

Jesus and the Twelve

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IBR Jesus Project Paper 2. That Jesus associated himself especially with twelve of his followers is a datum firmly established by good arguments across a broad spectrum of modern Jesus studies. But why Jesus chose the Twelve is in need of serious reconsideration because the standard, eschatological explanation has rarely been examined. A careful examination of the evidence pertaining to the number "twelve" in the Hebrew Bible and in ancient Jewish sources suggests that Jesus chose the Twelve to evoke the twin themes of covenant renewal (a Joshua theme) and eschatological restoration (with the reunification of the twelve tribes implied).

Key Words: Twelve, Historical Jesus, covenant, twelve tribes, eschatology, Qumran

Without overstating the case, we can affirm today that Jesus scholarship has come to this confident conclusion (among others): the number "twelve" signifies a category already in existence during the life of Jesus, and most scholars think that Jesus chose the number "twelve" with fundamental intention. Which intention, or which set of factors shaped this intention, however, has not yet been confidently concluded. It is the purpose of this paper to assess once again the arguments for the historicity of the Twelve and then to suggest why it was that Jesus selected twelve.

The list of the twelve names appears in Mark 3:16-19; Matt 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13; such a listing of a famous teacher's pupils is known also in rabbinic Judaism (*m. 'Abot* 2:8-14; compare the list of Jesus' supposed disciples in *b. Sanh.* 43a).¹ Apart

1. The intention and emphasis of each text are noteworthy: the mishnaic text elaborates on each in the direction of piety and describes the legacy of each disciple (the good qualities of each disciple of Yohanan b. Zakkai, their response to the meaning of "the straight path" and "the bad road," and their three memorable sayings); the text of the Babylonian Talmud discredits Jesus, his disciples, and the emerging church by

from one irregularity² and some minor differences in order, which I shall not explore here, the names are solidly consistent and grouped in fours:

<i>Mark</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>Acts</i>
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
James b. Zebedee	Andrew	Andrew	John
John b. Zebedee	James b. Zebedee	James b. Zebedee	James b. Zebedee
Andrew	John b. Zebedee	John b. Zebedee	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Matthew	Thomas	Matthew	Bartholomew
Thomas	Matthew	Thomas	Matthew
James b. Alphaeus	James b. Alphaeus	James b. Alphaeus	James b. Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Cananean	Simon the Cananean	Jude b. James	Jude b. James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

Apart from this evidence, the following traditions mention the Twelve: Mark mentions a separate "ordination" (Mark 3:13-15; compare with Luke 6:13); the group is occasionally described as being with Jesus, in whose presence they are instructed (4:10; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:17); and Judas is designated "one of the Twelve" (14:10, 43; compare with Matt 26:14; Luke 22:3; John 6:71). In addition, the Q tradition underscores the special role that the Twelve will have in the future Kingdom as judges (Matt 19:28 par. Luke 22:30). The later Evangelists confirm these impressions: Matthew paints the Twelve onto his canvas as recipients of Jesus' instruction (for example, Matt 11:1; 20:17; 26:20), and the same is done by Luke (8:1; 18:31) and John (6:67, 70). John identifies Thomas, alias Didymus, as one of the Twelve (20:24). It is not the purpose of this essay to examine the historicity of each of these traditions but instead to assess the reliability of Jesus' having a specially designated Twelve and to see if this number provides insight into the mission of Jesus.

the absence of favorable witness for Jesus and by exegesis, which also confirms execution for each of the named disciples of Jesus (which names are Matthai, Nakai, Nezer, Buni, and Todah), only one or two (Matthai and Todah [Thaddaeus?]) of which appears to be in the Christian list. The lists of the disciples in the earliest Jesus traditions are stark and nearly absent of commentary; their intentions appear to be nothing more than a list in order to know who are the authentic *Tradents* of the Jesus tradition.

2. The one irregularity is Thaddaeus or Judas ben Jacob (Jude son of James). Most conclude that Simon "the Zealot" and Simon "the Cananean" are the same person. However, E. P. Sanders leads these differences to a different conclusion: see his *Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993) 120-22. His arguments are not without serious merit but will not be the focus of this study. See here N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 300 n. 214.

1.0. THE HISTORICITY OF THE TWELVE IN JESUS' MINISTRY

The most complete analysis of the historicity of the Twelve is by J. P. Meier, whose study forms a survey of research, a response to the major critical studies,³ as well as a consensus-building programmatic statement.⁴ One of the first papers I wrote in preparation for a Ph.D. dissertation on Matthew's presentation of the missionary discourse was a study of the intention of Jesus in the mission of the Twelve. More than a decade later, Meier's study summarizes the arguments, and these arguments have not changed substantively. In the case of Meier, we encounter characteristic thoroughness and special emphasis given to criteria.⁵ I shall reexamine these arguments and then add, by way of confirmation, a final explanatory argument for the historicity of the Twelve.

Before I do this, I wish to give a response to the recent conclusion of the Jesus Seminar regarding the viability of a special group called

3. In particular, see P. Vielhauer, "Gottesreich und Menschensohn in der Verkündigung Jesus' in *Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (TBü 31; Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1965) 55-91; G. Klein, *Die zwölf Apostel: Ursprung und Gehalt einer Idee* (FRLANT 77; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1961); W. Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (trans. J. E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1969) 67-87, 231-88.

4. J. P. Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve: Did It Exist during Jesus' Public Ministry?" *JBL* 116 (1997) 635-72; see also E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 98-106, where he states that the historicity of the Twelve is "the weakest item in the list" of his facts about Jesus (p. 101). For further studies, see J. Dupont, "Le nom d'apôtres a-t-il été donné aux douze par Jésus?" *OrSyr* 1 (1956) 267-90, 425-44 (Jesus established the Twelve but the word "apostle" is later); B. Rigaux, "Die 'Zwölf' in Geschichte und Kerygma," in *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus: Beiträge zum Christusverständnis in Forschung und Verkündigung* (ed. H. Ristow and K. Matthiae; Berlin: Evangelische, 1960) 468-86; idem, "The Twelve Apostles," *Concilium* 34 (1968) 5-15; R. P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1968) 192-209; W. Trilling, "Zur Entstehung des Zwölferkreises: Eine geschichtskritische Überlegung," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs: Für Heinz Schürmann* (ed. R. Schnackenburg et al.; Freiburg: Herder, 1977) 201-22 (who opts for pre-Markan, and therefore probably authentic, tradition in Mark 3:14a, 16a and for substance in the inclusion of Judas as well as in the tradition in 1 Cor 15:5 and the term "eleven"; Matt 19:28 is inconclusive); B. F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979) 154 n. 82; J. Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. J. E. Crouch; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 27-28; H. O. Guenther, *The Footprints of Jesus' Twelve in Early Christian Traditions: A Study in the Meaning of Religious Symbolism* (AOS 7/7; Berne: Peter Lang, 1985). In what follows I will not catalog views on the historicity, since the arguments and evidence are summarized with exhaustive thoroughness by J. P. Meier.

5. Ancient evidence does not easily submit to the supposedly impartial and scientific criteria established by modern Jesus historians. Any reading of modern scholarship finds a plethora of compelling arguments used to establish solid historical evidence; only sometimes do these arguments follow the lines of the criteria. Three modern examples, each using historical judgment with considerable *élan* but without being tied to the criteria, are Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*

the Twelve during the life of Jesus. Their conclusion is that "there was general agreement among the Fellows that the number 'twelve' in connection with an inner circle of disciples is a fiction."⁶ Four arguments are advanced: first, *sources*. The presence of the Twelve in Q is acknowledged but assigned to the later (third) stage of the evolution of Q; the category "twelve" is not found in the *Gospel of Thomas*, it does not appear in the body of the *Didache*, and is absent from Clement's letter to Corinth and Ignatius's letters. Second, *Sachkritik*: the Twelve are connected to the "eschatological self-consciousness of the Christian community," and this eschatological outlook is a later Christian retrojection onto the Jesus traditions. Here we see the role that theology, in particular the noneschatological Jesus, plays in determining what is history. Third, *redaction criticism*: it is argued that the number "twelve" appears in "Mark's editorial work rather than in the body of the anecdotes," and the use of "twelve" including Judas "must also be regarded as a fabrication if the figure of Judas is a fiction, as many scholars think."⁷ Fourth, *problems with the lists*: the inconsistencies in the lists (Mark, Luke, and John's lists of names) suggest that the category "twelve" is more symbolic than it is historical.

The arguments presented above would require fuller retort than is possible in this amount of space but, because what follows below is a defense of the Twelve during the lifetime of Jesus, I can limit my comments. To begin with, denying an imminent eschatology to Jesus bifurcates Jesus scholarship today, but there is hardly a consensus for a noneschatological Jesus. The most important and eloquent proponent of the noneschatological viewpoint, who also maintains an independent line from the one found in the Funk orientation of the

(Christian Origins and the Question of God 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); and P. Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Knopf, 1999). Of the three, it is the latter that shows methodological tension in that Fredriksen uses dissimilarity along with an argument, working backwards, that if Paul and a Jesus tradition both have something there is good reason to believe it is historically probable. Historians have to live with methodological tension, since historiography is not laboratory science. A good bibliographic entry into criteria research can be seen in C. A. Evans, *Jesus* (IBR Bibliographies 5; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992) 52-67; see also his more exhaustive volume, *Life of Jesus Research: An Annotated Bibliography* (2d ed.; NTTTS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1996). One example of the complexity of argument and artful skill and judgment needed by a modern historian concerned with reconstructing an ancient, myth-overladen life is J. C. Holt, *Robin Hood* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982).

