Honor of William R. Farmer* (ed. E. P. Sanders; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 225-242; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 314; McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel*, 9-14.

¹¹⁸³ See Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 476-78 (who even mentions a “galiläischen Krise” here). Diversity of response to Jesus was the way that Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 119-21, understood Jesus and John the Baptist to have formed an eschatological “remnant” in Israel. E.g., at 121: “‘Remnant’, therefore, was not defined by the limitation of John’s mission to a given group. It was defined by the diversity of response (i.e., acceptance and rejection).” See also Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 173 (on an “open remnant”); Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 134-37.

he had harsh things to say about Pharisees, he probably did not consider them “blind” *en masse*. This means that, given Jesus’ address to all,¹¹⁸⁴ the distinction between those who see and those who do not could only come about as a result of his work.

The upshot of the preceding is that, like the sayings about “this generation” and the rejected prophet typology, the motifs of blindness, deafness, and hiddenness in the Jesus tradition are hard to place if we fail to view them as accommodations to realities that arose during the ministry. What I have hopefully contributed here are some new angles on an old issue, such that we conclude that the kind of wrestling with rejection that we find in the later Church began with Jesus’ own response to the same, albeit in a different setting. We know that the later Church had to wrestle with the issues that surface most clearly in Rom 9-11: the rejection of the Gospel.

It is likely that the later Church read into the Jesus story its own experiences of rejection. I intentionally neglected to discuss a number of Jesus’ parables that for crisis proponents and many others have re-narrated the story of Jesus’ rejection by Israel (esp. the Parable of the Wedding Banquet,¹¹⁸⁵ and the Parable of the Wicked Tenants).¹¹⁸⁶ Not only is the interpretation of the parables notoriously difficult,¹¹⁸⁷ I suspect that these parables have been significantly reshaped by the later community, and we can no longer say anything meaningful about what they

¹¹⁸⁴ Joachim Jeremias, “Der Gedanke des “heiligen Restes” im Spätjudentum und in der Verkündigung Jesu,” *ZNW* 42 (1949): 184-94.

¹¹⁸⁵ Here esp. see Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 250-54.

¹¹⁸⁶ Cf. Karl E. Pagenkemper, “Rejection Imagery in the Synoptic Parables,” *BSac* 153 (1996): 308-31. Jeremias, *Parables of Jesus*, 21, famously read the parables as stemming from situations of conflict and being used as “weapons of controversy.”

¹¹⁸⁷ See here Renate Banschbach Eggen, “Do the Parables Tell us something about the Mission of Jesus?,” in Byrskog and Hägerland, *Mission of Jesus*, 141-60 at 158: “an interpreter’s own decisions (on the original setting of the parable) may have too great an influence on the outcome of an interpretation in order to consider the parables as a reliable source in a quest for the historical Jesus.” See also Meier, *Probing the Authenticity of the Parables*, 5-6, 31-33.

meant for Jesus,¹¹⁸⁸ if they go back to him at all. Nevertheless, if we step back and look at some wider trends that appear in numerous sources and forms of tradition, we have good reason to think that Jesus and his later followers held in common certain attempts to theologize rejection. We do not face an either/or decision here.

A few broader conclusions to this discussion of theologizing rejection are fitting at this point. What have not identified a change of mind on Jesus' part, but the evidence does point toward development in the ministry that is not entirely unlike what proponents of a Galilean crisis have put forth. The most recent of these proposals is found in the publications of Eckhard Rau, which have focused on the importance of Jesus' sayings about "this generation." For reasons already explored, I believe that Rau has gone too far in reconstructing a "break" (in his words: "eine sachlich belangvolle Zäsur")¹¹⁸⁹ in the ministry along the lines of 19th-century Jesus research, even though his method is much more sophisticated than earlier proposals along similar lines. I am not sure that we can infer from "this generation" a wider failure among Israel as a whole,¹¹⁹⁰ and the same would go for the rejected prophet and perception motifs. In the Gospels, impressions of fame and failure sit side by side, as do Jesus' eschatological admonitions and

¹¹⁸⁸ On the question of the original settings of the parables in the ministry of Jesus, see Mary Ann Tolbert, *Perspectives on the Parables: An Approach to Multiple Interpretations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 40-50; Charles E. Carlston, "Proverbs, Maxims, and the Historical Jesus," *JBL* 99 (1980): 87-105; Birger Gerhardsson, "If We do not Cut the Parables out of their Frames," *NTS* 37 (1991): 321-35.

¹¹⁸⁹ Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 21.

¹¹⁹⁰ Contra Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 247: "Wenn Chorazin, Bethsaida und Kapernaum tatsächlich *pars pro toto* für Galiläa stehen, signalisiert der Verweis auf 'dieses Geschlecht', dass die Ablehnung eine sehr viel umfassendere Größe betrifft, als durch die Beschränkung der Notmenklatur auf Galiläa und seine Orte ausgedrückt werden könnte"). Contra also Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment*, 215 ("this generation" = "the whole nation of his contemporaries, all of Israel, as a unified opponent"). Cf. Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 135.

ethical teachings.¹¹⁹¹ As it is unwise to try to disentangle and periodize the latter, so too, I would submit, the former. The most we can divine is that these rationalizing measures appeared after Jesus' ministry was in full swing, as his lines of support and opposition had taken some recognizable shape. They are the product of varied experience.

In making this qualification, however, I do not wish to deny something more important that Rau had his finger on, and that is the implied backstory of rejection that the sayings about "this generation" and other traditions naturally bring to mind. If there be but one significant legacy of the crisis theory that is worth salvaging, it is, in my view, the way that it encourages us to think realistically and concretely about the rejection of Jesus' message.

7.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has made some claims about Jesus' popularity and considered indications that he found rejection in the Galilee. To summarize the conclusions:

- (i) there are reasons to think that the notion of a "Galilean Spring" is not entirely misleading as a description of Jesus' early ministry. On the one hand, we can see that it was necessary for Jesus to grow his own following after parting ways with John;
- (ii) on the other hand, there are numerous memories, in all layers of the tradition, of Jesus' "successful" activities in and around Capernaum. He must have been well received there, at least for a time;
- (iii) opposition to Jesus from certain religious leaders appears to have developed in response to his earlier successes. There must be some reason that Jesus was worth paying attention to and taking the effort to oppose (see the Appendix for the full case);
- (iv) the so-called Galilean woes reflect on a situation of rejection among cities that Jesus had committed much time and effort, and they seem to express disappointment about that fact. This presupposes some development in the reception of the Jesus movement in these areas, and thus require a later setting in the ministry;

¹¹⁹¹ On present and future eschatology see Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 92.

(v) the tradition is rife with attempts to theologize rejection. The early Church is no doubt responsible for some of this, but it is likely that Jesus adopted similar explanatory strategies. These include labeling critics (“this generation”), self-description (as a rejected prophet), and claims about the epistemology of his opponents (blindness and ignorance).

The argument of this chapter confirms, on the whole, that the old Lives of Jesus were onto something in spying important developments in the ministry of Jesus from “early success” to “growing opposition.” That result does not require us to periodize his public career, however. The case of the Baptist is, as always, instructive. In one saying Jesus claims that both he and John were rejected by “this generation.” Some had apparently said that John was possessed by a demon, probably in effort to explain his extreme asceticism and location in the wilderness. Other evidences for opposition and challenge to John are likewise present in the tradition. From other angles, however, it is clear that John was a quite popular and, one may even say, “successful” wilderness evangelist. All of the canonical Gospels stress the large crowds that flocked to see John, and Josephus corroborates this (“others came in crowds about him,” *Ant.* 18.118). Josephus indicates that John’s popularity persisted after his death, since some admirers had attributed Herod’s defeat by the Nabatean Aretas to divine punishment for killing John (*Ant.* 18.116). It would be foolish to take the impression of popularity as one “fact” of the tradition and pit it against the other “fact” of rejection, concluding that we must either choose one impression as more reliable than the other, or decide that we should starkly periodize John’s career. A much more reasonable explanation is that John encountered different people during his ministry, and some liked him and listened to him, while others did not. Perhaps there was some development here. But the key thing is that memories of both popularity and rejection are not absolute but rather relative to John’s reception among particular audiences. We should assume something similar for the historical Jesus.

CHAPTER 8.0:

FINAL THOUGHTS

This project, described in the Introduction as a “commentary” on the theory of a Galilean crisis, has come full circle. We have investigated where the idea came from, what forms it took, and whether or not there is anything to it for our knowledge of the historical Jesus. Since I already closed each chapter with an accessible summary of the important conclusions, I wish at this point to step back and offer some broader observations.

The crisis theory intrigues because the interpretive and historical issues that animate it capture what critical study of the Gospels and the historical Jesus is all about. That is why our discussion of prior literature should be of interest for any and all study of Jesus. On the whole, the crisis theory is an attempt to make sense of four Gospels that do not always agree with each other, that have troubling “gaps” in their chronologies, and that narrate rather than systematize theological stories about the kingdom of God, ethics, suffering, death, and the future. Readers have found tensions in these stories that, in their estimation, the Gospels do not acceptably resolve. Moreover, the Gospels raise questions about Jesus’ character, temperament, and past experiences which they do not answer.

The crisis theory also intrigues because the recognition of such interpretive problems is not unique to the modern period. Since the beginning, Christians have wondered about the life of

their Lord. The Gospels, as they stand, have not fully satisfied that curiosity. Some readers strove to identify overarching patterns in the Gospels' episodic presentations, and sometimes moved pericopae around so as to be more commonsensical. Others posited, intentionally or unintentionally, backstories to certain teachings and deeds that were actually contrary to the narrative frames of the Gospels themselves. Well before Hase (1829) we see harmonists and paraphrasers of the Gospels popularizing the idea that Jesus found early success and/or growing opposition, and others who started breaking Jesus' ministry into "periods" and "sections" of activity. Still others began to explore the possibility that Jesus did not always intend to end his career on the cross, assuming that that makes better sense of his teachings.

Thus, as much as the crisis theory is very much a product of the modern Quest for Jesus and fits squarely within its historiographical assumptions and aims, it is also constructed around interpretive and historical moves that are quite old. Moreover, it is shaped by earlier exegetical conventions, preexisting "habits of reading," and the material culture of books. Many early forms of the crisis theory in the 19th century were historical solutions to very theologically, philosophically, and socially constructed problems. That pre-history contributed to a "horizon of expectation" that made it possible for 19th-century readers of the Gospels to reach the conclusions they did.¹¹⁹² The crisis theory is intelligible as a part of that larger story.¹¹⁹³

¹¹⁹² On Jauss and "horizon of expectation" see Evans, *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation*, 10-13, 40-44.

¹¹⁹³ And on the importance of grasping that larger story before attempting to reconstruct the historical Jesus, note Paul Ricoeur, "History and Rhetoric," *Diogenes* 168 (1994): 7-24 at 22: "Before presenting themselves as master craftsmen of stories made out of the past, historians must first stand as heirs of the past...Before even forming the idea of re-presenting the past, we are in debt to the men and women of the past who contributed to making us what we are. Before we can represent the past we must live as beings affected by the past."

