

The historicity of the circle of the Twelve: All roads lead to Jerusalem¹

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Abstract

The article consists of five argumentative sections. The first deals with the textual evidence with regard to the expressions “disciples”, “the Twelve” and “apostles”. In the second section it is argued that Jesus did not create the idea of “the Twelve”. Firstly, the argument focuses on a discussion of the differences and similarities in the lists of twelve names found in the synoptic gospels, Acts and the Sayings Gospel Q and, secondly, of the so-called “minor agreement” between Matthew (19:28) and Luke (22:30) with regard to the expressions the “twelve thrones” and the “twelve tribes of Israel”. The investigation concludes that all roads lead to Jerusalem with regard to the historicity of the circle of the Twelve. Section three discusses the situation in pre-70 CE Jerusalem where the earliest Jesus faction linked the idea of “the Twelve” with the resurrection of Jesus and the appearances tradition. It is argued that the appearances tradition coincides negatively with an endeavour among leaders of the Jesus movement to seek positions of power and, positively, with the spread of the gospel to people who were previously considered to be excluded from being children of God.

1. INTRODUCTION

The article argues that there is no historical evidence that Jesus called “the Twelve” or sent out the “the apostles”. These designations seem to be interchangeable for Mark and those documents that are modeled after Mark. Paul did not see it this way. He regarded the concept “apostles” as an expansion of “the Twelve” in Jerusalem. The group of Jesus followers in Jerusalem created the idea of “the Twelve”. The number “twelve” represented the apocalyptic “true Israel”. The circle of “the Twelve” came into being as a result of

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the traditions concerning the appearances of the resurrected Jesus. It seems that the origins of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem lie in the claim of Peter and James (and probably also the sons of Zebedee, John and James) that they experienced an appearance of the resurrected Jesus. Mary Magdalene also had such a vision, but this was not mentioned in the tradition of the Jerusalem faction. Paul and Mark (and Christian writers dependent on them) knew this tradition about “the Twelve” and conveyed it further – albeit not very much enthused that the “pillars” of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem seemingly sought positions of power when they called themselves “the Twelve”.

The article, apart from the introduction and the conclusion, consists of five argumentative sections. The first deals with the textual evidence with regard to the expressions “disciples”, “the Twelve” and “apostles”. In the second section it is argued that Jesus did not create the idea of “the Twelve”. Firstly, the argument focuses on a discussion on the differences and similarities in the lists of twelve names found in the synoptic gospels, Acts and the Sayings Gospel Q and, secondly, on the so-called “minor agreement” between Matthew (19:28) and Luke (22:30) with regard to expressions the “twelve thrones” and the “twelve tribes of Israel”. This investigation will lead to the conclusion that all roads lead to Jerusalem with regard to the historicity of the circle of “the Twelve”. Sections three and four discuss the situation in pre-70 CE Jerusalem where the earliest Jesus faction linked the idea of “the Twelve” with the resurrection of Jesus and the appearances tradition. In section five it is argued that the appearances tradition coincides negatively with an endeavor among leaders of the Jesus movement to seek positions of power and, positively, with the spread of the gospel to people previously considered to be excluded from being children of God.

2. “DISCIPLES”, “THE TWELVE” AND “APOSTLES”: WHAT ARE THE TEXTS SAYING?

The phrases “disciple of Jesus” and “follower of Jesus” have different connotations. Discipleship presupposes that the historical Jesus calls someone who then physically followed Jesus (cf Meier 1997:636). Therefore, according to the gospel tradition, people such as Mary, Martha and Zacchaeus were “followers” of Jesus but not “disciples”. The question is whether the designation “the Twelve” in Mark (e.g., Mk 6:7) and John (e.g., Jn

6:67) should be seen as an “inner circle” (Meier 1997:637) among Jesus’ disciples and whether the term “apostle” equates “disciple” and pertains particularly to the circle known as “the Twelve”.

Matthew also employed the phrase “the twelve disciples” (Mt 10:1; 11:1; possibly 20:17). This phrase seems to be an equivalent for “disciples”. If it is the case, “the Twelve” (οἱ δώδεκα) and the “disciples” were, according to Matthew, the same group of people. However, it is important to notice that the term “twelve apostles” also occurs in Matthew (10:2). Luke, based on Mark, took over the Markan designation “the Twelve” but does not employ the Matthean phrase “the twelve disciples” or “twelve apostles”. According to Meier (1997:638) the “use of ‘the Twelve’ as completely equivalent to ‘the disciples’ does not reflect the earliest strata of Gospel traditions or the historical situation of Jesus’ ministry.” I fully agree with Meier in this regard, but I will argue that Jesus also did not call an “inner circle” to whom he referred as “the Twelve”. There is no historical evidence that Jesus was responsible for the concept “the Twelve” or the phenomenon “the apostles”. These designations were in various degrees interchangeable for Mark and those documents dependent on Mark. I will indicate that Paul did not see it this way. The group of Jesus followers in Jerusalem created the idea of “the Twelve”. The number “twelve” represented the apocalyptic “true Israel”. The circle of “the Twelve” came into being as a result of the traditions concerning the appearances of the resurrected Jesus.

Both the Markan character with the name “Levi” (see Mk 2:13-15) and the Johannean character with the designation the “beloved disciple” (also referred to as “the other disciple” – see Jn 13:23-25; 18:15, 16; 19:26-27; 20:2, 3, 8; 21:20-23) do not occur in the list of *the Twelve* (Mk 3:16-19). However, according to Mark and John, both were called “disciple”. It is remarkable that, at the time when Levi was reportedly called to be Jesus’ disciple (cf Mk 2:15), Mark did not count him among “the Twelve”. At this stage in the Markan narrative the individuals among “the Twelve” mentioned are Peter, Andrew, James and John. The actual selection and naming of “the Twelve” is recorded for the first time in Mark 3:13-19.

In Mark 3:7 a clear distinction between Jesus’ disciples and the crowds is made. Mark 3:13 could therefore be interpreted (see Meier 1997:638 note 8) that Jesus summoned “the Twelve” out of a larger group of disciples. This is how Luke understood

Mark 3:13: "And [Jesus] called his disciples, and chose from them twelve" With regard to Jesus' calling of the "rich man" to be a disciple (Mk 10:17-22) one can also argue that a larger group of disciples apart from "the Twelve" existed. The fact that the "rich man" reportedly responded negatively seems to be irrelevant for Mark when he referred to the "rich man" as a potential *disciple*.

However, in a number of cases Matthew redactionally changed Mark's tendency to equate "the Twelve" with *all* the disciples. In the case of Levi, Matthew transformed "the toll collector's" name into "Matthew" – a name that is found in the list of "the Twelve". Actually, in the Matthean narrative no individual "disciple" appears who is not named in the list. Whereas Luke (6:12-16) took over the Markan report of the selection and the naming of "the Twelve" (Mk 3:13-19), Matthew did not narrate a story in which Jesus called "the Twelve" out of a larger group of disciples. When Matthew referred to the calling of the "rich man" and his negative response, he characterized him as someone who associated himself with Jesus' opponents (see Van Aarde 1994:56-57). Meier (1997:638 note 8) concludes: "Perhaps one can say that Matthew presents the circle of the Twelve as de facto coterminous with the circle of the disciples."

The word "apostles" refers to envoys sent by Jesus and it occurs only once in Mark (6:30). The parenthesis (i.e., the phrase printed in italics) in Mark 3:14 ("and [Jesus] appointed twelve, *whom he also designated apostles*, in order to accompany him and to send them out to proclaim ...") should not be seen as the best reading (*contra* Metzger 1971:69). It represents a secondary reading and should be regarded as a harmonization with Luke 6:13. The "Greek manuscript tradition evinces various attempts to harmonize Mark's story of the selection of the Twelve with Matthew 10:1-4 and Luke 6:12-16" (Meier 1997:639 note 11; cf also Meye 1968:190).