6. R. W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998) 71.

7. Ibid.

Jesus Seminar, is Marcus Borg.⁸ On the other hand, the major studies of the present generation have had a decidedly eschatological Jesus—and I think here of B. F. Meyer, E. P. Sanders, J. P. Meier, N. T. Wright, and D. C. Allison.⁹ The argument of the Jesus Seminar here also wobbles on too confident of a judgment on the supposed layers of the Q tradition for, as many would argue, if we are not able to judge the various stages of evolution in the Q tradition, then the Twelve in Matt 19:28 par. Luke 22:30 may well be at the root of the Q tradition.¹⁰ In other words, for starters, if we endorse an eschatological Jesus and think Q is hardly capable of clear and compelling dissection by modern scholarship, then the Twelve may go back to Jesus. The arguments for this theory are noteworthy and encompass the criticisms of the Jesus Seminar, and to these I now turn.

First, *multiple attestation* suggests that the Twelve emerged in the lifetime of Jesus as special companions and men who were sent out on a mission to extend the ministry of Jesus. As is seen in the lists above, the Twelve are attested in three Gospels and Acts. It is almost certain that Matthew and Luke are dependent on Mark, but two points serve to show independence: (a) the variations of the lists even while dependent; (b) the variation within Luke-Acts. Some have argued from these variations that Matthew and Luke each had access to a pre-Markan tradition list of the Twelve names; Meier contends that Luke 6:14-16 may derive from L. The lists indicate then, at least, a single tradition (Mark) that was picked up with editing by later Evangelists; it is possible that the variations can be explained by a pre-Markan tradition or an L tradition.

More importantly, the term "twelve" is found in various strata of the Jesus traditions as well as different forms (meeting the criteria established in the community of scholarship), indicating at least a historical core to the number, even if the precise names are not clearly identifiable. Mark (3:14; 4:10; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43), Q (Matt 19:28 par. Luke 22:30),¹¹ perhaps "L" (Luke 8:1-3),¹² John (6:67, 70, 71; 20:24), and Paul (1 Cor 15:3-5) all indicate the presence of the Twelve during the life of Jesus. "In addition to multiple

8. See Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision—Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); see also his essays, "A Temperate Case for a Non-eschatological Jesus" and "Jesus and Eschatology: Current Reflections," in his *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity, 1994) 47-68, 69-96.

9. My own study fits into the same category; cf. *A New Vision for Israel*, 120-55.

10. D. C. Allison, for instance, contends that it is possible that Q 22:28-30 ended Q1 as well. See his *Jesus Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity, 1997) 35-36.

11. For the historicity of this text, see the discussion below (pp. 24-26).

12. On this, see J. Nolland, *Luke* (WBC 35; 3 vols.; Dallas: Word, 1989-93) 1.364, 365-67.

attestation of *sources*," says Meier, "these texts also give us multiple attestation of *forms*: the Twelve are mentioned in narrative (Mark, John), sayings (Q, John), a catalogue-like list (Mark, probably L),¹³ and a credal formula (1 Cor 15:3-5). In light of this broad spread of both sources and forms, suggestions that the Twelve arose only in the early days of the church must be judged pure conjecture with no real support in the NT texts."¹⁴

Second, using an argument that I consider logic rather than criteriological science,¹⁵ I would say that there are *elements of tension* in the emerging Jesus traditions that suggest the Twelve emerged from the time of Jesus. Meier calls this the "criterion of embarrassment."¹⁶ Judas is called "one of the Twelve" (for example, in Mark 14:43) and, so the argument goes, early Christians would not have made that kind of stuff up! There is no plausible context in the early church for inventing a betrayer if there was not one; and, *mutatis mutandis*, there is no reason to make the betrayer one of the Twelve if there was not a betrayer.¹⁷ Why would someone create trouble for himself if he were making things up? Further, the crucifixion of Jesus and the be-

13. Since some of the divergences between Mark and Luke can be explained as Lukan stylistic improvements (e.g., keeping the brothers together in group one of the list or changing Simon "the Cananaean" to "the Zealot"), it is possible that Luke's list is simply Mark's with some redaction. However, Luke (varying from the Markan-Matthean tradition) has "Jude ben James" in both his Gospel and the Acts (cf. John 14:22). The differences between Luke's list and Acts' can be best explained as Lukan redaction rather than use of sources, though the variations in the second block of names are not easy to unravel. As a result, Meier contends, probably accurately, that Luke had access to an "L" tradition with a list of the disciples (cf. "The Circle of the Twelve," 650-52).

14. Meier, *ibid.*, 663.

15. I still consider the hermeneutical discussion by Meyer (*Aims*, 23-110) to be the finest explanation to date of Jesus study criteria (indexes). However, analysis of ancient texts frequently forces historians to transcend or to work outside such categories. In particular, as can be seen in some recent studies of Jesus (including those of E. P. Sanders, N. T. Wright, J. D. Crossan, P. Fredriksen, as well as my own recent offering), operating from the "mission" or "focus" of the life of Jesus may yield better results than from criteria and sayings. If certain "facts" are established (e.g., that Jesus was put to death on a political charge, that he announced the imminent arrival of the Kingdom, et al.), then how are we to construe Jesus' life and his intentions? *My New Vision for Israel* is less concerned with establishing which sayings are authentic than with expounding traditionally-interpreted sayings in light of a reconfiguration of his mission as a mission to Israel. In many cases, the traditional interpretation, considered by some to be inauthentic because of that interpretation (e.g., his perception of his own death), yields to a more accurate historical perception of a particular (and, therefore, becomes as plausibly authentic as it becomes less traditional theologically). Few of my reviewers have seen this.

16. Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 663-70.

17. So W. Klassen, *Judas: Betrayer or Friend of Jesus?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 34-38.

trayal by Judas are indissolubly connected and are in fact correlates: see 1 Cor 15:3-5 and John 17:12.¹⁸ Since it is clear that the early church most likely would not have invented Judas, a close associate who betrayed Jesus, as a *Fundament* of the story about Jesus, and since he is included among the Twelve, it is probable that the Twelve emerged from the time of Jesus and Judas.¹⁹ In the quotable words of Dom Crossan: "He is too bad to be false."²⁰

Third, the *fluctuating and fading tradition history of the Twelve in the NT* suggests an early arrival as well as an early departure of the Twelve.²¹ Meier states this argument clearly: "If the group of the Twelve had arisen in the early days of the church [rather than during the life of Jesus] and, for whatever reason, reached such prominence that its presence . . . was massively retrojected into the Gospel traditions, *one would have expected that the history of the first Christian generation would be replete with examples of the Twelve's powerful presence and activity in the church.*"²² First, we know so little about some of the Twelve that one must question the theory that they were invented wholesale. Why not use other names that are known, and why use persons who seem to have negligible influence? Second, why do the Twelve appear so infrequently in the NT? Apart from the Jesus traditions, they hardly emerge: in the pre-Pauline creedal formula (1 Cor 15:3-5), in Acts not after 6:2,²³ and only once in Revelation (21:14). If they were invented as authoritative figures to function at some institutional level, we are led to ask what institution this might have been and why they are not shown meeting this need.

The facts press us to this conclusion: the Twelve emerged in the life of Jesus and then were virtually dropped as a functioning institution. Two considerations support this view: (1) the problems

18. So Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 65. Meier thinks the traditions develop here: from Mark 15:24 to John 13:18; Matt 27:9-10; and Acts 1:16, 20. He also counters the proposals of Vielhauer, Klein, Schmithals, and Crossan (pp. 667-70).

19. J. D. Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?: Exposing the Roots of Anti-semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), finds treachery on the part of Judas far more likely than the inclusion of Judas in the Twelve or than of his death as described in early Christianity (pp. 71-75).

20. *Ibid.*, 71.

21. See Rigaux, "Twelve Apostles"; J. Roloff, *Apostolat-Verkündigung-Kirche: Ursprung, Inhalt und Funktion des kirchlichen Apostelamtes nach Paulus, Lukas und den Pastoralbriefen* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1965) 138-68.

22. Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 670 (italics mine).

23. Even the ultimate cameo appearance of Matthias may suggest the disappearance of a former member (Acts 1:20-26). And, as was asked by members of our discussion, why not Barnabas? or James? or Paul? Why choose someone who is otherwise completely unknown? Such a record may well indicate memory of a transient, unknown figure.

in the lists suggest that the names were either unknown, or the figures were a distant memory (they were names only remembered for "their *twelveness*,"²⁴ leading Sanders to the view of the "historicity of a symbol"²⁵); (2) the expectations established by Jesus for the future role of the Twelve in judging the twelve tribes of Israel, in some form of "restoration" (Matt 19:28 par. Luke 22:28-30), were for interpreters gradually marginalized or at least deemphasized by other views of the future for God's people. The earthly life of Jesus, then, had a genuine focus on the Twelve; time, changes, social relocations, alternative leadership developments, and the charismatic power of key figures such as Peter and Paul simply eclipsed the institution of the Twelve. At the beginning, there were the Twelve; by the middle of the first century, they were history—but they were indeed just that. And what was this history all about? Why did Jesus choose Twelve? Before we answer this question, one other supporting argument for the Twelve may be offered.

Fourth, *the encapsulation theory of conversion suggests that close followers would be historically likely*. I do not mean by this that Jesus chose only twelve because of encapsulation theory. Instead, I am suggesting that a close group of associates is likely to have emerged among converts to Jesus and that "twelve," as a mere symbol for close associates, is thereby suggested—even if the specific number is not implied in the argument. Recent research in conversion, most clearly presented by L. R. Rambo,²⁶ shows that all religious conversions take shape in a pattern that permits individual variations of considerable magnitude. Rambo himself presents a consensus-like report of the following stages: context, crisis, quest, encounter (with an advocate) and interaction, commitment (involving surrender and testimony), and consequences. Our concern here is with the encounter: this is the point at which an *encapsulation* process takes place, the point at which the potential convert is initiated into and exposed to a new self-contained world of meaning. Encapsulation is the process of shielding in order for conversion to take place effectively; it may involve physical, but certainly involves social and ideological, encapsulation. In this encapsulation process there are four dimensions

24. See G. B. Caird and L. D. Hurst, *New Testament Theology* (New York: Oxford, 1994) 382.

25. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 101. The following is only slightly overstated by Sanders: "The twelve disciples are in one way like the seven hills of Rome: they are a little hard to find, although the idea is very old" (p. 102).

26. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), here pp. 103-8; see also A. Greil and D. Rudy, "Social Cocoons: Encapsulation and Identity Transformation Organizations," *Sociological Inquiry* 54 (1984) 260-78.

of influence: relationships, rituals, rhetoric, and roles. A convert's identity is reshaped through some form of encapsulation.

If this can be assumed, and I believe Rambo's model of conversion is a compelling presentation of years of research (both clinical research and research into the history of scholarship), a simple conclusion follows: it is highly likely, in fact, nearly certain, that Jesus *isolated* some of his followers and *encapsulated* them in order to lead them into a complete conversion. It follows then that there was a special group of Jesus' followers. That they were called "the Twelve" is not confirmed by encapsulation theory, but that there would have been some close associates is nearly certain. At a general level of religious experience, here thinking of conversion to Jesus' vision for Israel, it is highly probable that there would have been a few men who were considered the "closest" associates of Jesus, and we have every reason therefore to look for such a group in the earliest Jesus traditions. This conclusion can be confirmed by evidence both in Judaism (John the Baptist had disciples) and in the wider Mediterranean world (see, for example, the Epistle of Socrates and the Socratics).²⁷

Conclusion: It is highly probable, then, that Jesus had a special group of followers, designated during his lifetime as the Twelve. These twelve men are found in a variety of forms scattered throughout the early Jesus traditions; their presence creates tension within the traditions themselves; the history of the early Jesus and Christian traditions reveals an echo of a now-distant institution in the Jesus materials; and, on general religious grounds, it is likely that Jesus had a group of closest associates. What is the significance of such a group of Twelve followers?

2.0. THE TWELVE IN CONTEXT

Background

Now that we have established the tradition of the Twelve as reliably going back to the very life of Jesus, it remains for us to ask how the term "twelve" has been interpreted by scholars who see the tradition as reliable and how it might be interpreted if a wider lens is used to encompass even more ancient Jewish evidence.

Apart from an occasional study or two, the *reason* for choosing precisely twelve has not been investigated as much as the historicity of the Twelve. In fact, most scholars fight hard to win an argument

27. E.g., *Ep.* 28.11. Found in A. J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (SBL SBS 12; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 292.

for the historical reliability of traditions about the Twelve and then simply conclude: historical, therefore *eschatological*. In the words of Albert Schweitzer, "Primitive theology is simply a theology of the future, with no interest in history!"²⁸ In short, most scholars conclude that the choice of twelve was symbolic²⁹ but had only one motive: *to inaugurate the restoration and reunification of the twelve tribes as promised in ancient Jewish traditions, most notably in Isaiah and Ezekiel.*³⁰ Jeremias expresses this position well: "That Jesus chose precisely twelve men to serve as messengers indicates that he had a particular programme in mind. . . . The *twelve messengers* correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19.28 par. Luke 22.29f); they represent the eschatological community of salvation."³¹ Or, in the words of E. P. Sanders, "an eschatological miracle, a decisive act by God to redeem his people."³²

If the majority focus on the number "twelve" as an eschatological image—with some emphasizing a claim on the whole nation³³ or emphasizing that Jesus' vision was for the nation (in contrast to sim-

28. A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (trans. W. Montgomery; foreword D. R. Hillers, and F. C. Burkitt; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 344 (an edition that unfortunately fails to mention the translator and lacks the important introduction by J. M. Robinson, which was translated for the German edition!). German edition, p. 394. Further, p. 351 (ET): "Eschatology is simply 'dogmatic history'—history as moulded by theological beliefs—which breaks in upon the natural course of history and abrogates it" (German, p. 403). In this context, Schweitzer sees the twelve "as those who are destined to hurl the firebrand into the world, and are afterwards . . . to be his associates in ruling and judging it" (p. 371).

29. This has been thoroughly explored by H. Schürmann, "Der Jüngerkreis Jesu als Zeichen für Israel (und als Urbild des kirchlichen Rätelandes)," in his *Jesus—Gestalt und Geheimnis: Gesammelte Beiträge* (ed. K. Scholtissek; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1994) 64-84. A study devoted to Jesus is his "Die Symbolhandlungen Jesu als eschatologische Erfüllungszeichen. Eine Rückfrage nach dem irdischen Jesus," *Jesus—Gestalt und Geheimnis*, 136-56.

30. J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (trans. J. Bowden; New York: Scribner's, 1971) 234-35 (though the eschatological twelve embodies a universal salvation, pp. 245-47); Meyer (*Aims*, 153-54), who cites only the evidence given by Jeremias (who refers to his own earlier work); Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 104; J. Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History* (trans. S. S. Schatzmann; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997) 183; Caird and Hurst, *New Testament Theology*, 173, 382-83 (cf. G. B. Caird, *Jesus and the Jewish Nation* [Ethel M. Wood Lecture; London: Athlone, 1965] 8-9, 20-21); G. Theissen and A. Merz, *Der historische Jesus: Ein Lehrbuch* (2d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 200-201; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 300 (who has that deft British "of course").

31. Jeremias, *Proclamation*, 234. Inclusion of Gentiles cannot be established on the basis of the number "twelve"; nor does the term "restoration" lead in that direction. Gentile inclusion must be established on the grounds of other evidence. "Twelve" may be a claim on *all* Israel but not more than Israel.

32. Sanders, *Historical Figure*, 120; see also p. 185.

33. E.g., *ibid.*, 107 (also *idem*, *Jesus and Judaism*, 104).

ply individual redemption for the remnant: for example, 1 Kgs 19:18; Isa 7:3, 9; 8:16-20; 10:21; 28:16; 37:31; 42:19; 43:10,12; Jer 3:16; 23:3; 30:8-9; 31:10; Ezek 34:15-16; Mic 4:6-7; 7:18-19; Amos 5:15; Zeph 3:12),³⁴—others, without denying the eschatological dimension, center on the Twelve as a nucleus of the remnant or as leaders of a new movement within Israel. Here the focus becomes more ecclesial, referring to leadership of a new movement shaped by the various quests for holiness within first-century Judaism.³⁵ A combination of the two above views, extending the view of those who emphasize the ecclesial dimension, suggests both a continuity and a discontinuity: the old Israel now fulfilled.³⁶ No one speaks more completely for this view than Jürgen Roloff: "Jesus dokumentiert also in der Berufung der Zwölf seinen Herrscheranspruch über das endzeitliche Israel. Zugleich aber bleibt es nicht beim bloßen Anspruch: im Akt der Berufung konzipiert er dieses neue Gottesvolk in einer Weise, die zugleich zeichenhaft und real ist."³⁷ In this view of the Twelve, we have christology,³⁸ eschatology, ecclesiology, and symbolic action.

Finally, others have suggested that the term "twelve" is to be interpreted more simply: as no more than a claim on the nation *as a whole*.³⁹ In other words, "twelve" was a symbol,⁴⁰ a *general evocation* of all Israel, rather than an embodiment of a *specific* hope for restoring

34. Gnllka, *Jesus*, 183; see the more complete study of this in G. Theissen, "Gruppenmessianismus: Überlegungen zum Ursprung der Kirche in Jüngerkreis Jesu," *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 7 (1992) 101-23; B. E Meyer, "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," *JBL* 84 (1965) 123-30; idem, *Aims*, 115-28, 132-3Z 153-54, 210-19; R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church: A Study of the Ecclesia in the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1943), 17-98.

35. The heaviest emphasis given to the ecclesial dimension can be seen in A. M. Farrer, "The Ministry in the New Testament," in *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of the Episcopacy* (ed. K. E. Kirk; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946) 113-82, esp. pp. 119-33. A good balance can be found in, among others, Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 299-300, 430-31; D. Flusser, "Qumran und die Zwölf," *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem; Magnes, 1988) 173-85 (originally published in 1965); Roloff, *Apostolat*, 138-68 (explores "twelve" in the context of the development of the ecclesiological development of the apostolate).

36. See C. F. D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament* (3d ed.; Black's New Testament Commentaries; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1981) 54; Rigaux, "Die 'Zwölf,'" 482-86; R. Schnackenburg, *God's Rule and Kingdom* (trans. J. Murray; New York: Herder & Herder, 1963) 215-34; Schürmann, "Die Symbolhandlungen Jesu," 145-46.

37. Roloff, *Apostolat*, 146.

38. On p. 147 n. 37, Roloff states: "Der Zwölferteil der Erdentage ist gerade keine heilmächtige Realität in sich selbst, sondern ist Gefäß und Werkzeug für das gegenwärtige Wirken Jesu."

39. E.g., W. G. Kümmel, "Jesus und die Anfänge der Kirche," *ST* 7 (1953) 1-27.

40. The most important recent study on Jesus' symbolic actions is by M. D. Hooker, *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity, 1997), here p. 39, where she sees the Twelve as an eschatological embodiment of Jesus' intention. See also my "Jesus and Prophetic Actions," *BBR* 10 (2000) 197-232.

Israel by reuniting the twelve tribes.⁴¹ The only way to arbitrate this disparity of viewpoints is to examine the evidence once again. In studying this issue, I was surprised how frequently influential pieces of research seem not to examine the breadth of data about the concept "twelve" in ancient Judaism. In particular, the almost knee-jerk impulse to favor the eschatological perception of why Jesus' choice of twelve is in need of serious reconsideration. While it is easy to truck out evidence of an eschatological orientation, a fuller grasp of the evidence permits a broader (and more historically-nuanced) interpretation.⁴²

The Context of the Hebrew Bible

If we follow the biblical story line without attempting to reconstruct a critical history of either the term "twelve" (*šné 'āsār* and so on) or the term "tribes" (*šibtê*)—if we read the story as a first-century Jew probably would have done—the following points are notable. First, the "story" of the Twelve begins not with Jacob but Ishmael, whom Elohim promises that he will make "fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation" (Gen 17:20, NJPSV; compare 25:12-18). But, as the text reads, "My covenant I will maintain with Isaac" (17:21).

