

# ***PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCH:***

***A Study in Messianic Judaism***



**Part Two**

*"The Apostle Paul and the House of Hillel"*

*by*

Roderick Andrew Lee Ford

# ***PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCH:***

***A Study in Messianic Judaism***

***Part Two***

## *Part Two: “The Apostle Paul and the House of Hillel”*

### **Table of Contents**

Preface.....	4
About the Author .....	9
Introduction .....	10
Chapter One- “Rabbis as Guardians of the Written Law” .....	13
Chapter Two- “Hillel and Shammai: Two Colleges of Mosaic Law in Jerusalem” .....	17
Chapter Three- “The Gospels and the New Testament Letters and the House of Hillel” .....	27
Conclusion .....	33
Appendix A. Allan Cutler, “Does the Simeon of Luke 2 Refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel” <i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i> , Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), No. 1, pp. 29-39. ....	36

**--- The End of Part Two ---**

*“I am a Jew, and Jesus is my Rabbi!”*

*-- Messianic Judaism*

## *Preface*

The Jewish “House of Hillel” is presented here as a vital, missing chapter in the theology of the Black Church in the United States. Indeed, the African American Christian faithful have largely misperceived the “constitutional,” “civil,” “legal,” and “adjudicative” nature of the synagogue or the church – a misperception which would have been unthinkable to an orthodox Jew and a Pharisee such as the Apostle Paul.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, American slavery in the United States had interposed upon African American Christians *a form of Christianity* that lacked “*colleges of Mosaic law*” and “*houses of judgment*” that characterized the pure religion of the ancient Hebrew-Israelites since the days of Moses.<sup>2</sup> So that today, when the typical African American pastor or Black congregation reads and interprets the Sacred Scriptures, they are unable to find in Jesus of Nazareth the role of an important first-century Jewish elder and rabbi, Jewish lawyer, and (or) Jewish interpreter of the Torah – rabbinical duties that were predominant in ancient, first-century Judaism.<sup>3</sup> In this paper, while examining a brief history of the House of Hillel, as well as Jesus of Nazareth’s and the Apostle Paul’s relationship to Hillel the Elder, I have endeavored to offer to the Black Church a slightly different – albeit a messianically Jewish – perspective of the Sacred Scriptures. Here, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my ultimate concern with the Black Church’s capability in safeguarding the spiritual, moral, and material welfare of its African American constituencies.

In the Old and New Testaments, during the time of Moses as well as of Christ, the Torah was construed to be an all-encompassing expression of

---

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., 1 Corinthians 6: 1-11 (Paul tells the Church that the saints shall judge the world, and, as such, the saints should judge “things pertaining to this life” amongst themselves).

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 18: 18-19; Exodus 18: 25-26; Deuteronomy 16: 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> In 2015, I made my first attempt at uncovering this misperception in my book *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL: Xlibris, 2015).

both sacred and secular constitutional law and jurisprudence. In the Old Testament, the Torah was thus concerned with practical constitutional law, civil law, and criminal law. In the New Testament, the “law of Christ” (i.e., equity) was concerned with ensuring that the Torah was implemented with perfect and absolute justice in the daily and practical affairs of Jews and Gentiles alike. All of this flowed naturally from Moses’ original design of the Hebrew governmental and religious systems. In the Book of Deuteronomy – which has long been considered the constitution of ancient Israel – Moses thus expressly admonished the ancient Hebrews, saying:

Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.<sup>4</sup>

Today I am convinced that insular minority groups, such as the Jews of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, and African Americans living today, must be able to teach and apply its own internal customary laws through tribunals staffed by their own internal ruling elders and judges.

In ancient Judea, during the time of Jesus, the ancient synagogue – from which the Christian church was extracted – constituted, among other things, a component of a hierarchical, federated court system in ancient Israel. Hence, **the synagogue** was, among other things, **a local court** (i.e., the Beit Din or “house of judgment”) whereby civil, criminal, customary,

---

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 16: 18-20.

and religious laws were meted out and justice was rendered for the sake of the general welfare of the Jewish people.<sup>5</sup>

Simultaneously, Torah study and learning occurred in these synagogues; and rabbis (i.e., masters or teachers) and schools or colleges were organized around this system. The Jewish elders who presided over this system (i.e., the Sanhedrin, the synagogues, the colleges of Mosaic law, etc.) were considered “*guardians of the law of Moses*.”<sup>6</sup>

I believe that the present civilizational collapse of the Christian West, of which the African American community in the United States is a constituent part, is, in many ways, a failure of the Christian church to organize itself along the same lines, and upon the same principles as, the ultra-orthodox Jewish synagogue – with *a battery of religious courts* implementing traditional family laws and governing the traditional family which is the nucleus of civilization.<sup>7</sup> In England and Europe, where there

---

<sup>5</sup> For some time now, since at least 2015, I have, as a Christian lawyer, made overtures to the Black Church, to African American pastors, and to other African American legal professionals to implement some type of reform within the constitutions of their churches in order to begin to mediate and to arbitrate, firstly, the internal family law matters amongst African Americans, thus considering the plain fact that the environing, secular family law courts were designed without concern for the unique plight of the African American family; and, secondly, the civil rights and labor concerns that traditionally come within the auspices of the Civil War Amendments and that affect sizeable or large groups of African American citizens.

<sup>6</sup> Hymen Polano, *The Talmud: Selections* (San Diego, CA: The Book Three Pub., 2003), p. 2. See, also, *Ethics of the Fathers*, which is “a compilation of wise aphorisms by rabbis who lived roughly from 200 BCE to 200 CE,” stating:

Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders; and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets transmitted it to the men of the Great Assembly. They said three things: Be patient in doing justice; raise many students; and make a fence round the Torah.

As quoted in Noah Feldman, *To Be A Jew Today: A New Guide to God, Israel, and the Jewish People* (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2024), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> And, as the Reverend Jessie Jackson has once said, the African American community is simply a wheel within the larger wheel of the United States; hence, the civilizational collapse of Western civilization naturally encompasses the African American community.

were national churches such as the Church of England, which had its ecclesiastical courts for that express purpose, the law of Moses and the law of Christ were carefully administered and implemented with full backing from the civil polity. But in the United States, where a doctrine of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” together with the constitutional doctrine of “Church-State separation,” both irreligion and materialism decimated family values and American family life. Such functional *ecclesiastical courts* have always been absent from the Black Church, perennially placing the African American Christian faithful, their traditional marriages, and their traditional family values, between the Devil and the Deep Sea.

Hence, the Christian church, as it is so conceived in the West – whether Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, or independent – has all but lost its ecclesiastical jurisdiction over traditional or Christian family life to the secular legal systems of the West.<sup>8</sup> Today, both commercialism and big business dominate these secular Western legal systems – here, the source of the civilizational decline in the West.

Finally, I think that it is unfair to the several Christian churches in the Christian West for me to go on as a nominal “Christian,” when, in reality, “*Messianic Jew*” more accurately defines what I am trying here to convey. The type of Western civilizational reform, which I now conceive, is epitomized in the person of **the Apostle Paul**, “the teacher (doctor) of the nations in faith and truth,”<sup>9</sup> and in the Jewish **House of Hillel**.

---

<sup>8</sup> In my beloved Black Church, such ecclesiastical jurisdiction was originally unthinkable owing to the incompatible nature of the slave codes; and, even after slavery was ended, it remained unthinkable and non-existent!

<sup>9</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 453.

Hence, the type of civilizational reform which I here envision is fundamentally Jewish – messianically Jewish.

REV. RODERICK ANDREW LEE FORD  
Member, Lemba Cultural Association

January 4, 2026





## *About the Author*



*Rev. Roderick Andrew Lee Ford, D.D., Litt.D., LL.D.*

A Messianic Jew and

A Member of the Lemba Cultural Association and the Lemba Business Council



## INTRODUCTION

The House of Hillel was founded by a Babylonian-born Jew who migrated to Jerusalem as a young man eager to study the Torah. While working as a woodcutter, Hillel studied the Torah in Jerusalem; but, according to tradition, he was sometimes so poor that he could not pay tuition to attend the Torah lectures. Hillel was later chosen president (*nasi*) of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court. Many years later, Hillel would abolish the requirement that Torah students pay fees. During his tenure as president of the Sanhedrin, the Romans installed Herod the Great as king of ancient Judea (c. 37 BC – 4 AD). Hillel's genius appears to have been his ability to expound upon Jewish law in a manner that allowed Jews to retain their Jewish customs during the tumultuous constitutional period and changes which King Herod wrought.<sup>10</sup> But against Hillel's lenient approach to Torah was his friendly rival Shammai, who was a native of the land of Israel. Shammai was concerned that the continued Hellenization and Romanization which Herod's reign reflected presented mortal threats to Jewish civilization. For this reason, Shammai often disagreed with Hillel's school of thought. Shammai advocated from a stricter interpretation of Torah. Thus, the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai emerged in competition with one another, during the same time when Jesus of Nazareth was born in, circa, 4-6 AD. Of these two schools, that of Hillel's became predominant and most influential within Judaism.

