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978-1-107-12535-3 - Jesus and the Temple: The Crucifixion in its Jewish Context

Simon J. Joseph

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JESUS AND THE TEMPLE

Most Jesus specialists agree that the Temple incident led directly to Jesus' arrest, but the precise relationship between Jesus and the Temple's administration remains unclear. *Jesus and the Temple* examines this relationship, exploring the reinterpretation of Torah observance and traditional Temple practices that are widely considered central components of the early Jesus movement. Challenging a growing tendency in contemporary scholarship to assume that the earliest Christians had an almost uniformly positive view of the Temple's sacrificial system, Simon J. Joseph addresses the ambiguous, inconsistent, and contradictory views on sacrifice and the Temple in the New Testament. This volume fills a significant gap in the literature on sacrifice in Jewish Christianity. It introduces a new hypothesis positing Jesus' enactment of a program of radically nonviolent eschatological restoration, an orientation that produced Jesus' conflicts with his contemporaries and inspired the first attributions of sacrificial language to his death.

SIMON J. JOSEPH is Adjunct Professor of Religion at California Lutheran University. He is the author of *Jesus, Q, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* and *The Nonviolent Messiah*.

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For Jennifer

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xi</i>
1 The Death of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem	1
Why Did Jesus Die?	1
Who Killed Jesus? The Politico-Religious Conflict	15
2 The Eschatological Torah	30
The Torah in Second Temple Judaism	30
Jesus and the Law	35
Jesus, Q, and the Law	40
“From the Beginning of Creation”: Jesus and Divorce	49
The Torah in the Gospels	57
Conclusion	66
3 The Eschatological Temple	67
Revisiting the Temple Incident	67
Contemporary Critical Reflections on Sacrifice and Violence	71
“An Aroma Pleasing to the LORD” (Num 29:2): Ancient Israelite Sacrifice in the Law and the Prophets	85
The Community as Temple: Qumran, the Essenes, and the Dead Sea Scrolls	95
4 The Temple Controversy	105
A Chronological Inventory of Sources	105
The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1–12)	109
The Markan Passion Narrative and Zechariah 9–14	114
The Temple Incident in the Gospel of John	128

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12535-3 - Jesus and the Temple: The Crucifixion in its Jewish Context

Simon J. Joseph

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Contents

5 The Temple Incident: Toward a New Model of Eschatological Restoration	
The Symbolic Destruction of the Temple	133
The Cleansing of the Temple	144
The Rejection of Animal Sacrifice	156
Conclusion	166
6 The Jewish Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice	168
What Is “Jewish Christianity”?	168
The Jewish Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice	179
Animal Sacrifice, Vegetarianism, and the Torah of Creation	191
Animal Sacrifice, the Absence of Evidence, and the Argument from Silence	198
Conclusion	205
7 The Dying Savior	210
“For Our Sins”: The Vocabulary of Sacrifice in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8	210
“A Light to the Nations”: Jesus and the Suffering Servant	220
Jesus as Sacrifice	229
Conclusion	237
Summary and Conclusion	242
<i>Bibliography</i>	245
<i>Index of Ancient Sources</i>	299
<i>Index of Authors</i>	317
<i>Index of Subjects</i>	325

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[More information](#)

PREFACE

The present study builds on a number of earlier studies that investigated various aspects of Early Judaism and the Jesus tradition. My first book, *Jesus, Q, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Judaic Approach to Q* (2012), critically compared a number of Q and Dead Sea Scrolls passages and drew attention to the literary, historical, and theological similarities between the early Jesus tradition and the Qumran corpus. My second book, *The Nonviolent Messiah: Jesus, Q, and the Enochic Tradition* (2014), explored the relationship(s) between Jesus Research, Jewish messianism, and Q.

The present study had its genesis in my article “‘For Heaven and Earth to Pass Away?’ Reexamining Q 16,16–18, Eschatology, and the Law,” published in 2014, where I investigated the relationship between Q and the Torah, arguing that some of its sayings emerge from a highly realized restorative eschatology focused on the inauguration of a new era and a newly (re)interpreted law. More recently, in an article to be published in the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* entitled, “Jesus and the Temple Incident: A New Proposal,” I have argued that Jesus’ critical stance toward the Temple’s administration represents a symbolic enactment of eschatological Temple restoration.

Here I would like to thank Matthias Konradt, editor of *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, and Robert L. Webb, editor of the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, and these journals’ anonymous reviewers, for their constructive criticism. Special thanks to F. Stanley Jones for reading a draft of this book and providing constructive comments and recommendations, and to Matti Myllykoski, for reading through a full draft of the study and for making a number of constructive comments. I would also like to thank Petri Luomanen for accepting two papers in the Jewish Christianity Section of the SBL, for his engagement with my paper on “Q and the Ebionites: Testing a Conjecture,” and for a pre-publication copy

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978-1-107-12535-3 - Jesus and the Temple: The Crucifixion in its Jewish Context

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii Preface

of his book, *Recovering Jewish Christian Sects and Gospels*. Daniel Ullucci graciously responded to my SBL paper on sacrifice and vegetarianism in the Pseudo-Clementines, helpfully clarifying its argument. Markus Tiwald kindly provided me with a copy of his book on Q and the law, *Kein Jota wird vergehen*. Brian Pounds provided access to his Cambridge University Ph.D. dissertation on the “crucifiability” of Jesus. Steve Wiggins provided encouragement and support at an early stage of the project.

I have been very fortunate to teach in the Department of Religion at California Lutheran University over the last three years and would like to thank the Interlibrary Loan staff at Pearson library, in particular Kathy Horneck and Nick Millar, for tracking down numerous publications.

A very special thank you to Professor Paul Trebilco, Laura Morris, and the two Cambridge reviewers for their favorable comments and acceptance of this work for publication in the Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series.

It is to my wife, Jennifer – who has patiently listened, engaged, strengthened, fortified, supported, and celebrated all these years – that this book is dedicated.