

**The Gathering of the Church in the Kingdom.
The Self-understanding of the Didache Community in the Eucharistic Prayers**

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The prayers for the eucharistic meal in Didache 9-10 are older than the Didache. They existed prior to the final editing of the work and were incorporated in the document at a later date.¹

The petitions in Did 9:4 and 10:5 run parallel:

4. Just as this fragment lay scattered upon
the mountains and became a single
[fragment] when it had been gathered,

so may your church be gathered
from the ends of the earth
into your kingdom.

For glory and power are yours, through
Jesus Christ, forever

5. Be mindful, Lord, of your church, to
preserve it from all evil [or, from every
evil being] and to perfect it in your love.

And, once it is sanctified,

gather it
from the four winds,
into the kingdom

which you have prepared for it.

For power and glory are yours forever

¹See, e.g., J. Betz, 'Die Eucharistie in der Didache', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 11 (1969) 10-39; ET: 'The Eucharist in the Didache', in J.A. Draper (ed.), *The Didache in Modern Research* (AGJU 37) Leiden-New York-Köln 1996, 244-75; esp. 245; H. van de Sandt and D. Flusser, *The Didache. Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (CRINT 3/5), Assen-Minneapolis, 2002, 309-29.

1. The Jewish Character of the Prayer

Both the prayer before the ritual meal (Did 9) and the one concluding the meal (Did 10)² have parallels in the Jewish rites. Did 9:2-3 is close to the Jewish table blessing (see *m. Ber.* 6:1),³ while the supplication in 9:4 resembles the tenth benediction of the *Tefilla* (= Shemoneh Esreh or Amidah).⁴ Most scholars nowadays agree that the text in Did 10 evolved from the Jewish Grace after meals (or the Birkat Ha-Mazon), that is, the prayer that concludes the

²The clause *thn aḡiasqeisan* (“the sanctified”) in Did 10:5, is translated here as “and, once it is sanctified.” The attribute given to the church, is often considered to be textually suspect. Since this expression is found in the Jerusalem ms. H but is lacking in the Coptic Fragment and in the Apostolic Constitutions, it could represent a later gloss. On the other hand, the clause may reflect an authentic reading. The phrase *thn aḡiasqeisan* in combination with *kai\tel eiwsai au\thh* (“and to perfect it”) is closely related to the expression in Heb 10:14 where it says that Christ “has perfected (*tetel ei/wken*) for ever those who are sanctified” (*touj aḡiazomehouj*). Moreover, the apposition *thn aḡiasqeisan* shows agreement with Eph 5:25-26: “Christ loved the church ... that he might sanctify her, having cleansed (*ba au\thn aḡiaσh|kaqari/saj*) her by the washing of water with the word.”

³The structure of the separate prayers before the meal (cup-bread) reflects the sequence of these in mainstream Judaism. They are close to the Jewish table blessing in content as well. In the Mishna, the Jewish blessing over the cup is rendered thus:
“(Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, King of the world,) who creates the fruit of the vine (*m. Ber.* 6:1)” and over the bread:
“(Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, King of the world,) who brings forth bread from the earth (*m. Ber.* 6:1).”

⁴The tenth benediction of the Palestinian recension of the *Tefilla* reads
“lift up the banner for the gathering of our exiles; praised are you, O Lord, who gathers the dispersed of your people Israel” (For a comparison in parallel columns of the prayers in Did 9-10 and their Jewish sources, see J.W. Riggs, ‘From Gracious Table to Sacramental Elements: The Tradition-History of Didache 9 and 10’, *SecCent* 4 [1984] 83-101, esp. 92-93; R.D. Middleton, ‘The Eucharistic Prayers of the Didache’, *JTS* 36 [1935] 259-67; esp. 261-64) and the Babylonian recension of the same supplication is as follows:
“lift up the banner to gather all our exiles from the four ends of the earth into our land; praised are you, O Lord, who gathers the dispersed of your people Israel” (See H.L. Strack und P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* 4/1, München 1928, 212; L. Clerici, *Einsammlung der Zerstreuten. Liturgiegeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Vor- und Nachgeschichte der Fürbitte für die Kirche in Didache 9,4 und 10,5* [Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen und Forschungen 44], Münster [Westf] 1965, 90. See also the Mussaf prayer for Rosh Hashana and the benediction before the Shema: “Bring us to peace from the four ends of the earth and lead us straight into our land”).

Jewish ritual meal.⁵ Thus, while the blessings in Did 9 originate from different Jewish sources, those in Did 10 have come from one coherent Jewish liturgical source. Assuming that we get closer to the Jewish setting of Christian prayers as these reflect a single source, one may argue that the text in Did 10 represents the earlier prayer and that Did 9 in its literary form depends on Did 10.⁶

Certain structural patterns, key concepts, and thematic elements of the eucharistic prayer in Did 10 are similar to the Birkat Ha-Mazon. The first to have closely examined these prayers was Louis Finkelstein, who presented the two texts in parallel columns.⁷ Finkelstein's reconstruction is based on manuscripts from the ninth and tenth centuries, however, and his version consequently remains a hypothetical restoration. Furthermore, there is widespread recognition that the precise wording of the Grace was not yet established in the first century.⁸

⁵See, for example, G. Klein, 'Die Gebete in der Didache', *ZNW* 9 (1908) 132-146; esp. 140-41; L. Finkelstein, 'The Birkat Ha-Mazon', in id. *Pharisaism in the Making. Selected Essays*, New York 1972, 333-384; published previously in *JQR* n.s. 19 (1928-29) 211-62; passim; Middleton, 'The Eucharistic Prayers', 263-64; M. Dibelius, 'Die Mahl-Gebete der Didache', *ZNW* 37 (1938) 32-41; repr in H. Kraft and G. Bornkamm (eds.), *Botschaft und Geschichte. Gesammelte Aufsätze von Martin Dibelius. 2: Zum Urchristentum und zur hellenistischen Religionsgeschichte*, Tübingen 1956, 117-27; esp. 117.122-23; J.-P. Audet, *La Didachè. Instructions des Apôtres* (Ebib), Paris 1958, 410; L. Ligier, 'The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer: From the Last Supper to the Eucharist', *Studia Liturgica* 9 (1973) 161-85; published previously as 'Les origines de la prière eucharistique: de la cène du Seigneur à l'eucharistie', *Questions Liturgiques* 53 (1972) 181-202; G. Rouwhorst, 'Bénédictio, action de grâces, supplication. Les oraisons de la table dans le Judaïsme et les célébrations eucharistiques des Chrétiens syriaques', *Questions Liturgiques* 61 (1980) 211-40; H. Wegman, 'Généalogie hypothétique de la prière eucharistique', *Questions Liturgiques* 61 (1980) 263-78; W. Rordorf et A. Tuilier, *La Doctrine des douze Apôtres (Didachè)* (SC 248 bis), Paris ²1998, 178-79, n. 3; K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache* (Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 1), Göttingen ²1993 (1989) 194-199; E. Mazza, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer*, Colledgeville (Minn) 1995, 16-30.