Although the New Testament is not directly concerned with the House of Hillel, it is unquestionably greatly influenced by several members of the House of Hillel, including one Paul of Tarsus, who has

---

<sup>10</sup> See **Appendix A**, Allan Cutler, "Does the Simeon of Luke 2 refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel?" *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), p. 34, stating:

[R]abbinic literature associates ... the Holy Spirit especially closely with Hillel.... Hillel was thoroughly taken up by the anti-Herodian and anti-Roman revolutionary *messianic* movement of his time, especially from the late 20's B. C. E. on.

been a student of Gamaliel the Elder (grandson of Hillel) and leader of the House of Hillel. Hence, this paper shall explore the question as to whether *Messianic Judaism* (or Pauline theology) is a subdivision of the *House of Hillel*. Here I conclude that Messianic Judaism is a natural outgrowth of Hillel the Elder's several maxims, which are eerily similar to many of Jesus of Nazareth's maxims and parables. Messianic Judaism also is a reflection of Hillel's *elastic approach* to the Torah; and of the Pharisee's basic belief in the *resurrection of the dead*. All of these factors – the merger of Hillel's Pharisaic theology with Jesus's doctrine on love – were incorporated into the Apostle Paul's general approach to theology after he had met the risen Lord Jesus.

This paper demonstrates that the House of Hillel's lenient approach to the Law of Moses is eerily similar to Jesus of Nazareth's lenient approach to that same sublime Law. Jesus appears to have reframed or restated many of Hillel's sayings and maxims. Moreover, Simeon ben Hillel, who was Hillel's son, reportedly believed that the baby Jesus, when presented to him in Jerusalem, was actually the promised messiah. These two connections are alone sufficient to identify the House of Hillel with the new Christian religion; however, the interplay between Gamaliel I's relationship to the Apostle Paul, to the other Christian disciples, and to the new Christian religion affirm to a reasonable degree of archeological certainty that Pauline theology and the new Christian religion (i.e., Messianic Judaism) grew out of the House of Hillel.

The Apostle Paul was a Jew, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and a former student of Hillel's grandson Gamaliel the Elder (also known as Gamaliel I), "a Pharisee, a doctor of the law"<sup>11</sup> – he was, in essence, an alumni of the House of Hillel.<sup>12</sup> All throughout his three decades of

---

<sup>11</sup> Acts 5: 34.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., "*Was Gamaliel the Elder the leader of the House of Hillel?*" *AI Overview Response*: ("Yes, Gamaliel the Elder was the grandson of Hillel the Elder and became the leading authority in the Sanhedrin (the Jewish high court), effectively leading the House of Hillel's school of

ministry (i.e., c. 34 – 65 AD), Paul never disdained, rejected, or renounced the tradition of the “oral” Law, or his status as a Pharisee.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the Apostle Paul’s several epistles affirmed that the Pharisaic doctrines which he had been taught in the House of Hillel had actually prefigured the risen Jesus whom he had witnessed. Most importantly, the risen Lord Jesus, while himself obviously fully aware that Paul was a Pharisee who had been trained at the feet of Gamaliel I, nevertheless commissioned Paul to serve as his apostle to the Gentiles. Here I deduce further that Christ himself, through selecting Paul of Tarsus as his apostle, indirectly embraced and validated the House of Hillel as a model for Messianic Judaism and, indeed, for all the Christian faithful.

---

thought and maintaining its influence, though his son and grandson later became even more prominent leaders. He followed Hillel's more lenient approach, becoming a respected Pharisaic leader and teacher, famous for his wisdom and for mentoring the Apostle Paul.”)

<sup>13</sup> Acts 22: 3 (“I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day”); Acts 23:6 (“I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”)

## Chapter One

### “Rabbis as Guardians of the Written Law”

The Talmud is called the *oral* or *unwritten* law, in contradiction to the Pentateuch, which remains under all circumstances the immutable code, the **divinely given constitution**, the *written* law.<sup>14</sup>

The Talmud is thus subordinate to the Pentateuch. It interprets and applies the Pentateuch to Jewish practical, everyday Jewish life. According to the Talmud, its “oral or unwritten” law was derived in the nature and manner in which God gave the Torah to Moses. God delivered the Torah to Moses, who in turn delivered it to his brother Aaron. Next, both Moses and Aaron delivered the Torah to the Seventy Elders of ancient Israel. Afterwards, Moses, Aaron, and the Seventy Elders delivered the Torah to the entire congregation (i.e., the nation) of ancient Israel. Through this process, Moses himself articulated and delivered the Torah at least four separate times.<sup>15</sup> Moses then authorized the people of Israel to teach one another.<sup>16</sup> This ongoing teaching became the basis of the “oral” law of Moses.<sup>17</sup>

And yet the oral Law pre-existed the publication of the Talmud by several centuries. The oral Law was passed down from generation to generation through great teachers since the time of Moses. These great teachers were known as, inter alia, “**guardians of the laws and**

---

<sup>14</sup> H. Polano, *The Talmud: Selections From The Contents of That Ancient Book, Its Commentaries, Teachings, Poetry and Legends* (San Diego, CA: The Book Three, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

**traditions.**"<sup>18</sup> Generically, these great teachers were called "rabbis." For purposes of our discussion, Jesus of Nazareth was one such rabbi who taught and preached in synagogues within this Jewish tradition.<sup>19</sup> As such, Jesus was indeed a "guardian of the laws and traditions."<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, for the purpose of our discussion, the Apostle Paul – a Jew and a Pharisee – was a "guardian of the laws and traditions." Paul was born and raised into the traditions of the scribes and the Pharisees as they had developed during the period of the Second Temple (circa, 516 BC to 135 AD). Hence, the scribes and Pharisees were also "guardians of the laws and tradition."<sup>21</sup> A Jewish laymen or tradesman who demonstrated great talent and ability – such as a carpenter such as Jesus of Nazareth – might qualify for the title "rabbi" through demonstrated teaching ability. On the other hand, the surest way to obtain the stature of "rabbi" (or "Pharisee") was through learning under the tutelage of well-known Jewish rabbi. The nature of the "tutelage" could be informal or haphazard (e.g., such as Jesus' informal organization of his disciples); or the "tutelage" could be formal, such as the various Jewish schools or colleges that were organized for the purpose of training and instruction.

In the United States, for instance, a direct analogy can be drawn from the history of the training and qualification of American lawyers, physicians, and pastors – i.e., professional men. Historically, there were two methods of obtaining professional qualification: through tutelage or apprenticeship, or through the attainment of professional degrees in schools and colleges. In the world of ancient Judea, the status of "rabbi" could be similarly obtained. Jesus of Nazareth would have represented the

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> See, generally, the Gospel of John, where Jesus is called "rabbi" at least eight times.

<sup>20</sup> See, generally, Jesus' argument with, and rebuke of, the Pharisees in Mark 7: 1- 13.

<sup>21</sup> H. Polano, *The Talmud: Selections*, p. 2.

“apprenticeship” method of becoming a Jewish rabbi; whereas the Apostle Paul would have represented the “academic or collegiate” method of becoming a “rabbi.” In either case, the Jewish rabbi was a lawyer, a judge, a ruler of a synagogue, a member of the Sanhedrin, a scribe, and head of a school or college, etc.

Professor Hymen Polano’s *The Talmud* informs us that “[t]he guardianship of the laws and traditions was vested in the chiefs of the colleges, known as ‘Scribes,’<sup>22</sup> ‘Men of the Great Synod,’ ‘Princes and Fathers of the House of Judgment.’”<sup>23</sup> Here, the “Great Synod” and the “House of Judgment” refer to the Sanhedrin and, to a lesser extent, to the lower-level synagogues which constituted lower-level tribunals. These men were considered “chiefs of the colleges.”<sup>24</sup> “They instructed the people, preached in the synagogues, and taught in the schools.”<sup>25</sup>

Significantly, Jesus was called “Rabbi” by leaders of the local Jewish synagogues, such as Nicodemus. See, e.g., John 3: 1-2 (Nicodemus, who was a local ruler of a synagogue and a Pharisee, called Jesus “Rabbi”);<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Notably, a “scribe” in ancient Judea was comparable to a learned government administrator, with legal, financial, and other fiduciary roles. During the period of the kings, there were “royal scribes” who attended to the king’s affairs.