Some of these contingent influences on the development of the crisis theory challenge its historical value, but it was further argued that a number of its conclusions should be revisited. Of particular interest is the notion of a “Galilean Spring” and the suggestion that certain traditions in the Gospels reflect on, and hence respond to, rejection during Jesus’ own ministry. It is often said that early Christians had to find theological explanations for why Israel rejected Jesus because it was not expected that the people would by and large fail to heed the Messiah.¹¹⁹⁴ Should that be true, and I believe that it is, it also raises a question about the ministry of Jesus: for if he regarded himself a special figure in the salvation history of Israel, perhaps even God’s “Anointed,” would not rejection have raised similar questions for him and his followers? My contention is this: a theological attempt to wrestle with rejection is not unique to the post-Easter period—for which the execution of Jesus pressed the question more forcefully than before—but is rather shared between the original Jesus movement and those who came after him.

Beyond that, however, the crisis theory as it developed in modern research is not compelling as a historical hypothesis. It is natural that historians try to infer more about the career of Jesus than the Gospels have thought necessary to preserve. Historians do this all the time, and often for good reason. Many assume that Jesus, at a time that not one of our sources recall, was a disciple of John the Baptist.¹¹⁹⁵ In addition, it is sometimes thought that Jesus must have ministered for some time in Galilee before calling his first disciples, since Mark 1:16-20

¹¹⁹⁴ E.g. Craig A. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John’s Prologue* (JSNTSup 89; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 177-78; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (repr.; London; New York: Continuum, 2001 [orig. 1981]), 69.

¹¹⁹⁵ For discussion see Josef Ernst, “War Jesus ein Schüler Johannes des Taufers?,” in *Vom Urchristentum zu Jesus: für Joachim Gnilka* (eds. Hubert Frankmolle and Karl Kertelge; Freiburg: Herder, 1989), 13-33; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 350-52.

and par. is psychologically improbable.¹¹⁹⁶ One could muster many similar examples, and even outside of historical Jesus research.¹¹⁹⁷ But in all the crisis theory is based on inferences of another scale altogether. And in my judgment it does not do justice to the extant Jesus tradition that must be the starting and ending point for all reconstructive work.

So how do these positive and negative evaluations fit together? I would say that we find ourselves in a position analogous to what form criticism has concluded about the Gospel tradition.¹¹⁹⁸ That is, we know that the tradition changed during the oral period for which we

¹¹⁹⁶ See Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 310-11; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 118-19; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 182.

¹¹⁹⁷ Attempts to reconstruct the career of Muhammad on the basis of the Qur'an is in many ways similar to the task of historical Jesus research, since in both cases we have primary sources that only indirectly addresses the questions which interest the historian. It is also interesting that some of these projects on Muhammad assume that polemical and hostile language is better suited to a later point in his career than at its outset. It is not entirely surprising, then, to find reconstructions of Muhammad's career that parallel the narrative of the crisis theory rather closely. See, e.g., the famous work by Richard Bell, *The Qur'an: Translated, with a Critical Re-arrangement of the Surahs* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1937-39). Bell's portrait of Muhammad is summarized by Herbert Berg, "Context: Muḥammad," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an* (ed. Andrew Rippin; Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 187-204 at 193 as follows: "Muhammad's mission began with the limited purpose of urging the local Meccans to recognize God's bounties in creation and to worship Him alone. However, the resistance and indifference of the Meccans led to the incorporation of the notion of temporal punishment. With the acquisition of information about the other monotheistic traditions, the idea of eschatological punishment was introduced along with a stricter monotheism. This resistance developed into open opposition and persecution until Muhammad and his followers emigrated to Medina. Once there, the revelations to Muhammad also appealed to the People of the Book to accept Muhammad as a messenger of God. With their opposition came a turning point; the People of the Book were rejected and the religion of *islām*, the surrender to God, was introduced with its accompanying vocabulary."

¹¹⁹⁸ Hågerland, "Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus Research," 00, rightly notes that some recent studies have overstated the demise of form critical conclusions in effort to problematize the criteria of authenticity.

have very little evidence, but we do not know exactly what that modification looked like.¹¹⁹⁹ We can affirm, with generalities, that stories shrunk, grew, evolved, and were invented. We can readily grant that certain theological questions became more pressing to the Church while others faded from view. But as to specifics about the process we can say little. So too with the career of Jesus. It indeed appears that “early success” characterized his start in the Galilee. There are further reasons to think that opposition grew toward him in some respects *because of* his popularity, and that his movement was ultimately rejected in places where he devoted much time and effort. But we are unable to connect all the dots and trace the development.

What this means, ultimately, is that the most interesting question of all we cannot answer: did Jesus think his work in the Galilee a success? There are, as I see it, two difficulties in answering this question. One is phenomenological: the facts are not what is seen. Paul could write to Rome that he had “finished” proclaiming the Gospel and was now ready to head west (Rom 15:19-20), even though his “circle” (ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ), we might say, is quite narrowly drawn, the status of several churches was precarious at best, and he had many opponents, perhaps even losing Galatia to some of them. It is safe to say that if we did not have Rom 15:19-20 we would probably not guess that that was Paul’s perspective on his work. But there it is. In the case of Jesus we lack a Rom 15:19-20. All we have preserved is evidence that he experienced rejection and that he tried to make theological sense of disappointing experiences. I do not think we can produce a generalization about Jesus’ view of his ministry as a whole from anything discussed thus far.

¹¹⁹⁹ See here Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 14-16; Graham N. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 [orig. 1989]), 170-77. See also Tuckett, “Form Criticism,” 27-28.

The second difficulty is finding a thread to connect Jesus' activities in Galilee with what happens in Jerusalem. In my view this has never been successfully done. Questions always remain. Crisis theorists have typically understood Jesus' actions in Jerusalem as largely negative, shaped by his prior failure in the Galilee.¹²⁰⁰ This often entailed predicting judgment on the temple and/or Israel as a whole, or traveling to the holy city with the expectation to die. Such options are possible of course, but they are, to my mind, lopsided solutions, and it overstates matters to say Jesus' Jerusalem activity stands in "stark discontinuity" with what came before.¹²⁰¹ Jesus in Jerusalem does not strike me as one who just emerged from the Galilee defeated. He still commands crowds of sympathizers. The religious experts who formerly opposed him in the Galilee fade from view.¹²⁰² He does not speak only of judgment, but teaches, as before (e.g. Mark 12:35, 38 and par.; Matt 21:23; Luke 20:1; etc.). His so-called "triumphal"

¹²⁰⁰ On rejection in Galilee as one of the key reasons Jesus left for Jerusalem, see e.g. Bacon, *Beginnings*, 97-98; Bauman, *Life and Teachings*, 56; Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, 323-24. I doubt that, before his final Passover, Jesus had left Galilee out of fear of Antipas—even though concern about Herod may help explain his itinerancy. It makes little sense to think that Jesus fled the Galilee out of fear of Herod, only then to come to Jerusalem on its busiest and most politically charged week of the year—when the Roman garrison was stationed there, no less—and stage what were likely the most provocative actions of career: the triumphal entry and temple action.

¹²⁰¹ So Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 21 ("ein starkes Moment von Diskontinuität"). See also Rau, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 161; idem, "Die Ablehnung Jesu," 86.

¹²⁰² As is well known, in Jerusalem Jesus' opponents all but cease to be the Pharisees and become the leaders of the temple cult. Hence there is no clear connection between that conflict in the Galilee and Jesus' execution. To forge a connection here, Dodd, *Founder of Christianity*, 78, invented the theory of an alliance: "objections to certain features of his teaching...drove the Pharisees into an unnatural (and strictly temporary) alliance with the worldly hierarchy, whose motives for pursuing Jesus to death were quite other." For a similar view see John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 42 (Pharisaic "extremists" in the Galilee "alerted others in authority to the dangers implicit in Jesus' position").

entry on an ass, which I believe is historical,¹²⁰³ assumes that things are moving toward a climax for Israel.¹²⁰⁴ The meaning of the temple action is notoriously obscure,¹²⁰⁵ but if symbolic of coming destruction—which is likely, but may not be the full picture—there are no grounds to make rejection in Galilee a necessary subtext. I am attracted to the hypothesis that it was a recognition of rejection that caused Jesus to make sense of his death beforehand,¹²⁰⁶ but I do not know how to place that in relation to the rest of the ministry. Again, it does not seem that dramatic failure in Galilee is a necessary subtext. The larger question of what Jesus thought of his death is an interesting and important one that would extend the scope of this book too much.

Whatever Jesus thought of his prior ministry in the Galilee, it is more important to say, and more confidently it can be said, that he was still hopeful in the same mission that inspired him at the beginning: to announce that God’s kingdom was dawning and was soon to be revealed in full, and that all the people would see it together.

¹²⁰³ See Brent Kinman, “Jesus’ Royal Entry into Jerusalem,” in Bock and Webb, *Key Events*, 383-428.

¹²⁰⁴ See here Ben Meyer, “Jesus and the Remnant of Israel,” *JBL* 84 (1965): 123-130 at 126.

¹²⁰⁵ For discussion see Tan, *Zion Traditions and the Aims of Jesus*, 158-96; Jostein Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Temple* (WUNT 119; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000); Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, “Jesus’ Action in the Temple: A Key or a Puzzle?,” *ZNW* 97 (2006): 1-22.

¹²⁰⁶ See pp. 240 note 741 above.

APPENDIX:
JESUS, THE LAW, AND GROWING OPPOSITION

I begin by pointing out a historical conundrum that our sources preserve for us. According to my researches, this conundrum has never been explicitly named, though, once named, it helps to explain many of the perspectives on Jesus and the Law that have emerged throughout the years. This conundrum closely parallels another one that concerns the end of Jesus' life. In that later case, we have a disjuncture between what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem, and the content of Jesus' message as it has been preserved. It is well known: Jesus was executed as a political insurrectionist, and yet his message is nothing of the kind.¹²⁰⁷ Thus the effect (execution) does not have an explicable cause in what Jesus thought he was doing. There are a number of ways to resolve the conundrum: (a) on one end, deny it exists, and posit that Jesus actually was a revolutionist and the tradition has been subject to a massive cover-up;¹²⁰⁸ (b) on the other end, deny it exists, and posit that Jesus was killed for the nobility of his ideas or message (a very

¹²⁰⁷ On this question, see W. O. Walker, "The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Discussion of Methodology," *ATR* 51 (1969): 38-56 at 55; Craig A. Evans, "From Public Ministry to the Passion: Can a Link Be Found between the (Galilean) Life and the (Judean) Death of Jesus?," in *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 373-88.

¹²⁰⁸ This view has made a recent comeback, but still fails to compel. Cf. Martin, "Jesus in Jerusalem," 3-24; Bermejo-Rubio, "Jesus and the Anti-Roman Resistance," 1-105. Note how Bermejo-Rubio addresses this historical issue: "a harmless and peaceful man turns the well-attested fact of the crucifixion into an unfathomable conundrum" (74).

ahistorical reconstruction); (c) conclude there is no historical solution, because Jesus was killed more or less by accident or whim;¹²⁰⁹ (d) conclude that Jesus intended something non-political, but he was perceived as either intending or being swept up by (unintentionally) a more subversive end. All views on Jesus' crucifixion fit into these general categories in one way or another. To my mind, (d) is nearest the truth, though it not important to defend that here.

We are faced with a similar dilemma, I believe, when it comes to controversies between Jesus and the sages of his day. It is this: according to the presentation of the Gospels, which is where we must start and end our investigation, this opposition became quite harsh and vitriolic.¹²¹⁰ Yet when we look at the content of Jesus' teaching about the Law, it is hard to find what could have generated that response. Hence, there is a disjuncture between effect and cause. One could try to deny that the conundrum is real. One could contend, on the one hand, that Jesus' teachings about the Law *really were* offensive enough to generate such controversy. I do not think that this view is viable, for reasons that will become clear below.¹²¹¹ On the other hand,

¹²⁰⁹ Perhaps a fair characterization of Paula Fredriksen's view that Jesus "lost control" of his audience in Jerusalem; see *Jesus of Nazareth*, 247, 252.