In Mark 6:30 the word "apostles" is used within the context of messengers who accomplished their missionary itinerary and it could refer to a concept known in Aramaic as *schaliach* (see Schmithals 1986:737-738; Meier 1997:639). This figure was a legitimized agent who was sent out with the full authority of the sender. Matthew (10:2) took the reference to the "apostles" over from Mark. The context of Mark 6 represents the typical Markan "sandwich-style" (see Best [1983] 1985:11). Between the sending of *the*

Twelve, two by two (Mk 6:7-13), and the return of the *apostles* (Mk 6:30-32) the narrator intercalated the report of John the Baptist's decapitation (Mk 6:1-29). A function of this particular narrating technique in Mark² could be to create for the implied reader a distance between the role of "the Twelve" and the *mission* of the "apostles".³ "However, this is no mere repetition, for the second part adds precision and clarifies the first part. Both parts comprise a two-step progressive description. The first part is important, yet the emphasis often lies on the second step, which usually contains the more significant element" (Rhoads & Michie 1982:47).

After Mark's reference to the completion of the mission by the messengers ("apostles"), Mark does not use the word "apostles" any longer. At least one can conclude that when Mark linked "the Twelve" to the concept "apostles", he did it only within the context of mission. But Markan research has also pointed out that the "disciples" in Mark's story were not very enthusiastic to serve people from outside the boundaries of their own homeland. The story of the apostles' return is followed by the "double story" about Jesus giving bread to people. In the first narration of this story (Mk 6:35-44) the recipients of bread were people from the land of Israel and the disciples took the initiative (cf Mk 6:35). In the second version (Mk 8:1-10) the recipients were from across the boundaries of the homeland and the disciples were not only hesitant to react on Jesus' initiative but were also unwilling to act as mediators of Jesus' gift of bread to the people. This "double story" is again intercalated by among others the report of the Syro Phoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30) who received left-over bread intended to be consumed by dogs. A possible interpretation of Mark's narrative point of view in the so-called mission discourse could be to understand the intention of his creation of a distance between "the Twelve" (i.e., the "disciples") and the "apostles" as an illustration that the nature of their "apostolate" was particularistic. This is exactly how Matthew (10:5) interpreted

² See Rhoads & Michie (1982:47-49) and Neiryneck (1972) on the so-called "two-step progression" as a Markan rhetorical device.

³ According to the Afrikaans translation of the first part of Mk 6:32, the returning messengers are referred to as "disciples". However, this is an inexplicable interpolation by the Afrikaans translators. Such a phrase does not occur in the textual apparatus of both the 27th revised Greek version of Nestle-Aland (1993:108) and the 4th revised edition of the United Bible Societies' *The Greek New Testament* (1994:142).

Mark. Yet, in line with Matthew's narrative point of view, he did not report this particularistic attitude pejoratively.

However, a comparison with Luke clearly points out that Luke did not consider the "apostles" as equivalent to "the Twelve". For Luke "apostles" were rather the "itinerants" who traveled two by two (seemingly male and female – cf Seim 1994). It is therefore noticeable that Luke did not characterize Paul as an "apostle". In the Lukan mission discourse the "itinerants" were numbered seventy (or seventy-two, according to other early manuscripts). It is also important to see that Luke expanded the "mission of the disciples" into a journey with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (commencing at Lk 9:51) and that they traveled through Samaria. Luke also made it clear that the "disciples James and John" (sons of Zebedee) wanted the Samaritans to be struck by an apocalyptic catastrophe similar to Sodom and Gomorrah (Lk 9:51-56). The sons of Zebedee clearly disapproved of Jesus travelling through Samaria and their hatred towards the Samaritans were easily evoked by the "bastards'" reported antagonism against Jesus. Luke (9:57-62) however, compared James and John to "would-be followers" of Jesus. The "itinerants", on the other hand, are implicitly described as "apostles" (see Luke's [10:1] use of the verb ἀποστέλλω). They traveled to "every city and place" where Jesus himself was prepared to go (Lk 10:1). According to the context in Luke, this reference would include Samaria.

In the light of our knowledge of Luke's overall conservative transmission of Q-traditions, one can assume that Matthew's version represents more of a radical redactional change of the Q-tradition than Luke. In The Sayings-Gospel Q and in Luke the itinerant emissaries were distinguished from "the Twelve" in Jerusalem. This can be seen in the designation in the mission discourse of those who were sent out as "others" (ἑτέρους). Luke describes this group as seventy or seventy two (Lk 10:1). This is a clear distinction between the "mission of the disciples" and the "mission of the seventy/seventy two". These "itinerants" are depicted over against the disciples such as the sons of Zebedee to whom Luke explicitly referred as "disciples" (Lk 10:5), but in Mark (3:16f) as "the Twelve". Thus, both Luke and Mark created a distance between the "itinerants" and the "disciples"/"the Twelve". The opposing ideologies behind this distinction can be read between the lines as either a particularistic mission or a universal mission.

We have seen that Matthew changed this and equated the “itinerants” with the “twelve disciples” (Mt 10:1). He also referred to them as the “twelve apostles” (Mt 10:2) and said that they did not travel on the “road to the nations” or visit a “city in Samaria” (Mt 10:5), but rather (μᾶλλον) proclaim the “approaching kingdom of heavens” only to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:6). The “rich man” is, for Matthew, a potential follower of Jesus who chose to share the ideological perspective of Jesus’ opponents (in Matthew represented by the “coalition” of Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priests and the “elders” in Jerusalem – see Van Tilborg 1972:1). In Matthew the “rich man” is not seen as a disciple. He displays an ambivalence similar to that of the character of the person without a wedding garment (Mt 22:11-13) in the parable of the wedding banquet (see Van Aarde 1994:242). In Matthew disciples of “little faith” are also tempted to collaborate with the enemy. Like the “rich man”, Judas (a “disciple” among “the Twelve”) and other renegades revealed their preference by using names for Jesus that were constantly used by the antagonists in Matthew’s story (see Van Aarde 1994:54-59).

My hypothesis with regard to Matthew is that Matthew conformed to the ideas that were previously held by the Jesus faction in Jerusalem. The existence of such a pre-70 CE group in Jerusalem is historically sure. Independent multiple witnesses of the role of among others James (the brother of Jesus) in this group are found in the Pauline tradition (Gl 1:19; Acts 1:14 [implied]; 15:13 [explicit]) and Josephus (*Antiquitates* 20.200). Similar witnesses with regard to the killing of James (the brother of John), due to his role in the Jesus faction in Jerusalem, occur in Mark 10:38ff (implied) and in Acts 12:1ff (explicit). According to information gained from the gospel tradition, this faction was probably formed around a core group (the so-called “inner-circle”) which Paul (Gl 2:9) referred to as “the pillars” (of which Cephas, i e Peter, and James, i e, the brother of Jesus, and the brothers James and John were the leaders). This group idealized their movement by thinking about it as the “eschatological Israel” and referring to the “first” disciples as “the Twelve”. This designation is clearly analogous to “the twelve patriarchs” referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures.

It seems as though Luke (and Mark as the source of Luke) knew that the indication of the “inner circle” as “the Twelve” was not authentic. Therefore, they interpreted “the Twelve” as a selection from a larger group of disciples. We have seen that Matthew differs from Mark and Luke by equating the “disciples” with “the Twelve”. Matthew would not use the term “disciple” when referring to potential disciples. He therefore changed the name “Levi” into “Matthew” in order to have all “disciples” explicitly referred to by a name that occurs in the list of “the Twelve”. This list was taken over from Mark, but probably originated earlier within the Jerusalem faction. Paul was acquainted with a group in Jerusalem called “the Twelve” but he did not mention their names. He only mentions the leaders Peter and James. Paul’s reference to “all the apostles” (εἴτα τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν) in juxtaposition to “the Twelve” in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 indicates that “apostles” were people who should be seen as an *extension* of “the Twelve”. It means that “the Twelve” were also seen as “apostles”, but the “apostles” were not restricted to “the Twelve”.