See, e.g., <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/scribe>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> English Standard Version (“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God....”).

and Luke 19: 39 (“Thereupon some of the Pharisees in the crowd appealed to Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, reprove your disciples.’”)<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, the rulers of the various synagogues in ancient Judea allowed Jesus to teach, or to preach, in their synagogues. See, e.g., Luke 4: 15 (“And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”); See, also, Matthew 4:23 (same); Mark 1:38 (same); Luke 4:15-16; 4:43 (same); and John 18:20 (“synagogue and temple”)

Similarly, the various synagogues throughout the Jewish diaspora allowed the Apostle Paul, while teaching as a Pharisee, to teach, or to preach, in their synagogues. See, e.g., Acts 9: 20 (“immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues”); Acts 13:5 (“proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews”); Acts 14:1 (“entered together into the Jewish synagogue”); Acts 17: 1-2 (“Paul went in [‘a synagogue of the Jews’], as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures”); Acts 18:4 (“he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath”); Acts 19:8 (“he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God”); and Acts 28: 23 (Paul breaching under house arrest in Rome).

---

<sup>27</sup> The Weymouth New Testament (“Rabbi”); English Standard Version (“Teacher”); King James Version (“Master”).



## Chapter Two

### **“Hillel and Shammai: Two Colleges of Mosaic Law in Jerusalem”**

At the time when Jesus was born, there were two competing colleges or schools of Mosaic Law in ancient Judea – the college or house of Hillel (i.e., Beit Hillel); and the college or house of Shammai (i.e., Beit Shammai).

**Table 1. The Houses of Hillel and Shammai**

<b>“House of Hillel”<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>“House of Shammai”</b>
---------------------------------------	---------------------------

The Talmud reports that these two schools had grown out of a long tradition of law teaching going back to Moses; and that they were often at odds with each other.

The House of Hillel (Beit Hillel) and House of Shammai (Beit Shammai) were two schools of thought in Jewish scholarship during the period of the Zugot (transl. pairs). The houses were named after the sages, Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai (of the last century BCE and the early 1st century CE), who founded them.

---

<sup>28</sup> The House of Hillel was “messianic,” and appears as the natural source of Messianic Judaism and the doctrine that became the Christian religion. See **Appendix A**, Allan Cutler, “Does the Simeon of Luke 2 refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel?” *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), p. 34, stating:

[R]abbinic literature associates ... the Holy Spirit especially closely with Hillel.... Hillel was thoroughly taken up by the anti-Herodian and anti-Roman revolutionary *messianic* movement of his time, especially from the late 20's B. C. E. on.

These two schools had vigorous debates on matters of ritual practice, ethics, and theology, which were critical for shaping the Oral Torah and, later, Rabbinic Judaism as it is today.

The *Mishnah* mentions the disagreement of Hillel and Shammai as one that had lasting positive value for Jewry and Judaism....

Only three – or, according to some authorities, five – disputes are recorded between Hillel and Shammai themselves.

However, with time the differences between their respective schools multiplied, to the point that hundreds of disputes between them are recorded in the Talmud. The split between them was so deep that, according to the Talmud, ‘the Torah became like two Torahs’....

In most cases (though not always), Hillel's opinion was the more lenient and tolerant of the two. In nearly all cases, Hillel's opinion was accepted as normative by Halakha and remains in effect....

In general, Beit Shammai's positions were stricter than those of Beit Hillel. It was said that ‘the school of Shammai binds; the school of Hillel looses’.... Modern Rabbinic Judaism almost invariably follows the teachings of Hillel....<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> “Houses of Hillel and Shammai,” *Wikipedia*,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houses\\_of\\_Hillel\\_and\\_Shammai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houses_of_Hillel_and_Shammai)

[T]he fortunes of Beit Hillel improved after the First Jewish–Roman War, which had resulted in destruction of the Jewish Temple; Jewish leaders no longer had an appetite for war. Under Gamaliel II, the Sanhedrin, which was reconstituted in Yavne (see also Council of Jamnia), reviewed

all the points disputed by Beit Hillel, and this time it was their opinions which won the Sanhedrin's support; on most issues, it was said that whenever Beit Shammai had disputed the opinion of Beit Hillel, Beit Shammai's opinion was now null and void.

When Jesus preached in ancient Judea, these two colleges or schools were already established and were predominant. Although these two schools were not mentioned in the New Testament, much of the substance of their ongoing debates and disputes were manifest in several of the questions or “tests” which the scribes and Pharisees presented to Jesus.

For instance, in the Gospel of Matthew, “[t]he Pharisees ... came unto [Jesus], tempting him, and saying not him, *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?*”<sup>30</sup> During the time of Jesus, the house of Hillel had advocated for a lenient standard for divorce (e.g., similar to a “no-fault” divorce standard); whereas the house of Shammai had advocated for a stricter standard for divorce (e.g., “adultery,” etc.) Here, Jesus took the same stricter position advocated by the house of Shammai.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, Jesus upheld to a very strict interpretation of the Law of Moses (i.e., the Pentateuch) against any and all forms of “oral” laws that tended to nullify the plain meaning of the text of the “written” Mosaic law. Jesus described the “oral” laws as “doctrines” that were nothing more than “the commandments of men,” which made “the *word of God of none effect* through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”<sup>32</sup>

Notably, Jesus did not categorically reject the “oral” laws; he admonished his follows to follow the “oral” laws as set forth from the scribes and the Pharisees; but, at the same time, he also admonished his follows to pay careful attention to what these rabbis said and did, and not

---

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 19: 3.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew 18:9 (“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”)

<sup>32</sup> Mark 7: 7-13.

to follow their examples, *“for they say, and do not,”*<sup>33</sup> for they had *“omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.”*<sup>34</sup>

Again, Jesus upheld to a very strict interpretation of the written Law of Moses. Jesus made it clear that his teachings did not “come to destroy the law, or the prophets... but to fulfil.”<sup>35</sup> He was concerned the “commandments” not be broken; and that false teachers not create new doctrines encouraging the breaking of the “commandments.”<sup>36</sup> He forewarned that “whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>37</sup> That said, Jesus informed his listeners that their “righteousness [must] exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.”<sup>38</sup>

Without question, this line of reasoning put Jesus of Nazareth’s teachings on the written Law of Moses squarely within the mix of the robust debate taking place between the schools or houses of Hillel and Shammai.

As a Messianic Jew, I would be remiss here if I did not emphasize the important fact that Jesus of Nazareth’s entire Gospel centered around the “law and the prophets,” which his teachings were meant to fulfil.<sup>39</sup> The “law” which Jesus referenced, upheld, and championed is the “written”

---

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 23: 1-3.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 23:23.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 5:17.

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 5:19.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 5:20.

<sup>39</sup> Matthew 5: 17.

Law of Moses (i.e., the Pentateuch); and the “prophets” whom Jesus similarly referenced were authoritative interpreters and guardians of that Law. This means that Jesus of Nazareth’s rabbinical interpretations of the Law of Moses put him squarely within the mix of the robust debate taking place between the schools or houses of Hillel and Shammai

And because there are so many similarities between Hillel’s teachings and Jesus’ teachings, even some Jewish commentators – as do the undersigned author – have placed Jesus’ teachings within the house of Hillel.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 2. Hillel the Elder and Jesus of Nazareth**

**Similarities Between**  
**Hillel the Elder (c. 110 BC to 10 AD) and Jesus of Nazareth (c. 4 BC to 33 AD)**

**1. Summary of the Torah**

Both teachers were famously asked to summarize the entire Law in a brief statement. Both teachers made the same conclusion that love of neighbor (and God) fulfills Torah.

**2. Blue Collar Laborers**

- **Hillel:** worked a carpenter or woodcutter.<sup>41</sup>
- **Jesus:** worked as a carpenter.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Daniel Nessum, “What were the Parallels of Jesus’ Teachings with Those of the Rabbis of His Day?” *Chosen People Ministries*; Richard N. Osling, “What Sort of Jew was Jesus?” *Time* (April 12, 2005).

<sup>41</sup> “Hillel and Shammai,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hillel-and-shammai>

<sup>42</sup> Mark 6:3 (“the carpenter, the son of Mary”); Matthew 13:55 (“the carpenter’s son”).

### 3. Summary of the Law (Golden Rule)

- **Hillel:** In a well-known story, he was asked to teach the Torah "while standing on one foot." He replied by quoting the "Golden Rule" in the negative and stated, "This is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn it".
- **Jesus:** In Matthew 22:37–40, Jesus identified the two greatest commandments as loving God and loving one's neighbor, stating that "all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments".

### 4. Judging Others

Both teachers emphasized empathy and warned against self-righteous judgment.

- **Hillel:** "Do not judge your fellow until you have stood in his place" (Pirkei Avot 2:4).
- **Jesus:** "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1), and "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned" (Luke 6:37).

### 5. Humility and Self-Exaltation

They shared nearly identical warnings regarding the pursuit of prestige and fame.

- **Hillel:** "One who advances his name, destroys his name... and one who makes personal use of the crown [of Torah] shall perish" (Pirkei Avot 1:13).
- **Jesus:** "Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it" (Luke 17:33).