¹²¹⁰ Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 338: "If some of the woes against the Pharisees go back to the historical Jesus, then the debate between the Pharisees and himself became at times fierce and vituperative—which is quite typical of the defaming of adversaries practiced in the ancient Mediterranean world." For reasons to think that such woes capture antagonism during Jesus' ministry, see Gustaf Aulén, *Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 61-63; Schürmann, "Redekomposition wider 'dieses Geschlecht' und seine Führung in der Redenquelle," 33-81; Eckhard Rau, "Jesu Auseinandersetzung mit Pharisäern über seine Zuwendung zu Sünderinnen und Sündern: Lk 15,11-32 und Lk 18,10-14a als Worte des historischen Jesus," *ZNW* 89 (1998): 5-29; idem, *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*, 126-66; Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 332-40; Casey, *Aramaic Approach to Q*, 64-104.

¹²¹¹ Proponents of this view often set Jesus above his Jewish context; see e.g. Helmut Merkel, "The Opposition between Jesus and Judaism," in Bammel and Moule, *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, 129-44 at 44: "Once we become aware of how often Jesus burst through the bounds of conventional thought and behaviour, we must regard a conflict between him and the representatives of the traditional order as unavoidable."

one could argue that we search in vain for a historical solution in the life of Jesus because the controversies are projections from the situation of the later Church.¹²¹² This is a more serious objection. But it too does not convince. It cannot be denied that the controversy narratives often function as “two level dramas.” Matthew’s particular focus on the Pharisees may assume a later, post-70 CE situation, when that group was beginning to fill a power-vacuum in Judaism created by the destruction of the temple.¹²¹³ But the simple fact that the Gospels reflect later realities does not thereby imply that these controversies are historically worthless.¹²¹⁴ The Synoptic Jesus does not simply mirror the actions of later, particularly Gentile or loosely-observant Jewish Christians.¹²¹⁵ He does not openly transgress the Law, or declare it void. He says nothing about

¹²¹² See Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 39-61; Gösta Lindeskog, *Die Jesusfrage im neuzeitlichen Judentum* (Uppsala: Lundquist, 1938); Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (2nd ed.; SJ 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974 [orig. 1961]), 175 (“All the Marcan ‘controversy stories’, without exception, reflect disputes between the ‘Apostolic Church’ and its social environment, and are devoid of roots in the circumstances of the life of Jesus” [italics orig.]); Arland J. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries: The Form and Function of the Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979), 19 (the conflict stories “composed at various periods in the history of tradition”), 39 (“composed by early Christian storytellers specifically for the needs of the newly developing Christian movement”), though see also 19, 198-99; Smith, *Magician*, 22-23, 29, 153-57; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 291 (Jesus had “little contact, either hostile or cordial” with the Pharisees); Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 375.

¹²¹³ See Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:133-38. For another take see Peter Fiedler, *Studien zur biblischen Grundlegung des christlich-jüdischen Verhältnisses* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 209-31.

¹²¹⁴ Cf. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History*, 51 (“It is hardly conceivable that the whole picture of an on-going controversy between Jesus and the sages of his time is fictional”); Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 268 (“We must not be tempted to assume that the insertion of a later conflict between the church and the Pharisaically shaped synagogue means that there were no conflicts at all between Jesus and the Pharisees, or even that it favors the notion that Jesus himself has to be considered part of the Pharisaic orientation”).

¹²¹⁵ Contra Mack, *A Myth of Innocence*, 177: “the challenge to Jesus that invites his address in the stories reflects in general the actual challenge that other Jewish movements posed for these early Christian communities.” On this point see esp. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 36-37; Martin Pickup, “Matthew’s and Mark’s Pharisees,” in Neusner and Chilton, *Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (eds. Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton; Waco: Baylor University Press,

circumcision, which was a pressing issue for later followers of Jesus.¹²¹⁶ His activities on the Sabbath have no clear parallel in the later period.¹²¹⁷ One could say that the controversy stories, taken collectively, are like pictures that do not fit the frames which have been placed around them.¹²¹⁸ In the Gospel of Mark, the Evangelist has used these stories to advance his own liberalizing perspective on the Mosaic Law as a whole, but the stories are very ill suited for that agenda.¹²¹⁹ He even uses them to explain the death of Jesus (3:6), even though the Pharisees and Herodians completely drop from the picture once Jesus gets to Jerusalem. The earliest Gospel appears to have made traditional materials serve a larger theological agenda for which they must be stretched in order to fit. James Crossley is right to note in his recent book that “The Synoptic disputes are fairly typical halakhic disputes, which do not seem to have been of interest to the early church outside of the Gospel tradition.”¹²²⁰ Crossley represents a trend in current Jesus

2007), 67-112 at 111. Pickup also is keen to remind (at 67, 111) that Mark’s claims about Jesus’ interactions with the Pharisees (most of which are “intact” in Matthew if only accentuated in certain ways) stem from around 70 CE, and thus must tell us something about the historical Pharisees prior to 70 CE, even if the controversies are in some sense “ideal scenes.”

¹²¹⁶ Unlike *Gos. Thom.* 53.

¹²¹⁷ Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 684-85, may be right that the traditions used by the Fourth Evangelist concerning the healing of the paralyzed man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9) and the healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-7) did not originally refer to the Sabbath. I do not know what to think.

¹²¹⁸ This picture/frame language appears in Dodd’s famous article, “Framework of the Gospel Narrative,” 399, though to different ends.

¹²¹⁹ Two examples: (a) the episode of picking grain on the Sabbath (e.g. what is permissible on the Sabbath) becomes, eventually, an opportunity for Jesus to express his lordship over the Sabbath itself (2:28). See here Meier, *Law and Love*, 267-93. (b) Mark turns the controversy over handwashing into an opportunity for Jesus to abolish the food laws (7:19). See Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 447-48.

¹²²⁰ Crossley, *Chaos of History*, 51. He is also right to note that controversy and debate about the proper interpretation of the Law was commonplace in Palestinian Judaism (see 123-24).

study that has generally found more history in these controversy narratives than our 20th-century forbearers.¹²²¹ This hardly settles the matter, but it is safe to state at this point that we cannot pin all of the conflict on the later Church.

My solution to the conundrum is similar to (d) above concerning the crucifixion of Jesus. In particular: Jesus did not intend to break the Law, and did not teach others to do so, but he was thought by some a lawbreaker on account of the company he kept and certain things that he said to his followers.¹²²² The opposition to Jesus that developed, then, was not merely a clashing between different approaches to the Torah. It was a response to the concrete reality of his growing movement and concern about what that entailed.

In defense of this proposal, we should state at the outset how this approach differs from other common treatments of Jesus, the Law, and the controversies. The typical course of action is to take all of the Synoptic and Johannine material that may be considered relevant to the question at hand, consider each datum individually, and try to identify wider theological coherence among the whole. The aim is to find Jesus “view” of the Law, or the intentions of Jesus’ teaching about the Law.¹²²³ This is not a futile endeavor, by any means. But it does place an inordinate focus on

¹²²¹ Though it is not as though all the earlier form critics were so skeptical. Vincent Taylor was characteristically conservative here in *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1933). For some recent work see Tom Holmén, *Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 88-274; Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 225-27; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 313-52; Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*.

¹²²² Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History*, 11-35, was right to argue that Jesus’ conduct perhaps raised the question of legality, but he did not breach the Law as such.

¹²²³ Just a sampling: Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, 297-300; Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 96-109; Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 209-22; Schweizer, *Jesus*, 30-34; Douglas J. Moo, “Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law,” *JSNT* 20 (1984): 3-49; Peter Fiedler, “Die Tora bei Jesus und in der Jesusüberlieferung,” in *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament* (ed. Karl Kertelge; QD 108; Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 71-87; R. P. Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark 7* (JSNTSup 13; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986); Barnabas Lindars, “All Foods Clean: Thoughts on Jesus and the Law,” in *Law and*

Jesus' intentions, and downplays or even ignores an equally important consideration: how Jesus *was perceived* with respect to the Law. Critics have been attentive to a possible distinction here when it comes to the crucifixion of Jesus, but generally not in regards to this issue. We do not need to think that Jesus was a poor communicator, or that he was "misunderstood" by his audience, to conclude that intention and perception did not always agree. This becomes clear when we think concretely about Jesus' ministry and the material that has been preserved.¹²²⁴ We do not have Jesus' systematic theology of the Law because he never produced one. We have instead a collection of varied material that was intended for varied audiences. This material includes his public proclamation, teaching to his immediate followers, conflicts with opponents,

Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1988), 61-71; Alan Watson, *Jesus and the Law* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 208-47; William R. G. Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels* (WUNT 97; Tübingen: Mohr, 1997), 518-24; Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 359-72; Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah: Was Jesus Indifferent to Purity?* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2002); Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 563-83; Allison, "Torah, *Urzeit*, *Endzeit*," *Resurrecting Jesus*, 149-97; Meier, *Law and Love*, 75 (as but one example: "it is vital to remember what our focus is. We are asking only what a particular Palestinian Jew named Jesus taught other Palestinian Jews about divorce ca. A.D. 28"; see also 342 on purity); Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), 190-215; Thomas Kazen, *Scripture, Interpretation or Authority? Motives and Argument in Jesus' Halakic Conflicts* (WUNT 320; Tübingen: Mohr, 2013); Per Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 137-45; LaCocque, *Jesus the Central Jew*, 131-68.

¹²²⁴ For some early thoughts along these lines, although mistaken in other ways, see R. Travers Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period* (London: Lindsey Press, 1928), 200-01: "Each (Jesus and the Pharisees) was seen by the other in the least favorable aspect. The Pharisees never saw him, and never could see him, as his friends of the multitude saw him." Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 576, also penned a few sentences on such matters, noting that "Jesus' teaching was heard differently. Some heard Jesus as not content to debate issues of purity solely at the level of ritual but pressing home the concerns behind such law and halakhoth to the more fundamental level of purity of motive and intention. Others heard Jesus, when the teaching was rehearsed within wider circles of discipleship, as validating or commending a more radical conclusion, to the effect that Israel's purity law no longer applied to the followers of Jesus." See also J. Arthur Baird, *Audience Criticism and the Historical Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969); Robert Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 240-41.

and probably *ad hoc* statements that were not repeated. We may be able to reconstruct with high probability what Jesus really thought by weaving together all of this material. We may well conclude that he was perfectly consistent and everything fits nicely into some eschatological scheme. But it should be obvious that that process would not help very much in explaining what Jesus' contemporaries thought of him. People formed opinions about Jesus not after carefully considering everything he had to say on a particular topic, for few would ever have had that opportunity. The disciples of Jesus may have known him in this capacity, because they left their homes and were with him daily. But most others would have had to form their view of Jesus only on the basis of hearsay or by listening him speak on particular occasions. The history of interpretation itself proves this is true. We find in Christian exegesis of the Gospels a countless number of perspectives on Jesus' view of the Law.¹²²⁵ Why is this? It is at least partly due to the fact that we, like some of Jesus' original hearers, do not have the whole picture.¹²²⁶ We have only snapshots of things that he said and did. From this vantage point one can easily emphasize or downplay certain particulars, or simply end up at the wrong place because of collective ignorance. Readers make sense of the micro evidence on the basis of their macro perspective on Jesus and what he was about, which may be well or ill informed.¹²²⁷ Hence diversity of opinion, diversity of perception, is inevitable, and so it must have been at the beginning.