⁶Riggs, 'From Gracious Table', 93. See also Van de Sandt-Flusser, *The Didache*, 313.

⁷Finkelstein, 'The Birkat Ha-Mazon', 215-17.

⁸See J. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud. Forms and Patterns* (SJ 9), Berlin-New York 1977, 37-64 and, concerning the Grace after meals, S. Safrai, 'Religion in Everyday Life', in id. and M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century. Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions* 2 (CRINT 1/2), Assen/Philadelphia 1976, 793-833; esp. 802-03; P.F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship. Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, London 1992, 207; S.C. Reiff, 'The Early History of Jewish Worship', in P.F. Bradshaw and L.A. Hoffman, *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship*, Notre Dame 1991, 109-36; J.A. Draper, 'Ritual Process and Ritual Symbol in Didache 7-10'. *VC* 54 (2000) 121-58; esp. 139.

On the other hand, since Finkelstein's reconstructed text reflects ancient traditions and roughly corresponds to the outline of the three berakhot echoed in the Mishna (*m. Ber.* 6:8), some form of the later Birkat Ha-Mazon must have been in regular use at the end of the Second Temple period.⁹

However, if Did 10 indeed evolved from the Birkat Ha-Mazon, it is clear that the initial form of the Hebrew Grace after meals underwent a significant development. While the Birkat Ha-Mazon is divided into three strophes, its structure has been adapted to a bipartite use in Did 10.¹⁰ The blessing-thanksgiving-supplication pattern of the Birkat Ha-Mazon becomes a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication. The reorganization of the Grace in the Didache reflects the displacement of the entire first pericope (a *berakha* or blessing addressed to God) in the Birkat Ha-Mazon in favour of the second (a *hodaya* or thanksgiving). The *hodaya*, which was found in the Grace at the second place, is located at the beginning in the present structure and the *berakha*, which was initially the first strophe, has now become part of the *hodaya*. This transposition is not as fantastic as it seems. The Greek verb *eucharistein* ('to be thankful,' 'to return thanks') may already have been the common designation of 'to bless at table' in Hellenistic Judaism (cf. Rom 14:6; 1 Cor 10:30; 1 Tim 4:3-4; and Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 2,175), where this alternate form of Grace probably began with this word (*eucharistein*).¹¹ The thanksgiving in the first pericope of the prayer in the Didache has its parallel in the *hodaya*, the thanksgivings in the second pericope of the Jewish Grace.

Another point of difference between the Hebrew Grace and Did 10 concerns the ongoing spiritualization of the prayer in the Didache. One may note, for example, the substitution of spiritual food and spiritual drink (10:3) for their physical counterparts and the replacement of the thanks for the 'land' for the gratitude that the Lord has his "holy Name ... made dwell in our hearts" (10:2). This process of modifying the Grace after meals by spiritualizing the

⁹The antiquity of the general structure and themes of the Birkat Ha-Mazon is corroborated by the book of Jubilees (2nd century BC); it gives an account of Abraham who, after a "good thank offering"(22:5), pronounces his Grace after meals (22:6-9); see Van de Sandt-Flusser, *The Didache*, 316-18.

¹⁰Cf. Middleton, 'The Eucharistic Prayers', 263; Th. J. Talley, 'From Berakah to Eucharistia: A Reopening Question', *Worship* 50 (1976) 115-37; esp. 125-29 and, also for the following, Van de Sandt-Flusser, *The Didache*, 313-25.

¹¹J. Laporte, *La Doctrine eucharistique chez Philon d'Alexandrie* (ThH 16), Paris 1972, 82-84; P. Drews, 'Untersuchungen zur Didache'. *ZNW* 5 (1904) 53-79; esp. 77 and K. Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre). Barnabasbrief. Zweiter Klemensbrief. Schrift an Diognet* (Schriften des Urchristentums 2), Darmstadt 1984, 57, n. 192.

prayers may be assigned to circles in Hellenistic Judaism as well.¹² All this results, as will be shown below, in the conclusion that Did 10 is not a reworking of the Hebrew but of the *Greek* version of the Birkat Ha-Mazon.¹³ Instead of taking for granted that the prayer has only one layer of tradition, we have to consider its several stages of development. Structure and expressions in the eucharistic prayers of the Didache betray a strong Hellenistic influence. We shall, therefore, assume that the prayer in the Didache is a Christianization of the Hebrew prayer after meals used in Greek Judaism.

2. The Problem: The Concept of Dispersion behind the Prayers

We have seen that, since the prayer in Did 10 was composed from a single source, it may be the more primitive form of the two prayers in Did 9-10. Accordingly, the focus here will be placed primarily on the petition in 10:5. The petition for the gathering of the church “from the four winds” and its being brought home into the “kingdom” reflects the Jewish desire that the people of Israel be gathered and united. According to a reconstruction of Finkelstein, the earliest version of the the third benediction of the Jewish Grace after meals, also called the supplication for Jerusalem, may have read as follows:

Have mercy, O Lord, our God, on Israel, your people, and on Jerusalem, your city, and on Zion, the resting-place of your glory, and on your altar and on your temple. Blessed are you, O Lord, who buildest Jerusalem.¹⁴

¹²K.G. Sandelin, *Wisdom as Nourisher. A Study of an Old Testament Theme, its Development within Early Judaism and its Impact on Early Christianity* (Acta Academia Aboensis, ser. A: Humaniora 64,3), Åbo 1986, 212-18; Dibelius, ‘Die Mahl-Gebete’, passim; Clerici, *Einsammlung der Zerstreuten*, 37. See also Rordorf-Tuilier, *La Doctrine des douze Apôtres*, 179, n. 4.