### 6. Spirit of the Law over the Letter

Hillel and Jesus both prioritized human compassion and the "spirit" of the Law over rigid, legalistic applications.

- **Sabbath Observance:** Hillel's school was generally more lenient regarding Sabbath restrictions, a stance that aligns with Jesus' frequent assertions that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

- **Outreach to Sinners:** Like Hillel, Jesus sought to bring "sinners" and non-practicing Jews back into the fold through mercy and openness, rather than exclusion.
7. Both teachers were noted for their gentleness and openness toward Gentiles (non-Jews). While their primary mission was to the Jewish people, they both engaged graciously with those outside the community who sought to understand God's truth.
  8. Notably, the Hillel was "anti-Herodian" and advanced a "messianic" prophetic theology.

We would be remiss, however, if we limited the nexus between Hillel and Jesus to the drawing of analogous comparisons to their respective maxims, sayings, and beliefs; because when Jesus nominated Paul of Tarsus — a Jew, a Pharisee, and a former student of Hillel's grandson (i.e., Gamaliel I) — to be his apostle to the Gentiles, he essentially merged his own messianic doctrine into many of the doctrines of the Pharisees (e.g., the raising of the dead) which were espoused in the school of Hillel.

The Apostle Paul was extracted from the Pharisaic wing of the school of Hillel, which, so far as the record demonstrates, produced sages who were "messianic" and open to at least the possibility that Jesus himself was the promised messiah. This Pharisaic openness to at least the possibility that Jesus was the promised messiah we may deduce from certain historical facts about one leading family among the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin: first, Hillel the Elder (*grandfather*); second, Simon ben Hillel (*father*); and, third, Gamaliel the Elder (*son*). Each one of these Jewish Pharisees seems to have had some special nexus to the Christian religion.

## A. Hillel the Elder

Hillel the Elder (c. 110 BC – c. 10 AD) was president (nasi) of the Sanhedrin and leader of the Pharisees during the time of Herod the Great. He is known for his proverbial maxim: “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow; this is the entire Torah, all the rest is an elaboration. Now go and learn it.”<sup>43</sup> I have mentioned Hillel here because his life-span both pre-dates and overlaps with the birth and life of Jesus of Nazareth. And so, we may consider Hillel’s Jewish theology or philosophy to be fairly representative of Pharisaic Judaism during the time of Christ. Secondly, Hillel’s summary of the Torah is eerily similar<sup>44</sup> to that of Jesus of Nazareth’s<sup>45</sup> and the Apostle Paul’s.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., Darryl L. Tippens, “‘Love Calls Us to the Things of This World’: The Pauline Tradition and ‘The Law of Christ,’” *Agape, Justice, and Law: How Might Christian Love Shape Law?* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2017), p. 38, stating:

According to Rabbi Hillel, love of neighbor is the essence of the Torah, ‘The rest is commentary. Now go study the commentary.’ Christianity builds on the venerable Jewish tradition of law, love, and the just treatment of others. In the Gospels, Jesus emphasizes the centrality of love and its connection to law when he declares love of neighbor one of the two greatest commandments. Indeed, ‘the entire law’ and the prophets hang upon love of God and neighbor (Matt. 22: 37-40).

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., “Jewish Christianity,” *Wikipedia* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish\\_Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Christianity) (“The Gospels contain strong condemnations of the Pharisees, though there is a clear influence of **Hillel's interpretation of the Torah** in the Gospel sayings. However, certain laws followed the more stringent views of Shammai, such as regarding divorce. Belief in the resurrection of the dead in the Messianic age was a core **Pharisaic** doctrine.”)

<sup>45</sup> **Matthew 7:12** (“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the **law** and the prophets.”); and **Romans 13:10** (“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the **law**.”) This overlap between Hillel’s understanding of Torah and that of Christ and Paul exemplifies why there is a “Judea-Christian” ethos. See, e.g., Darryl L. Tippens’ “‘Love Calls Us to the Things of This World’: The Pauline Tradition and ‘The Law of Christ,’” in Robert F. Cochran, Jr. and Zachary R. Calo, *Agape, Justice, and Law: How Might Christian Love Shape Law?* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. P., 2017), pp. 38 -54.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*



## B. Simeon ben Hillel

Simon ben Hillel (c. 10 BC to 70 AD), who is the son of Hillel the Elder, is referenced in the Gospel of Luke,<sup>47</sup> which describes him as “just and devout,”<sup>48</sup> as one who had “the Holy Ghost” upon him,<sup>49</sup> who had awaited to see “the Lord’s Christ,”<sup>50</sup> and who, when seeing the baby Jesus in the Temple, “took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.’”<sup>51</sup> Other than this reference to Simeon in the Gospel of Luke, there is little information about Simeon’s life. He was the son of Hillel; the father of Gamaliel I (or Gamaliel the Elder); and the grandfather of Simeon ben Gamaliel. The Talmud indicates that he succeeded his father and became Nasi of the Sanhedrin.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> See **Appendix A**, Allan Cutler, “Does the Simeon of Luke 2 refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel?” *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), pp. 29-35.

Notably, arguments for, and against the proposition the Simeon ben Hillel was the same person in Luke 2 is not as important as the plain fact that there was, in fact, a Jewish rabbi named Simeon in the Second Temple, during the time of when both Hillel and his Simeon ben Hillel were alive, who believed in “messianic” theology and more specifically believed that the baby Jesus was, in fact, the promised messiah.

<sup>48</sup> Luke 2:25.

<sup>49</sup> Luke 2: 25. (KJV).

<sup>50</sup> Luke 2:26 (KJV).

<sup>51</sup> Luke 2:28 – 32 (KJV). Noticeably, when Joseph and Mary heard Simon’s words, they “marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.” Luke 2:33. Simeon is reported to have said, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel....”

<sup>52</sup> “Simeon ben Hillel,” *Wikipedia* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simeon\\_ben\\_Hillel#cite\\_note-3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simeon_ben_Hillel#cite_note-3).

### C. Gamaliel the Elder

Gamaliel the Elder (died c. 52 A.D), who was the grandson of Hillel, also became Nasi of the Sanhedrin. "In the Christian tradition, Gamaliel is recognized as a Pharisaic doctor of Jewish Law. Gamaliel was named as a member of the Sanhedrin in the fifth chapter of Acts and the teacher of Paul the Apostle in Acts 22:3. Gamaliel encouraged his fellow Pharisees to show leniency to the apostles of Jesus in Acts 5:34."<sup>53</sup> "According to Christian tradition, Gamaliel embraced Christianity and was baptized by St. Peter and St. John."<sup>54</sup>

In the Book of Acts, Paul tells us something about his education and upbringing which places him within the house of Hillel, where he says:

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, *educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.* I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.<sup>55</sup>

This same Paul became a zealous advocate for the acknowledgment of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised messiah — not by renouncing his Pharisaic training or the Law of Moses but rather by demonstrating that these two Jewish institutions both led to the man Christ Jesus.

---

<sup>53</sup> "Gamaliel," Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamaliel>.

<sup>54</sup> "Gamaliel," Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gamaliel-I>

<sup>55</sup> Acts 22:3-5.

## Chapter Three

### **“The Gospels, the New Testament Letters, and the Reign of the House of Hillel”**

Finally, when we compare the chronology of the House of Hillel, we find that it coincides almost perfectly with the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and with the writing of most of the New Testament, the fall of the Second Temple, and the Apostle John’s book of the apocalypse. Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapters, both Christ’s teachings and Paul’s theology were squarely within tradition of the House of Hillel.

According to the Talmud, written and oral Law were passed down from Moses to Joshua and the elders, who carefully safeguarded the laws. The detailed history of the Talmud thus supports and coincides with the events of the New Testament.

**Table 3 The House of Hillel and the New Testament**

#### **A History of the Oral Law Preserved and Passed Down from Moses to the Elders**

- 2448 Promulgation of the Decalogue
- 2488 Death of Moses
- 2516 Death of Joshua
- 2830 Oral laws transmitted to various elders
- 2871 Samuel, Judge of Israel
- 2884 David, King of Israel
  - Achiyah the Shelomite, guardian of the Law
- 2962 Guardianship transferred to Elijah

- 3047 Elisha succeeded his teacher.
  - Yehoyadah, high priest.
- 3067 Zechariah, the son of Yehoyadah, the next custodian of the law, killed in the Temple by order of Joash.
- 3110 Guardianship transferred to Amos, his successor.
- 3140 To Isaiah, the son of Amoz.
- 3160 To Micah the Morashtite.
- 3190 To Joel, the son of Pethuel.
- 3240 To Nahum the Elkoshite.
- 3254 To Habakuk the prophet.
- 3280 To Zephaniah.
- 3321 To Jeremiah.
- 3332 To Ezekiel and Baruch, son of Neriya.
- 3413 To Ezra, chief of the great synod of 120 members including among its number Haggai, Malachi, Daniel, Chananyah, Michael, Azaryah, Nehemiah, Mordecai, and Zerubabel.
- 3448 To Simon “the Just,” also a member of the synod, the first of the sages of the *Mishna*.<sup>56</sup>
- 3460 To Antigonus of Socho.