Second, the predominant use of "twelve" is for the sons of Jacob / Israel (35:22-26; Sir 44:23-45:1). The sense of the "twelve sons of Israel" as heads of the twelve tribes moves from a physical literality (the actual sons of Israel and a real tribal interest; see Gen 42:13, 32; 49:28; Tob 1:4; 4:12; 5:9-14; Add Esth 14:5) to a representation for the *descendants* (the twelve tribes) and *hereditary representatives* (twelve tribal princes/chieftains, and so on). So: Moses sets up an altar at the foot of Sinai with twelve pillars "for the twelve tribes of Israel" (Exod 24:4); Moses finds "chieftains" and "heads" (Num 1:5-16) who will help him take a census of the whole house of Israel (see 1:44); Moses sends twelve to reconnoiter the land that was promised to Israel (Deut 1:22-23); and upon entry into the land beyond the Jordan and after its reconstitution, the "twelve" play a major role (see Josh 4:2, 3, 8, 9, 20; 18:24; 19:15; 21:7, 40). Much later Ezra offers twelve goats to purify Israel, the whole of Israel, "according to the number of the tribes of Israel" (Ezra 6:17). The same reference to the twelve tribes

41. Some arguing for historicity are unclear regarding specific intention on the part of Jesus: e.g., C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospel* (2 vols.; 2d ed.; London: Macmillan, 1927) 1.88. Others see his intention as a broad claim on all Israel: e.g., Becker, *Jesus*, 28.

42. E. P. Sanders speaks for many: "that 'twelve' would necessarily mean 'restoration'" (*Jesus and Judaism*, 98).

is found in the later tradition of 1 Esdras (5:1, 4; 8:54) and, of course, the original tribal structure becomes the foundation for the emergence of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

A feature of this tribal use of "twelve" is the regular use of twelve objects as an embodiment of the twelve tribes of Israel: twelve pillars (Exod 24:4); twelve stones on the breastplate (39:14; compare with Sir 45:11); twelve bowls (Num 7:84); twelve bulls, rams, lambs, goats (7:87; 1 Esdr 7:8; 8:65-66); twelve staffs (Num 17:17[2]); cutting a prostitute into twelve pieces, one for each tribe (Judg 19:29); and Ahijah's cutting of the robe into twelve pieces, ten for Jeroboam, when the kingdom was split (1 Kgs 11:30-31; see also *Jos. Asen.* 5:6).

Third, an important feature of the term "twelve" is its *association with covenant establishment and renewal*. Whenever "twelve" is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, one naturally thinks of Israel's sons and their successors. Inasmuch as Israel's tribes are tied into a sacrificial cult, there will be evidence for the entirety of Israel being represented vicariously in sacrifices (for example, Exod 24:4; Num 7:87). More importantly, when the children of Israel are about to enter into the land, an event that will be in fulfillment of a covenant promise given to Abraham (Genesis 12; 15), a *covenant renewal*, is enacted and the number "twelve" plays a central role in the renewal. Joshua is instructed by YHWH to select twelve men, "one from each tribe" (Josh 4:1), who are to pick up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan where the priests are standing and to deposit them where they spend the night (4:3). These stones are to become an *iconic* catalyst to tell the story of how the waters of the Jordan were cut off by God because of the "Ark of the Lord's Covenant," and they are to be a "memorial for all time" (4:7). In addition, Joshua himself sets up a small altar of twelve stones at the feet of the priests who are supporting the Ark of the Covenant, "and they have remained there to this day" (4:9b). When they encamp at Gilgal, Joshua sets up twelve stones as a memorial (4:20). Eventually, the tribes are assigned twelve cities (see, for example, 18:24; 19:15; 21:7, 38). To my knowledge, few have looked to Joshua⁴³ for a background to Jesus' choice of twelve as I shall do below; entering into this discussion now is what the great American humorist James Thurber called a "flashforwards"!

Fourth, we ought to observe the frequency with which *twelve are selected to represent the nation*. In Num 1:44 we find that there is one "chieftain" for each ancestral house, twelve total; in 31:5 twelve thousand, one thousand per tribe, are chosen; to reconnoiter the land, one man per tribe is selected (Deut 1:23); later, Joshua is instructed by YHWH to select one man per tribe on two different occasions (Josh 3:12;

43. See my "Jesus and Prophetic Actions."

4:2; compare with a similar use in 1 Esdr 5:1, 4; 8:54). When the myth of the translation of (portions of) the Hebrew Bible into Greek is elaborated in the *Letter of Aristeas*, the tribes and the number "twelve" emerge: six translators from each tribe (35-51).

The Context of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pseudepigrapha

An important extension of this fourth sense of representatives can be seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls' attention to *twelve leaders*, and here the eschatological nature of the community and its fundamental beliefs enter the picture to give these twelve leaders both an *ecclesial* and an eschatological function. The evidence is neither unambiguous nor abundant, though a possible historical trajectory has been traced in the insightful article of William Horbury.⁴⁴ More importantly, in the use of twelve with a leadership role at roughly the time of Jesus, as well as in a particular community with eschatological orientations, we find a significant parallel to the presence of twelve in the vision of Jesus.⁴⁵ Examples of use of the number at Qumran follow:

1QS 8:1: "In the Community council (there shall be) twelve men and three priests."⁴⁶ Their task? To be perfect in the whole revelation, to implement the truth, to practice "unassuming behaviour of one to another" (8:2), to preserve faithful commitment to the Law in the land to atone for sin, and to walk with one another in light of the revelation (8:3). 1Q28a 11-22 (also called 1QSa, or *Rule of the Congregation*):

At [a ses]sion of the men of renown, [those summoned to] the gathering of the community council, when [God] begets the Messiah with them. . . . After, [the Messiah of Israel shall [enter] and before him shall sit the *heads* of the th[ousands of Israel, each] one according to his dignity, according to [his] po[sition] in their camps and according to their marches. And all the *heads* of the cl[ans of the congregation with the wise [men . . .] shall sit before them.

While the number "twelve" does not appear here, one might suppose that precisely twelve "heads" are in mind for at least one of the above-italicized words. Their "sitting" here refers to a holy convocation of the leadership for judgment or for a meal (see lines 17-22).

44. Horbury, "The Twelve and the Phylarchs," *NTS* 32 (1986) 503-27.

45. Cf. Flusser, "Qumran und die Zwölf." Flusser contends that the origins of the Twelve for Jesus can be traced to the Qumran material, which also has a substantive parallel in the book of Revelation.

46. For each citation from the Scrolls, I have used the translation of F. Garcia Martinez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997).

4Q159 (*Ordinances^a*) frgs. 2-4:3-4: "And [. . . te]n men and two priests, and they shall be judged by these *twelve*." These twelve, which include two priests, are assigned judgment over capital offenses (line 5). 1QM (*Milhamah*, or *War Scroll*) 2:1-3:

They shall arrange the chiefs (רִאשֵׁי) of the priests behind the High Priest and of his second (in rank), *twelve* chiefs (שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרֵי רִאשֵׁי) to serve in perpetuity before God. And the twenty-six chiefs of the divisions shall serve in their divisions and after them the chiefs of the levites to serve always, *twelve*, one per tribe. And the chiefs of their divisions shall each serve in his place. The chiefs of the tribes, and after them the fathers of the congregation, shall take their positions in the gates of the sanctuary in perpetuity.

Here we have twelve priests serving before God eternally, twelve (additional?) levites, and twelve (more?) chiefs/tribal princes.⁴⁷ 4Q164 (pIsa^d) 4-6: "Its interpretation [of 'I will place all your battlements of rubies' from Isa. 54:12] concerns the *twelve* [chiefs of the priests who] illuminate with the judgment of the Urim and Thummim [. . . without] any from among them missing, like the sun in all its light."⁴⁸ This duodecimal "council" (line 2), similar to the council in 1QM 8:1, is composed of priests and laity, and these twelve function along with "heads of the tribes" (line 7; twelve in number, of course). We have here then a council of some sort, composed of twenty-four, a priestly, oracular judicial body (see Ezek 48:31; Rev 21:12-14, 19-21).

We find an even more intriguing piece of evidence in 11Q19 (*Temple^a Scroll*) 57:11-14: "And *twelve* princes (רָאשֵׁי) of his [the eschatological king] people shall be with him, and *twelve* priests and twelve levites, who shall sit together with him for judgment and for the law." With the ideal king, we have here a council of thirty-seven, both priestly and tribal, exercising judgment (see 11Q19 576, 11-12; 11Q13 [*Melchizedek*]; compare with *1 En.* 45:3; 51:3; 61:8; 62:1-2).⁴⁹ The theme of judgment pervades the scrolls when it comes to the "twelve."

Outside the scrolls, the interesting prediction of *T. Abraham* 13:6, a second-century CE text, suggests a Jewish motif of "judgment by twelve": "And at the second Parousia they will be judged by the twelve tribes of Israel" (*OTP*, trans. E. P. Sanders). Other texts confirm this: *T. Judah* 25:1-2: "And after this Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected to life and I and my brothers will be chiefs (wielding) our scepter in Israel: Levi, the first. . . ." *T. Benj.* 10:7:

47. So Horbury, "Twelve," 511. See further in 1QM 3:14; 5:1-2.

48. For this text, see esp. J. M. Baumgarten, "The Duodecimal Courts of Qumran, Revelation, and the Sanhedrin," *JBL* 95 (1976) 59-78, esp. the restored text on p. 60.

49. Numbers of judges in the Sanhedrin, for instance, were debated; see *m. Sanh.* 1:6; see also 4:3.

"Then shall we also be raised, each of us over our tribe, and we shall prostrate ourselves before the heavenly king."