¹³See above, n. 12. Compare also G. Alon, ‘Ha-halakhah ba-Torat 12 ha-Shelihim’, in id., *Studies in Jewish History* 1, 274-94; 288, n. 67; published previously in *Tarbiz* 11 (1939-40) 127-145; English Translation: ‘The Halacha in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles’, in Draper, *The Didache in Modern Research*, 165-94, 185, n. 67; H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl. Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Liturgie* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 8), Berlin 1926; ET: *Mass and Lord’s Supper. A Study in the History of the Liturgy*, with Introduction and Further Inquiry by R.D. Richardson. Leiden 1979, 233-34; H. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den apostolischen Vätern* (TU 65), Berlin 1957, 193; Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre)*, 48-49. 53, n.177; R.J. Ledogar, *Acknowledgment. Praise-verbs in the Early Greek Anaphora*. Rome 1968, 127-28; B. Kollmann, *Ursprung und Gestalten der frühchristlichen Mahlfeier* (GTA 43), Göttingen 1990, 80-89.

¹⁴Cf. Finkelstein, ‘The Birkat Ha-Mazon’, 233.

The Greek version of the Birkat ha-Mazon is not known but it is conceivable that the elements in the third strophe ('Jerusalem, your city', 'Zion,' 'your altar', and 'your temple') may have resulted in a prayer for the return to the land of Israel. In any case, the Christian supplication in Did 10:5 recalls the situation of Israel's dispersion. The longing for the triumphant reunion of the church is bound up with the biblical expectation of salvation for the people of Israel.¹⁵ In later Judaism, these ideas continue to flourish¹⁶ and the future hope of a restored Jerusalem is sustained by prayers.¹⁷ Originally, the dispersion was related to the Babylonian captivity (LXX: diaspora), a singular event in Jewish history. However, during the Hellenistic age, when the Babylonian captivity had ceased for a long time, the Jewish colonies abroad survived and continued to grow. It is this reality, also frequently expressed in terms like *paroikia* (meaning 'sojourn') or *(dia) skorpismoj* (referring to the scattering of Israel), which is envisaged when the eschatological gathering is mentioned.¹⁸

In this article, we focus on two clusters of questions:

1. In Did 10:5 (and 9:4), the traditional Jewish earthly orientation expressed in the third strophe of the Birkat Ha-Mazon (a compassionate treatment of Israel, the people according to the flesh, of Jerusalem, Zion, and the temple) is conceived in terms of ethical, spiritual, supra-terrestrial, and everlasting goods: the spiritual building of the 'church', its deliverance from all evil, its perfection in love, and its ultimate integration into an immaterial reign of God. The earthly, worldly expectation and confidence is replaced by a

¹⁵See Deut 30:1-5a; Isa 11:12; 27:13; 43:5-7; 49:22; 56:8; Jer 23:8; 31:8.10; 39:37 (LXX); Ezek 11:17; 20:34; 28:25; 34:11-16; 37:21; 39:27; Mic 2:12-13; 4:12; Pss 106:47; 147:2; Neh 1:8-9; Zech 2:10 (LXX); 8:7-8; 10:6vv ; 1 Chr 16:35; 2 Macc 2:7.18; Tob 13:5; Sir 36:11; 51:12 (f). Cf. also A. Stuiber, 'Diaspora', in *RAC* 3 (Stuttgart 1957) 972-82; esp. 974-75.

¹⁶2 Macc 1:27; 2:18; *1 En.* 57:1; 90:34; *Pss. Sol.* 8:28; 11:2-6; 17:26.28.31.34-36.43-44; 2 *Bar.* 77-78; 4 *Ezra* 13:39; *T. Asher* 7; Philo, *Praem.* 117; *Exsecr.* 165; *b. Meg.* 29a; *b. Pesah.* 117a; etc.; cf. P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, Tübingen 1934, 344-50.

¹⁷Ps 147:2; Sir 36 (33):1-16; 51:12a-q (Hebr.); 2 Macc 1:24-29; *Ps. Sol.* 8:27-28; 17:30-31; and the 10th benediction of the *Tefilla* (see above, n. 4); cf Clerici, *Einsammlung der Zerstreuten*, 65-102; Niederwimmer, *Die Didache*, 188 and n. 54.

¹⁸A.P.J. Arowele, *Diaspora-concept in the New Testament. Studies on the idea of Christian Sojourn, Pilgrimage and Dispersion according to the New Testament* (Inaugural-Dissertation), Würzburg 1977, 27-54.

spiritualized and eschatological hope. The Christian longing for a gathering does not include the Jewish hope for a restoration of Israel and Jerusalem. Is this an attempt to define the Christian community of the Didache as distinct from Judaism? Does the Didache prayer reflect a separation from the tie that Jews have with the land and Jerusalem? Does it substitute the gathering of the church for the gathering of Israel according to the flesh?

2. The Didache prayer recalls the condition of dispersion and the scattering of Israel among the nations of the world. At the same time, however, it is a prayer for the church (*ekklesia*), and its gathering into the kingdom. What kind of concept of diaspora underlies this prayer? The term *diaspora* was used by Jews to indicate that part of Judaism living outside of Palestine, but what would such a term mean to Christians? Does it say that Christians as such, whether Jewish or Gentile, live in dispersion? Where is this gathering supposed to take place? How to grasp the ultimate significance of the petition in Did 10:5 and 9:4?

Below, we will take the following steps. Because the eucharistic prayer clearly recalls a Hellenistic Jewish milieu, our initial concern will be with the concepts of dispersion and gathering in the Hellenistic Jewish writings of Philo of Alexandria, the pre-eminent representative of Hellenistic Judaism. It will be shown that Philo employs the notions 'diaspora' and equivalent terms ('sojourn', 'scattering') in a metaphorical way. At variance with their Hebrew Palestinian content, these words do not have a material but a spiritual sense. The same is true for some New Testament writings. This evidence enables us to better understand the motif of return of the dispersed in the Didache prayer (*section 3*). It does not solve the issue, however, of the disregard of the concrete city of Jerusalem, Zion, and the temple in the Didache prayer. On the contrary, one might go so far as to wonder if the figurative understanding of the term 'diaspora' does not reflect deviating roles of the physical land of Judaea and the concrete city of Jerusalem in contemporary Judaism. Was the purpose of a metaphorical concept of dispersion not to undermine the hope for a future return to the earthly fatherland? And might such a view not have emerged before the Christianization of the Birkat Ha-Mazon, i.e., as early as in the Hellenistic stage? It will become clear, however, that the supplication in the Didache - without mentioning the physical land of Judaea and the tangible city of Jerusalem - reflects a Christian rather than a Jewish longing (*section 4*). This evidence will finally bring us to the conclusion that the texts of Did 10:5 and 9:4 reflect a Christian community which increasingly distances itself from Judaism.