¹²²⁵ Beginning, of course, with the Gospels themselves, which, as Loader shows in detail in his big study *Jesus' Attitude toward the Law*: "No two gospels are identical in their approach to Jesus' attitude toward the Law" (509). See also Helmut Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft: eine Skizze* (3rd ed.; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989 [orig. 1983]), 94.

¹²²⁶ In our case this is also partly due to our lack of familiarity with the interpretive traditions Jesus assumed and worked with; so John P. Meier, "The Historical Jesus and the Historical Law: Some Problems within the Problem," *CBQ* 65 (2003): 52-79.

¹²²⁷ E.g., for the majority of Christian history, Jesus was the new lawgiver who had replaced Judaism with the Church and, at least in the Reformation period, the Law with the Gospel. His "view of the Law," then, naturally confirmed that portrait.

The advantage of focusing on perception rather than intention is that it allows us to take what I consider to be the best insights of 19th-century and 20-21st-century research on this question. To generalize: most scholars have hesitated in recent years to say that Jesus *really* had offensive things to say about the Law—e.g., that he abolished the Law or declared parts of it null in some way.¹²²⁸ That must be right, for otherwise the early decades of Christian origins are inexplicable. But the older research is probably also on target in its common estimation that, in the eyes of the learned, Jesus had an offensive if not damnable perspective on the Law. Their reasoning for this was flawed, because it was often assumed that Jesus himself actually held such offensive opinions about the Law (e.g. that he intended to overturn it, or abolish it), and was informed by later Christian views of grace and internal righteousness.¹²²⁹ They saw the controversies between Jesus and his opponents as a controversy between Christianity and Judaism (and a caricatured Judaism at that).¹²³⁰ But the general insight here, I submit, should be affirmed, as it best explains why Jesus was worth paying attention to and taking the effort to oppose.

¹²²⁸ Particularly important here was the work of Vermes. Cf. his Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 11-45. Though see before him Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 367. Meier writes in *Law and Love*, 126: “it is nonsense to speak of the Jewish Jesus abrogating or annulling the Mosaic Law.” See also Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History*, 37; Flusser, *Jesus*, 58-66.

¹²²⁹ Another factor in the popularity of this view was the common assumption that the Law would be abolished or revised in the messianic age, a view which even Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 275, held, and, on the basis of which, he argued that Jesus abolished the food laws (not as a rejection of the Torah).

¹²³⁰ Cf. e.g. Baur, *Church History*, 1:30, where he states, among Jesus’ teaching being “qualitatively” different than the Mosaic Law, Jesus consistently taught that “the inner is opposed to the outer, the disposition to the act, the spirit to the letter.” He described this as Jesus’ “*Idealisirung*” of the Law. Cf. Susannah Heschel, “The German Theological Tradition,” in Neusner and Chilton, *Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, 353-74; Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (SJHC 20; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009).

Relevant to this line of inquiry is Chris Keith's recent study, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, which is "the first book-length treatment of the origins of the controversy between Jesus and the scribal elite."¹²³¹ Keith's study is to my knowledge the first to reflect seriously on the following:

...we may grant Jesus's healings, exorcisms, and particular perspective on Torah would have garnered him attention from the scribal authorities, but *only under the circumstance that Jesus's opinion mattered in the first place*. And with regard to the circumstance that Jesus's opinion did matter, unlike that of thousands and thousands of other Jews in the Second Temple period, we may ask the simple but poignant question "Why?" Why did the authorities care at all what Jesus thought or did? Why did they not dismiss him as a harmless madman?¹²³²

It is a great question. We may presume that so few have asked it because, to their minds, Jesus was the most interesting thing going in Galilee in the first century, and so everyone was naturally interested in what he had to say. Keith puts the matter in a more realistic historical framework, which is what raises the quandary: since Jesus was a Galilean peasant, possibly illiterate, and was certainly not the first to disagree with Pharisees and scribes on this or that, why the raucous?

I find Keith's ultimate response to his question suggestive but not convincing. Keith argues that it was Jesus' "status" as a teacher that is fundamental to the origin of the controversy narratives. In other words, the conflict that emerged between Jesus and the "scribal-literate authorities" was related to his authority to be teaching in the first place. Jesus, who did not possess what Keith calls "scribal-literate status," was nevertheless able to convince some that he had such status, which led the true "scribal elite" to try and expose Jesus as a fraud. It is a creative reconstruction. The problem, however, is that Keith fails to demonstrate that there existed a widely-recognized "line (that) divided authoritative teachers ('scribal-literate

¹²³¹ Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 7.

¹²³² Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 13 (italics orig.).

authorities') from everyone else."¹²³³ Classist views such as that represented in Sirach 38 can be presumed to exist in any culture,¹²³⁴ but it is unlikely that, in an unregulated pre-70 synagogal system,¹²³⁵ the mere fact of Jesus teaching would be considered the violation of some rule.

Keith's categories—particularly his construction of a "scribal literate" "status"—complete much of the legwork for his argument. The controversy over "status" does not arise naturally from the Gospels themselves, and Keith's readings are rather forced.¹²³⁶

¹²³³ Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 36. Here are two reasons why: (1) Four of Keith's "six key factors" of "scribal authority" (20) are not actually positive evidence for the existence of a particular class of persons whose rare skills "translated into interpretive authority" (27). His points about "majority illiteracy," "degrees of literacy," the "separate literary skills" of reading and writing, and "multilingualism" (21-26) are all interesting and illuminating, but would, at most, only constitute a negative argument that suggests, to paraphrase, "given the historical reality that so few could read the biblical texts, *we should consider it likely* that those select few who could do so had interpretive authority." That is a different angle than the thesis of Chapter 1 presents to the reader. (2) Keith's final two factors of "scribal authority" claim to "confirm a particular set of recognizable roles in the synagogue" (33). But again Keith's argument, if I understand it right, is not just that most people were unable to read and access the Scriptures and so those who were able typically did so. His claim is a bolder one: the "scribal elite" had a status as authoritative interpreters of Scripture in the synagogue, such that the historical Jesus could be faulted for violating some norm or rule not merely by the content of his teaching, but by the fact of his teaching at all.

¹²³⁴ Moreover, Sir 38 is not a sober description of sociological fact; it is an ideologically driven paean to the learned.

¹²³⁵ A rather striking lacuna in Keith's study is engagement with current work on pre-70 synagogues in Palestine, especially since he makes claims such as the following: "scribal-literate authorities...typically ran synagogues in Galilee" (142).

¹²³⁶ Particularly troublesome here are Keith's attempts to boil down the controversy narratives to two issues—"scripture" and "authority"—which he then connects with "scribal literate status." This is, to my mind, a good example of the "gist" method in Jesus research gone wrong, for Keith never attends to the details of these passages before subsuming them to his particular interests in these larger categories. For instance, for the "authority" question, I do not see one single text that Keith refers to that has anything to do with scribal status. Did the scribes have the "authority" to enter Jerusalem on an ass and overturn the tables of the moneychangers? Did the scribal elite have the "authority" to forgive sins? Perhaps one could make an argument that the Gospels have christologized this "authority" language which had concerned only scribal status originally. But that is not Keith's claim, since he thinks all of the Evangelists are aware of his category of "scribal literate status" and relate it to Jesus in different ways.

Nonetheless, I appreciate and find historically valuable what Keith is trying to do, which is to supplement traditional reconstructions of the conflict which focus on the intentions of Jesus' teaching, or the content of his message, alone. To repeat the view taken here: the "authorities care(d) at all (about) Jesus thought or did" because of concern about the growth of a movement surrounding a man perceived to be a lawbreaker.

Keith cites as representative of the traditional view Craig Keener's big book on Jesus (2009), which claims "Jesus...must have been aware that it (his eschatological teaching) would provoke hostility from the elite...Healings and exorcisms could point people to depend on God rather than the old order for their fundamental needs."¹²³⁷ Keener later claims that "Jesus' frequently non-Pharisaic approach to the Law would have brought him into conflict with the Pharisees."¹²³⁸ In both cases it is the content of Jesus' teaching or activity—both well understood by the opponents—to have generated the conflict.¹²³⁹ Keith says that he "does not necessarily disagree with Keener," and that the factors Keener describes could "explain why there was conflict to a degree."¹²⁴⁰ But here I dissent. First of all, to say that Jesus' healings and exorcisms were controversial because they told people to "depend on God" cannot be considered a serious historical proposal. There is nothing inherently controversial about healings and exorcisms, far less about depending on God. Keener's point about shunning "the old order" is another abstraction that quickly breaks down when one thinks about particulars. Keener does not mean

¹²³⁷ Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 38.

¹²³⁸ Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 39.

¹²³⁹ Though Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 223, does make passing reference to the popularity of Jesus at one point: "If Jesus' other activities (such as healings) augmented his popularity beyond that of most other teaches, others may have viewed him as undermining the sound teachings they were laboring to cultivate among the people."

¹²⁴⁰ Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 11.

that Jesus told people to reject the Law of Moses. An antinomian Jesus cannot hope to explain the observance of the Law among Jewish Christians after his death, including his immediate followers, as well as the debates that consumed the Church concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles (where there was no help from Jesus to settle matters).¹²⁴¹

Keener's other suggestion about Jesus' "non-Pharisaic approach to the law" may be right. We do not know much about first-century Pharisaism, but we know enough to say that Jesus opposed typically Pharisaic views on a series of individual topics.¹²⁴² Ed Sanders's view of the Pharisees as ecumenical Jews who were comfortable with difference strikes me as an anachronistic, if not apologetical, perspective.¹²⁴³ Perhaps it was issues of handwashing, tithing, and fasting that cultivated sufficient frustration among certain Pharisees to oppose Jesus publicly. But there are problems. On the one hand, this view has the tendency to set up Jesus as someone who went around the Galilee preaching against the Pharisees.¹²⁴⁴ That I doubt. Jesus held halachic views, obviously, but he was not remembered as a halachic teacher.¹²⁴⁵ His

¹²⁴¹ See Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 315: "Neither the actions nor the words of the historical Jesus had given precise and detailed instructions for such an initiative."

¹²⁴² Cf. Stephen Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority* (ConBNT 10; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1978); Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 229-30; Jacob Neusner, "The Pharisaic Agenda: Laws Attributed in the Mishnah and the Tosefta to the Pre-70 Pharisees," in Neusner and Chilton, *Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, 313-28; Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 119-20.

¹²⁴³ See also Jacob Neusner, "The Debate with E. P. Sanders since 1970," in Neusner and Chilton, *Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, 395-408 at 404.

¹²⁴⁴ Borg's study *Conflict, Holiness and Politics*, tends in this direction, since he conceived Jesus and the Pharisees engaged in a "hermeneutical battle" about "the validity of the quest for holiness as the vocation of Israel" (153-54). Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 234, admits that "Some Pharisees may have agreed with Jesus' emphasis on inner rather than outer purity," but then speculates that "they normally stated it only in private."