In Luke-Acts “the Twelve” are distinguished from a “crowd of disciples” and also from the “servants of the word” (see Lk 1:2). Probably due to Pauline influence, the election of Matthias in Acts (1:26) is described as an addition to the “eleven apostles” (cf also Acts 2:14). In Acts 6:2 the eleven plus Matthias are called “the Twelve”. After Acts 6:2 both the terms “the Twelve” and “apostles” do not appear in Acts again. It seems that the “servants of the word” took over the role of the “apostles” as if they were athletes in a relay race. In Luke 1:2 these two “character roles” are anticipated by means of the expressions “eyewitnesses” and “ministers of the word”. It is, however, noticeable that Luke did not describe Matthias as an “apostle”.

It seems that for both Paul and Luke someone could only claim to be an “apostle” if he⁴ was a “witness of Jesus’ resurrection” (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor 15:7f). This is the reason

⁴ It seems that Luke (see Lk 24:10f, 22f) and Paul (see the omission in 1 Cor 15:3-8) found it difficult to take the witness of women, such as Mary Magdalene, seriously.

why Paul saw himself as an “apostle”, though the “last among the apostles” (ὁ ἐλάχιστος τῶν ἀποστόλων) (1 Cor 15:9). Apart from witnessing Jesus’ resurrection, Acts (1:22) also expects an apostle to be someone who accompanied Jesus from his baptism to his ascension (see the term “eyewitnesses” in Lk 1:2). In this regard Luke could not have been influenced by the Pauline tradition, since Paul never knew the historical Jesus. This is Lucan *Sondergut*. It also explains why Luke, apart from Acts 14: 4 and 14, preferred not to call Paul an “apostle” in Acts.⁵

However, the New Testament does not attest unanimously that the “apostles” were the same as “the Twelve”. We have seen that this is Matthew’s presentation. In this regard it could be that Matthew conformed to the Jerusalem faction’s opinion. The world of Matthew seems to depict a Syrian situation (Antioch?) that reflects Pauline influence, albeit more than forty years after Paul’s contact with Antioch.⁶ According to Meier (1997:639 note 12) “(t)he viewpoint of the late-first-century church may be reflected ever so fleetingly here.” For Mark “apostles” were emissaries who should be distinguished from the Jerusalem faction.

⁵ Schmithals (1982:131) refers to Paul’s “apostleship” in Acts as follows: “In V.4 überrascht wie in V.14 die Bezeichnung ‘Apostel’ für Paulus und Barnabas. Da Lukas den Aposteltitel im übrigen für die Zwölf Apostel reserviert, um sie wegen ihrer unwiederholbaren Rolle am Beginn der apostolischen Tradition auszuzeichnen (vgl. 1,21f.), dürfte im vorliegenden Fall die Bezeichnung ‘Apostel’ für Paulus und Barnabas auf die Quelle des Lukas zurückgehen. Natürlich hat Lukas diese Bezeichnung nicht ohne Bedacht übernommen (oder ggf. eingeführt). Daß Paulus selbst sich mit Betonung ‘Apostel’ nannte, war Lukas ohne Frage bekannt. Er konzidiert diese Benennung auch, freilich in der hier vorliegenden funktionalen Weise: Paulus ist Apostel nur wie Barnabas in dem allgemeinen Sinn, in dem man die christliche Missionäre, die von Antiochien abgesandt wurden (13, 1-3), ‘Apostel’ (= Abgesandte) nennen konnte. Mit dem genuin lukanischen Apostelbegriff, wie er in 1,21f. dargelegt wird, hat der Apostolat des Paulus nichts zu tun. Eben dies demonstriert Lukas in V.4. 14 gegenüber den Irrlehrern, die Paulus für den Apostel schlechthin ansahen.”

⁶ According to David Sim (1998:573-587) Matthew was highly critical of Paul and his so-called “law-free” gospel.

This distinction in Mark indicates Mark's use of the second redactional layer (according to Mack 1993:177-179 the so-called Q³ additions) of the Sayings-Gospel Q.⁷ The tradition about Jesus addressing his followers as "lambs among wolves" originated prior to the first "formative" stratum of Q. This saying, however, does not appear in Mark. Scholars increasingly "assume the literary independence of the Sayings Gospel Q and Mark, as well as their use of some shared tradition" (Jacobson 1992:62 note 2; cf *inter alia* Lührmann 1989:51-71).⁸ Parts of the so-called "mission discourse" (Mk 6:6b-13, 30; Lk 10:1-22; Mt 10:1-42/43) are examples of these shared traditions.

The "formative" stratum of Q underwent at least two major redactional changes. Apart from the "formative" stratum (Q¹), a second (Q²) and a third stratum (Q³) can be distinguished. The reference in the "mission discourse" (Q 10:3) to the *sending out* (ὐπάγεται ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς) of "the Twelve" (Mk 6:7) / "others" (Lk 10:1) /

⁷ According to Mack (1993:128-130) the mission itself was also part of the first stratum of Q and the saying regarding the lambs and wolves was earlier (a saying of the historical Jesus?). Mack therefore supports me in this regard. The following judgmental pronouncements against towns that rejected the Jesus movement are Q² additions. For Mack, the Q³ additions were added shortly after the war and it is this stratum that "was subsumed by the authors of the narrative gospels later in the century" (Mack 1993:172). The Q³ additions represent "(1) the mythology of Jesus as the son of God, (2) the relationship of Jesus as the son of God to the temple in Jerusalem, and (3) the authority of the scriptures" (Mack 1993:173). Kloppenborg (1987:101) refers to Q¹ as the "formative" stratum, to Q² as the "first recension" (Kloppenborg 1987:167-170) and to Q³ as the "second recension" (Kloppenborg 1987:238-243). Jacobson (1992:49) explains it as follows: "What we have, therefore, are two basic recensions of Q, followed by a third stage during which only the temptation account (Q 4:1-13) was added." Q¹ represents a "sapiential" layer and contains sayings with regard to discipleship, poverty and the kingdom of God. This layer entails the redaction of earlier sayings by a "missionary-sending community" (cf Jacobson 1992:50). According to Kloppenborg Q² was induced because of the "failure of the mission to Israel. Q³ added material concerning the announcement of judgment in an apocalyptic fashion. My disagreement with Mack's stratification pertains to both the date of the writing of Mark and that the above-mentioned Q³ additions should be regarded as part of the second stratum. I do not think that Mark was written almost half a decade after the war, but rather in the immediate aftermath of the war. The third stratum represents those sayings that pertain to the self-identity of the Q community over against the Jamnia Academy. Matthew and Luke made use of the Sayings Gospel Q in its final redactional stage, but the Q known to Mark represents the second redactional layer.

⁸ The following advice of Arland Jacobson (1992:62 note 2) is worth taking into consideration: "For the study of the theology of Q, it is advisable to include only those possibly shared traditions where there is significant evidence of Q, and where there is sufficient recoverable Q material to support the argument that this material presents a point of view different from Mark's. I include among these esp. Mark 1:1-8; 4:30-32; 6:6b-13; 8:11-13 and their Q parallels."

“the twelve disciples” (Mt 10:1) as “wandering missionaries” seems to be part of the first “formative” stratum. The designation of the followers of Jesus as either “the Twelve” (Mark), “the twelve disciples” (Matthew) or simply “others” (Luke), seems not to appear in Q¹ but is rather the product of the three synoptics’ respective response to an oral tradition. In other words, designating the “inner circle” of the followers of Jesus as “the Twelve” represents a pre-Markan tradition.

One can infer that some uneasiness with regard to this tradition caused the synoptics to reflect on its meaning. Mark considered it necessary to distinguish between the sending of “the Twelve” (Mk 6:7) and the successful return of “apostles” (Mk 6:30). The designation “apostles” is a Markan addition. It does not occur in the “mission discourse” found in the Q collections (see Jacobson 1992:138-139). Matthew combined the concept “disciple” with “the Twelve” (Mt 10:1; 11:1), but did not report the successful completion of the mission, as did Mark and Luke (see Van Aarde 1994:103). Instead, Matthew considered it necessary to give the “twelve disciples” an own identity over against the “disciples” of John the Baptist (Mt 11:2ff). This episode appears in Luke before the commencement of the mission.