3. Dispersion in a Hellenistic -Jewish and Early-Christian setting

It was established that the eucharistic prayers of the Didache have their origin in the Jewish Grace (the Birkat Ha-Mazon) recited by Jews in a Hellenistic milieu. Therefore, one may assume an Hellenistic Jewish provenance for the supplication in Did 10:5. Since the Greek version of the prayer goes back to a Hellenistic Jewish model of the Hebrew supplication for Jerusalem (the Birkat Ha-Yerushalayim),¹⁹ the quest for parallels or similarities in Hellenistic Judaism brings us to Philo.

3.1. Philo

Although the sources do not provide much information about Philo himself, his writings show him to have been deeply influenced by the Socratic-Platonic view of the dualistic body-soul relationship. He was probably born between 20 and 10 BC and belonged to one of the most influential families of Alexandrian Jewry. He had a wide education and was acquainted with many Greek philosophers and writers. At the same time, he was a religious Jew who practised Jewish laws and customs. Because his writings are based on the Law of Moses, Philo regarded himself not primarily as an original thinker but as an exegete of Scripture. In his

¹⁹The fourth benediction of the Birkat Ha-Mazon is not reflected in either Jub 22:6-9 (see above, n. 9) or in Did 10. It already existed in the Second Temple period, but did not become obligatory until after the Bar Kokhba War. See Alon, 'Ha-halakha ba-Torat 12 ha-Shelihim', 289-90 (ET: 187) and Finkelstein, 'The Birkat Ha-Mazon' (1928-29) 221-222.

view, Greek philosophy was the intellectual framework of reference within which the books of Moses should be explained.²⁰

Philo conceived the reunion out of the dispersion which is prayed for in Did 10:5 as a metaphorical concept, as bridging the distance from the heavenly home. With reference to Lev 25:23 (“for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me”), he explains

“to God they” (all creatures) “are aliens and sojourners (παροικῶν). For each of us has come into this world as into a foreign city, in which before our birth we had no part, and in this city he does but sojourn (παροικεῖ), until he has exhausted his appointed span of life.”²¹

In his writings, the idea is found that the life of man is a sojourn and that his original homeland is heaven. He uses terms like παροικῶν, παροικία, and παροικεῖν. In its technical use, the term παροικεῖν means “to dwell as a resident alien or stranger” in a place where one is not native or a citizen and does not have civil or native rights.²² In Philo’s texts, παροικῶν serves to express the fact that the righteous man is a stranger, a non-citizen, on earth. These qualifications are often used in the LXX, primarily denoting a sojourn in a geographical location. In Philo, however, they show a basic transformation of meaning. The Greek terms no longer refer to any particular geographical location; they now have bearing on the whole of the physical world as it is. There is a clear dualism between this world and the next. Philo portrays the soul as “imprisoned in that dwelling place of endless calamities - the body.”²³ The body is the animal side of man. It is the source of all evil and “the grave of the

²⁰See e.g. P. Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria. An Exegete for his Time* (NovTSup 86), Leiden-New York-Köln 1997, 1-45. See also E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)* 3/2; rev by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman, Edinburgh 1987, 871-80.

²¹*Cher.* 120; cf. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, *Philo. With an English Translation* 2 (LCL 227), London-Cambridge MA 1968 (1st print 1929), 78-79. See also *Cher.* 121.

²²K.L. and M.A. Schmidt, ‘παροικῶν, παροικία, παροικεῖν’ in *TWNT* 5, 841-53; esp. 851-53. For additional information, see J.H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless. A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy*, London 1982 (1st ed. 1981), 24-37.

²³“Living nature was primarily divided into two opposite parts, the unreasoning and the reasoning, this last again into the mortal and immortal species, the mortal being that of men, the immortal that of unbodied souls which range through the air and sky. These are immune from wickedness because their lot from the first has been one of unmixed happiness, and they have not been imprisoned in that dwelling place of endless calamities - the body.” (*Conf.* 176-177); cf. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* 4 (LCL 261), 1968 (1st print 1932), 106-07.

soul, in which it is buried as if in a grave.”²⁴ These statements are entrenched in Philo’s overall view of man’s fight against the *παῖς* and the world with his treasures.

Life is a pilgrimage in which the mind of man attempts to get away from the body, which he calls “the foul prison-house.”²⁵ The wise man, who lives in wisdom and virtue, regards his earthly material existence as a temporary domicile. He is a ‘sojourner’:

This is why all whom Moses calls wise (*σοφοὶ*) are represented as sojourners. Their souls are never colonists leaving heaven for a new home. Their way is to visit earthly nature as men who travel abroad to see and learn. So when they have stayed awhile in their bodies, and beheld through them all that sense and mortality has to show, they make their way back to the place from which they set out at the first. To them the heavenly region, where their citizenship lies, is their native land (*πατρίδα*); the earthly region in which they became sojourners (*ἐν τῷ παρωκῆσαν*) is a foreign country (*κεῖθεν*).²⁶

Hellenistic dualism is thus often presented by Philo in the form of a belief that heaven is the true home of the soul. He refers to the soul’s heavenly pre-existence again and again. On the other hand, man cannot return without difficulty and strain to his celestial origin. Those who achieved perfect virtue are restricted to a privileged few biblical personages like Moses,

²⁴(*QG* 4, 75); cf. R. Marcus, *Philo. Supplement 1: Questions and Answers on Genesis* (LCL 380), London-Cambridge MA 1961 (1st print 1953), 353. See also R. Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge Commentaries on writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200; 1/2), Cambridge 1989, 212-14.

²⁵“Depart, therefore, out of the earthly matter that encompasses you: escape, man, from the foul prison-house, your body (*δεσμωτήριον, τὸ σωμα*), with all your might and main, and from the pleasures and lusts that act as its jailers; ...” (*Migr.* 9); cf. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* 4, 136-37. See, also for the following, Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 483-91 and R.A. Bitter, *Vreemdelingschap bij Philo van Alexandrië. Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van παρωκίκο* (Diss. in Dutch; with a summary in English); Utrecht 1982, 129-69.

²⁶*Conf.* 77-78; cf. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* 4, 50-53. See also *Somn.* 1, 181: In the course of his allegorical interpretation of the dream of Jacob at Bethel, Philo refers to the statement uttered by God to Jacob in Gen 28:15 (“and I will bring you back to this land”) as follows: “Perhaps, too, in these words he hints at the doctrine of the immortality of the soul: for, as was said a little before, it forsook its heavenly abode and came into the body as into a foreign land. But the father who gave it birth says that He will not permanently disregard it in its imprisonment, but will take pity on it and loose its chains, and escort it in freedom and safety to its mother-city, and will not stay his hand until the promises given by words have been

Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac. In the paragraph following the passage quoted above, Philo makes use of the Greek Bible to substantiate this idea (*De confusione linguarum* 79-82). Reference is made to Gen 23:4, Gen 47:9, and Gen 26:2-3.²⁷ Those whom Moses calls wise are represented as sojourners since “their souls are never colonists leaving heaven for a new home.”