In summary: The number "twelve" in the biblical story denotes the tribes of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, who became Israel. "Twelve" thus defines "biblical" Israel, pre-captivity Israel, as a tribal-based community with its roots in God's redemptive acts under Abraham, Israel, Moses, and Joshua. Further, the number "twelve" becomes a central feature of the conquest of the land and, in particular, of the crossing of the Jordan and the reestablishment of the covenant in connection with this major act of YHWH, as he fights for his people in granting the land he has promised. In Israel's tribal arrangement, twelve men are regularly selected, just as twelve objects are sometimes put forward, to embody the entirety of the nation in some ritual enactment. These twelve function vicariously.

One negative conclusion is immediately noticeable for Jesus studies: I have found *no instance of "twelve" functioning eschatologically in the Hebrew Bible*, although the term does function eschatologically in the unfolding Jewish tradition. This means that an eschatological connotation will rarely exhaust the intentions of later writers who use the tradition of the number "twelve."

Eschatology and the Use of the Word "Tribe"

For eschatological connotations we must turn to other evidence, including the term "tribe." In so doing, I shall present data that envision a regathering of the "tribes" of Israel (combining the lost Northern tribes with the two and one-half tribes extant [Judah, Benjamin, half-Levi]) in an eschatological act of God to reunite the sons of Israel and preserve them from disaster (*T. Zeb.* 9:1-3; *2 Bar.* 1:2; 62:5; 77:19; 78:1). Reunification of the tribes is an "ideal state of affairs."⁵⁰

Besides a fairly common use of the word "tribe" (for example, Num 33:54; Deut 1:13; 16:18; 1 Sam 15:17; 1 Kgs 11:31-32; Ps 78:55), there are several eschatological instances, some with a priestly orientation: (1) clearly Isa 11:11-12: "In that day, my Lord will apply his hand again to redeeming the other part of his people from Assyria. . . . He will hold up a signal to the nations and assemble the banished of Israel and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (compare with 27:13); (2) possibly Isa 49:6: "Is it too little that you should be my servant in that I raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the survivors of Israel?"; (3) perhaps Isa 63:17: "Relent for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your very own!"; (4) Jer 3:18; 29:14; 30:3; 31:7-10; 32:36-41: Jeremiah, who at

50. Gnllka, *Jesus*, 183.

times is absorbed with Ephraim, also clearly expects a reunification of the twelve tribes in the land, a restoring of the fortunes of Israel and Judah, because "Ephraim is my firstborn" (31:9); (5) clearly Ezek 36:8-11; 37:19: "Thus says the Lord God: I am going to take the stick of Joseph—which is in the hand of Ephraim—and of the tribes of Israel associated with him, and I will place the stick of Judah upon it and make them into one stick; they shall be joined in my hand" (see 32:36-41); (6) also Ezek 47:13: "These shall be boundaries of the land that you shall allot to the twelve tribes of Israel" (compare with 47:21; 48:1, 19, 23, 29, 31); (7) at the foundation of this hope for restoration perhaps lies Amos 9:14: "I will restore my people Israel";⁵¹ and, finally, (8) we can note the following texts: Mic 2:12; 4:6-7; Zeph 3:19-20; Zech 10:8-10.

Outside the canonical texts, this notion of a restoration of the twelve tribes, regathering the dispersed from both exiles, finds "widespread"⁵² expression, most notably in Ben Sira 36 and probably in 48:10; 36:13, 16: "Gather all the tribes of Jacob, and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning." And these tribes will gather in "Jerusalem" (36:18) and "Zion" (36:19), proving YHWH's prophets trustworthy (36:21). One thinks also of the implicit vision of *Psalms of Solomon* 11 and 17:26-34: here we find the land divided into tribes once more (compare with 8:28-32; 11:2; 17:44). Tob 14:7 anticipates exiled Israelites returning, as do 2 Macc 1:27-28; 2:18; *T. Levi* 16:6; *T. Asher* 7:7; *T. Benj.* 9:2; *Jub.* 1:15; 2 *Bar.* 77:5-6; 78, especially v. 7; 1QM; 11Q19 (*Temple*) 18:14-16; 57:5-6; 59:1-13 (theme of covenant renewal); compare with 4Q252 3:1-14; 4Q504 (DibHam^a); 4Q508 (*Festive Prayers*^b) frg. 2:2 ("the time of the return," רָוַח); *Jos. Asen.* 5:6.

The vision of a restored twelve tribes occupying the land emerges most explicitly in the Hebrew Bible under the priestly hand of Ezekiel; Isaiah's words evoke the restoration of the twelve tribes, but his vision hardly focuses on such an image. In short, the expectation of the twelve tribes' being restored, as in former days, is one significant crystallizing shape of future expectation in the evidence of the Hebrew Bible. Later traditions unfold these formative visions. However, what we do have in the Bible is a *covenantal* and *selectional* emphasis on the concept "twelve" when it expresses the ancient establishment of God's people as heirs to Jacob.

To contend, on the other hand, that "twelve" means "eschatological restoration" is to suggest a higher correlation than the evidence permits. To contend that Jesus must have meant "eschatological

51. Cf. F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989) 893.

52. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 96; he cites further evidence on pp. 96-98. On the theme of exile, see now the important edited collection of J. M. Scott, *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

reunification of the twelve tribes" because he used twelve disciples may find support in some texts, such as in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Ben Sira 36, but is the evidence so uniformly monodirectional? I think not. When the Jesus traditions are seen in this context, a new appreciation for what Jesus meant in choosing twelve emerges. If these several strands—especially a covenantal emphasis emerging from the Jordan River texts of Joshua with an ecclesial dimension at the front and an eschatological hope in the future of Ezekiel at the back—represent the fuller picture out of which choosing twelve would have emerged and been understood by contemporary Jews, it is only by examining the evidence of the Jesus traditions themselves that we will be permitted a more nuanced grasp of what Jesus meant to evoke when he chose the Twelve.

3.0. JESUS AND THE TWELVE

Above we established that there is solid evidence and there are persuasive arguments for contending that Jesus used "twelve" for a special group of his followers (even if a name or two is not probative). If we could gather a larger cluster of texts around the Twelve, we might establish with more precision the intention of Jesus in choosing twelve. The evidence is not abundant, but there are a few significant segments to analyze: (1) general descriptions of the Twelve, (2) the choosing and sending of the Twelve, and (3) the Q tradition about the Twelve as future "judges" of the twelve tribes.

The Twelve in the Jesus Traditions

First, I consider the following segment to be *possible* information about the Twelve, harder to prove historical because this kind of evidence is isolated and sometimes fraught with tradition-critical complexities. Nonetheless, *it is reasonable because it is coherent with the fact that Jesus did associate himself especially with a group of twelve disciples.*⁵³ For instance, when Mark 4:10 tells us that Jesus was alone after telling several parables and that ἡρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς παραβολάς, we are dealing with narrative information

53. In this paper I will not examine the various other terms used for the followers of Jesus, such as *apostles* and *disciples*. The issues here are (1) church development and (2) redactional perspective of the Evangelists. Early redaction critics of Mark saw most of these references as Markan redaction; cf, e.g. Trilling, "Zur Entstehung," 201-10; Roloff, *Apostolat*, 140-45 ("Mk hat den Zwölferapostolat gekannt," p. 143); Gnlika, *Jesus*, 182. For fuller study, compare Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 636-42; F. H. Agnew, "The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research," *JBL* 105 (1986) 75-96.

(these are Mark's words) that is also reasonable and coherent information: that is, if Jesus did gather the Twelve and did tell parables, it is reasonable that the Twelve were with him many times (see 3:14)⁵⁴ as well as that they asked him the meaning of his parables. Other pieces of evidence, in my judgment, belong in this segment: that the Twelve were urged to make themselves servants (Mark 9:35 D) and to accept the fate of their teacher (10:32-34 par. Matt 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34; compare with John 6:67); that they Twelve were with him during his last week (Mark 11:11; 14:17-20 par. Matt 26:20-25; Luke 22:14 [ἀπόστολοι]; 22:21-23 [omits "twelve"]). If one thinks Jesus actually fed a large multitude miraculously, it is only slightly possible that the twelve baskets remaining reflect this group's presence (see Mark 6:43 par. Matt 14:20; Luke 9:17; compare with Luke 9:12, where δώδεκα is used).

I consider all this information both possible and reasonable; if Jesus did isolate the Twelve, it is highly likely that they did these kinds of things with Jesus and heard from Jesus about following him. However, *what* we learn here about the Twelve is *negligible*: that they heard Jesus' interpretation of various parables, that they were warned of his fate and that they would have to endure a trial themselves, and that they were with him during the last week and heard his words on those special occasions. This kind of information tells us more about discipleship than it does about why Jesus chose the Twelve. If anything, it tells us that the Twelve were more than a symbol but, instead, an actual part of the outworking of Jesus' vision of the kingdom, which he believed was presently entering history as his still, small voice.