Luke emphasized that the “itinerants” were *other* persons than “the Twelve”. In Matthew’s “mission discourse” the list of the names of “the Twelve” appears at the beginning of the mission (Mt 10:2-4), described as a mission to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:6). Jesus’ appointment of “the Twelve” and the presentation of a list of their names coincide in Mark’s gospel (Mk 3:16-19) and are reported to have happened prior to the mission (Mk 6:7ff). In Luke (6:14-16) the list of twelve names appears *before* Jesus reportedly presented a Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:20-49) and *before* he sent others on a mission beyond the boundaries of the homeland of the Israelites (Lk 10:1ff). As we have said, Matthew mentioned the list at the beginning of the mission discourse (Mt 10:2) and the mission is reported to have happened *after* the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). Mark’s reference that “the Twelve” were sent out “two by two” (Mk 6:7) made that Matthew “arranged the twelve names in six pairs” (Harrington 1991:137). Luke saw the mission of the “seventy”/“seventy two” as an itinerary of pairs.

The idea of the *sending out* is a Q¹ addition to the tradition that Jesus compared his followers with “lambs among wolves”. This addition, as is generally the case with the

other Q¹ additions (cf Kloppenborg 1987:200), seemingly intended to make the Jesus sayings relevant to a larger Israelite community. It is unclear whether Q¹ already contained a list of the twelve names or that it should rather be seen as a Q² addition. Be that as it may, it appears that in the collections of the Sayings Gospel Q a list of “the Twelve”⁹ is included at the second stratum phase of the tradition history of Q. But I will also argue that a pre-Markan list existed that differs from the one that was included in Q³.

This second stratum was prompted by the opposition from the ranks of Israel against the Jesus movement before the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 CE. It led to Q² additions in which the mission to Israel was extended to the nations. After the war the Q community sought its self-identity in the light of increasing Pharisaic bigotry. Q² also introduced apocalyptic eschatology into Jesus sayings. It can be seen in the “appended prophetic threat” in Q 10:13-15 (see Jacobson 1992:68). This addition pertains to an announcement in Q 10:11 that the kingdom is near and in Q 10:13ff that those who rejected the “laborers” will be judged, including woes against antagonized Galilean cities. These elements are absent from Mark. It is possible that both the proclamation of judgement and the woes against Capernaum, Gorazin and Bethsaida as the “Galilean counterpart of Jerusalem” (Van Aarde 1994:124) should be seen as Q³ additions.¹⁰

In the third stratum (i.e., the “second recension” of the “formative” stratum) the mission discourse is now re-interpreted from an “universal” perspective. Both Matthew and Luke used the third version of the Sayings-Gospel Q,¹¹ but Mark was only acquainted

⁹ See Schürmann (1969:318-319) and Schneider (1980:206) with regard to Luke’s relationship to Q.

¹⁰ Jacobson (1992:68) does not distinguish between three layers as such, but rather describes the “theology” of Q as a literary unit, consisting of sayings which are added linearly. He explains Q in the light of the above-mentioned absence from Mark as follows: “In contrast to Mark, who omits any reference to the kingdom, Q makes it clear that in the person of the ‘laborers’ the kingdom draws near to Israel, and that this means judgment, so that those in Israel who reject the ‘laborers’ reject God and bring wrath upon themselves. What we have in Q, therefore, is not really a mission at all but rather an errand of judgment. The results seem predetermined, for the discourse opens with a saying describing the laborers as lambs in the midst of wolves. Here the image of God’s lamb, Israel, in the midst of hostile gentile wolves has been sarcastically inverted. The appended prophetic threat (Q 10:13-15), which says that gentiles would have responded better than Israel, assumes the failure of the call for Israel to return to Yahweh.”

¹¹ The Q version used by Matthew and Luke represents the “final” addition. This version, according to Kloppenborg (1987:246-262), includes the last addition, namely the “temptation” report (cf Jacobson 1992:94-95).

with the second version of Q. Luke is closer to the intention of Q³, while Matthew redactionally changed some aspects of the “universal” tendency in Q³.

Luke knew that the “intinerants” were not “the Twelve”, but Matthew equated them with “the Twelve”. Whereas, for Mark, “the Twelve” (Mk 6:7-13) were linked with the “apostles” (Mk 6:30-32), for Luke the concepts “disciples” and “apostles” were interchangeable. Luke is the only witness of the tradition (either the creator thereof or he took it over from the Jerusalem faction) that the number “twelve” was restored by the selection of Matthias after Judas’ death. In the “salvation history” scheme of Luke-Acts this “historical” core group is separated from the “servants of the word” (such as Stephen and Paul). In the Lukan narrative the “disciples”/“apostles” were part of the *Mitte der Mitte*. In Luke’s salvation history the Jesus story forms the middle narrative line and should be seen as apart from the story of the prophets (the first narrative line) and the story of the church (the third narrative line). In the plot of Acts the “servants of the word” appear later. They took the Jesus tradition over from Peter as the leader among the “apostles”/“disciples”. The “servants” are characters in the story of the church that began in Jerusalem with the missionary work of Peter and the other “pillars” and ended in Rome with Paul’s mission.

Paul explicitly referred only to Peter as an *apostle* (see Gl 1:17-19; 2:8). Allusions in this regard to John (the son of Zebedee) and James (the brother of Jesus) seem to be ambiguous. Within the context of Galatians 2:1-10 the reference to James and John (vs 9) in juxtaposition to Cephas (explicitly called an apostle in vs 8) could indicate that they were included among the apostles. Also Galatians 1:19 may be read as “I did not see any other of the apostles *except* (εἰ μὴ) James” or as “I did not see any other of the apostles, *but* (εἰ μὴ) [I did see] James” (Meier 1997:640 note 15). In 1 Corinthians 15:9 Paul saw himself as “the last of the apostles”. Because of this reference and also his articulation “*all* the apostles” as an expansion of the “the Twelve”, it seems that Paul did not fully equate the “apostles” with “the Twelve”. He did, however, regard “the Twelve” as among the “apostles”. The context of Galatians 1 and 2 also does not clearly indicate whether Paul regarded only Peter, James (the brother of Jesus) and John (the son of Zebedee) or the entire group of “the Twelve” as the “pillars” (Gl 2:9).

3. DID JESUS CREATE THE IDEA OF “THE TWELVE”?

In the New Testament as a whole references to the “the Twelve” are relatively scarce:

(T)he Twelve are mentioned in the Four Gospels, in the pre-Pauline formula in 1 Cor 15:5, and in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles (the group called the Twelve is never mentioned after Acts 6:2, while even references to “the apostles” diminish notably after chap.8, disappearing entirely after 16:4). This exhausts all purportedly historical reports of the Twelve in the NT. They are mentioned again only fleetingly in Rev.21;14, an apocalyptic vision of the heavenly Jerusalem at the end of time (“the twelve apostles of the Lamb”).

(Meier 1997:670)

According to Meier (1997:671) the “reasons for the swift disappearance or total absence of the Twelve from most of the NT are unclear.” He suggests that after the death of some members (such as the martyred James, the son of Zebedee) during the first decade after Jesus’ crucifixion, “it made little sense to continue to speak of the Twelve in regard to the present situation of the church” Or it could be that “the power of the Twelve as a group was eclipsed by the ascendancy of individual leaders like Peter or James [the brother of Jesus?], or some other members of the Twelve imitated Peter in undertaking a mission to Diaspora Jews in the East or the West – thus leaving no visible group of twelve leaders ‘on the scene’ in Palestine.” Meier (1997:671-672 note 83) summarizes Schmithals’ (1969:69-70) viewpoint as follows:

(1) a life of Jesus without the Twelve, (2) the sudden creation of the Twelve after Easter as a result of a resurrection appearance, (3) the conferral of such an important and lofty status on the Twelve in the early church that the group was retrojected into various streams of NT tradition (Mark, Q, L, and John), (4) the disintegration of the Twelve quite early as the apostasy of Judas and not later that the martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee, and consequently (5) the almost total absence of the Twelve from the rest of the traditions and writings of the first-century church.