3.2. Early Christian Literature

It is difficult to determine to what extent Philo’s spiritual views and philosophical ideas can be taken as representing his Hellenistic fellow-Jews. However, additional sources, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews and 1 Peter, show a similar strand of Judaism, at least as far as the concept of dispersion is concerned.

Since the Christian community thought of itself as one with a temporary character (Phil 3:20-21; Heb 13:14), it was natural that it tended to appropriate to itself the language of Israel as the sojourning people of God. Addresses to churches in the ‘dispersion’ are found in 1 Petr 1:1 (cf. 2:11) and similar terms appear in the introductions to 1 Clement, the Epistle of Polycarp, and the Martyrdom of Polycarp. A fine example of this idea is found in the Letter to Diognetus, from which a few verses are quoted here:

Yet while living in Greek and barbarian cities, according as each obtained his lot, and following the local customs, both in clothing and food and in the rest of life, they (the Christians) show forth the wonderful and confessedly strange character of the constitution of their own citizenship. They dwell in their own fatherlands, but as if sojourners in them (*παροικοι*); they share all things as citizens, and suffer all things as strangers (*κενοι*). Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is a foreign country. ... They pass their time upon the earth, but they have their citizenship in heaven (5:4-5.9).²⁸

made good by actual deeds;” cf. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* 5 (LCL 275), 1968 (1st print 1934), 392-93; Further see *Her.* 267; *Gig.* 61; *Agr.* 65 etc.

²⁷In Gen 23:4, Abraham says “I am a stranger and sojourner with you;” in Gen 47:9, Jacob reports “The days of the years of my life, the days which I sojourn, have been few and evil, they have not reached to the days of my fathers which they sojourned;” in Gen 26:2-3, Isaac is told in an oracle “Go not down to Egypt, but dwell in the land which I say to you. And sojourn in this land.”

²⁸English Translation by K. Lake in *The Apostolic Fathers; in Two Volumes* (LCL 25), Vol. 2, London-Cambridge MA 1970 (1st print 1913), 358-61.

Just as Philo depicts the Jews as sojourning in foreign countries, so the terminology is used here to depict metaphorically the Christians' state as one of "strangers and pilgrims" upon the earth.

Christian believers are journeying to their true home in heaven as they make their way through the present transitory life. This is also the conviction of the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. In Heb 11:13-16, the patriarchs are said to have confessed that they were "strangers (αἰῶνι) and sojourners (παρεπίδημοι) on the earth." The terms 'stranger' and 'sojourner' denote the stranger who stays for a short time in a place, the transient alien without rights of citizenship.²⁹ The author of Hebrews at the same time establishes, however, that these patriarchs, while living in Canaan, their country of adoption, did not attempt to return to their country of origin. Although they had the opportunity to go back, they did not do so. A literal explanation of their confession to be "strangers and sojourners on the earth" was, therefore, not appropriate. To him, it is clear that these two terms are symbolically used, that is, that "they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one." Heaven is the homeland of God's people (cf. Heb 12:22-24).

The alien typology which 1 Peter employs puts him in the same Hellenistic Jewish traditional stream, which we have seen to be strongly represented in Philo and Hebrews. In 1 Peter, the recipients of the letter are addressed as "chosen sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus ..." (ἐκλεκτοὶ παρεπίδημοὶ διασπορᾷ Πόντου... κτλ.; 1 Pet 1:1). Terms like diaspora and paroikia or paroikoj are appropriated as easily as the use of παρεπίδημοι. The writer of 1 Peter implores his Christian addressees as "aliens and sojourners (παροίκου καὶ παρεπίδημου) to abstain from passions of the flesh" (2:11), that is, to maintain their status as spiritual pilgrims to their heavenly home.³⁰ The believers are urged to behave in such way as to attain the goal to which they have been called. This is

²⁹See, e.g., Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless*, 21-58.

³⁰«Die Metaphern vom Fremdling, der nur vorübergehend an einem für ihn fremden Ort lebt (παρεπίδημοι: V 1; 2,11), und vom Fremden ohne Bürgerrecht in einer Stadt (παροίκου: 2,11) sowie von der Diaspora verstehen christliche Existenz, wie sich immer deutlicher zeigen wird, als Nicht-Angepasst-Sein an den verbreiteten Lebensstil, als Verweigerung von Identität und Zustimmung, als eine die greifbaren Lebensbedingungen transzendierende Hoffnung, die das Leben unter diesen Bedingungen reguliert. »Heimat« haben die Christen also anderswo;» cf. N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (EKKNT 21), Zürich und Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979, 57.

For the Christian adoption of paroikoj and related terms, see K.L. and M.A. Schmidt, 'παροίκου, paroikia, paroikew', 851-53. See also K.L. Schmidt, in *TWNT* 2, 101-104 on diaspora in the New Testament and W. Grundmann in *ibid.*, 64-65 on παρεπίδημοι.

also the drift of 1:17, where their strangeness is emphasized with the same term, *paroikia* (sojourning in a foreign land), so as to indicate an ethical behaviour that does not ruin their Christian status. Since these terms appear in contexts which do not consider any geographical specifics (except for 1:1), one may suppose that the ‘dispersion’ community of 1 Peter seems to have had a predominantly gentile background (1 Pet 4:3; cf. 1:14.18). There is no need to find a Jewish address behind the use of *diaspora*/and related terms. Peter is addressing all Christians - Jewish and Gentile - as chosen exiles in dispersion.³¹ Their true homeland is not to be found anywhere on earth but in heaven.

The above observations partially answer the questions in cluster 2. Did 10:5 and 9:4 assume the church to be dispersed but mention neither the location of the kingdom nor the spot where the church was to be gathered. Like Philo, the Christians of the Didache community probably understood the gathering of the church from the ends of the earth in a metaphorical sense. Christians were said to live in *diaspora* because they dwelled on earth and God would bring them together into his kingdom.