¹²⁴⁵ On point here was Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 205: "'If all the controversial discourses and sayings and answers to questions, which were so to speak wrung from Him, were subtracted from the sum of His utterances, how much of the didactic preaching of Jesus would be left over?' asks Albert Schweitzer. The answer obviously is, remarkably little, remarkably, that

teaching naturally touched on the Law, exposited it, and held it up as God's sacred Writ.¹²⁴⁶ He surely opposed Pharisees on occasion. But none of that means we can define Jesus' "approach" to the Law as "non-Pharisaic." (In fact, not only is our evidence too scant and fragmentary to identify, as Beker and countless others have tried with Paul,¹²⁴⁷ the "coherence" or "center" of Jesus' thought on the Law, it is not self-evident that he even had one.¹²⁴⁸) Moreover, as Meier has written and countless others have shown, "there were probably contrasting and clashing tendencies within Palestinian Judaism in regard to purity."¹²⁴⁹ In light of such difference, is unlikely that Jesus having his own view of things—and he does not appear to have rejected purity concerns outright¹²⁵⁰—would have been so controversial.¹²⁵¹ And finally, if the opposition

is, if one entertains the erroneous notion that Jesus was principally a teacher of the scribal sort, dispensing instruction on religious and moral issues, based upon Scripture and tradition."

¹²⁴⁶ On Jesus debating the interpretation of the Law, see Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 66, 151-59; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 281-312. On Galilee as a setting for such reflection, see Morten Hørning Jensen, "Purity and Politics in Herod Antipas's Galilee: The Case for Religious Motivation," *JSHJ* 11 (2013): 3-34.

¹²⁴⁷ Johan Christiaan Beker, *Heirs of Paul: Paul's Legacy in the New Testament and in the Church Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 24-26. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1-26.

¹²⁴⁸ So Cadbury, *Peril of Modernizing Jesus*, 145-46; Smith, *Magician*, 23; Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 28: "there is no indication that Jesus had a *systematic* interpretation of the Torah. He did not, as did the rabbis, discuss the various distinctions of tort law with other rabbinical scholars" (*italics orig.*). Note also the insightful concluding thoughts of Meier, *Law and Love*, 653-58: "one cannot discern any moral or legal 'system' containing some organizing principle or center that makes sense of the whole" (653). For him that is not only because of the nature of our evidence, but because Jesus is best understood as a "charismatic leader" and prophet, not a systematic halakhic thinker. This leads me to think that Meier's "mantra" throughout *Law and Love*, e.g. 649, that "the historical Jesus is the halakic Jesus," is more rhetoric than substance.

¹²⁴⁹ Meier, *Law and Love*, 351.

¹²⁵⁰ Cf. Paula Fredriksen, "Did Jesus Oppose the Purity Laws?" *BRev* 11 (1995): 18-25, 42-47.

between Jesus and the Pharisees on these traditions of the elders was so absolute,¹²⁵² it is inexplicable that Jesus would have sympathizers among them (Luke 7:36; 11:37; 13:31; Acts 15:5; John 3:1; Josephus, *Ant.* 20:9).¹²⁵³

To clarify: that there was conflict over such issues cannot be seriously questioned. But it is doubtful that “disagreement” on these matters alone is sufficient to explain the genesis of the controversy. To raise again Keith’s question: why care about Jesus’ opinion? If Jesus had grown a following of people who were starting to imitate his activities and sympathize with his views, *then* we might have cause for concern and reason to oppose Jesus publicly. Here we are very close to my own view: popularity and a perception of offensive content. Still, as said, the offense of Jesus was probably more severe than stepping on the toes of the Pharisees, at least to get the controversy started. If Jesus came under fire because he was perceived to challenge the Law of Moses, and that, because he was popular among the people, he was thought to be leading Israel astray, then we could readily see why particular disagreements on Pharisaic special interests were important: it was because they were couched within a larger perception that Jesus had said

¹²⁵¹ Contra K.-W Niebuhr, “Jesus, Paulus und die Pharisäer: Beobachtungen zu ihren historischen Zusammenhängen, zum Toraverständnis und zur Anthropologie,” *RCT* 34 (2009): 317-46.

¹²⁵² Against this see R. A. Wild, “The Encounter between Pharisaic and Christian Judaism: Some Early Gospel Evidence,” *NovT* 27 (1985): 105-24. Per Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 143, overstates matters when he says that Jesus “rejected” the oral tradition entirely and “stuck to the scriptures of the Jewish Bible alone.”

¹²⁵³ I think that some of these Lukan meal stories are from L. Cf. Patrick J. Mullen, *Dining with Pharisees* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 80. This is not to deny the important theological role the Pharisees play in Luke’s narrative. See David Moessner, “The ‘Leaven of the Pharisees’ and ‘This Generation’: Israel’s Rejection of Jesus According to Luke,” *JSNT* 34 (1988): 21-46; Amy-Jill Levine, “Luke’s Pharisees,” in Neusner and Chilton, *Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, 113-30.

offensive things about the Law. It would, moreover, explain the high temperature of the conflict without having to attribute it to the early Church projecting its angst onto the tradition.

I will defend this larger reconstruction in two steps, (i) looking first at how conflicts assume Jesus' popularity, (ii) and then the likelihood that Jesus was perceived by some as a lawbreaker.

(i) We turn again to consider another of Keith's insights in *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*. Although he is not the first to do so, Keith helpfully situates the controversies in an honor/shame value system.¹²⁵⁴ He recognizes that in an honor-shame society, "almost any social interchange... was an opportunity to gain or lose honor."¹²⁵⁵ Not only that, he argues that that was probably the intention of some of the engagements of Jesus in public: "the public critiques and challenges were calculated rhetorical ploys designed to upstate and humiliate the other party."¹²⁵⁶ Keith argues along this line because he reads several of the controversies as attempts by the "scribal-literate authorities" to reveal to the crowds that Jesus did not have "scribal literate" status, and thus expose him to public humiliation. That may or may not be the case. But one does not have to agree with Keith on that further point to note that, in taking this honor-shame risk, such controversies presuppose that Jesus already had some public reputation. If the

¹²⁵⁴ On these cultural values see essays in *Honor and Shame* (ed. Jean G. Péristiany; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); David D. Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1987). Important for New Testament studies, and by no means uncontroversial, has been the study of Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

¹²⁵⁵ Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 150. Cf. David M. May, "Mark 3:20-35 from the Perspective of Shame/Honor," *BTB* 17 (1987): 83-87; Joseph H. Hellerman, "Challenging the Authority of Jesus: Mark 11:27-33 and Mediterranean Notions of Honor and Shame," *JETS* 43 (2000): 213-28.

¹²⁵⁶ Keith, *Jesus against the Scribal Elite*, 148. For similar thoughts here see Zeba Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *JBL* 128 (2009): 591-611 at 601-02.

aim is to embarrass or condemn Jesus in the eye of the crowd, which is likely at least for some of the exchanges (cf. e.g. Mark 8:11/Matt 16:1/Luke 11:16; Mark 10:2/Matt 19:3), they assume the publicity of Jesus in that venue.

In support of this view, we should emphasize that the controversy stories, if they record any history at all, are not intellectual debates about halakha like those found in the later rabbinic literature. The conflicts, rather, are responses to and criticisms of *the prior activities* of Jesus.¹²⁵⁷ This corroborates the idea above that certain conflicts try to do something about Jesus' prior work and reputation among the public.¹²⁵⁸ If Jesus was asked about handwashing before meals (Mark 7:5; Matt 15:2; cf. Luke 11:38),¹²⁵⁹ was accused of violating the Sabbath (Mark 2:24 and

¹²⁵⁷ See here Cadbury, *Peril of Modernizing Jesus*, 143 ("Jesus had much to say about conduct...but...His remarks were usually in answer to concrete cases or questions"); Loader, *Jesus' Attitude toward the Law*, 521 ("One of the problems in approaching the traditions is that they do not portray Jesus as a formal interpreter of the Law, despite what the Matthean antitheses suggest. Much of Jesus' instruction in Mark, and doubtless, therefore, in Markan tradition was about mission, his own and that of his disciples, and about responses to it"); William R. Farmer, "Reflections upon 'the Historical Perimeters for Understanding the Aims of Jesus,'" 59-82 at 67-68. If the dispute story about divorce in Mark 10:2-12 commemorates some event in the life of Jesus—rather than being a creation of the Evangelist for an isolated saying about divorce (vv. 11-12) (so Jacob Kremer, "Jesu Wort zur Ehescheidung," in *Geschieden, Wiederverheiratet, Abgewiesen? Antworten der Theologie* [ed. Theodor Schneider; QD 157; Freiburg: Herder, 1995], 51-67 at 53-54)—then it is necessary to suppose that Jesus is here questioned about divorce because the Pharisees had heard about his former repudiation of the practice. That is a plausible scenario. Cf. Meier, *Law and Love*, 121, 124.

¹²⁵⁸ Crossley, *Chaos of History*, 110, wonders "If, say, the Jesus movement gained increasing numbers, might not some associated with a different group start to worry...?" Cf. Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, 263-99 (who sees Jesus and the Pharisees competing for audiences in the Galilee). Note also that Meier, at the end of his discussion of Jesus and the Pharisees in *Companions and Competitors*, 339, wrote this: "The tone of the interaction (between Jesus and the Pharisees) is often adversarial. This is not surprising, since both Jesus and the Pharisees were competing to influence the main body of Palestinian Jews and win them over to their respective visions of what God was calling Israel to be and do at a critical juncture in its history." He does not take this idea any further.

¹²⁵⁹ Cf. Neil J. McEleney, "Authenticating Criteria and Mark 7:1-23," *CBQ* 34 (1972): 431-60; Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, 60-88.

par.; 3:2 and par.; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:2-18; 7:14-25; 9:1-17; cf. *Gos. Thom.* 27),¹²⁶⁰ and was questioned about fasting (Mark 2:18 and par.; cf. Matt 16:16-18; *Gos. Thom.* 14, 27, 104),¹²⁶¹ it was because Jesus *had been doing* precisely those activities.¹²⁶² We can put it another way: if Jesus had not acted in these ways at some point in his ministry, we would not have these controversy narratives, since they are not decontextualized intellectual musings about purity, defining “work” on the Sabbath, or proscribing fasts for the pious. Such conflicts position themselves—by means of the backstories they presuppose—subsequent to earlier activities. To challenge this one would have to claim that the conflict stories themselves were created from whole cloth by early Christians to historicize Jesus’ “view” of these particular halakhic issues. That reshaping occurred should not be doubted; the theory that we are dealing with total creation, however, raises more questions than it answers.¹²⁶³

Attacks on Jesus’ character and background lead to similar implications about his public reputation. Jesus was likely called a “eunuch” (cf. Matt 19:12)¹²⁶⁴ and a false prophet (cf.

¹²⁶⁰ Cf. Sven-Olav Back, *Jesus of Nazareth and the Sabbath Commandment* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University, 1995), 2-13 (for a survey of views); Holmén, *Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking*, 100-06; Donald A. Hagner, “Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies,” in Bock and Webb, *Key Events*, 251-92. Contra Nina L. Collins, *Jesus, the Sabbath and the Jewish Debate: Healing on the Sabbath in the 1st and 2nd Centuries CE* (LNTS 474; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2014), 435-39 (for a summary).

¹²⁶¹ For discussion see Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, 94-96; Holmén, *Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking*, 128-57.

¹²⁶² Relevant here is Aulén, *Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research*, 55: “The cause for the irritation present among the Jews of Jesus’ time does not seem to have been his teaching. Primarily at issue was his behavior, his way of acting.” See also Smith, *Magician*, 23; Lutz Doering, *Schabbat* (TSAJ 78; Tübingen: Mohr, 1999), 445.

¹²⁶³ Cf. Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, “E. P. Sanders’ ‘Common Judaism’, Jesus, and the Pharisees,” *JTS* 46 (1995): 1-70 at 4-7.