Meier regards it as specifically “complicated” when Schmithals (1972:398-401) notes in his article “Die Markusschluß: Die Verklärungsgeschichte und die Aussendung der Zwölf” that Mark was the first to retroject “the Twelve” into the public ministry. Schmithals, like many other historical critical exegetes (e.g., the Jesus Seminar; cf Funk 1998:106), sees Mark’s transfiguration story (Mk 9:2-8) as a re-worked edition of a story of an appearance of the risen Jesus.

The appearances tradition links up with Mark’s understanding of Jesus as Son of God within a Greco-Roman environment and the apostolate of the church outside the boundaries of Judean particularity. What actually happens here is that Meier expresses his disapproval of Schmithals who says that Mark was the first to “free” the Jerusalem faction from their particularistic attitude by transforming their self-designation (as though they are “the Twelve”) into “apostles”.¹² By doing so, Mark in fact criticized the leaders of the Jesus faction in Jerusalem.

Although Meier sees this view as a “convoluted hypothesis”, I concur fully with Schmithals in this regard. According to Meier, Schmithals sketches the origin and disappearance of the idea of “the Twelve” as a “meteoric rise” followed by a “meteoric fall”. It “strains credulity and in the end is totally unnecessary” (Meier 1997:672 note 83). Meier utilizes both the “criteria” of “multiple independent attestation” and “embarrassment” to argue that the “circle of the Twelve did (probably) exist during Jesus’ public ministry.” In spite of the fact that I do not regard the implementation of such “criteria” as a “method” to ascertain historicity (see Crossan 1998:143-149), I will argue in the light of Meier’s discussion of “multiple independent attestation” against the probability that Jesus

¹² “Die missionarischen Aktivität der Urgemeinde setzt vermutlich das ‘Messiasbekenntnis des Petrus’ voraus; denn eigentlich christliche Verkündigung gibt es erst mit dem Glauben an Jesus als den ‘Sohn Gottes’: ‘Dies ist mein geliebter Sohn; hört auf ihn [Mk 9:7]!’ Dadurch werden die Zwölf, anfangs die Repräsentanten der endzeitlichen Gemeinde, welche die apokalyptisch vorgestellte Äonenwende erwarten, zu den ‘Zwölf Aposteln’” (Schmithals 1986:736-737).

created the idea of “the Twelve”¹³. Both concepts “the Twelve” and “apostles” are lacking in the earliest Jesus traditions (e.g., miracles, chreias, apothegms, and controversy reports). The idea of “the Twelve” should rather be seen as going back to the earliest Jesus faction in Jerusalem (cf Conzelmann 1988:341-342).¹⁴

The primary evidence for this statement, from a tradition critical perspective, is that both Paul and Mark related their knowledge of the idea of “the Twelve” to their receipt of the kerygmatic tradition (gospel about the salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus). This tradition is said to have been taken over from the leaders in the Jerusalem faction who regarded themselves as “the Twelve”. From the ten (or eleven) times that Mark mentioned “the Twelve” two “at least ... seem firmly embedded in the pre-Markan tradition” (Meier 1997:644; cf Schmahl 1972:203-213; Trilling 1977:204-206; Kertelge 1969:193-206); the list of names in Mark 3:16-19 and the reference to Judas as “one of the Twelve” in Mark 14:43.

The following synopsis (taken from Meier 1997:646) clearly indicates that Matthew and Luke represent an independent tradition about “the Twelve” with regard to Mark :

¹³ See Denaux (1966:25-45) for a list of scholars who argue pro and contra the historicity of the belief that the historical Jesus constituted the Twelve. For arguments used on both sides, see Klein (1961:34-37). Among the scholars from a previous generation who “affirm the existence of the Twelve during Jesus’ ministry” are W G Kummel, H von Campenhausen, G Bornkamm and J Gnika. Among those who questioned the possibility are J Wellhausen, J Weiss, E Hirsch, R Bultmann, P Vielhauer, W Schmithals, H Braun, G Schille, S. Schulz and H Conzelmann (cf Meier 1997:643 note 22). Recently E P Sanders (1985:11, 98-106 (see also Sanders 1993:169-195) and J P Meier (1997:643-672) have been among the “positivists” and J D Crossan (1995:75), and the Jesus Seminar (see Funk & The Jesus Seminar 1998:85-86) among the “critics”.

¹⁴ Schmithals (1986:733) puts it as follows: “Die Konstituierung des Kreises der Zwölf fällt in die früheste Zeit der Jerusalemer Urgemeinde, wie aus 1 Kor 15,5 hervorgeht. Ob die Zwölf durch eine Erscheinung des Auferstandenen berufen wurden oder ob sie sich auf die Erscheinung vor Petrus hin zusammenfanden und dann dem Auferstandenen begegneten, sei dahingestellt. Sie verstehen sich offenbar als Repräsentanten jener eschatologischen Heilsgemeinde des neuen Israel (vgl. Lk 22,29f.), die wie anfänglich auch Petrus [Mk 9,5f.] in Jesu Auferstehung den Anbruch der allgemeinen Totenaufstehung sah (1 Kor 15,20). Vielleicht repräsentierte jeder der Zwölf einen der Stämme Israels; jedenfalls bildeten sie den ‘Ältestenrat’ der Heilsgemeinde (vgl. Bar 8,3).”

Mark 3:16-19	Matthew 10:2-4	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
<i>First Group of Four</i>			
Simon Peter James [son of] Zebedee John brother of James Andrew	Simon Peter Andrew his brother James [son of] Zebedee John his brother	Simon Peter Andrew his brother James John	Simon Peter John Zebedee James Andrew
<i>Second Group of Four</i>			
Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew the toll collector	Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew
<i>Third Group of Four</i>			
James [son of] Alphaeus Thaddeus Simon the Cananean Judas Iscariot	James [son of] Alphaeus Thaddeus Simon the Cananean Judas Iscariot	James [son of] Alphaeus Simon the Zealot Jude [of] James Judas Iscariot	James [son of] Alphaeus Simon the Zealot Jude[of] James -----

.Meye (1968:200-201) is of the opinion that a list of “the Twelve” was orally transmitted before it was taken up in the narrative gospels and that the differences occurred during the oral transmission. According to Sanders (1985:102) Jesus referred only symbolically to his disciples as “twelve”. Consequently, it could be that there were not necessarily always a group of twelve followers around him.

Meier (1997:647-648) does not think the lists vary much. The only name that varies in all four lists is *Thaddeus* versus *Jude of James*. According to Meier (1997:652) the “replacement of Thaddeus by Jude of James finds no explanation in the theological program or stylistic preferences of Luke.” I am in agreement with this judgment. I also agree that Luke 6:14-16 most likely represents a “tradition of the names of the Twelve that is independent of that in Mark 3:16-19.” But I disagree that this evidence “witnesses both to the existence of the Twelve during the life of Jesus and the names of the individuals who made up the Twelve.” Multiple independent attestations illustrate four other points:

- A single list that could go back to Jesus himself did not exist.
- A pre-Markan list that differed from the one that was added to Q² (in other words, a Q³ addition) existed.
- The list in Q³ was used by Luke and Matthew (and also known to John).
- Matthew's list represents both an acquaintance with Q³ and redactional changes of the list found in Mark.