Second, *that Jesus sent out the Twelve* opens up another segment of information that intersects with the data about the number "twelve" in ancient Judaism.⁵⁵ The fundamental texts are found in Mark 3:14; Matt 10:1; Luke 6:13 and Mark 6:7-13, 30; Matt 9:35-11:1; Luke 9:1-6, 10; 10:1-12; the texts appear to relate a threefold process: an early call and designation; a mission of the Twelve; a subsequent mission

54. On which text, see Roloff, *Apostolat*, 145-48.

55. If the "two-by-two" mission is genuine memory, it is less likely that it was mutual support (cf. Qoh 4:9-12; Gen 2:18) than a form of providing an additional witness (cf. Deut 17:6; 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28; as well as Acts 8:14; 13:2; 15:27, 36-40; 17:14; 19:22; 1 Cor 9:6; cf. also Jos. Asen. 3:2). See J. Jeremias, "Paarweise Sendung im Neuen Testament," in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson, 1893-1958* (ed. A. J. B. Higgins; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959) 136-43; D. Daube, "Responsibilities of Master and Disciples in the Gospels," *NTS* 19 (1972) 1-15. From another angle, see J. D. Crossan (*The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991], 333-37), who proposes a plausible *Sitz im Leben* for the notion of "healed healers."

of the 70/72.⁵⁶ It is entirely probable that Matthew has conflated Mark with Q, along with other traditions;⁵⁷ it is possible that Luke's mission of the 70 is a conflation of the sources available to him, although others think Jesus may well have sent out disciples more than one time.⁵⁸ Few have disputed that Jesus sent out some of his followers—probably the Twelve—mostly because the story is found in separate traditions (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:1-16; Matt 9:35-11:1 has residual elements from M; some see L traditions in Luke 10:1-16; see also 22:35). The act itself is coherent with the substantive content of why Jesus chose twelve: to evoke the restoration of the twelve tribes not only must there be twelve but they must be its leaders.⁵⁹ T. W. Manson spoke for many when he said and, like Melchizedek, still

56. For my own study of these texts, see *New Shepherds for Israel—Matthew 9:35-11:1: An Historical and Critical Study of Matthew 9:35-11:1* (Ph.D., diss., University of Nottingham, 1986); subsequent studies include R. Uro, *Sheep among Wolves: A Study on the Mission Instructions of Q* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae: Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 47; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987); D. J. Weaver, *Matthew's Missionary Discourse: A Literary Critical Analysis* (JSNTSup 38; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); E. C. Park, *The Missionary Discourse in Matthew's Interpretation* (WUNT 2/81; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995) 9-31 (a spotty survey of scholarship). These four dissertations are each concerned with the mission at the level of church tradition and redactional theology; they shall be left to the side except when tradition-critical remarks are apposite. See also D. C. Allison Jr., *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity, 1997) 104-19; P. Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (NTAbh n.s. 8; Munster: Aschendorff, 1972) 236-355; H. Schurmann, "Mt 10, 5b-6 und die Vorgeschichte des synoptischen Aussendungsberichtes," in *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze: Festschrift für Prof. Josef Schmid zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. J. Blinzler; Regensburg: Pustet, 1963) 270-82 (who contends there was a single messianic mission, found now in the remnants of Luke 10:1; Matt 10:5-6; Luke 10:8-12 [Matt 10:5-6 was originally between Luke 10:7 and 10:8] this mission was "eine letzte große Anfrage an Israel vor dem Ende"; idem, "Die Symbolhandlungen Jesus," 146). I am unpersuaded that the mission can be accurately described as a "symbolic action" or even as an "eschatologische Erfüllungszeichen," though the shaking off of dust can be so designated (cf. Mark 10:11; contra Schürmann, "Die Symbolhandlungen," 146).

57. E.g., J. Dupont, "'Vous n'aurez pas achevé les villes d'Israël avant que le Fils de l'homme ne vienne' (Mat. x, 23)," *NovT* 2 (1957-58) 228-44, here p. 229; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949) 73-74; F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (trans. F. Clarke; SBT 47; London: SCM, 1963) 42-43 (but cf. p. 46).

58. On this, see esp. P. Hoffmann, "Lk 10:5-11 in der Instruktionsrede der Logienquelle," in *Evangelisch Katholischer Kommentar: Vorarbeiten* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971) 3.37-53, here pp. 38-39.

59. Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 657. At some level, then, the notion of sending twelve coheres with the term "apostle," though recent research has shown the term to be less derived from the Hebrew *šāliah*, even though substantively related: cf. Agnew, "Apostle-Concept." See also R. W. Herron Jr., "The Origin of the New Testament Apostolate," *WTJ* 45 (1983) 101-31. A foundational text, though not often discussed in the literature, remains Isa 61:1-11.

speaks: "The mission of the disciples is one of the best-attested facts in the life of Jesus."⁶⁰

Without extensive exegesis of each text or a detailing of the tradition history, the following observations are pertinent:

(1) The Twelve are not physical descendants of each of the twelve tribes: they are a symbolic representation of the twelve tribes. Jesus is obviously not using "twelve" in the sense of a literal, physical fulfillment of the prophetic hope of the reunification of the tribes, for this hope has every indication of being physical. His intention here is to embody the hope of either representing Israel in a covenant renewal or representing reunification symbolically in his chosen twelve followers.⁶¹ This very action of Jesus is not without significance for his understanding of what he is doing and how he sees Israel's history coming to its fulfillment.

(2) The Twelve are restricted to a Galilean/Israelite mission and are prevented from extending their mission to either Gentiles or

60. Manson, *Sayings*, 73. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 103: "In particular, apart from what we learn from the symbolic nature of the number twelve, we do not know Jesus' purpose in calling them. Mark 3.14 says that it was for them 'to be with him', and that has recently been taken to be a plain statement of fact. [Here he refers to Eduard Schweizer's 1968 book on Jesus.] But Mark cannot have known what was in Jesus' mind. "Two points: (1) Being with Jesus is so obviously historical it cannot be contested—what else do disciples do but accompany their master? Sanders is overly sceptical here. I do not question that some German scholarship has grossly overinterpreted "being with him" into a neat ecclesiological formula. (2) I am unsure what Sanders means by "cannot" when it comes to Mark's knowledge—does he mean some kind of psychological knowledge? In which case, Sanders' scepticism is justified. Or does he mean he cannot know Jesus' intention or another person's intention? If so, Sanders is again overly sceptical. The ancient tradition of Peter's connection to Mark may not be that far from historical reality. The actions of Jesus in gathering disciples to be with him and of sending them out (if they were sent out) surely imply that Jesus wanted them with him and that he wanted them to spread the Kingdom. These assertions of Jesus' intention can be exaggerated in significance; but they need not be. On knowing another's intentions, the classic study remains G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Library of Philosophy and Logic; 2d ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1979).

61. While the terms "restoration" and "reunification [of the twelve tribes]" may be properly distinguished, with the former being the more general Jewish expectation and the latter a special dimension of this larger expectation on the part of some, at times the terms are also nearly synonymous: those expecting a reunification of the twelve tribes certainly also had in mind this action of God as part of the larger restoration. "Restoration" is a good term for describing Jewish eschatology as well as the particular slant that Jesus gives to this hope when he uses the term "Kingdom." N. T. Wright is not alone in being asked why Jesus does not use the term "restoration"; the answer to this question is that Jesus thought the term "Kingdom" was a better term expressing the complex of factors that scholars today call "restoration." When Jesus uses "Kingdom," he has in mind the fulfillment of the Jewish expectations that involved the restoration of Israel.

Samaritans (Matt 10:5-6).⁶² The restriction by Jesus emerges from a complex historical-missionary situation⁶³ and involves several critically-debated Jesus traditions (Mark 7:24-30 par. Matt 15:21-28; Mark 5:1-20 par. Matt 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39; Mark 11:15-19 par. Matt 21:12-13;⁶⁴ Luke 19:45-48; Mark 12:1-12 par. Matt 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-10; Mark 13:10 and 14:9 par. Matt 10:18; 24:14; 26:13; Q: Luke 7:1-10 par. Matt 8:5-13; Luke 7:18-23 par. Matt 11:2-6; Luke 14:34-35 par. Matt 5:13-16; Luke 4:16-30; Matt 7:6).

In summary, the following are noteworthy: (1) Jesus had no mission to the Gentiles; his mission was directed toward Israel because his mission was about the restoration of Israel as it realized its covenant expectations and hopes; (2) the eschatology of Jesus leads one to think of his mission as being an urgent call to repentance in light of the coming judgment of God on a disobedient nation;⁶⁵ (3) Gentile inclusion is by way of exception and permission to enter rather than the direct result of an intentional, inclusive mission; (4) Gentile inclusion is primarily an eschatological phenomenon as a result of God's direct intervention in history, and this places Gentiles in the final judgment (for example, Mark 12:1-12 pars.);⁶⁶ (5) along these salvation-historical lines, then, one can argue that Jesus' *universalism* is the consequence of his *particularism*: a mission to Israel embraces an eventual impact for the entire creation.⁶⁷ Just as Isaiah's vision begins with Is-

62. This text has only occasionally been questioned with respect to authenticity. The Jesus Seminar, for instance, found a Jesus who was more universal in orientation, so it assigned the saying to a Judaizing branch of earliest Christianity. But, the saying is Matthean neither in style or substance (except for the parallel at 15:24), and it leaves us with a Jesus somewhat incongenial to the Church's mission. That is, on the basis of criteria, it is fundamentally dissimilar to earliest Christianity. On this, W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison Jr., *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988-97) 2.168-69.

63. On this, see my *Light among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). That there was some kind of "crisis" in Galilee is rarely held today; cf. F. MuBner, "Gab es eine 'galiläische Krise'?" in *Orientierung an Jesus: Zur Theologie der Synoptiker* (ed. P. Hoffmann et al.; Freiburg: Herder, 1973) 238-52; H. Montefiore, "Revolt in the Desert? (Mark vi. 30ff)," *NTS* 8 (1962) 135-41.

64. See C. A. Evans, "From 'House of Prayer' to 'Cave of Robbers': Jesus' Prophetic Criticism of the Temple Establishment," in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders* (ed. C. A. Evans and S. Talmon; BibIntSeries; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 417-42.

65. On this, see my *New Vision for Israel*, 1-15 et passim; Caird and Hurst, *New Testament Theology*, 361; see also V. Taylor, "The Life and Ministry of Jesus," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (ed. G. A. Buttrick; Nashville: Abingdon, 1951) 7.125-26.

66. On which, see K. Snodgrass, *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants: An Inquiry into Parable Interpretation* (WUNT 27; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1983).