¹²⁶⁴ Cf. Josef Blinzler, “Eisin eunouchoi: Zur Auslegung von Mt 19.12,” *ZNW* 48 (1957): 254-70; Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 182-84; Halvor Moxnes, “Lost in Translation: What Happened to the Eunuchs in Matthew 19:12?,” *Fourth R* 17 (2004): 3-8, 20.

πλανάω in John 7:12, 25-27, 40 and Deut 13:6),¹²⁶⁵ maybe an “illegitimate child” (John 8:41; 9:29).¹²⁶⁶ We do not know if Pharisees or scribes were involved in such *ad hominem* attacks. They may not have been. Some Pharisees or scribes probably were involved in the accusation that Jesus cast out demons “by the prince of demons” (Mark 3:22-30; Q 11:15-23).¹²⁶⁷ It is common to note that this episode assumes not only the prior exorcistic activity of Jesus, but the admitted successes of it.¹²⁶⁸ The exchange is also considered important because it shows that Jesus’ healings and exorcisms were not self-interpreting and could be understood in different ways. All of that is true. But it should not be missed that to appeal to the power of Beelzebul to explain the exorcisms of Jesus is not a self-interpreting move either. To the contrary, it is a rather remarkable accusation when one considers that there was nothing inherently objectionable about healing or exorcising (as Jesus himself seems to point out in context).¹²⁶⁹ So the Beelzebul accusation must also tell us something about the interpretive perspective of those opposed to Jesus, just as Q 11:20 (“If I by the finger/spirit of God...”) tells us something about the

¹²⁶⁵ Graham N. Stanton, “Jesus of Nazareth: A Magician and a False Prophet Who Deceived God’s People?,” in Green and Turner, *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ*, 164-80.

¹²⁶⁶ Cf. Bruce Chilton, “Jésus, le mamzer (Mt 1.18),” *NTS* 46 (2001): 22-27; Scot McKnight, “Calling Jesus *Mamzer*,” *JSHJ* 1 (2003): 73-103.

¹²⁶⁷ Jesus’ question “by whom do *your sons* cast them out?” (Q 11:19, my italics) would be an odd thing to ask the crowd or some anonymous objector.

¹²⁶⁸ Cf. Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological Study* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 266-69, 282.

¹²⁶⁹ Cf. Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 35-54; Meggitt, “Jesus and Healing,” 20-22; Tony Costa, “The Exorcisms and Healings of Jesus within Classical Culture,” in Porter and Pitts, *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture*, 113-44. See also Jack Lightstone, *The Commerce of the Sacred: Meditation of the Divine among Jews in the Greco-Roman Diaspora* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 56 (on magicians being associated with synagogues themselves).

interpretive perspective of Jesus on his ministry.¹²⁷⁰ For to take the exorcisms of Jesus in this way is to take them in their worst possible light.

What made Jesus worth calling names and attacking in this manner? We can presume it was not because these opponents, whoever they were, were evil and blinded by hate. And it probably was not because Jesus himself was just that interesting. What is clear is that these accusations, while perhaps spoken directly to Jesus on occasion, were intended for others to hear and take note of. Their illocutionary force is “stay away from Jesus.”¹²⁷¹ So it is likely that there was some concern about Jesus’ repore. In fact, several accusations are aimed not at Jesus alone but at the company he kept. To call Jesus a “sinner” and a “Samaritan,” if John does not mislead (John 8:48), is not slander of an individual but a group. Helpful here are Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey:

To label a person or group negatively is a social act of retaliation for some alleged deviance... (Epithets) *are social weapons*. In the hands of influential persons or powerful groups, they can inflict genuine injury, since they serve to define a person as out of social place, hence as permanently deviant. While putting a person down may be a joke or a serious challenge, it need not involve situating that person outside the accepted boundaries of society. But in a society built on grades of status, degrading terms that stick almost necessarily lead to collective avoidance, ostracism, and isolation.¹²⁷²

¹²⁷⁰ See here Aulén, *Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research*, 58: “The driving out of evil spirits, to use the expression of the time, was in and of itself no cause for criticism. When, nonetheless, this activity of Jesus was described a demonically inspired, the charge must have been based on the fact that his actions and patterns of behavior were interpreted from another angle.”

¹²⁷¹ Dwight D. Sheets, “Jesus as Demon Possessed,” in McKnight and Modica, *Who do My Opponents Say that I Am?*, 27-49 at 33: “The function of the (Beelzebul) accusation was to bring about the eradication of Jesus.”

¹²⁷² Cf. Malina and Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names*, 37.

(ii) There is, in addition, the likelihood that Jesus was perceived as a lawbreaker.¹²⁷³

Jesus' practice of table fellowship earned him the reputation of being a "friend of tax collectors and sinners." The view was probably not unique to his learned opponents, but we can be confident that the phrase originated as an accusation and not as a self-description.¹²⁷⁴ But why was Jesus accused of such a thing? Sanders convincingly eliminated two of the most common proposals. The problem was not that Jesus was hanging out with "the dregs" of society, or the "people of the land."¹²⁷⁵ Sanders exposed the theological root of such reconstructions, which caricature Jesus' Jewish contemporaries in order to make Jesus stand out as one who uniquely and offensively extended God's grace beyond its former limits.¹²⁷⁶ Moreover, the issue was probably not only purity either: eating with the unclean.¹²⁷⁷ In the LXX, ἁμαρτωλοί refers not

¹²⁷³ For some good insights here see Cadoux, *Historic Mission of Jesus*, 251-52; McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*, 94; Michael F. Bird, "Jesus as Lawbreaker," in McKnight and Modica, *Who do My Opponents Say that I Am?*, 3-26.

¹²⁷⁴ Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 109-11; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 174.

¹²⁷⁵ E.g. Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 112. Though, to be fair to Jeremias, he fully understood that "sinners" meant one who "failed to keep the Law" (see 111). He just thought that its range was broader. See recently Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 264-68 (who resembles Jeremias here); Craig Blomberg, "The Authenticity and Significance of Jesus' Table Fellowship with Sinners," in Bock and Webb, *Key Events*, 215-50 at 243-44 ("the notorious riff-raff of this world" and "outcasts of society").

¹²⁷⁶ Cf. Jeremias, *Proclamation of Jesus*, 2 ("his message of God's love for sinners...was so offensive to the majority of his contemporaries that it cannot be derived from the thinking current in his environment"); Saunders, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 206-08; Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching*, 97; Riches, *Transformation of Judaism*, 99, 108.

¹²⁷⁷ Contra Craig A. Evans, "'Who Touched Me?' Jesus and the Ritually Impure," in Chilton and Evans, *Jesus in Context*, 353-76. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 187: "Making *purity* and *table-fellowship* the focal points of debate trivializes the charge against Jesus" (italics orig.). Cf. Aulén, *Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research*, 60. However, Sanders has been challenged, and for good reason it seems to me, on his view that the Pharisees did not eat ordinary food in a state of ritual purity (see *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 437-38). Cf. Hannah K. Harrington, "Did the Pharisees Eat Ordinary Food in a State of Ritual Purity?" *JSJ* 26 (1995): 42-55; John C. Poirier, "Why Did the Pharisees Wash Their Hands?" *JSJ* 47 (1996): 217-33; Booth, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity*, 194-202; Crossley, *Chaos of History*, 112-14. I do not find

to “commoners” or “impure ones” but “the wicked” (רשעים).¹²⁷⁸ That is, those who willfully violated God’s Law and abandoned the covenant. It is probably the same here. Jesus was accused of fraternizing with “the wicked.”¹²⁷⁹

The offense is still not clear. “(N)o one would have objected if Jesus persuaded tax collectors to leave the ranks of the wicked: everybody else would have benefited. If he were a successful reformer of dishonest tax collectors, Jesus would not have drawn criticism.”¹²⁸⁰ Sanders’s own proposal, which stems from this correct insight, is not convincing, and has come under heavy scrutiny.¹²⁸¹ (In brief: that Jesus drew this accusation because he welcomed “the wicked” into his fold apart from the normal patterns of repentance.¹²⁸²) Sanders goes immediately for Jesus’ intentions, as is typical in scholarship when the topic is the Law, whereas

Meier, *Law and Love*, 399-405, convincing in his attempt to dismiss the entirety of the dispute about handwashing in Mark 7:1-5 as relevant for the life of Jesus, nor does Thomas Kazen, *Issues of Impurity in Early Judaism* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 161.

¹²⁷⁸ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 177-78.

¹²⁷⁹ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 179 (“the *charge* against him was not that he love the ‘*amme ha-arets*, the common people. If there was a conflict, it was about the status of the wicked” [*italics orig.*]). Cf. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 111; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 149, 211-12; Greg Carey, *Sinners: Jesus and His Earliest Followers* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 7; LaCocque, *Jesus the Central Jew*, 153-54.

¹²⁸⁰ Sanders, *Historical Figure of Jesus*, 236.

¹²⁸¹ Cf. Dale C. Allison Jr., “Jesus and the Covenant: A Response to E. P. Sanders,” *JSNT* 29 (1987): 57-78 at 71; Bruce Chilton, “Jesus and the Repentance of E. P. Sanders,” *TynBul* 39 (1988): 1-18; Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 44-45; Crossley, *Chaos of History*, 106-11. Recently Carey, *Sinners*, 27-36, tries to follow Sanders, but he also goes beyond him: for Sanders, to say Jesus did not require “repentance” means he did not require people to fulfill the normal cultic requirements (he is has often been misunderstood on the point). Carey’s view of “repentance” is more moralistic, e.g. “His companionship with sinners had no strings attached” (35).

¹²⁸² For an attempt to salvage some of Sanders’s key insights (which, to my mind, still struggles to make sense of Mark 1:40-44, as well as Matt 5:23-25), see Tobias Hägerland, “Jesus and the Rites of Repentance,” *NTS* 52 (2006): 166-87.

it is much more likely that what we have here is a difference in perception. Jesus sees one thing, his opponents see another. Jesus, like John, who issued a call for nation-wide repentance in view of the coming end, probably saw those who harkened to him as the firstfruits of the ingathering of the exiles, and a fulfillment of prophetic expectation that the end would see the conversion of the wicked to God.¹²⁸³ But Jesus' opponents saw something different. They saw people who, whatever their verbal claims or personal allegiances, failed to conform to God's Law.¹²⁸⁴ The concern here would be a real one. If Jesus' call to repentance, to the minds of these opponents, "did not actually work very well in practice," Jesus' association with them could easily be taken as aiding and abetting sin (see 1 Cor 5:11).¹²⁸⁵ He would be, from this perspective, a "friend of sinners." One could see his ministry opposed not just to the interests of the Pharisees, but to the

¹²⁸³ Mark 2:17, if substantially historical, would capture this well: "I have come not to call the righteous but sinners." Cf. Rau and Petersen, *Perspektiven des Lebens Jesu*, 51 (on the connection between Jesus message of the coming kingdom and his attempt to inaugurate "die Sammlung des Gottesvolkes"). I find my view preferable to the explanation of Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 532, who makes his Jesus a poster child for the New Perspective: "Jesus objected against boundary-drawing within Israel which treated some Israelites as outside the covenant and beyond the grace of God. Such attempts to erect internal boundaries within Israel, creating internal divisions within Israel, were contrary to the will of God." I see Jesus drawing boundaries all over the place.

¹²⁸⁴ I am intrigued by, but ultimately unsure of, the thesis of Rau that the Parable of the Prodigal Son was an attempt by Jesus, at an early phase in his ministry, to appeal to those who had taken offense to his fellowship with tax collectors and sinners. See "Jesu Auseinandersetzung mit Pharisäern," 5-29. He develops the idea further in *Jesus, Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern*.