We have seen that the list of the names of "the Twelve" appears in Matthew at the beginning of the mission discourse. The fourth point is therefore specifically important because it demonstrates that the *Sitz im Leben* of the sending of "twelve apostles" on a mission does not go back to the historical Jesus. In this regard, Kloppenborg's (1987:72) remark about Matthew's conflation of Q with Mark is relevant:

That Matthew both conflates Q with with Mark and displaces Marcan stories is a matter of empirical fact. When we encounter a Q pericope which is conflated with a Marcan story [e.g., the *sending* (Q) of *the Twelve, designated as apostles* (Mark) and, therefore, referred to as *twelve apostles* (Matthew)] we may assume that the setting is secondary. Similarly, when a cluster of Q sayings [e.g., those relating to the so-called "mission discourse"] is placed in such a way as to fulfil a specific function in respect to the *Marcan framework or Marcan materials* (i.e., a function it could not originally have had in Q [e.g., Mark's presentation of the mission discourse in terms of his "sandwich-style"]), then its position is certainly secondary (emphasis by Kloppenborg, but my additions).

Yet the *difference* in the lists with regard to *Thaddeus* and *Jude of James* is not the real issue. It is the *similarity* with regard to the place of *Judas Iscariot*, despite of the respective redactional changes made by all three synoptists, that points to a common pre-Markan *Sitz im Leben*. This setting however does not go back to the historical Jesus. Both the research of John Shelby Spong (Judas was Mark's invention) and John Dominic Crossan (Judas was a real person but Mark's story about Judas' betrayal is fiction with the aim to place the guilt on the Judean elite) point to a unauthentic situation (see Funk 1998:136-137).

Yet the most important issue is the fact that the reference to Judas Iscariot is independently linked to the “Last Supper” as an eschatological meal (cf Mk 14:17-25; Jn 13:18-30). It is possible that Jesus could have such a “last meal” with close followers but the interpretation of this meal as an eschatological event in all probability goes back to the earliest Jesus movement in Jerusalem. This evidence is also supported by John 14:22. Judas Iscariot here referred back to John 13:18-30 where Judas is called “Judas son of Simon Iscariot”. The context here pertains to the tradition of the “Last Supper” as an eschatological meal. Thus, in the light of the diversity of the “list” tradition, we cannot affirm the existence of a list that could go back to the historical Jesus. However, we can trace the tradition of “the Twelve” back to the origins of the kerygmatic tradition because of Mark’s passion tradition with regard to Judas’ betrayal.

The so-called “minor agreement” between Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30 also supports my belief that the Jerusalem faction was responsible for putting itself on the pedestal of the “new” Israel. The common source of this saying is Q³ (see Mack 1993: 205). Q³ reflects from a post-war situation on the position of the Jesus movement that originated in Jerusalem. It attests to a position of trying to clarify its self-identity in the light of the Pharisaic reformation at Jamnia. The difference between Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30 with regard to Q³ is important. It demonstrates their respective attitudes towards the Jerusalem faction. These perspectives cohere with their overall ideological point of view. Matthew, who conformed to the Jerusalem tradition, wrote: “you shall sit on *twelve thrones* obtaining justice (κρίνοντες) for the *twelve tribes of Israel*.” Luke, who was ambivalent towards the Jerusalem tradition and, on the one hand, legitimized the “authority” of the *apostles in Jerusalem* but, on the other hand did not regard them as the *Twelve*, wrote: “you shall sit on *thrones* obtaining justice for the *twelve tribes of Israel*.”

John P Meier (1997:636) asks: “Did ‘the Twelve’ count as ‘apostles’ in the earliest days of the church? Scholars such as Günter Klein (1961) and Walter Schmithals (1969) do not think so. Jürgen Roloff (1965:57-60) believes that they were. Meier (1997:64) says: “It was in the early church that ‘apostle’ was first used as a set designation for a specific group – though different authors used the designation in different ways.”

Which of these opinions is correct can only be ascertained if expressions such as the “earliest days of the church” and “early church” are clarified. It is also a question whether Meier interpreted the above-mentioned scholars with adequate nuance. We must keep in mind that, since its earliest days, the “church” was a diverse phenomenon. Furthermore, the concept “church” cannot be applied to all the Jesus movements that existed during the “earliest days” after Jesus’ death. Form critical exegetes have broadly distinguished three *Sitze im Leben*: that of the pre-Easter Jesus (the historical Jesus), the early Jesus movements (which transmitted the Jesus traditions orally and in written form) and the writing of individual “Christian” documents (based upon the transmitted oral and written traditions in combination with authorial *Sondergut*).

Considering only the form critical development of the disciple tradition, it has become clear that the post-Easter resurrection belief in particular influenced this tradition. This influence pertains specifically to the convictions held in Jerusalem by influential male followers of Jesus. They regarded themselves as “apostles” (i e, legitimized “agents” of the Jesus *Sache*) and as the most important “prophets” (i e, “the Twelve” analogous to the twelve patriarchs) of the “new Israel”.

The tradition history of the “disciples’ mission” can diagrammatically be described as follows:

The historical Jesus

(addressing followers as “lambs among wolves”)

The Jerusalem faction

(“inner circle” are “the Twelve”, “apostles” of Jesus, the Messiah)

Q¹

(mission without apocalyptic woes; unclear whether a list of twelve names is included)

Paul

(“the Twelve” expanded to other “apostles” of Jesus Christ, including Paul himself)

Q²

(mission to larger Israelite community; a list of twelve names included and apocalyptic woes added, but without a return reported)

Mark

(a list of twelve disciples *and* the mission of “the Twelve” to “Israel”
[including those living in the Decapolis];
woes included and the return of the apostles separately reported)

Q³

(a list of twelve names; mission discourse includes woes, but without a return reported)

Matthew

(conflation of Q³ with Mark: Markan list of the twelve disciples coincides [i e, non-Markan tradition] with mission of “twelve apostles” to “lost sheep of Israel” [i e, non-Markan tradition];
woes included but no return reported (i e, non-Markan tradition))

Luke

(influenced by Pauline tradition and both Q³ and Mark: adapted list of twelve names and mission of seventy/seventy two *other* apostles to Israelites, Samaritans and gentiles; woes included;
in connection with Mark, a successful return is reported in terms of Lukan *Sondergut*)

Revelation

(the “twelve apostles of the Lamb” [i e, twelve multiply twelve = 144(000), referring to martyrs from all nations), symbolizing the “heavenly Jerusalem”)

4. ALL ROADS LEAD TO JERUSALEM

4.1 The idea of “the Twelve” and the Jesus faction in Jerusalem

It therefore appears that the earliest Jesus movement in Jerusalem emanated from a faith based on the resurrection belief. However, it is an open question whether this “church” reflects a continuity or discontinuity with the cause of Jesus. The peculiar qualities of the Jesus cause are its inclusivity and anti-hierarchical tendency. The Jerusalem faction is, on the other hand, known for its embeddedness in Israel’s mores. It is not known for openness towards the gentiles or for egalitarianism. Yet, it does not mean that there is an absolute discontinuity between Jesus and the earliest Jesus movement in Jerusalem. The historical Jesus brought his message within the scope of Israel. The Jerusalem faction searched Scriptures and found evidence that Jesus was adopted by God to be Israel’s messiah.

From this messianic outlook and with an apocalyptic mind-set they were apparently the people who started the process of institutionalizing Jesus’ last meal with close followers as a table fellowship symbolizing their participation in God’s “spiritual kingdom”. These followers of Jesus distinguished themselves from the circle of the disciples of John the Baptist. Like Jesus himself some of them could initially have belonged to this circle. Their separation is symbolized by their distinctive understanding of the baptismal rite. The baptism by John the Baptist was a water ritual that initiated a lifestyle to be lived when and where God reigns. The leaders of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem institutionalized a “spiritual baptism” in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Spirit of God as sign of initiation into a discipleship of the “heavenly kingdom”.