67. On this, cf. D. Bosch, *Die Heidenmission in der Zukunftsschau Jesu* (ATANT 36; Zürich: Zwingli, 1959), 132; T. W. Manson, *Only to the House of Israel?: Jesus and the Non-*

rael and erupts into a universal praise (Isa 61:1-11) and just as Israel is to become a light to the nations (49:4-7), so Jesus restricts his mission to Israel because Israel's restoration impacts the world. In the words of T. W. Manson, "a transformed Israel would transform the world."⁶⁸

(3) The mission of the Twelve was fundamentally the same mission that Jesus had, and this means that the Twelve's mission was to extend the mission of Jesus into the various villages of Galilee (Israel).⁶⁹ If the "authorization" of the Twelve is less demonstrable (see Mark 3:15; 6:7 par. Matt 10:1; Luke 9:1), what the Twelve were commissioned to do⁷⁰ becomes potential information—and, since authorization is typically Jewish, the Twelve become at least ipso facto authorized. And what were they commissioned to do? (a) extend the Kingdom of God and its peace: see the Q tradition in Luke 10:5-6 (peace is perhaps a Lukan redaction); 10:9, 11; (b) the Twelve were "enabled" to perform Kingdom miracles, such as exorcism (Mark 6:7 par. Matt 10:1; Luke 9:1; compare with Mark 3:27; Luke 10:18; 11:20 par. Matt 12:28),⁷¹ healing the sick (Matt 10:1 par. Luke 9:1; 10:9),⁷² and announcing the arrival of the Kingdom⁷³—in short, they were "fishers

Jews (FBBS 9; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955). That the same applies to the restriction from entering Samaritan territory can be found in John 4:4-42.

68. Manon, *Only to the House of Israel?*, 24.

69. See Schurmann, "Der Jüngerkreis Jesus' 70-72; J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus*, 333-37.

70. Cf. here E. Arens, *The HAΘON-Sayings in the Synoptic Tradition* (OBO 10; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976). Among other things, the bare facts as discerned by Arens show that Jesus had a "vocation-consciousness" (*Sendungsbewusstsein*) rather than a "self-consciousness" (*Selbstbewusstsein*) (p. 339).

71. See esp. G. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993); Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2.398-506; W. Manson, "Principalities and Powers: The Spiritual Background of the Work of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels," *Bulletin for the Society of New Testament Studies* 3 (1952) 7-17; McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel*, 107-10.

72. Cf. Becker, *Jesus*, 211-33; Goppelt, *Theology*, 1.139-57; R. H. Fuller, *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus: An Examination of the Presuppositions of New Testament Theology* (SBT 12; London: SCM, 1954) 35-43; J. Hempel, *Heilung als Symbol und Wirklichkeit im biblischen Schrifttum* (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen 3; Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958) 237-314 (esp. pp. 271-91); M. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer* (Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995).

73. It is at this juncture that the *Tradent* role of the Twelve becomes fundamental, even if its later ecclesiological dimensions need to be relinquished. Cf., e.g., Roloff, *Apostolat*, 166; R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer: Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (WUNT 2/7; Tübingen: Mohr, 1981) 481-87; Moule (*Birth*, 225-37), who connects the Twelve to the process of canonization.

of men" (Mark 1:16-20 par. Matt 4:18-22); (c) Matthew's specific instructions betray a redactional hand designed to portray the mission of the Twelve as identical to Jesus' actions in Matt 8:1-9:34; (d) their means of subsistence was identical to Jesus': trust in God for provisions through the hospitality of others (see Q: Luke 9:58 par. Matt 8:20; Luke 11:3 par. Matt 6:11; Luke 12:22-31 par. Matt 6:25-34; here Mark 6:8-11 par. Matt 10:9-15; Luke 9:3-5; 10:4-12).⁷⁴

The implication seems fairly straightforward: they were to be a radical sign⁷⁵ of the Kingdom's power by finding support through local sympathizers. This mission of Jesus and its extension through the ministries of his followers now gain support from the recently published Dead Sea Scroll 4Q521 frg. 2, col. 2, as emerging from an existing Jewish hope. Here the messianic ministry, largely realizing the hopes of Isaiah 61, includes the very things early Jesus traditions attribute to Jesus: among other things, the *Lord* will call the righteous by name, renew the faithful, aid and preach good news to the poor, give an eternal Kingdom to the pious, free prisoners, give sight to the blind, straighten out the twisted, and raise the dead.

A third segment of information emerges from a close scrutiny of the Q tradition in Luke 22:28-30 par. Matt 19:28 that the Twelve will judge the twelve tribes of Israel.⁷⁶ (1) The tradition-critical history of this *logion* is notoriously complex, revealing only potential redactional features of each Evangelist,⁷⁷ though the Matthean context perhaps has more to speak for it.⁷⁸ The eschatology of this Q *logion*

74. Details are imprecise (e.g., bag, sandals or no sandals? staff or no staff?) but the general impression is strong that Jesus restricted his missionaries' provisions. In general, see the important study of W. L. Liefeld, *The Wandering Preacher as a Social Figure in the Roman Empire* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1967) 245-71; cf. *m. Ber.* 4:5; *m. Roš Haš.* 2:9.

75. Cf. Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 142-45.

76. See G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986) 273-77; Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 653-59; J. Friedrich, *Gott im Bruder: Eine methodenkritische Untersuchung von Redaktion, Überlieferung und Traditionen in Mt 25,31-46* (Calwer Theologische Monographien 7; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1977) 53-56.

77. For example, Πάλιγγενεσία could be Matthean redaction; but the term is hard to count in Matthew's arsenal, since it is found in the NT only one other time (Titus 3:5).

78. The Lukan context preceding this *logion* concerns the *defection* of Judas (Luke 22:21-23); this context is less likely than Matthew's. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3.55, for summary conclusions. It is possible, however, to read Luke's context as a reaffirmation of Jesus' authority in spite of betrayal, in which case, the balance is again even. A conspectus of judgments on this *logion*'s status in Q can be found in J. S. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, and Concordance* (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1988) 202. For a less-confident judgment on the historicity of the *logion*, see Trilling, "Zur Entstehung," 213-20; for a more positive assessment, see Rigaux, "Die 'Zwölf,'" 476-77.

anchors it into the very life of Jesus, not only because it is indisputably Jewish and uncharacteristic of earliest Christian history (Judas will be judging?), but also because its shape is entirely Jewish and coherent with Jesus' vision (dissimilar at a substantive level).⁷⁹ (2) Matthew may duplicate the term δώδεκα but, in so doing, adds no new information; perhaps it is Luke who has omitted the term.⁸⁰ (3) A secure feature of the early Q tradition is the following: κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλὰς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. This clause provides valuable information concerning why Jesus, distinct from the Twelve as the Son of Man in judgment (see Matt 25:31; 26:64; *1 En.* 62:5; 69:29), appointed twelve special leaders.⁸¹ The term "judging" may mean either determinative judgment in an executive, judicial sense (salvation or damnation; see Dan 7:9, 19-28; *1 En.* 95:3; *Ps. Sol.* 17:28; 1QH 4:22), even in a witnessing sense (Isa 24:23; see also 3:14); or rulership and establishing justice (see Matt 2:6; 20:20-21; Judg 3:10; Ps 2:10; Dan 9:12; 1 Macc 9:73; 11Q19 [*Temple*] 56:20). For our context, it is not necessary to argue the pros and cons of each. I adhere to the latter meaning largely because of the book of Judges, Psalms (for example, 10:18; 35; 76:9; 82:1-4; 103:6), Isa 42:1; 49:6, and the Qumranic evidence cited above, where we set the Twelve in historical context.⁸² In each case the Twelve are

79. So, e.g., Meier, "The Circle of the Twelve," 657-58. See for the broader picture, my *New Vision*, 120-55.

80. So Nolland, *Luke*, 3.1066.

81. That the christology of the twelve judging is Son of Man christology was pointed out long ago. See, e.g., Roloff, *Apostolat*, 149-50. Paul believed saints would judge the world (1 Cor 6:2-3) and in the Apocalypse the victor is promised a seat with the Son of Man (1:13), on his throne (3:21; 20:4), which is the place of judgment. On this, cf. A. Geysler, "The Twelve Tribes in Revelation: Judean and Judeo-Christian Apocalypticism," *NTS* 28 (1982) 388-99. Each of these traditions may well derive from the Q tradition.

82. I. Broer, "Das Ringen der Gemeinde um Israel: Exegetischer Versuch über Mt 19, 28," in *Jesus und der Menschensohn: Für Anton Vögtle* (ed. R. Pesch et al.; Freiburg: Herder, 1976) 148-65; W. Trilling, "Zur Entstehung des Zwölferkreises: Eine geschichtskritische Überlegung," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs* (ed. R. Schnackenburg; Freiburg: Herder, 1978) 201-22; E. J. Kissane, "A Forgotten Interpretation of Mt 19:28," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 17 (1921) 359-66; Beasley-Murray, *Jesus*, 275-76; Nolland, *Luke*, 3.1067 (ruling); Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3.55-56; Roloff, *Apostolat*, 149; R. A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) 201-8. D. Flusser connects judging to the stones of the Urim and Thummim and finds confirmation in Rev 21:14, 19-20 ("Qumran und die Zwölf"). The absence of a priestly emphasis in the Jesus traditions speaks against this theory. His lines of thought continue throughout a presentation of Jesus: see his *Jesus* (coll. R. Steven Notley; 2d ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1998). See also R. A. Horsley and J. A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity, 1999) 262-63.

appointed to a leadership role in the final Kingdom,⁸³ where they will exercise rule/judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel.⁸⁴ Thus, while in the sending tradition no evidence exists for a fulfillment of the literal expectation for the reunification of the twelve tribes, in this *logion* we see such an expectation.