¹²⁸⁵ Quotation from Crossley, *Chaos of History*, 110. Despite Crossley's good point here, his own view is tainted by the claim that "sinners" were "the rich" (e.g. "the very people representative of the economic injustices in [say] Galilee"). This is tendentious. See Aulén, *Contemporary Historical Research*, 66 ("One could not find a sign of...penance among the sinners with whom Jesus associated"); Bond, *Historical Jesus*, 129 ("it might be a matter of debate as to whether a person was a 'sinner' or not"). Note 1 En. 90:25 (seventy shepherds "were judged and found to be sinners"), 26 (the blinded sheep "were all judged and found to be sinners").

Law of Moses. Interestingly, the early Church itself was concerned to stress that Jesus' sinful company really was moved "to repentance," that is, they did not stay as they were before.¹²⁸⁶

Sanders's view is driven by the presupposition that, in order for the opponents of Jesus to make this statement about "sinners," these followers must have actually been, and continued to be, "sinners." I agree that the charge of "sinners" is serious, and also I agree that, at one time, they probably were. The "tax collectors" actually were tax collectors, at least once.¹²⁸⁷ But

¹²⁸⁶ This is a special concern of Luke, who often changes his source material to make the point (cf. 3:10-14 [in the preaching of the Baptist]; 5:32 [he adds εἰς μετάνοιαν to Mark 2:17's "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners"]; 15:7 [unique to Luke]; 18:9-14 [unique to Luke]; 19:1-10 [unique to Luke]). Cf. Guy D. Nave, *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts* (AcBib 4; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002). See also John 5:14 ("Behold! You have been made well! Do not continue to sin, lest something worse happen to you"); 8:11 ("go and sin no more"). One thinks of Oscar Wilde's prose-poem, "The Doer of Good," in *The Poetical Works of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1913), 298-99, in which Jesus comes upon four people he had formerly healed (the leper, a blind man, Mary Magdalene, and Lazarus). The leper had become a reveler, the blind man had become lustful, Mary had become a lawbreaker, and Lazarus now despairs of life. This raises an interesting historical question.

¹²⁸⁷ For discussion see Fritz Herrenbrück, *Jesus und die Zöllner: historische und neutestamentlich-exegetische Untersuchungen* (WUNT 41; Tübingen: Mohr, 1990); K. S. Krieger, "Die Zöllner: Jesu Umgang mit einem verachteten Beruf," *BK* 52 (1997): 124-30; Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 210-11.

Sanders collapses reality and perception,¹²⁸⁸ which is ironic considering the way he explains other Jewish polemic in the period.¹²⁸⁹ It is a move Sanders often made in his work.¹²⁹⁰

The important implication of our discussion for understanding the course of Jesus' career and the development of opposition to him is this: the perception of Jesus as a "friend of tax collectors and sinners" is a polemical statement that assumes an offensive message and public following. The two, in fact, are inextricably conjoined. The offense was not just that Jesus held a radical theological opinion about "sinners and tax collectors" in the Kingdom. I do not even think Jesus' own view is important here. The offense is that, aside from what Jesus thought about the matter, those opposed to him saw that he found a welcome audience among those who had, in their view, a shaky commitment to God's covenant with Israel. He had been "successful" in

¹²⁸⁸ On "partisan" debate and characterization, see Luke Timothy Johnson, "The New Testaments Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *JBL* 108 (1989): 419-441; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 287; Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 338. On "sinners" as a term used polemically to castigate rivals in Judaism, see James D. G. Dunn, "Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus," in *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research* (eds. James D. G. Dunn and Scot McKnight; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 463-89 at 475-82; idem, "Jesus, Table-Fellowship, and Qumran," in Charlesworth, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 254-72 at 259. However, I do not think that Dunn overturns Sanders's fundamental insight here, and he may overplay the rhetorical nature of the description. Note e.g. Mark 2:16: the mention of Jesus associating with "sinners and tax collectors" is not a polemical accusation (as appears in Q 7:34), but a sincere question.

¹²⁸⁹ E.g., when the Hodayot condemn opponents of "practicing idolatry at their festivals" (1QH^a 12:11-12) and "altering the very Laws of God" (1QH^a 13:36), they were not literally setting up idols in the sanctuary and redacting Torah scrolls. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 337-39; idem, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 188.

¹²⁹⁰ E.g. Judaism *really* was a religion of grace, therefore Paul could not have criticized it for legalism. The Jerusalem priesthood *really* were not corrupt, therefore Jesus could not have been opposed to them. Such lines of argument, in my view, are unpersuasive. On the issue of the priesthood in particular, how does the historian speak of "evidence" when talking about "corruption"? Sanders is right that our records of financial dishonesty and violence refer to the latter half of the first century CE. But that does not establish that Jesus could not have believed the priesthood corrupt.

recruiting their likes to his cause. We have here a response to a social force, and not just a debate about a theological idea.¹²⁹¹

If Jesus's activities (e.g. with the company he kept) helped to develop this negative, law-shunning reputation, then hearing some of Jesus' sayings about discipleship and other topics could have easily bolstered it. Important here is the recognition that not everything Jesus said about the Law should be regarded as his *public teaching* about the Law. As mentioned above, the Gospels preserve a complex mixture of material that touches on the Law as Jesus encountered various audiences in various contexts.¹²⁹² Unfortunately we are often unable to reconstruct the original audiences of Jesus' utterances.¹²⁹³ We do know, however, that unlike Theudas and the Egyptian, Jesus did not call all to "follow" him.¹²⁹⁴ Jesus' sympathizers can be distinguished among at least three different levels of commitment: the circle of "the twelve," other "disciples"

¹²⁹¹ I would argue the same regarding the "offensive nature" of Jesus' self-claim. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 280 ("If we give full weight to Jesus' extraordinary statements about the kingdom and about the role of his disciples—and thus, by implication, about himself—we have no trouble seeing that his claims were truly offensive..."). The statement that one's response to Jesus decides one's fate on the final judgment is easily dismissed as the statement of a madman—little worth responding to—if Jesus were, like the other Jesus ben Ananias, a lone ranger. If, however, a number of people had actually come to believe that, then there could be a problem here.

¹²⁹² This is true, of course, not just for Jesus' views on the Law, but his teaching in general. Here see Manson, *Sayings of Jesus*, 28. Already in 1745 Edmund Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 293, recognized the importance of this consideration for explaining differences in Jesus' teaching, although he overstates his case: "This mixture of so various, and seemingly opposite qualities (in Jesus' teaching)...did not proceed from any variation in his temper, but wholly in that of those among whom he convers'd." See also George Campbell, *The Four Gospels, Translated from the Greek with Preliminary Dissertations, and Notes Critical and Explanatory* (2nd ed.; Aberdeen: J. Chalmers, 1803 [orig. 1789]), 114 (Jesus' teaching appears to change because "the particular and immediate object varies with the subject and occasion").

¹²⁹³ Cf. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 322; Buchanan, *Jesus the King and His Kingdom*, 81; Schröter, *From Jesus to the New Testament*, 111; Sanders and Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, 377-44.

¹²⁹⁴ As is well known. Cf. e.g. Dibelius, *Jesus*, 58-60; Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 233-34; Meier, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, 80-82; etc.

who followed and supported his ministry, the crowds.¹²⁹⁵ The last in the list were the recipients of Jesus' teaching and miracle working activities, but were never expected to leave their belongings and "follow." Jesus, in other words, did not place the same demands on all.

It is noteworthy, then, that a pattern emerges in our sources. What were potentially Jesus' most offensive or radical statements about the Law—or at least have been so read throughout the history of interpretation—were probably said to disciples. Indeed, much of the public teaching appears rather conventional.¹²⁹⁶ But to whom did Jesus say, "let the dead bury their own dead" (Q 9:60)? The Gospels tell us: a potential disciple.¹²⁹⁷ Jesus does not intend to establish a universal rule of behavior for how one's parents should be treated after death. This is important because, if it were a general rule, this saying could easily be taken as a violation of the fifth commandment to honor one's father and mother, especially in light of the importance of burial piety in Second Temple Judaism. The same could be said of the imperative to "hate father and mother" (Q 14:26; cf. *Gos. Thom.* 55; 101). This statement clearly inverts the fifth commandment to "honor your father and mother" (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16: τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα σου), which must have been rhetorically intentional.¹²⁹⁸ But, again, it is

¹²⁹⁵ Cf. Meier, *Companions and Competitors*, 627-30; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 539-41.

¹²⁹⁶ Jesus reportedly taught that the Shema and Lev 19:18 are the two greatest commandments (Mark 12:29-31). He taught that the Decalogue should be kept (Mark 7:9-13, 21-23; 10:17-19). He said that "not one iota" will fall from the Law (Q 16:17). He encouraged righteous living, etc. Cf. Levine, *Misunderstood Jew*, 17-52.

¹²⁹⁷ As is widely recognized, see e.g. Hengel, *Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, 4 note 4, 73; Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 205-06; M. Cifrak, "Lass die toten ihre Toten begraben" (Q 9,60): Das Motiv der Zögerung in der Nachfolge Jesu," *Anton* 87 (2012): 11-24.

¹²⁹⁸ See Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 62-64; Peter Balla, "Did Jesus Break the Fifth (Fourth) Commandment?," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 4:2973-3022 at 2969-71. It is interesting to note that a similar subversion of expectations, and on the same topic of family division, appears in Q 12:51: "do you think that I have come to

quite unlikely that this was intended as general ethical advice for public consumption. The topic concerns the breaking up of families, and thus naturally has to do with Jesus' call for some to forsake all and follow him.¹²⁹⁹ Jesus himself had apparently shunned his own family in favor of a new "fictive kinship group," which was, of course, controversial (cf. e.g. Mark 3:34-35). Those who had adhered to him became his "brother and sister and mother." It is also possible that Jesus' prohibition of divorce (which Moses allowed, Deut 24:1-4; Jer 3:8) was directed to those who followed him: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her" (Mark 10:11-12). Jesus had both men and women in tow (cf. Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:1-3) who may have left their families to do so. Thus the temptation to divorce one's former spouse and join to another would have been real.¹³⁰⁰

Not one of these claims is novel. But in other discussions the question of interest to critics is again Jesus' intentions. What was Jesus' view of the Law? How did he square this radical statement with that conservative statement? Such are important lines of inquiry, to be sure. We should assume that Jesus knew what he was doing.¹³⁰¹ There is no reason to think that Jesus wanted to overturn the fifth commandment by telling his disciples to "hate father and mother." It is, rather, a rhetorically charged statement aimed to highlight the importance and urgency of his call. Similar qualifications could be provided for everything listed above. Jesus

cast peace on the earth? No! But rather division!" This language of "throwing/casting peace" is also associated with family issues in Mek. on Exod 20:25, Sipre to Num. 16.3 (on 5:16-28).

¹²⁹⁹ Cf. C. Heil, "Was ist 'Nachfolge Jesu'? Antworten von Q, Matthäus, Lukas—und Jesus," *BK* 54 (1999): 80-84; Michael Lattke, "The Call to Discipleship and Proselytizing," *HTR* 92 (1999): 359-62.

¹³⁰⁰ For this idea see Allison, "Problem of Audience," 43-44.