According to their scrutinizing exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures, this “imperial rule” was inaugurated by Jesus as Israel’s Spirit-filled messiah. This messiah triumphed on account of his victory over death. Within an apocalyptic mind-set this was expected of the Son of Man. Therefore the Jerusalem faction referred to Jesus not only as Israel’s messiah, but also as the Son of Man. Apocalypticism is the mother of the Jerusalem faction’s theology and apocalypticism goes hand in hand with the belief in the resurrection from death. The apocalyptic expectation is that this world is to be transformed into the final kingdom of God. The vicarious death of a martyr was an important

dynamic in this expectation, because the martyr died on behalf of others in order to procure a better future for them beyond death. According to a specific prophetic tradition this new age would dawn when the nations would come to Jerusalem to join the unified Israel.

In Mark and Luke the focus is on moving from Jerusalem to the gentiles. Luke, in particular, geographically divides the world into concentric circles: Judea, Samaria and Rome, symbolizing the greater world. For Matthew the journey into the pagan world was not at issue. The focus was on the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" in order that the Temple in Jerusalem could become the house of prayer for all nations, including the impure and the outcasts. The social location of Luke's audience differed from that of Matthew.

Matthew is either a Syrian or Galilean gospel in which a tendency to both conformity with and separation from the (Pharasaic) Synagogue are to be found. The Pharisees remained the advocates of the ideology even after the destruction of the Temple. An aversion to the so-called Samaritans formed part of this ideology. The defamation of Jesus on account of his alleged illegitimate background seems to be part of the aversion. Matthew defended the church against this accusation by explaining that Jesus' birth was the result of an intervention by God. However, he conformed to the synagogical view by explicitly denying that Jesus or his followers ever went to the region of the Samaritans. For Matthew the son of David was the messianic son of man who was expected to inaugurate the utopia for the lost sheep of Israel. Paradoxically, Matthew departed from synagogical policy by emphasizing the ingathering of the social outcasts into the (symbolic) Temple (which did not concretely exist anymore) and, therefore, into God's kingdom.¹⁵

Luke also knew of the illegitimacy charge against Jesus. Luke's audience was probably located in Ephesus in Asia Minor. The conflict between the Synagogue in Jamnia and the Christian communities also had its influence far beyond the boundaries of

¹⁵ For Matthew, as for Mark, the Jesus kerygma became the message of an apocalyptic death, although he did not mention Jesus' death being for the benefit of others. The only hint of such an idea in Matthew's gospel (26:26-29) is the eucharistic formula which he (cf also Paul in 1 Cor 11:23-26) took over from Mark's interpretation (14:22-25) of the convictions of the Jerusalem church.

Roman Palestine (cf Boshoff 1997:599-601). This was the case in Asia Minor where the emperor granted judicial rights over Israelites to the Synagogue. The defamation on account of Jesus' alleged illegitimate background seemingly originated in the Synagogue probably because of the fact that Jesus grew up fatherless (see Van Aarde 1997, 1998).¹⁶

The resurrection appearances were known to Luke because of his acquaintance with the Pauline tradition.¹⁷ Paul, in turn, took over the core of the appearance tradition as it falls out in the traditional formula in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 from the Jerusalem faction (cf Murphy-O'Connor 1981:582-589; Gaston 1984:66-67):

died, for our sins, according to the Scriptures
was *buried*,
was *raised*, on the third day, according to the Scriptures
appeared to Cephas (i e, Peter), then to *the Twelve*
to *James*, then to *all the apostles*.

In this article I argued above that the Jerusalem faction seemingly understood the notion of "the Twelve" as exchangeable for "all of Israel", represented by "all the apostles". In Paul's version of the traditional formula it is clear that he differed from this juxtaposition. Apart from himself, he names Junia, Andronicus, Cephas, and probably

¹⁶ Luke's apology for the slander concerning Jesus' scandalous birth memoir differs from that of Matthew. Luke combined the Jerusalem faction's claim of Jesus' messianic origin with the tradition of the "new born baby". This combination was placed within the common context of Greco-Roman apotheosis and emperor-cult motives. For the Jerusalem faction Jesus was "Messiah" in an adoptionistic sense (cf Gaston 1984:69): as "Son of David" he was the Messiah who, as "Messiah" became the "Son of God". Historically analyzing this tradition, especially in the light of how it was used by New Testament writings, one can infer that the Jerusalem faction did not understand this "adoptionistic" motive as going together with divine conception. The same is true for Paul and Mark. Luke's way of thinking also must be understood against, among others, the background of the defamatory assertions concerning Jesus' origins by the "opponents" attached to the Jamnia Academy. Just as with the virginal conception, I do not trace the empty tomb tradition back to the Jerusalem faction, but to common Greek thinking that manifests in the stories of the deification of Hercules. In this respect Luke shares the opinion of Paul, who apparently got his idea of the empty tomb (cf 1 Cor 15:4) from the common thinking in the Greco-Roman world. This idea partly lies behind the Christ hymn in Philipians 2:6-11.

¹⁷ This can be seen, among others, in the correspondence between Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 15:6 to the five hundred who experienced the risen Christ at the same time and Luke's version in Acts 2:1-13 of the "pentecostal" experience of a multitude of believers.

James, and Silvanus (see Gaston 1984:67 note 36) as apostles. For Paul the concept “apostles” is an expansion of “the Twelve” in Jerusalem.

4.2 The appearances tradition and the mission of “the Twelve”/“apostles”

After Jesus’ brutally maltreated body had not been laid in a family tomb, Jesus arose in the kerygma. In other words, Jesus lived forth through the retelling of his cause. This process resulted in a development of Jesus movements (see Schillebeeckx 1974:38; Schille 1994:104) that reached back to his followers’ experience of resurrection appearances of Jesus, in particular, by Mary Magdalene, Peter, James and Paul.¹⁸ For some in early Christianity, it was as if they experienced the appearance of the resurrected Jesus in the form of the Son of Man in an altered state of consciousness (for evidences in Matthew see *inter alia* Mt 24:30; 27:52-53; 28:16-20). The Son of Man is that triumphant apocalyptic figure who had been expected to come at that point in history when the experiences in this world would be almost unendurable so that God’s people began to fantasize about the inauguration of the kingdom of God transcending the worrisome times that they experienced (see *inter alia* Dn 7:13-14).

Others could only hold on to the kerygma of those who said that they had been sent by the exalted Jesus to convey his cause (cf Jn 20:29). Paul said explicitly that God sent him to become an “apostle for the gentiles” (see Gl 2:8). It is reported that it happened to Paul while he was transformed by the experience of an epiphany by means of a divine light in which the risen Jesus appeared. This is, however, not described as a visual experience. It is reported that he heard Jesus’ voice (see Acts 9:3-4; 22:6-7; 26:13-14; cf Gl 1:25-27).

Mary of Magdala claimed to have been the first to have experienced an appearance of the risen Jesus. This was probably the case (see Mk 16:1, 9; Mt 28:1; Lk 24:10; Jn 20:1; Gospel of Peter 12:50; Epistula Apostolorum 9 [in both the Ethiopic and Coptic versions]). Only the Epistula Apostolorum does not place the name of the previously demon-possessed Mary Magdalene first on the list of the women who said they had a

¹⁸ Cf Lüdemann ([1994] 1994 68, 100, 170, 176-177) with regard to Peter and Paul, and the Jesus Seminar with regard to Mary Magdalene, contra Lüdemann (1994:160).

vision of the resurrected Jesus. This story of the women *confused* the men (Lk 24:22-24) – the Greek word ἐξίστημι can refer to amazement or surprise – which man could believe the witness of a woman! Fortunately for the sake of the men, another “stone” pillar of faith said he could confirm that the master appeared to him (cf Lk 24:34). It seems that Paul believed Peter in that he was actually the first to have seen Jesus (cf 1 Cor 15:5), although Peter himself and the other “pillars of faith” fled during the turmoil surrounding Jesus’ crucifixion (Mk 14:50). The rumor goes that when Peter’s shame prompted him to return his heart failed him again (see Mk 14:34, 66-72). Nevertheless, it is believed that God made him an “apostle for the Israelites” (see Gl 2:8).