---

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., Luke 2: 25 (“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.”); Sally Mallam, “Who Do Men Say that I Am?” *The Human Journey* <https://humanjourney.us/>.

- 3500 To Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah, and Jose ben Jochanan of Jerusalem
- 3560 To Judah ben Parachiah and Nitai the Arbelite.
- 3621 To Judah, the son of Tabbai, and Simon, the son of Shatach.
- 3722 To Shemayah, Abtalyon, and other teachers in the college.

**[HOUSE OF HILLEL]**

- 3728 Charge received **by Hillel**.
- 3768 Intrusted to his **son Simon**, and to R. Jochanan ben Zakkai. During their time the 'Common Era' commenced.

**[According to the Gospel of Luke, Simon received the baby Jesus at Jerusalem].<sup>57</sup>**

- 3809 **Rabbi Gamliel** succeeded R. Simon — eighteen years before the destruction of the Temple.

**[According to the Book of Acts, Gamaliel persuaded the Sanhedrin to be lenient towards Peter, John, and other Christians. As a Pharisee and a doctor of the law, Gamaliel also taught Paul of Tarsus].**

- 3810 Charge descended to **Rabbi Simon the second, who died a martyr** [when the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 AD].

Peter and Paul had previously been executed by the Romans in 64/65 AD.

Most of the New Testament books and letters were written during this period.

---

<sup>57</sup> Luke 2: 25-40.

### Chronological Order of New Testament Books

- James (45-48 AD)
- Galatians (48-50 AD) – written by Paul
- 1 Thessalonians (51-52 AD) – written by Paul
- 2 Thessalonians (51-52 AD) – written by Paul
- Mark (50-65 AD)
- 1 Corinthians (55-56 AD) – written by Paul
- 2 Corinthians (55-56 AD) – written by Paul
- Romans (57-58 AD) – written by Paul
- Luke (60-62 AD)
- Acts (62-64 AD)- describes the life and ministry of Paul
- Philippians (61-63 AD) – written by Paul
- Colossians (61-63 AD) – written by Paul
- Philemon (61-63 AD) – written by Paul
- Ephesians (61-63 AD) – written by Paul
- Matthew (65-85 AD)
- 1 Timothy (62-64 AD) – written by Paul
- Titus (62-64 AD) – written by Paul
- 2 Timothy (66-67 AD) – written by Paul
- Hebrews (64-70 AD)
- 1 Peter (64-67 AD)
- Jude (60-80 AD)
- 2 Peter (65-68 AD)

**Many Pharisees and rulers of Synagogues became Christians during this period.**

- 3840 To **Rabbi Gamliel the second** – twelve years after the destruction of the Temple.
- 3881 To **Rabbi Simon the third**.

### Chronological Order of Remaining New Testament Books

- John (80-100 AD)
- 1 John (90-110 AD)
- 2 John (90-110 AD)
- 3 John (90-110 AD)
- Revelation (95-96 AD)

### [End of the House of Hillel]

- 3948- Rabbi Judah, Hannasee (the chief) edited the *Mishna*, the text of the “Talmud,” putting the traditions and enlargements on the precepts into writing for the first time.
- 3979 Rab and Samuel succeeded R. Judah, and began the commentaries on the *Mishna* in their college at Babel.
- 4028 Rabbi Jochanan edited the Jerusalem Talmud.
- 4056 R. Huna, the successor of Samuel, became principal of the college at Sura.
- 4060 Rabbah, the son of Nachamuni, chief Rabbi.
- 4111 Death of Rabbah, who died the same day Rab Ashi the *redacteur* of the *Gemarah* was born.
- 4127 Rabbi Ashi became principal of the college, and commenced his labours on the *Gemarah*.
- 4180 Death of Rab Ashi before the completion of his undertaking.
- 4253 The work completed as it now is, by Mar, and Meremar, the son of Rab Ashi, and their associates.

There needs to be more research into the influence which Hillel the Elder had upon the common people of ancient Judea – such as Joseph and Mary, who were the parents of Jesus. Because there are so many similarities between Hillel’s doctrines and Jesus’s teachings, a plausible

conclusion can be made that Jesus was familiar with Hillel's doctrines, agreed with them, and reframed them in his teachings. The other theological explanation could be that Hillel was himself a proto-Christian who had anticipated the spirit of the Christian age. This seems to be the case with respect to Simon ben Hillel, who was Hillel's son. According to the Gospel of Luke, Simon held the baby Jesus in his arms and opined that this was the promised Messiah.<sup>58</sup> This tradition squarely puts the House of Hillel within the camp of the proto-Christians of the ancient world.

The New Testament also informs us that Gamaliel the Elder dealt favorably with the Christians and that he had been the teacher of the Apostle Paul, during Paul's earlier years as a student in Jerusalem. That church tradition has held that both Gamaliel and Paul converted to the Christian faith also speaks favorably of the House of Hillel being an integral source of Christian theology and the new Christian religion.

Finally, the House of Hillel began and ended almost precisely during period of time between the birth of Christ (c. 4-6 AD) through the Apostle John's writing of the book of Revelation (c. 90 AD). Meanwhile, there were many Jewish rabbis and Pharisees who converted to the Messianic Jewish or Christian faith; and, yet, they remained orthodox Jews and continued to worship within the synagogues.<sup>59</sup>

This history of the House of Hillel suggests what I have long ago held; namely, that Judaism and Christianity are actually two sides of the same coin – *Messianic Judaism* being the natural bridge and link between the two faiths.

In Judaism, the synagogue functioned like, inter alia, a local court system where the written and oral Torah were applied to the practical, mundane affairs within the lives of Jews.

---

<sup>58</sup> Luke 2: 25-40.

<sup>59</sup> Acts 15: 5 ("Pharisees which believed"); Acts 21: 17-25.



In modern Christianity, however, that local court function has been lost to the church and relinquished to secular law courts. Messianic Judaism thus reminds the Christian faithful that the *administrative and legal structure* of the Jewish synagogue is *not inherently un-Christian*; and, when implemented within the church, these “Jewish” administrative and legal structures can be useful and beneficial to Christian church and to the lives of the Christian faithful.<sup>60</sup>

For instance, as previously mentioned, the Apostle Paul himself had admonished the Christian church to establish their own local court systems in order to properly resolved disputes between the Christian faithful.<sup>61</sup> Without question, the sort of *local church courts* that Paul had in mind had been extracted from the examples of the *rabbinical courts* then already operating within the Jewish synagogues, under *auspices of the House of Hillel and the Sanhedrin*, in first-century ancient Palestine.<sup>62</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The House of Hillel advanced two major pillars of the future Christian religion; namely, that a promised messiah would come to liberate God’s chosen people, and that the dead would be resurrected and judged. The Apostle Paul, who had been educated “at the feet of Gamaliel,” was fully versed in both of the pillars of the Christian religion long before he

---

<sup>60</sup> Here, with the paper, I respectfully implore the Black Church of the United States to give serious consideration and to follow suit.

<sup>61</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:1-11.

See, also, *AI Overview*, as follows: “Paul’s recommendation in 1 Corinthians 6:1–11 was primarily informed by Jewish customs and the practice of Beit Dins (rabbinical courts), which favored internal communal arbitration over secular legal systems. Influence of Jewish Beit Dins. Prohibition of Gentile Courts: Paul’s instructions reflect a long-standing Jewish principle that forbade taking disputes between Jews to Gentile (unbelieving) tribunals. Rabbis viewed such actions as a profanation of God's name.”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

met the risen Lord Jesus. Hence, for Messianic Jews, the House of Hillel can serve as an important marker in the life of the church (or messianic synagogue). The House of Hillel clearly produced great Jewish rabbis who were recruited into the new burgeoning Christian religion, including Simeon ben Hillel, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel the Elder, the Apostle Paul, and many other Pharisees who joined the Early Church. And the House of Hillel clearly demonstrates that many “Jewish” institutions, such as the implementation of *local ecclesiastical courts* with rabbinical lawyers and judges are not incompatible with the Christian religions – and certainly not incompatible with Messianic Judaism.

Recently, there has been much uproar among both Jews and Christians that address concern about the civilizational decline of Judea-Christian values in the West. And I have often wondered whether Jews and Christians (and especially Jews and Black Christians) might find some common theological ground upon which to rebuild the West along moral and culturally inclusive foundations. Today, I believe that the House of Hillel, together with its rich legacy, may afford Christians and Jews the platform upon which vital interfaith or secular institutions can be built (or rebuilt) with the aim towards civilizational reform in the West, including civilizational reform within the African American community in the United States, within the African continent, and throughout the entire African diaspora. This rebuilding has to focus on “reform” and on “remaking of Christian clergymen” along the lines of “Jewish rabbis” (such as Gamaliel I and the Apostle Paul) who are trained in the Sacred Law and who are committed to implementing Torah in every facet of Christian life – *economic, social, and political*, but especially within the institution of Christian marriage and the Christian family.