On the other hand, the outlook in the Didache is significantly different from the position of Philo. According to Philo, the soul belongs to another world and is imprisoned in the body whereas the prayer of the Didache does not seem to know a cosmological dualism or any heavenly pre-existence of the soul. In Did 10:5, the praying congregation opens its heart to God so that He might purge it, perfect it, and make it holy. The ethical phrases lend a special meaning to the community vis-a-vis the world. The belief had practical implications in everyday life. Conversion to Christianity appears to have significantly altered the Didache believers’ social interaction with non-Christians. Did 9:4 goes a step further as it expresses the gathering of the diaspora of the church through the metaphor of the bread. The very act of eating one bread (*sunaxqh en ekei to eb*) at the Eucharist is regarded as anticipating the future

³¹This seems apparent from Peter’s parallel in 2:10 to Rom 9:25: “Once you were no people but now you are God’s people.” In Jas 1:1, the address *ai dwdeka ful ai en th diaspora* is found. At variance with 1 Pet 1:1, this expression might quite realistically refer to Christians, whether Jews or gentiles, who do in fact live in dispersion, without an “accompanying spiritual sense”; cf. Schmidt, ‘diaspora’, 103, n. 14.

eschatological gathering, the day on which God will collect (ouβw sunaxqhtw) his church in his reign.³² The church's self-understanding has become part of liturgical practice.³³

One might expect that the concrete historical belief in a return to Jerusalem would have become less urgent and pressing in this metaphorical way of speaking. This assumption brings us back to our initial questions with respect to Jerusalem (cluster 1). Because the Didache community conceived of the diaspora in figurative terminology, the prayers in Did

³²The church is compared here to a 'piece of bread that was scattered' and then gathered together. As a loaf is made into a whole through the gathering of widely scattered corn, so this prayer asks that the scattered church be likewise brought together from the ends of the earth into God's reign. It is likely that the image of the bread used for the reunion of the church was a novel Christian idea. It is similar to the terminology in 1 Cor 10:16-17, where the cup of wine and the bread symbolize the unity of the church: "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

The passage in 1 Cor 10:16-17 is particularly relevant to our subject since the rite of the cup and the rite of the bread are mentioned in reverse order to the usual structure in the accounts of the Last Supper in the New Testament (Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor 11:23-26). The same (reversed) cup-bread sequence is found in Did 9:2-3 and Luke 22:15-19. Paul reproduces in 1 Cor 10:16 the liturgy of the eucharistic supper celebrated by the Christian community of Corinth: "The cup of blessing (to_pothrion th~ eu)ogibaj) which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" In v. 17, he goes on to point to the unity implied in the bread of the Christian rite because there is only one body of Christ: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." The first person plural of the various verbs in verses 16-17 (euOogoumen, kl wmen, esmen, metekomen) tells us about the form of the eucharistic celebrations in Corinth. It suggests that Paul assumes that the Corinthians would recognize their celebration in his description of the meal. Furthermore, because the efficacy of the ceremony with regard to unity is formulated in rhetorical questions (ouxi\.. ouxi), the rite of the cup and of the bread must be ritual facts, which the Corinthians experienced in the way Paul describes them. In this letter, the two celebrations are different, the one (11:23-25) dealing with apostolic tradition about Jesus and confronting the Corinthians with a model to follow, while the other (10:16-17) considers the actual liturgy of the local community (See Van de Sandt-Flusser, *The Didache*, 307-08). The evidence may thus indicate that there was already a pre-Pauline liturgical tradition where the bread of the Eucharist symbolized the unity of the participants.

A similar idea is found in the letter of Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, to the Ephesians. In the closing statement to the body of the letter (20:2), the major theme is repeated, namely, the need to come together in unity under bishop and presbytery. (W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch. A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* [Hermeneia], Philadelphia 1985, 95-96.) The emphasis on the *one* bread (eβa aiton kl wtej) suggests that Ignatius, too, must have known the tradition.

³³According to John, the prophecy of Caiaphas explained that Jesus not only died for the (Jewish) people, but also to gather together (sunagagh|eiθ eβ) "the children of God who are scattered abroad (dieskorpismeha)." There is no need, however, to suppose that the Didache was influenced by John here since the phrase in Did 9:4 and John 11:52 may depend on a common liturgical tradition; see also John 10:16.

10:5 and 9:4 need not necessarily reflect a deliberate dejudaization innovated by Christians. They may witness to an archaic tendency which was already firmly rooted in Hellenistic Judaism. If this was the case, however, the abandonment of the hope that the people of God would return to Jerusalem may have occurred before the Christianization of the Birkat Ha-Mazon. Entirely different views of the earthly Jerusalem would have become apparent between the Palestinian and Hellenistic Jews at an early stage.

Since the Greek version of the Birkat Ha-Mazon has been lost to us, we are not in a position to establish whether terms like 'Jerusalem', 'Zion', and 'temple' were already lacking in the third *berakha* of the Hellenistic synagogue. Perhaps it is possible to apply some other tests to the question at issue. First, it is worthwhile to investigate if the spiritualization emerging in Philo goes hand in hand with an increasing alienation from the earthly Jerusalem in his writings. Second, it is particularly instructive to find out what the status of Jerusalem was to Hellenistic Jews in the first century AD.

4. Jerusalem as a test case

At first sight, Philo appears to be interested in the spiritual conquest of virtue and in universalizing Jewish laws rather than identifying himself with and paying attention to the politics of his Palestinian homeland. It is wrong, however, to suppose that Philo's approach to Judaism is philosophical and spiritual only and that national eschatology is completely lacking in his thought. He and other diaspora Jews were interested in Judaea and Jerusalem. The situation among the early Christians was quite different. We will see that, at variance with the Jewry of Alexandria and Philo, some early Christian writings toned down the importance of the earthly and physical city of Jerusalem in favour of the celestial one.

4.1 The significance of Jerusalem in diaspora Jewry

Philo clearly showed an interest in practical nationalism once he was chosen to head the delegation, sent by the Jewish community of Alexandria, to the emperor Gaius Caligula in AD 39-40. He was also eager to advance the participation of the Jews in Hellenistic cultural institutions and to help them attain full citizen rights in Alexandria. Furthermore, in his view, the survival of the Jewish people in the homeland was fundamental to Jewish identity. Although he thought of the temple of Jerusalem primarily as allegorical, he believed it to be a

prominent symbol of Judaism as well.³⁴ He writes about the pilgrimages to Jerusalem, undertaken by Jews from the Diaspora, and portrays how Jews from all over the world congregated and enjoyed fellowship in Jerusalem:

Countless multitudes from countless cities come, some over land, others over sea, from east and west and north and south at every feast. They take the temple for their port as a general haven and safe refuge from the bustle and great turmoil of life³⁵

Philo may have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and have worshipped in the temple, although his familiarity with contemporary Palestinian Judaism is debated.³⁶

Philo's practical nationalism reflects the general outlook of diaspora Judaism as a whole that always remained in touch with Palestine. Of course, the view that sacrifice is of no avail if a man acts unjustly towards his neighbour may have been more widespread in the Diaspora than in Jewish Palestine.³⁷ The influence of the environment may have prevented some Jews in the Greek environment from observing all specifically Jewish laws and customs so as to pave the way for tolerance from their Hellenistic surroundings. Nevertheless, the eyes of all pious Jews - in the land and in the diaspora - were directed to Jerusalem. Those abroad sent gifts to the temple in order to contribute to the sacrificial cult. If they were able, they went on pilgrimage on the three great feasts.³⁸ Jerusalem was the city of salvation in the eschatological age where God would take up his residence again and inaugurate his royal rule. The hope that the Diaspora would return to the lofty city was kept alive.