According to Paul Jesus also appeared to the whole core group of Jesus’ followers, believed to be twelve as if they could claim to represent all the sons of Israel (cf 1 Cor 15:5; see also Lk 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-23; 26-29). Another early tradition was also transmitted that the cause of Jesus began to find its way through the Roman Empire after the “end-time” Spirit of God came upon a larger group of people from many different ethnic backgrounds who came to Jerusalem as the prophets said the nations would do. This spiritual experience of an altered state of consciousness happened when Peter took the lead by “evangelizing”, telling the people about the crucified Jesus whom God made to be Lord (Κύριος) and Messiah (Χριστός) of *all* of Israel (Israelites and gentiles included) (cf Acts 2:1-42). Through his death a transformation of the temple cult took place. Instead of sacrificial rites for receiving forgiveness of sin, everyone could now be baptized in the name of Jesus Messiah as a sign of their spiritual renewal (cf Acts 2:38ff).

This message is referred to as *good tidings* (εὐαγγέλιον). The word, *gospel*, was used over against the alleged “good news” of the divine birth of the emperor Augustus who claimed to be the saving patron of the whole world. This experience of an altered state of consciousness happened when the Spirit of God came upon not only an individual but on many sons and daughters of Israel (see Acts 2:17-21). According to an earlier transmission of probably the same story, it might have been that their numbers were more than five hundred (see 1 Cor 15:6). Paul, the source of this early testimony (cf 1 Cor 15:6), said he was informed that Jesus’ brother James claimed to have seen him after his crucifixion (cf Gospel of the Hebrews, fragment 7, preserved by Hieronymus, *De Viris Illustribus* 2). This reportedly happened *before* the appearance to “the Twelve” as a

group. The authority of James' upcoming leadership of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem probably depended on his being a primary witness (see 1 Cor 15:6). The historian Josephus (Ant 20:197-203) mentioned that James became an important official in the priestly circles of Jerusalem after the Romans had killed his brother. The experience of seeing his crucified brother resurrected apparently ignited in James the desire to become a follower of Jesus. However, while Jesus was among them, James, his mother and other kin from Nazareth did not believe in Jesus' cause. Nevertheless, he became one of those "pillars of faith" in Jerusalem. Having never been a follower of Jesus during his lifetime, it comes as no surprise that James did not believe that the gospel should go further, from Jerusalem through Samaria into the rest of the Roman Empire, even to the world of the barbarians who could not speak Greek. The legitimacy of his *apostleship* can therefore be questioned.

Another man, Paul, who apparently even did not know Jesus personally, was truly an *apostle* because he advocated this cause. This he did in the midst of afflictions which made him feel like a woman being crucified (according to a reading between the lines of 2 Cor 4:12). Likewise he considered his right to be an apostle to be based on the authority of a revelation of the resurrected Jesus (see Gl 1:12). Here it seems that both parties used the resurrection belief in a way that indicates that they did not fully internalize Jesus' disdain for selfish superiority (cf Mk 10:42-44). Yet Paul dissociated himself from the Jerusalem faction by his ideology critique of the idea that the obedience to culture conventions makes right relationship with God possible (see Phlp 3:7-11). He also differed from them concerning the task of an apostle to bring the light of the gospel to the nations outside of Jerusalem. Paul was eventually killed in Rome.¹⁹ Two years earlier Jesus' brother was also killed in Jerusalem. The historian Josephus (Ant 20:197-203) reported that the high priest eliminated this "pillar of faith" in 62 CE because he and other Pharisees were charged with lawlessness, probably because their opposition to the high priest could topple him from his lofty position.

¹⁹ So it seems to be (despite 1 Clem 5:7), because the Roman emperor Nero used the Christians for his own ends. The emperor wanted to expand the mansions of his family members. For that he needed the land where catacombs were used as shelter by outcasts. He started a fire, lied and said that Christians were responsible. The outcome of this was that many Christians were killed (cf Tacitus Ann xv.44).

5. CONCLUSION

Apart from the pre-Easter followers of Jesus centered in Jerusalem after his crucifixion, the cause of Jesus soon also became a movement for others as well. They were the Israelites in the Diaspora as well as devout Hellenists ("God-fearers") who associated themselves with the religion of the "children of Abraham". Pioneers like Paul played a major role in this Jesus movement. However, Paul seems to be unaware of the bias that caused the indifference among the Jerusalemites about Mary's experience of the resurrected Jesus.

Paul developed a theological construct of participation in the risen Christ Jesus.²⁰ Paul differed from the Jerusalem group in his opinion that the continuing experience of the meaning of Jesus' life through the resurrection belief meant that the "old" Israel died as well. The Jesus movement in Jerusalem believed that Jesus "restored" Israel as an ethnic entity. Therefore, as Jesus' earliest followers, they modeled themselves after an idealized (eschatological) Israel inaugurated by Jesus the Spirit-filled Messiah and Son of Man through his death and resurrection. This kerygma retrojected that Jesus himself, through his death and resurrection, placed the "the Twelve" on "twelve thrones" to obtain justice for the "twelve tribes of Israel" (cf Mt 19:28). However, for Paul the kerygmatic tradition means that the "Israel of God" was totally transformed into a spiritual entity. In other words, he also grounded his conviction in his understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection. The church as an "altered" Israel was seen as a movement of people who believe in Christ and in the *Kyrios*, the Jesus of faith for both Israelites and non-Israelites (cf Bousset [1913] 1926:76-77).

The historical Jesus did not foresee that an entity such as "the church" would be built upon such an interpretation of his death. Jesus also did not foresee the creation of either the circle of "the Twelve" or the circle of the "Twelve Apostles". I argued that all roads lead to Jerusalem with regard to the question who created the idea of "the Twelve" and called them "apostles". However, the Jesus faction in Jerusalem did not fully comply

²⁰ This "unity" with the cause of Jesus is a faith experience that can be described as an altered state of consciousness because of its spiritual nature. Spirituality is expressed by Paul with the formulae "to be in Christ", "to be in the Kyrios", "to be in the Spirit" and "to call upon God as Abba". The "live in Spirit" forms an alternative to a life according to everyday cultural arrangements.

in this regard with Jesus' subversive vision against the Temple ideology of the Judeans. Mark invented the idea of the *mission* of "the Twelve" as "apostles". I understand Jesus' criticism of Peter in Mk 8:29f (as one of the spokespersons of "the Twelve") as relating to Peter's perception of Jesus as only *Israel's* messiah. For the Jerusalem faction Jesus was "Messiah" in an adoptionistic sense (cf Gaston 1984:69): as "Son of David" he was the Messiah who, as "Messiah" became the "Son of God". For Mark Jesus is Son of God also for foreigners (see Mk 15:39).

Mark also criticized the ambition of Zebedee's sons (John and James) to be patrons (see Mk 10:35-40). They aspired to be similar to the "great men" who ruled over ethnic powers (see Mk 10:42-45). Mark was aware that this aspiration caused contention among the Jerusalem group which modeled itself after "the Twelve" (see Mk 10:41). Mark wanted them to convert their endeavor for positions of power into an attempt to serve. Matthew did not report this controversy. Matthew (16:6f) also "adjusts" Jesus' criticism against Peter on account of Matthew's partial conformity with the Jerusalem faction. Luke, ambivalent to the Jerusalem group, recounted Jesus' disdain for selfish superiority (see Lk 22:25-27), but he too did not mention the contention. John minimized Peter's primary position by emphasizing Mary Magdalene's "apostleship" and by idealizing the imaginary "beloved disciple".

Paul's extension of "the Twelve" to "all apostles" coincides with Paul's (and Jesus') subversion of the idea that culture can put humankind in the right relationship with God. It also represents Paul's (and Jesus') "altered" vision of egalitarianism among human beings before God. Although never having known the historical Jesus, Paul, an "apostle for the gentiles", embodied a material continuation of Jesus' vision of God as the father of "nobodies", that is "patron" for the Judean poor and for women without husbands, the fatherless children and foreigners who now also have Abraham as their father.

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