Amen.

**--- The End of Part Two ---**

Russian Orthodox icon of the Apostle Paul, 18th century CE.





OXFORD JOURNALS  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

---

Does the Simeon of Luke 2 Refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel?

Author(s): Allan Cutler

Source: *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Jan., 1966, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), pp. 29-35

Published by: Oxford University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1460564>

## REFERENCES

~~Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:~~

~~[https://www.jstor.org/stable/1460564?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1460564?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents)~~

~~You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.~~

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Oxford University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Bible and Religion*

# Does the Simeon of Luke 2 refer to Simeon the Son of Hillel?<sup>1</sup>

ALLAN CUTLER

THIS article makes a case for the thesis that the man (referred to below as X) who first crystallized the story of Simeon now found in Luke 2 intended his Simeon to refer to Simeon the son of Hillel. In support of this thesis I present eleven arguments.

1. Similarity in name. The name "Simeon" alone as it appears with X's Simeon and Hillel's son without any kind of surname (patronymic or other) was not very common in late Second Temple times. Further, the incidence of "Simeon" even with a surname was not very great in Hillel's generation or in the generations immediately preceding it and immediately following it.<sup>2</sup>

2. Similarity in time. X's Simeon and Hillel's son were almost certainly contemporaries. The incident involving X's Simeon occurred 30–40 days after

---

ALLAN CUTLER (A.B., Ph.D., University of Southern California; B.R.E., University of Judaism; B.H.L., Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles) is Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies and Medieval Comparative Religions at Temple University, Philadelphia. He is presently at work on a book entitled *Hillel the Palestinian (ca. 65–1 B.C.E.), the Founder of Rabbinic Judaism: a Revisionary Study of His Life and Work*.

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a paper read at the Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting, Mid-West Section, Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago, April 22, 1964, and is the fruit of research conducted at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, in the course of a post-doctoral fellowship from the Society for Religion in Higher Education in 1963–64.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1963, Vol. II, p. 866c–d; W. Whiston, *Josephus: Complete Works*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1963, pp. 767b–768a; A. Schmoller, *Handkonkordanz zum griechischen neuen Testament*, 11th ed., Stuttgart: Privilegium Württemberg Bibelanstalt, n. d., pp. 454b–455a, 467b; K. G. Kuhn et al., *Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960, pp. 223–4, and "Nachträge," *Revue de Qumran*, IV (1963), 231; A. M. Haberman, *M'gilôt Midbār Y'hūdāh*, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv: Machbaroth Lesifrut Publishing House, 1959, pp. 163–4; H. Danby, *Mishnah*, London: Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 838b–839a; M. S. Zuckerman, *Tosephta*, Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1963, pp. xlb–xliib; J. Umanski, *Ha'émē Hat-talmūd . . . Bābī*, Jerusalem: *Mōsād Hār-rah Kuk*, 1948, pp. 212–19, 258–9, and *Ha'k'mē Hat-talmūd Y'rūšalmī*, Jerusalem: *Mōsād Hār-rah Kuk*, 1952, pp. 139–46; A. Hyman, *Tōl dōt Tannā'im V'amōrā'im*, London: Express, 1910, pp. 1155a–1228a; M. Margalioth, *Enšiq'lopēdīyāh L'ha'k'mē Hat-talmūd V'hag-g'ōnīm*, Tel Aviv: Joshua Chachik Publishing House, 1962, Vol. II, pp. 838–72; E. Schuerer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 4th ed., Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911, Vol. IV, pp. 103b–104a; J. A. Selbie, "Simeon," and "Simon," in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, IV (1902), 517–20; W. C. van Manen, "Simeon," and "Simon," in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, IV (1907), 4534–6; A. Legendre, "Simeon," and "Simon," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, V (1922), 1732–43; K. Elliger and L. Hicks, "Simeon," and "Simon," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, IV (1962), 356–8; A. van den Born, "Simeon," and "Simon," in Hartman's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (1963), 2216–18; C. Roth, "Simon-Peter," *Harvard Theological Review*, LIV (1961), 91–7; J. A. Fitzmeyer, "The Name Simon," *Harvard Theological Review*, LVI (1963), 1–5; Roth and Fitzmeyer, "The Name Simon — A Further Discussion," *Harvard Theological Review*, LVII (1964), 60–1.

the birth of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> which as is generally believed took place no more than a few years before the death of Herod in 4 B. C. E. (cf. Matt. 2:16).<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Simeon the son of Hillel was alive at this time, for Hillel probably became the leader of the Pharisaic party ca. 30 B. C. E.,<sup>5</sup> and served in this capacity at least until 4 B. C. E. (the year of Herod's death).<sup>6</sup> Rabbinic tradition leads us to conclude that Hillel's Simeon did not die before his father.<sup>7</sup>

3. Similarity in place. The primary place of residence of X's Simeon would seem to have been Jerusalem, for Luke calls him "a man in Jerusalem" (2:25), and the expression "a man *in*" would seem to be equivalent to "a man *of*" (cf. Acts 10:1; 14:8). Likewise, the primary place of residence of Hillel's Simeon would seem to have been Jerusalem, for at this time Simeon would probably have been at least an assistant to his father in the leadership of the Pharisaic party in the Great Sanhedrin<sup>8</sup> which met in the Temple at Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> In that capacity he would probably have had to reside in Jerusalem most of the time.

Furthermore, X's Simeon came into the Courtyard of the Women in the Temple to greet Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:27).<sup>10</sup> Hillel's son would seem to have been especially closely connected with the Courtyard of the Women, for the following reason. Tannaitic sources<sup>11</sup> indicate that there probably was constant communication between the Great Sanhedrin which met in the Chamber of Hewn Stone in the Courtyard of the Israelites,<sup>12</sup> and the two

<sup>3</sup> H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924, Vol. II, pp. 120–4.

<sup>4</sup> R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times*, New York: Harper, 1949, p. 32; T. Corbishley, "The Chronology of New Testament Times," in B. Orchard, ed., *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, London: Thomas Nelson, 1953, p. 849a.

<sup>5</sup> *Talmūd Bābī*, *Šabbāt*, 15a; W. Bacher, "Hillel," in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, VI (1964), 397a; I. Goldberger, "*Ham-m'qôrôt Biḏ'har 'Aliyat Hillel Lan-n'š'ūt*," *Haš-šofeh L'hoḳ'maṭ Yisrā'ēl*, X (1926), 71; J. Goldin, "Hillel the Elder," *Journal of Religion*, XXVI (1946), 269 and note 45; N. Glatzer, *Hillel the Elder*, Washington: B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1959, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> *TB. Šabbāt* 15a, plus *Sifré*, ad Deuteronomy 34:7a, edited by M. Friedmann, Vienna: no publisher (Jewish Theological Seminary of Vienna?), 1863–4, p. 150a; Goldin, *op. cit.*, p. 263, note 1; Glatzer, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>7</sup> *TB. Šabbāt* 15a.

<sup>8</sup> See above, note 7; also H. Mantel, *Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Mišnāh*, *Middōt*, 5:4; *M. Sanhedrīn*, 11:2; S. Hoenig, *Great Sanhedrin*, Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1953, pp. 77–91, 145, 198.

<sup>10</sup> As a woman, Mary would seem to have been forbidden to go further into the Temple than the Courtyard of the Women. Luke 2:27, 33–4, makes it clear that Mary was right at Joseph's side when they met Simeon in the Temple.

<sup>11</sup> *M. Sanhedrīn*, 11:2; *Tôseftā*, *Sanhedrīn*, 7:1.

<sup>12</sup> *M. Middōt*, 5:4. For diagrams of the Second Temple, which, however, differ from one another and are often incorrect, cf. J. Eisenstein, "Temple, Plan of Second," in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, XII (1964), 94–5; the *Mišnāh* editions of the Jüdischer Verlag, Vienna: Jüdischer Verlag, 1951–2, Vol. II, *Seder Qoḏāšīm*, pp. 204–5, of E. Levi, Tel Aviv: Sinai Publishing House, 1958, Vol. V, pp. 574–5, and of H. Albeck, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv: Dvir



lesser sanhedrins which met, respectively, at the gate to the Courtyard of the Women and at the gate to the Courtyard of the Gentiles.<sup>13</sup> (These bodies are referred to below as, respectively, A, B, and C.) As assistant to his father, Simeon was probably deeply involved in the constant communication among these three bodies. The communication route connecting A with B and C went right through the Courtyard of the Women.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, although it may be true that almost everybody who had any business at all in the Temple sooner or later had to pass through the Courtyard of the Women, the business of Simeon the son of Hillel in the Temple would probably have brought him into consistent association with the Courtyard of the Women day after day. This greatly increases the possibility that it was he who was referred to in X's story.