The Twelve, Jesus, and the Historical Context

The historical context for the Twelve, if drawn from our previous discussion of the ancient evidence about "twelve," suggests the following: (1) the Twelve sent by Jesus could conceivably correspond to the ancient custom of *twelve representatives*; however, in every case of twelve representatives, those who are chosen represent *each and every* tribe (for example, Num 1:44; Deut 1:23; Josh 3:12; 4:2, 3, 8; 1 Esdr. 5:1, 4; 8:54). What I am suggesting here is that this background for the use of "twelve" by Jesus does not appear to be paramount. Jesus chose the Twelve to embody *all of Israel* but not to represent *each tribe*. The parallel to the Qumran community's leadership is more apposite here: a nonliteral fulfillment of the reunification of the twelve tribes or a simple reutilization of the ancient twelve patriarchal ideal drives the choice of twelve as leaders in these texts and, in the case of Jesus, with no priestly emphasis. In the words of Beda Rigaux:

Alles, was man daraus folgern kann [e.g., the parallel with Qumran], ist, dass in den letzten Jahrhunderten des Judentums eM Klima entstanden war, in dem die Geschichte Israels eine betont theologische and messianische Bedeutung erhielt. Man ging zurück auf Adam, auf Henoch, auf die Patriarchen, um sie zu Offenbarern der Geheimnisse Gottes zu machen. Israel war das Zentrum der göttlichen Sorge.⁸⁵

(2) The Twelve being sent by Jesus *correspond in potentially suggestive ways with the Covenant renewal and the ancient story of crossing the Jordan, entering into and capturing the land by the strong hand of Joshua* (see Josh 4:1, 3, 7, 9, 20). Just as tribal representatives of ancient

83. The use in Matthew of the Greek term *παλιγγενεσία* has generated significant debate: (1) it is possible to find a Semitic foundation for such a Greek term (cf. 1QS 4:25); (2) it seems probable, however, that the term is a Matthean expression; (3) it is entirely reasonable to think Jesus could have said something that gave rise to such a translation; (4) it is remotely possible that Jesus suggested the restoration of the twelve tribes; (5) it is most likely that the term describes an era (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.66; cf. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus*, 275 and n. 235). On the term, see F. W. Burnett, "Παλιγγενεσία in Matt 19:28: A Window on the Matthean Community?" *JSNT* 17 (1983) 60-72; J. D. M. Derrett, "Palingenesia" *JSNT* 20 (1984) 51-58; D. Sim, "The Meaning of Παλιγγενεσία in Matthew 19:28," *JSNT* 50 (1993) 3-12.

84. Cf. Jeremias, *Proclamation*, 272; Broer, "Ringen," 158-59; contra Kissane, "Forgotten," 361-66.

85. Rigaux, "Die 'Zwölf,'" 483.

Israelites were to go throughout the land to capture it for YHWH and then to "rule" over that land, so the Twelve sent by Jesus were to go throughout the land (esp. Galilee and then beyond) and declare the Kingdom so that the nation could be reclaimed for YHWH's covenant. Just as twelve tribal leaders formed the ancient leadership, so with Jesus the leadership comprised twelve men. It is possible that the "judging" of the Twelve was originally set in a Covenant reminder context: Luke 22:29-30 connects the two concepts, as has been argued by Heinz Schürmann and Rudolf Otto.⁸⁶

This connection of the Twelve with the covenant ideal can be strengthened by appealing to the foundational event of Jesus' mission: the baptism by John in the Jordan.⁸⁷ The connections I draw here are of varying degrees of probability but, together, are suggestive that the Twelve were connected to covenant renewal. As I have stated in another context,⁸⁸ this baptism (1) took place in the Jordan, and (2) probably the baptisands entered the water from the other side of the Jordan and, only after the baptism, reentered the land as a symbolic "action" of covenant renewal, purification, and conquest.⁸⁹ The second observation can be gleaned from the following: John exposed Herod, who was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Mark 6:8, 17-29; compare with Luke 13:31-33); John was imprisoned in Machaerus (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116-119); Jesus' response to John's query "Are you the one who is to come, or do we wait for another?" shows serious connections with Qumran (see Matt 11:2-6 and 4Q521, frgs. 2, 4; esp. 2.1, 6-8, 12-13); the Gospel of John connects John's ministry to Perea (see John 1:28; 3:26; 10:40). Thus, it is indeed plausible that John's ministry was Transjordanian (Perean) and evoked a symbolic action of entering into the land of Israel from the Transjordan similar to the entry of the generation of Moses and Joshua. When these observations are juxtaposed in the same paragraph, they suggest that the Twelve were at least shaped by Jesus' knowledge of the covenant renewal traditions of Joshua. We can place somewhere in this mixture the plausible connection of John with Qumran and the role that twelve (see above) played there as a possible genesis for Jesus' use of

86. See Beasley-Murray, *Jesus*, 276-77.

87. See esp. R. L. Webb, "Jesus' Baptism: Its Historicity and Implications," *BBR* 10 (2000) 261-309, idem, "John's Baptizing Activity in the Context of First-Century Judaism," *Forum* 1 (1999) 99-123 (though I would distance myself from use of the view that proselytes were baptized upon conversion in first-century Judaism); idem, "Josephus on John the Baptist: Jewish Antiquities 18.116-119," *Forum* 2 (1999) 141-68.

88. S. McKnight, "Jesus' New Vision within Judaism," in *Who Was Jesus? A Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (ed. P. Copan and C. A. Evans; Louisville: WJK, 2001) 73-96.

89. Cf. Webb, *John the Baptizer*, 360-66 (who sketches this interpretation admirably); C. Brown, "What Was John the Baptist Doing?" *BBR* 7 (1997) 37-50; see also my essay "Jesus and Prophetic Actions."

"twelve."⁹⁰ While this grouping is eschatological, it is equally covenantal. The covenantal, however, shapes the eschatological.

Here then are the suggestive details:

The baptism evoked the entry into the land in ancient history (Josh 3:1-4:18); the use of twelve stones can be plausibly connected to Jesus' choice of twelve (Josh 4:1-10). When John declared vociferously that God is able "from these stones" (Luke 3:8 par. Matt 3:9) to raise up children for Abraham, this was perhaps what turned Jesus from disciple into prophet. Part of his task was to make the stones declare the glory of God's covenant with Abraham.

The mission of the Twelve was an attempt to spread the message throughout the land and, if any vision was involved on the part of Jesus, then the hope was to gain the land and its people for the Kingdom of God. This evocational context emerged from the Jewish hope to restore the land, to reunify the tribes, and to reestablish the covenant.

(3) There are solid grounds for contending that *Jesus envisioned a reunification of the twelve tribes that would take place in the land of Israel*. This is only implied, I am suggesting, in the choice and sending of the Twelve, but it is firmly assumed in the Q tradition in Luke 22:30 par. Matt 19:28 and probably in a text otherwise not studied here—namely, Luke 13:28-30 par. Matt 8:11-12 (compare with Ps 107:2-3; Isa 43:5-6; *Ps. Sol.* 11:2-3).⁹¹

(4) It is implied in all that precedes that Jesus' choice of the Twelve to embody his covenantal and eschatological vision *implies a political vision, a vision for the nation, and this in some ecclesial sense*. Jesus thinks the current leadership is in need of replacement; his twelve special followers are to be that new "nation" (Matt 21:43). To embody his vision in these Twelve is heady political stuff. The evidence considered here does not go as far as G. W. Buchanan did, or even as far as R. A. Horsely did, in attempting to reconstruct a political Jesus.⁹² However, the evidence clearly implies that Jesus had a design for the nation; his vision was not yet the world.

90. H. Schürmann has argued, however, that dimensions of Jesus' vision were in place prior to the baptism; cf., e.g., "Jesu Aufbruch zum Jordan: Beginn der ureigenen Basileia-Verkündigung Jesu," in his *Jesus—Gestalt und Geheimnis: Gesammelte Beiträge* (ed. K. Scholtissek; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1994) 31-44.

91. See esp. Allison (*Jesus Tradition*, 176-91) who single-handedly disputes the consensus that this text is speaking of Gentile inclusion in the Kingdom.

92. G. W. Buchanan, *Jesus: The King and His Kingdom* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1984); Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*.

This political design clearly implies negative critique of the establishment. It would take us wide of the mark here to consider whether Jesus' critique of the leadership in the form of his choice of the Twelve is primarily targeted at the Pharisees or the Sadducees, but the evidence does imply a trenchant dissatisfaction with what is going on in Jerusalem and, no doubt, through Jerusalem, in Galilee. His vision is grand enough to critique the entire leadership. While I am not convinced that this critique of the establishment emerges because Jesus is a Galilean, as was mentioned so suggestively by G. Vermes,⁹³ Jesus' childhood region certainly does not frown on such grandiose plans for the nation. His critique is solid: anti-Pharisee, anti-Sadducee, and anti-Roman (what else can the disparaging words of Luke 7:24-35 par. Matt 11:7-19 mean?). Jesus envisions a new leadership for the entire nation, and this means that the entire establishment must be swept clean, a veritable coup d'etat, with his Twelve as the new shepherds for those who would then be lost in Israel.

SUMMARY

Jesus' sending out the Twelve shows little parallel with the expectation of the reunification of the twelve tribes. Instead, the connotations of his choice and sending out of the Twelve show more significant parallels with Qumran leadership, *T. Judah* 25:1-2, and *T. Benj.* 10:7, and covenant reestablishment as found in Joshua 4. His expectation of the reunification of the twelve tribes in the land does emerge in the Q tradition (Luke 22:30 par. Matt 19:28; Luke 13:28-30 par. Matt 8:11-12), and his Twelve were to function in a leadership role in that Kingdom. There is significant evidence for us to think that Jesus had in mind a restored Israel—twelve new leaders, the land under control, a pure Temple, and a radically obedient Israel. The two themes of covenant and eschatology that swirl around the number "twelve" form a combined witness to the centrality of Jesus' vision for Israel: salvation-historical fulfillment—that is, covenant reestablishment—in his mission's inauguration of the Kingdom and the embodiment of leadership in his twelve special leaders, who will rule and liberate the twelve tribes of Israel in the Kingdom.

93. G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: Collins, 1973).