¹³⁰¹ A few possibilities: see Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*, 131; Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft*, 93-130; Moo, "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law," 3-49; Tom Holmén, "A Contagious Purity: Jesus' Inverse Strategy for Eschatological Cleanliness," in Charlesworth and Pokorný, *Jesus Research*, 199-229.

did not think himself rejecting Moses in prohibiting divorce, but returning to the original plan of creation.¹³⁰² And so on.

The intentions of Jesus aside, however, it is just as important to consider how such sayings and their corresponding activities would have been perceived by others, and particularly by outsiders who would not have had Jesus' full perspective on the topic at hand. This is a matter over which Jesus would not have control. We do not have to guess what happened. Jesus was at one point accused of being a "drunkard and a glutton." The line is straight from Deut 21. The subtext is revealing:

If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father and mother, who does not heed them when they discipline him, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him (וּתְפֹשׁוּ) and bring him out to the elders of his town at the gate of that place. They shall say to the elders of his town, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard (זוֹלֵל וְסוֹבֵא).' Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death. (Deut 21:18-21).

This is a serious charge, on par with the accusation of being a "friend of tax collectors and sinners."¹³⁰³ As a "glutton and drunkard," Jesus is a "rebellious son" and a breaker of the fifth commandment. He violates not this or that ordinance of the Pharisees, but the Law of Moses. The accusation does not square with Jesus' own intentions (presumably), but it is a readily understandable way to make sense of what we have discussed, and is fully understandable within the parameters of inner-Jewish dispute and polemic of this period.¹³⁰⁴

¹³⁰² Cf. Hans Joachim Schoeps, "Restitutio Principii als kritisches Prinzip der Nova Lex Jesu," in *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit, religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), 271-85; Meyer, *Aims of Jesus*, 139-40; Tärrech, *Jesus: An Uncommon Journey*, 235-41; Bilde, *Originality of Jesus*, 145.

¹³⁰³ Cf. Howard Clark Kee, "Jesus: A Glutton and Drunkard," in Chilton and Evans, *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, 311-32 esp. at 329; Joseph B. Modica, "Jesus as Glutton and Drunkard," in McKnight and Modica, *Who do My Opponents Say that I Am?*, 50-75.

¹³⁰⁴ Cf. e.g. CD 1:18-20: (certain opponents) "had sought easy interpretations, choose illusions, scrutinized loopholes, chose the handsome neck, acquitted the guilty and sentenced the

This situation, if accurate, would present rather striking parallels with the ministry of Paul. Paul, like Jesus, was soundbiteable. In Romans Paul had to respond to accusations that he was an antinomian preacher and had said some radical things about grace (see also Acts 21:20-21). Interestingly, some of these misrepresentations sound a lot like some of Paul's one-liners in Galatians and even elsewhere in Romans.¹³⁰⁵ So the misunderstandings make sense. It is likely that Jesus had to face a similar problem. The risk of misrepresentation may even have been greater for Jesus when it came to certain issues, since he left nothing in writing and everything known about him was passed around by word of mouth. Notice what we have considered so far: "let the dead bury the dead," "hate your father and mother," "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery." What would people have thought if these sayings, possibly delivered "in secret," found their way to the rooftops? These are not well-crafted "positions" on pressing legal issues (while they may have stemmed from such). They are soundbites. And as such they can be taken in drastically different directions depending upon the context into which one places them. The original context, we must assume, is not only opaque to us who read the Gospels now, but also for those who were not followers of Jesus, since all of these were probably directed to disciples. Consider, in addition, the following:

just, violated the covenant, broke the precept..." Of course, these opponents, perhaps Pharisees, would not see matters in this way, but this take is still understandable as a reaction to their Halacha. See also T. Levi 16:2; T. Mos. 7:3-10.

¹³⁰⁵ Cf. Isaac J. Canales, "Paul's Accusers in Romans 3:8 and 6:1," *EvQ* 57 (1985): 237-45; F. Stanley Jones, "*Freiheit*" in *den Briefen des Apostels Paulus: eine historische, exegetische und religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (GTA 34; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 111, 116-17; Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Purpose of Romans," in *The Romans Debate* (ed. Karl P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 231-42 esp. at 239-40; James D. G. Dunn, "Was Paul Against the Law? The Law in Galatians and Romans: A Test-Case of Text in Context," in *Texts and Contexts: Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (eds. Tord Fornberg and David Hellholm; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 455-75.

- “the Law and the Prophets were proclaimed/prophesied until John” (Luke 16:16; Matt 11:13);
- “there is nothing outside of a person going into him that is able to defile him, but the things which come out from a person are the things that defile the person” (Mark 7:15);
- “Sabbath was made on account of the man, not the man on account of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27);
- “tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you (chief priests and scribes) do” (Matt 21:32).

These sayings are similar in that a slight variation here, a minor difference in context there, could create a totally new meaning.¹³⁰⁶ In fact, that is exactly what has happened. The Evangelists disagree on what to make of them, each molding each saying to correspond to his own vision for Jesus’ person and task. For instance: Matthew placed Q 16:16 in an eschatological context so as to clarify that John the Baptist is Elijah who is to come, whereas Luke had it express the uniqueness of the kingdom message.¹³⁰⁷ Mark understood 7:15 to mean that Jesus “declared all foods clean,” whereas Matthew took it to be far less dramatic and still within the handwashing and purity concerns that began the conflict (Matt 15:11).¹³⁰⁸ Critics have typically diagnosed these differences as a problem,¹³⁰⁹ and regarded our struggle to get at the *ipsissima verba Jesu*

¹³⁰⁶ For insightful reflection on this issue, see David E. Aune, “Oral Tradition and the Aphorisms of Jesus,” *Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul*, 256-302.

¹³⁰⁷ On Q 16:16-18 see Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude toward the Law*, 337-39; Simon J. Joseph, “‘For Heaven and Earth to Pass Away?’ Reexamining Q 16,16-18, Eschatology, and the Law,” *ZNW* 105 (2014): 169-88.

¹³⁰⁸ See here Jan Lambrecht, “Jesus and the Law: An Investigation of Mk 7, 1-23,” *ETL* 53 (1977): 24-79, who in fact states on 77 that Jesus “was in reality both anti-Halachah and anti-Torah”). Cf. Helmut Merkel, “Markus 7.15: das Jesuswort über die innere Verunreinigung,” *ZRGG* 20 (1968): 340-63 (a survey of views at 341-50); Charles E. Carlston, “The Things that Defile (Mark VII.15) and the Law in Matthew and Mark,” *NTS* 15 (1968-69): 75-96.

¹³⁰⁹ See Meier, *Law and Love*, 9. See also Heikki Räisänen, “Jesus and the Food Laws: Reflections on Mark 7:15,” *JSNT* 16 (1982): 79-100.

as a barrier to historical reconstruction. On one level that is true, if one's interests are solely the intentions of Jesus. To my mind we have little hope of knowing what Jesus actually meant by several of these sayings, if they even go back to him. But on another level, our inability to know exactly what Jesus said, and then what he may have meant, probably tells us something important about the ministry of Jesus. For the plight cannot be unique to us. The difficulty probably characterized the reception of such sayings from the beginning.

There is another parallel with Paul that has to do with opposition. Paul was a not controversial figure in his time because he was the only one casting grace into a sea of legalism. Paul was controversial because he was having success among the Gentiles by not requiring them to adopt the sign of Abraham's covenant, circumcision, and other distinctive markers of Jewish identity. Paul was controversial, then, because the expansion of his ministry was thought to entail the spread of an anti-Torah message.¹³¹⁰ On the Torah Paul's views are different than Jesus', to be sure, as their ministerial settings and goals were literally miles apart. But the opposition to Jesus is best explained on similar grounds: in the context of a wholly inner-Jewish dispute, some could view the spread of Jesus' message as a challenge to the authority of the Torah.¹³¹¹ The Gospels, of course, have framed opposition to Jesus from the Pharisees in a highly negative manner. They even scheme his death (Mark 3:6). The Gospel authors think they know the

¹³¹⁰ A challenge to this view would be the recent article by Paula Fredriksen, "Why Should a 'Law-Free' Mission Mean a 'Law-Free' Apostle?," *JBL* 134 (2015): 637-50, which makes several insightful arguments concerning Paul's own "judaizing" of the Gentiles. But her assumption that Paul suffered beatings in synagogues because he was requiring *too much* of Gentiles is problematic, and seems to be overly reliant on a particular sketch of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world. More compelling here is Levine, *Misunderstood Jew*, 69-72, 78-82.

¹³¹¹ Cf. Klausner's take on the matter in *Jesus of Nazareth*, 276: "The people flocked after the Pharisaic 'Rabbi' whose parables were so attractive and who did not insist that men observe all the laws in every detail. Here was a 'Rabbi' whose 'yoke was easy and whose burden was light.'"

motives of those opposed to Jesus, which are not noble (e.g. Mark 2:6-7; 3:5 [πώρωσις τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν]; 8:11 [πειράζοντες]; 12:13 [αὐτὸν ἀγρεύσωσιν λόγῳ]; 15:10 [φθόνος of the chief priests']). Here the Evangelists mislead us.¹³¹² But if we put the controversy into the narrative advanced here, there is nothing inherently suspicious about Galilean sages seeking ways to oppose Jesus publically.¹³¹³ Sanders wrote “We can hardly imagine the Pharisees as policing Galilee to see whether or not an otherwise upright man ate with sinners.”¹³¹⁴ That is a rhetorically powerful statement that is, on further thought, tendentious. Pharisees, we may presume, cared for the Law and treasured the covenant. Were they not doing God’s good work by opposing a man who, from their perspective, had broken up families, fraternized with “the wicked,” and presumably said other offensive things about the Torah?¹³¹⁵

To close: the fundamental point of this Appendix is that there must have been some reason that Jesus was worth paying attention to and taking the effort to oppose. It is a good hypothesis that Jesus was perceived by some to be a lawbreaker, and it was alarming that a number of people were sympathizing with him. To my mind, that combination offers a better explanation of the extant evidence than other proposals. The upshot is a reconstruction that

¹³¹² Cf. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics*, 154.

¹³¹³ On plucking grain on the Sabbath, Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 226, points to Bultmann who “observed” that the passage represents a Christian response to Jewish critics. When Sanders says Bultmann “observed,” he means Bultmann asserted.

¹³¹⁴ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 178, see also 265 (“Pharisees did not organize themselves into groups to spend their Sabbaths in Galilean cornfields in the hope of catching someone transgressing”). He is followed by Meier, *Law and Love*, 275-75. On Pharisees in the Galilee see Sean Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 305-34; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 306-08; James F. Strange, “Archaeology and the Pharisees,” in Neusner and Chilton, *Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, 237-54. Important for this debate is Josephus, *Life* 191-93, 197.

¹³¹⁵ Cf. rightly Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 568; Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 17. This is not to deny that the controversy stories in the Synoptic tradition are, at least in some respect, “idealized scenes.”

sounds a lot like the plotlines of the old Lives of Jesus. Not only do we have “early success, growing opposition,” we have “growing opposition” that is, some sense, *because of* that earlier success. We have, one could say, a response to Jesus’ “Galilean spring.” Moreover, the activities of Jesus that seem to have contributed to such controversy probably characterized his early activities in Capernaum, as noted above: leaving his family, calling disciples, and gaining an audience from “tax collectors and sinners.” A narrative starts to emerge. We cannot, of course, like the 19th-century critics, stand inside this development and chart it from within in detail. We have to look at the outcome and work backwards to a probable cause, as do historians with the crucifixion of Jesus and many other issues in the study of Christian origins.

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