4. Similarity in temperament. The general passivism of X's Simeon, whose whole life, so Luke tells us (2:25, 29), was directed merely toward waiting, matches the general passivism advocated by Hillel's son in the only statement which rabbinic literature preserves from him, wherein he stresses the religious importance of *silentio*.<sup>15</sup> Although it is true that he also emphasized therein the importance of the religious deed, it would seem from the way he expresses himself that, to him, *silentio* was primary and the religious deed secondary.<sup>16</sup>

5. Greek recension A, which goes back at least to the second century c. E.,<sup>17</sup> of Part I (Gospel of Nicodemus) of the Acts of Pilate preserves a

---

Publishing Company, 1959, Vol. V, pp. 328-9; and also W. F. Stinespring, "Temple, Jerusalem," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, IV (1962), 556.

<sup>13</sup> See above, notes 11 and 12.

<sup>14</sup> See above, note 12.

<sup>15</sup> *M. Ḥbôt*, 1:17 (cf. the later expanded version of this statement in *Ḥbôt D'rabbī Nāṭān*, recension A, chapter 22, edited by S. Schechter, New York: Shulsinger Brothers Publishing Company, 1944-5, p. 75a, lines 15-20, and the later abbreviated version of this statement in the same work, recension B, chapter 32, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 70b, lines 5-8), as restored to Simeon the son of Hillel by J. Alting and H. Reland (both 17th century; cf. J. C. Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, Hamburg: Christian Liebezeit, 1721, Vol. II, p. 861, lines 25 ff.); W. Landau, "Bilder aus dem Leben und Wirken der Rabbinen: R. Johanan b. Zakkai," *Monatsschrift fuer die Geschichte und die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, II (1853), 167, note 7; B. Pick, "Simeon, 4.," in M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, IX (1890), 757a; I. Jelski, *Die innere Einrichtung des grossen Synedrions zu Jerusalem*, Breslau: W. Koebner, 1894, p. 56, note 1; R. T. Herford, "Pirke Aboth," in Charles, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 694 and note ad 1:17, and *Pirke Aboth*, New York: Schocken Books, 1962, pp. 36-7, 37, note 1; L. Ginzberg, "The Mishnah Tamid," *Journal of Jewish Lore and Philosophy*, I (1919), 288, note 108, and *On Jewish Law and Lore*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955, p. 247, note 9; Goldin, "The Period of the Talmud," in L. Finkelstein, ed., *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion*, 2nd ed., Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955, Vol. I, pp. 139, 205, note 18.

<sup>16</sup> In *M. Ḥbôt*, 1:17, plus *ARN*, A, 22, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 75a, lines 15-20, *silentio* is stressed first and last; in between, the religious deed is mentioned. In *ARN*, B, 32, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 70b, lines 5-8, the second stress upon *silentio* is omitted.

<sup>17</sup> F. Scheidweiler, "The Gospel of Nicodemus," in E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. Wilson, Philadelphia: The Westminster

tradition to the effect that X's Simeon was a "great teacher" of the Law<sup>18</sup> and a "rabbi,"<sup>19</sup> that he taught the Law to a certain Levi, also called "teacher" and "rabbi,"<sup>20</sup> and that this Levi later became a member of the Great Sanhedrin.<sup>21</sup> It seems obvious why this may reflect a historical memory that X's Simeon referred to Hillel's son.

6. The Protoevangelium (Book of James), dating in the main from between ca. 150 and 300 c. E.,<sup>22</sup> preserves a tradition to the effect that X's Simeon was elected High Priest.<sup>23</sup> According to rabbinic literature, Hillel's son, as *Nāšīḥ*, was head of the Great Sanhedrin.<sup>24</sup> However, early Christian literature held that the High Priest was head of the Great Sanhedrin.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, any early Christian writer who held that X's Simeon was Hillel's son would probably have made X's Simeon High Priest. For this reason, when the Protoevangelium makes X's Simeon High Priest, it may be reflecting a historical memory that X's Simeon referred to Hillel's son.

7. Latin recension A, dating probably from the third century c. E.,<sup>26</sup> of Part II (Descent into Hell) of the Acts of Pilate, for no apparent reason of plot introduces Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, who in actual fact was the son of Hillel's Simeon, into the story of Karinus and Leucius, the alleged sons of X's Simeon.<sup>27</sup> Gamaliel is not mentioned often enough in the apocryphal New

Press, 1963, Vol. I, pp. 444-7; E. Amann, "Apocryphes du Nouveau Testament," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplement I (1928), 487.

<sup>18</sup> Chapter 16, section 2, in M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1960, p. 111, line 37.

<sup>19</sup> 16:6, in James, *op. cit.*, p. 113, line 8.

<sup>20</sup> 16:3, in James, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> 16:1-3, in James, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12. The "rulers of the synagogue . . . priests and . . . Levites" of 16:1, 3, and the "teachers . . . priests and . . . Levites" of 16:2 would seem to refer to members of the Great Sanhedrin. Cf. Luke 24:20; Matt. 26:3; Mark 11:18, 14:53; Luke 19:47, 20:19, 22:2, 66; Acts 6:12. Annas and Caiaphas would seem to be presiding here (16:1) just as they were believed to have presided over the Great Sanhedrin (Acts 4:5-6).

<sup>22</sup> James, *op. cit.*, p. 38; O. Cullmann, "The Protoevangelium of James," in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 372-3; Amann, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

<sup>23</sup> 24:3, in James, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-9; cf. Latin recension A, dating from about the same time as the Protoevangelium (James, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-5, 117), of Part II (Descent into Hell) of the Acts of Pilate, Chapter 1 (17 of the entire Acts), section 1, in James, *op. cit.*, p. 120, line 3, for another reference to X's Simeon as High Priest.

<sup>24</sup> See above, note 7.

<sup>25</sup> G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954, Vol. III, pp. 32-3; S. W. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 1953, Vol. I, p. 396, note 16; Hoenig, *op. cit.*, pp. xiii ff., 121 ff.; Mantel, *op. cit.*, p. 54, note 2; J. Reumann, "Review of Solomon Zeitlin's *Who Crucified Jesus?*," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXIV (1965), 84. The High Priest, *qua* High Priest, may also have been called *Nāšīḥ* during Second Temple times. Mantel, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, note 1, 4-5, note 21.

<sup>26</sup> James, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-5, 117.

<sup>27</sup> Chapter 1 (17 of the entire Acts of Pilate), sections 1-3, especially section 2, in



Testament to allow the argument that this linking of Rabban Gamaliel, the son of Hillel's Simeon, with Karinus and Leucius, the alleged sons of X's Simeon, was a complete coincidence.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it would seem that this linking of Rabban Gamaliel with Karinus and Leucius may reflect a historical memory that X's Simeon referred to Hillel's son.<sup>29</sup>

8. Saintliness is associated with both Simeons. X's Simeon is described as *eulabes* (Luke 2:25) and this Greek term is the equivalent of the Hebrew *hāsîd*, i. e., saintly.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, rabbinic literature associates saintliness especially closely with Hillel.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the only statement rabbinic literature preserves from Hillel's Simeon emphasizes two ideals, *silentio*,<sup>32</sup> implying humility<sup>33</sup> and/or contemplation,<sup>34</sup> and the religious deed.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere, rabbinic literature closely links humility,<sup>36</sup> contemplation,<sup>37</sup> and the religious deed<sup>38</sup> with saintliness.

9. The Holy Spirit is associated with both Simeons. X's Simeon had the *pneuma hagion*, the Holy Spirit, upon him (Luke 2:25),<sup>39</sup> received revelation from it (Luke 2:26), and was inspired by it to enter the Temple shortly before

James, *op. cit.*, p. 121, line 4. *Actus Petri cum Simone* links its own Simon with a certain friend named *Gemellus*. Cf. M. Bonnet and R. A. Lipsius, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, Leipzig: H. Mendelssohn, 1891, Vol. I, p. 299b.

<sup>28</sup> A. C. Coxe, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925, Vol. X, p. 163b; Bonnet and Lipsius, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 299b, Vol. II:2, pp. 318b, 387a; Schuerer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 430, note 49; G. Milligan, "Gamaliel," in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, XI (1923), 106b; E. Mangelot, "Gamaliel," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, III (1926), 102-4; M. A. van den Oudenrijn, "The Gospel of Gamaliel," in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 508-10.

<sup>29</sup> It cannot be argued that this linking of Rabban Gamaliel with the alleged sons of X's Simeon is due to the early Christian belief that Gamaliel was a secret Christian convert or sympathizer (cf. Milligan, *op. cit.*, p. 106b; Mangelot, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4), just as X's Simeon was believed to have been, for in this case Gamaliel would probably have been linked directly with X's Simeon, not merely with the alleged sons of X's Simeon.