³⁴J.J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem. Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, New York 1983, 111-117.

³⁵*Spec.* 1, 69; cf. F.H. Colson, *Philo. With an English Translation* 7 (LCL 320), London-Cambridge MA 1968 (1st print 1937), 138-39. See Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, 20-21. Cf. also S. Safrai, 'Relations between the Diaspora and the Land of Israel', in S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People* 1 (CRINT 1/1), edited in co-operation with D. Flusser and W.C. van Unnik, Assen-Philadelphia 1974, 185.

³⁶Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 116, and n. 50; Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, 3/2, 818; P. Borgen, 'Philo of Alexandria' in M.E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (CRINT 2/2), Assen-Philadelphia 1984, 257-59.

³⁷See also D.R. Schwartz, 'Temple or City: What did Hellenistic Jews See in Jerusalem?', in M. Poorthuis and Ch. Safrai (eds.), *The Centrality of Jerusalem. Historical Perspectives*, Kampen 1996, 114-27; esp. 117-24.

³⁸Safrai, 'Relations', 191-201.

For all Jews, in Palestine and in the Dispersion, Jerusalem is the ‘holy city’ (ἱερόπολις)³⁹ or the ‘mother-city’ (μητρόπολις).⁴⁰ Mount Zion is called the “midst of the navel of the earth” (Jub 8:19; cf. also Josephus, *Bellum judaicum* 3, 52).⁴¹ In apocalyptic apocrypha, Zion-Jerusalem is called the mother of all Israelites⁴² who has brought up her children (Bar 4:8-10).⁴³ The Jews, though scattered throughout the ancient world, maintained the bond with the motherland and the holy city. The dispersion was seen as a painful

³⁹“As for the holy city (ἱερόπολις), I must say what benefits me to say. While she, as I have said, is my native city she is also the mother city (μητρόπολις) not of one country Judaea but of most of the others in virtue of the colonies sent out at divers times to the neighbouring lands Egypt, Phoenicia, the part of Syria called the Hollow and the rest as well and the lands lying far apart, Pamphylia, Cilicia, most of Asia up to Bithynia and the corners of Pontus, similarly also into Europe, Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth and most of the best parts of Peloponnese.” Philo, *Legat.* 281; cf. F.H. Colson, *Philo 10: The Embassy to Gaius* (LCL 379), London-Cambridge MA 1971 (1st print 1962), 142-43. See also *Legat.* 225. 288. 299. 346.

⁴⁰Not merely for Jews in Palestine but for Jews everywhere who “hold the Holy City (ἱερόπολιν) where stands the sacred Temple of the most high God to be their mother city (μητρόπολιν);” Philo, *Flacc.* 46; cf. F.H. Colson, *Philo. With an English Translation* 9 (LCL 363), London-Cambridge MA 1967 (1st print 1941), 326-29. Compare also *Legat.* 203. 278. 281. 294. 305. 334. See W.C. van Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis der Jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, bearbeitet von P.W. van der Horst (AGJU 17), Leiden-New York-Köln 1993, 135-36; A. Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. The Struggle for Equal Rights* (TSAJ 7), Tübingen 1985, 236-37.

For the concept of Jerusalem as “our mother”, see Isa 49:14-21; 50:1; 51:18; 54:1; 60:4; etc; see also below. For the early passages in which the Church is represented as a mother, see J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia. An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity* (The Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity 5), Washington D.C. 1943.

⁴¹For the passage in Jub 8:19, see Ph. S. Alexander, ‘Jerusalem as the *Omphalos* of the World: On the History of a Geographical Concept’, in L.I. Levine (ed.), *Jerusalem. Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, New York 1999, 104-119.

⁴²“Sion mater nostra omnium” in *4 Ezra* 10:7. 38-44; cf. also *2 Bar.* 3:1-3; and see *5 Ezra* where, in 2:2.4.5-6, Jerusalem is called the mother of Israel but, in 2:15.17.31, is referred to as the mother of the church and of the Christians; see G. Stanton, ‘5 Ezra and Matthean Christianity in the Second Century’, *JTS* NS 28 (1977) 67-83; esp. 71-73.

⁴³In the New Testament, Jesus addresses Jerusalem as a mother when he states “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children (τα τέκνα σου) together ...” (Matt 23:37; cf. Luke 13:34). Weeping over her, Jesus predicts “For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies ... will dash you to the ground, you and your children (τα τέκνα σου) within you ...” (Luke 19:43-44).

experience, the bitter destiny of the people of God.⁴⁴ They had to live with the hard fate of the diaspora and envisaged the restoration to be reserved for the messianic age. Diaspora is a substantiation of eschatological hope for the future return to the earthly fatherland.

Philo also seemed to expect that some day God would gather the exiles from the ends of the earth into the homeland. His *De Praemiis et Poenis* 165-72 presents an elaborate portrayal of the eschatological fulfilment of the hope of the Jews. It starts thus:

When they have gained this unexpected liberty, those who but now were scattered (sporadej) in Greece and the outside world over islands and continents will arise and post from every side with one impulse to the one appointed place, guided in their pilgrimage by a vision divine and superhuman unseen by others but manifest to them as they pass from exile to their home. (*Praem.* 165)

The passage continues by emphasizing that the nation would be gathered as a people, peace would be established, and Israel's enemies would be destroyed.⁴⁵ This hope would never be abandoned but would continue to be cherished.

4.2 The Significance of Jerusalem in some early Christian writings

The earliest indication that Christians regarded themselves as aliens and pilgrims on earth is found in the letters of Paul. Paul believes that Christians belong to the Jerusalem above, or the heavenly community (Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20). They are not at home on earth but pertain to that heavenly domain where the glorified Lord dwells (cf. 2 Cor 5:1-5.6-9; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:17). In the polemical passage of Gal 4:25-26, Paul is clearly attacking his opponents who claim that the present Jerusalem is their mother, probably suggesting that their views emphasizing the observance of the Law were supported by Jerusalem. Paul counters this position by appealing to a higher instance in contradistinction from the earthly Jerusalem:

Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

⁴⁴See, e.g., R. Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde. Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief* (WUNT 64), Tübingen 1992, 63-69.