<sup>30</sup> E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *Concordance to the Septuagint*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1954, Vol. I, p. 572a, Vol. II, Supplement, p. 234c; R. Bultmann, "Eulabes," in G. Kittel, ed., *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament*, Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935, Vol. II, pp. 749-51; Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 357a.

<sup>31</sup> N. Glatzer, "Hillel the Elder and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in K. Stendahl, ed., *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957, pp. 233-5, 299, note 7-24, and Hillel, *passim*, beginning p. 18, especially pp. 33-9.

<sup>32</sup> See above, notes 15-16.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. the traditional commentary of Obadiah of Bertinoro (ca. 1510 c. e.) *ad loc.* in *Mišnāh*, edited by the Jüdischer Verlag, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, *Seder N'ziqtn*, p. 177, line 44.

<sup>34</sup> E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, New York: Meridian Books, 1958, pp. 298, 328; T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964, p. 73.

<sup>35</sup> See above, notes 15-16.

<sup>36</sup> *M. Sôṭāh*, 9:15; *T. Sôṭāh*, 13:3-4.

<sup>37</sup> *M. B' rākôt*, 5:1; *TB. B' rākôt*, 32b.

<sup>38</sup> *M. Ṿābôt*, 5:14; cf. *M. Sukkāh*, 5:4.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Strack and Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 126-38.

Joseph and Mary did (Luke 2:27).<sup>40</sup> Likewise, rabbinic literature associates *ruḥaḥ haq-qōdeš*, the Holy Spirit, especially closely with Hillel.<sup>41</sup>

10. Intense interest in the imminent coming of the messiah is associated with both Simeons. X's Simeon had received a revelation that the messiah would come during his lifetime<sup>42</sup> and was looking for him (Luke 2:29).<sup>43</sup> He allegedly recognized him in the baby Jesus brought into the Temple by Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:27–35). Likewise, contrary to the generally accepted scholarly opinion, Hillel was thoroughly taken up by the anti-Herodian and anti-Roman revolutionary messianic movement of his time, especially from the late 20's B. C. E. on.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Luke does use "Holy Spirit" frequently, but rarely so often in connection with one man (i. e., X's Simeon) and within the same short literary unit (i. e., 2:25–35). In the first two chapters of Luke, the so-called "Lucan Infancy Narrative" (*Kindheitsgeschichte*), outside of the Simeon unit (2:25–35) wherein the "Holy Spirit" is mentioned three times in three consecutive verses, it is only mentioned four other times, all in chapter one — two times in connection with Zechariah, but in widely separated contexts, 1:15, and 1:67, once in connection with Elizabeth, 1:41, and once in connection with Mary, 1:35.

<sup>41</sup> *T. P'sāḥīm*, 4:2; *TB. P'sāḥīm*, 66a; *Talmūd Y'rūsalmī*, *P'sāḥīm*, 6:1, 33a. *T. Sōṭāh*, 13:3–4; *TB. Sōṭāh*, 48b; *TY. Sōṭāh*, 9:13, 24b. Hillel's pupil Jonathan b. *Uzzi'el*, is closely linked with the Targum of the prophetic portion of Scripture (*TB. M'gīlāh*, 3a) and with the Jewish mystical tradition (*idem.*, plus *TB. Sukkāh*, 28a; *TB. Bāḥā Batrā*, 134a). *Yōḥānān b. Zakkāy*, called Hillel's pupil (cf. J. Neusner, *Life of Rabban Yohanan Ben Zakkai*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962, pp. 22–7), is also linked with prophecy and the Jewish mystical tradition (Neusner, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 ff., 114 ff.). On the continuation of prophecy into the later Second Temple period, cf. E. Urbach, "*Māṭay Pās'qāh Han-nūḥāh*," *Tarbiš*, XVII (1945–6), 1–11.

<sup>42</sup> This is probably the proper interpretation of Luke 2:26.

<sup>43</sup> Strack and Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 124–6.

<sup>44</sup> G. Allon, "*Emdat Hap-prūšīm K'lappē Šilṭon Rōmī Ūḥet Hōrōdōs*," *Štyōn*, III (1937–8), 301 and notes 1–4; J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, trans. W. F. Stinespring, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955, pp. 392–3, 393, notes 2–3; Glatzer, in Stendahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 241–2, and Hillel, pp. 63–73, especially pp. 69 ff.; M. Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York: The Viking Press, 1958, p. 384. For the beginning of a corrective, cf. Allon, *op. cit.*, pp. 300–22; A. Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951, pp. 167–8; S. Zeitlin, "Herod, a Malevolent Maniac," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. LIV (1963), 22–6.

<sup>45</sup> (1) *M. 'Eduyōt*, 8:7; Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 453, line 4; *TB. P'sāḥīm*, 70b. (2) *TY. Ta'anit*, 4:2, 68a; *Midrās Rabbāh*, ad Genesis 49:10c, edited by M. Mirkin, Tel Aviv: Yavneh Publishing House, 1958, Vol. IV, pp. 198, lines 5–6, 199, lines 1–3. (3) *Midrās Rabbāh*, ad Genesis 49:10c, edited by Mirkin, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 198, lines 4–5. (4) *TB. M'gīlāh*, 3a. (5) Neusner, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–7, 172 ff. (6) *T. Hagīgāh*, 2:11; *TB. Bēṣāh*, 20; *TY. Hagīgāh*, 2:3, 78a. *TB. Bāḥā Batrā*, 3b–4a; Josephus, *Antiquities*, XV, 8, especially 8:3; W. Bacher, "Baba b. Butah," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, II (1964), 392a. (7) Josephus, *Antiquities*, XV, 10:4, XVII, 2:4. (8) *T. 'Erūḥīn*, 3:7, with the oldest MS of the *Tōseftā*, that of Erfurt, and the edition of Zuckerman, *op. cit.*, p. 142, lines 14–16, which read Hillel here, against the later MSS of Vienna and London, and the edition of S. Lieberman, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962, p. 100, lines 25–8, which read Shammai here. (9) *ARN*, B, 28, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 57b, lines 14–15; *TB. Sukkāh*, 28a; *TB. Bāḥā Batrā*, 134a; W. Bacher, "Hillel," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, VI (1964), 399b. (10) Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII, 2:4. (11) Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII, 6:2–4. (12) Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII, 10. (13) Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, 1:1, 1:16; cf. Acts 5:37.

11. A combination of Jewish religious universalism and particularism, including a definite interest in the conversion of the gentiles, is associated with both Simeons. X's Simeon expresses his belief that God's salvation in the messianic era would embrace "all peoples" (Luke 2:30–31), but would especially redound to the "glory of" his "people Israel" (Luke 2:32b), and shows his interest in the conversion of the gentiles by echoing Deutero-Isaiah's famous missionary phrase "a light . . . to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32a).<sup>46</sup> Likewise, rabbinic literature attributes to Hillel concern for the welfare of all men *qua* men (and not merely *qua* Jews),<sup>47</sup> while at the same time indicating that he considered Israel of special importance in God's eyes.<sup>48</sup> Hillel's emphasis on the conversion of gentiles to Judaism is well known.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Citing Isaiah 42:6, 49:6 (cf. 51:4), on the missionary implications whereof cf. R. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948, pp. 477–8, and *History of New Testament Times*, pp. 188, note 39, 189.

<sup>47</sup> *M. Ḥabot*, 1:2; cf. 1:15, for similar thoughts of Shammai, who, contrary to general opinion, was more of an ally than an opponent of Hillel. See above, note 45, point 8.

<sup>48</sup> *T. P'sāḥīm*, 4:2; *TB. P'sāḥīm*, 66a; *TY. P'sāḥīm*, 6:1, 33a; *ARN*, B, 27, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 55b, lines 28–30.

<sup>49</sup> *M. Ḥabot*, 1:12. (2) *TB. Šabbāt*, 31a, edited by *M'ôrôt*, New York: Feldheim, 1961, Vol. II, p. 61, lines 27–30. (3) *TB. Šabbāt*, 31a, edited by *M'ôrôt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 61, lines 30–44; *ARN*, A, 15, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, pp. 61a, line 13, to 62a, line 11; *ARN*, B, 29, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 61b, lines 26–39. However, *TB. Šabbāt*, 31a, edited by *M'ôrôt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 61, lines 21–6, is not really a proselyte story; the Palestinian versions of the story, *ARN*, A, 15, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, p. 61a, lines 1–13, and *ARN*, B, 29, edited by Schechter, *op. cit.*, pp. 61b, line 40, to 62b, line 12, indicate that it was originally a story of how Hillel converted a Sadducee to Pharisaism and not a gentile to Judaism. In Babylonia, where the Sadducee threat had never really existed, the story was mistaken for a proselyte story and told as such.