⁴⁵*Praem.* 165-72; cf. Colson, *Philo* 8 (LCL 341), London-Cambridge MA 1968 (1st print 1939), 417-23. For comments on *Praem.* 163-72, cf. Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, 276-80; see also Van Unnik, *Das Selbstverständnis der Jüdischen Diaspora*, 133-34; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 115.

Paul uses the phrase of the Heavenly Jerusalem in his argumentation without any explanation, as if his readers are familiar with it. One may thus assume that the image of the “Jerusalem above” was widely accepted by the early Christians. It takes up the expectation in Jewish apocalyptic tradition of the pre-existent city which is built by God in heaven with glory and magnificence and comes down to the earth in the end.⁴⁶ In rabbinic literature, the designation ‘the Jerusalem above’ or ‘the Jerusalem of the age to come’ as distinct from ‘the Jerusalem of this age’ is found.⁴⁷ In these examples, the latter is an image of the original in heaven. Out of love for the city on earth, God has erected the city in heaven and he swears not to enter the celestial one until that below is restored.⁴⁸ Apparently, then, the celestial city shares the hardships of the earthly Jerusalem’s fate.

For Paul, however, the earthly Jerusalem stands in sharp contrast to the celestial one. The heavenly Jerusalem is pre-existent and remains in heaven. By setting the two in opposition, he demonstrates that salvation is not to be transferred to an indeterminate future but has come already. Those who are to dwell in it must move upward.⁴⁹ If the Christians have their real commonwealth in heaven, it follows that they are aliens on earth.

1 Peter and the Epistle to the Hebrews also reveal that the present city of Jerusalem, to which the Christians should have no desire to return, has been replaced as the centre of hope. The first letter of Peter does not show any indication of a positive concern for Judaism nor any interest in Israel. The letter to the Hebrews makes it clear that the new and better covenant provides access to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. In 13:13-14, Christians are exhorted to “go out to him” (= Jesus), “outside the camp” since the blood of Jesus was poured on an altar “outside the gate.” Like Abraham, who went out to “a place which he was to receive as an inheritance” (11:8), they too had to go out to witness the

⁴⁶Cf. 4 Ezra 7:26; 10:27.54; 13:36; 1 En. 90,28-29; Rev 21; cf. also Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde*, 372-75 about the variations in the ideas of the heavenly Jerusalem. See also P. Lee, *The New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation. A Study of Revelation 21-22 in the Light of its Background in Jewish Tradition* (WUNT 2/129), Tübingen 2001, 72. 129-39.

⁴⁷Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* 3 (1926) 573 and also 3,795-96; 4,883-85; 919-31.

⁴⁸See G. Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu. Mit Berücksichtigung des nachkanonischen jüdischen Schrifttums und der aramäischen Sprache* 1, Leipzig ²1930, 106. See also H. Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (WUNT 2), Tübingen 1951, 123-25.

⁴⁹H.D. Betz, *Galatians. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia), Philadelphia ²1984, 246.

impermanence of this world in search of a city which had foundations (11:10). Because Jesus died outside the earthly city of Jerusalem, Christians had to leave the city which was not “a continuing city” (13:14). They had to experience an insulted and unsettled life on their journey to the eternal city of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁵⁰ By remaining with Jesus outside the camp of Judaism, Christians show that the present city, to which they should have no desire to return, has been replaced as the centre of hope.

5. Conclusion

The Christian longing for a gathering of the dispersed church into the kingdom in the eucharistic prayers of Did 9-10 does not include the Jewish hope for a restoration of Israel and Jerusalem. A similar separation - and in some cases even estrangement - from the historic Jewish setting is found in several other early Christian writings. In the Didache prayer, the alien status of the Christian in the world probably arises from the demands of faith irrespective of any particular historical event or situation. The longing to be gathered from the four winds into the kingdom is a description of the actual situation of the church, which is set apart from the world by its Christian heterogeneous character.

The terminology also indicates the Christian character of the supplication. In Jewish texts, even in the LXX, no instances are found where the *dispersed* people of God are designated *ekklesia* ('church'). The idea of the assembling of the believers “from the four winds” (Did 10:5) or “from the ends of the earth” (9:4) is reflected in the gospels as well. In Matthew, it is said that when the Son of Man comes, “he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (24:31; cf. Mark 13:27). The “loud trumpet call” in Matthew may imply the sign for the raising of the deceased righteous to meet the Lord.⁵¹ In John 11:52, the son of man not only gathers the members of the Jewish nation but also the gentile believers, the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one (cf. also John 10:15-16). Furthermore, while the texts in Matthew and Mark seem to presuppose a gathering place on

⁵⁰“Das Heilsziel liegt nicht im Diesseits, sondern im Jenseits. Insofern gibt V 14 der dualistischen Weltansicht des Hebräer den klassischen Ausdruck. Christen sind »Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten«; cf. E. Grässer, *An die Hebräer*, 3 Teilband: Hebr 10,19-13,25 (EKKNT 17/3), Zürich und Neukirchen-Vluyn 1997, 386-87 and n. 28.

⁵¹Clerici, *Einsammlung der Zerstreuten*, 80.

earth, it is important to note that, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus is supposed to have said “and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (12:32; see also 1 Thess 4:15-17 and 2 Thess 2:1). Did 10:5 contains a congenial tradition as it links the gathering of the church to the end time, when the church will enter God’s kingdom.

The Didache probably originated in a Jewish community which made Jesus the core of its understanding. The community had close affinities with Jewish antecedents and still felt a high regard for Israel. The texts of Did 10:5 and 9:4, however, reflect an alienation from Judaism. These verses represent a discontinuity in the people-of-God concept, since the gathering of the church into God's kingdom no longer has any connection with the gathering of Israel. The prayer for the political restoration of Israel in the third benediction of the Birkat Ha-Mazon has turned into a prayer for the gathering of the church. Palestine and Jerusalem are no longer linked to the Christian eschatological hope.

The ecclesial existence takes on the character of dispersion not because its communities are scattered in the world, but as a result of the fact that the believers must behave as if they are transient aliens sojourning on earth in the hope of an inheritance. The inheritance, a word belonging to the ‘land’ terms in the Hebrew Bible, is spiritualized to a high degree without mention of the concrete land, Zion, or Jerusalem. The kingdom is made supraterrrestrial, stripped of all earthly limitations and qualifications. The prayers of Did 9:4 and 10:5 may have been formulated in a community which had moved away from close contact with Judaism.