

JAMES THE RELATIVE OF JESUS AND THE EXPECTATION OF AN ESCHATOLOGICAL PRIEST¹

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Both the NT and post-canonical early Christian writings mention a man named James as a dominant figure in Jewish Christianity during the middle of the first century. To distinguish him from others named James² the sources designate this James as "the Lord's brother" or "relative"³ or as "James the Just."

I. SUMMARY OF NOTICES ABOUT JAMES

NT passages⁴ usually assumed to refer to this James portray him as a member

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¹This paper is part of an ongoing study of the person of James the relative of Jesus and his place in early Christianity. Part of my research is contained in my *The Church of Jerusalem, A.D. 30-100: An Investigation of the Growth of Internal Factions and the Extension of its Influence in the Larger Church* (unpublished dissertation; Manchester, England: University of Manchester, 1969) 265 ff., 271 ff. For a statement of my reconstruction of the character of the Jerusalem church and James' place in it see "Parties in the Church of Jerusalem as Seen in the Book of Acts," *JETS* 18 (1975) 217 ff.

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²Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 list one of the twelve as "Judas of James" (probably meaning "son of James"). This James is otherwise unknown. James the son of Alphaeus was another member of the twelve (Matt 10:3; Acts 1:13) who is usually identified with the man called "James the Little" (or "the Less" or "the Younger") in Mark 15:40. The best known member of the twelve with this name was "James the brother of John, the son of Zebedee," who was executed by Herod Agrippa I ca. A.D. 44; see Mark 1:9 (=Matt 4:21); 3:17 (=Matt 10:2; Luke 6:14; cf. Acts 1:13); Acts 12:2.

³Three major theories have been put forward to explain the exact relationship between Jesus and those called his "brothers" or "brethren" (Mark 6:3, etc.): (a) the Helvidian theory says they were later children of Mary and Joseph; (b) the Hieronymian theory says that they were Jesus' cousins; and (c) Epiphanius suggests that they were children of Joseph by an earlier marriage. Although I accept the Helvidian view, out of deference to other opinions I shall refer to James with the general designation "the relative of Jesus."

⁴James is listed with the other "brothers" of Jesus in Mark 6:3 (=Matt 13:55). All other direct references to James are in the writings of Paul and in Acts. (1) Paul (a) says he saw "Peter and James, the Lord's brother" during his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, Gal 1:18 ff.; (b) includes James among those reputed to be "pillars" whom he contacted during a subsequent visit, 2:1 ff.; (c) indicates that Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentiles in Antioch was occasioned by the coming of "certain from James," 2:12; and (d) mentions James as a witness of the risen Lord, 1 Cor 15:7. (2) Acts says that (a) Peter gave instructions to report his release from prison "to James and the brethren," 12:18; (b) James played a leading part in the council described in Acts 15; and (c) during his final visit to Jerusalem Paul met with "James and the elders" who suggested that Paul join certain Jews who had taken a vow in the temple, 21:17 ff.

References to Jesus' "family," "friends" or "brothers" may include James by implication: Mark 3:21; 6:4; John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5. James the relative of Jesus is traditionally identified as the author of the canonical epistle of James.

of the family of Jesus and as a leader of the church in Jerusalem. In Christian literature outside the canon James appears as a member of Jesus' boyhood home⁵ and the recipient of a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus.⁶ The Pseudo-Clementines and other writings place James in a unique position of leadership over the church in Jerusalem.⁷ In *Gos. Thom.* from Nag Hammadi⁸ Jesus designates James as head over all the disciples and affirms that for James' sake "the heavens and earth came into existence" (Logion 12). The fourth-century *Liturgy of St. James* calls him "the brother of God."⁹

⁵The *Protoevangelium of James* claims James as its author ("Now I, James, who wrote this history in Jerusalem . . ."; cf. Origen, *Comm. on Matt.* 10:17), says Joseph was an elderly widower to whom Mary as a child of twelve was committed for keeping, and states that the sons of Joseph, by implication including James, were present at the birth of Jesus (18:1). Similar representations are made regarding the family of Mary and Joseph in other apocryphal documents such as *Pseudo-Matthew*, *The Gospel of the Birth of Mary*, *The History of Joseph the Carpenter*, and both the Arabic and Armenian "gospels of infancy." Another infancy tradition relates how James, having been bitten by a snake, was healed by the boy Jesus; *The Gospel of Thomas*, Greek Text A, 16; Latin Text 14 (divisions by M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford: University Press, 1953]).

⁶*The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, quoted by Jerome (*Of Illustrious Men* 2): "Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from the hour wherein he had drunk from the Lord's cup until he should see him risen again from among them that sleep. And again after a little, 'Bring ye, saith the Lord, a table and bread': and immediately it is added, 'He took bread and blessed and brake and gave it unto James the Just and said unto him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from among them that sleep.'"

⁷In the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* (11:35) James is called "the brother of the Lord, to whom was entrusted to administer the Church of the Hebrews in Jerusalem." *Recognitions* 1:43 claims that James was ordained bishop by Jesus himself, and 1:74 places him above all bishops with the title "archbishop." The *Recognitions* describe James as carrying on activities characteristic of the head of the whole Church: receiving reports (1:66; 3:74), engaging in disputes with Jewish leaders as representative of the whole of Christendom (1:66 ff.), detailing even Peter to specific tasks (1:72), and sending testimonial letters of authorization with official representatives of the Church (4:35). In the epistles attached to the *Homilies*, Peter calls James "the lord and bishop of the Holy Church," and Clement addresses him as "the lord, and bishop of bishops, who rules Jerusalem, the Holy Church of the Hebrews, and Churches everywhere excellently founded by the province of God, with elders and deacons, and the rest of the brethren." In the Pseudo-Ignatian *Epistle to Hero* 3, and the longer edition of Ign. *Trall.* 7, deacons are enjoined to be faithful to ministering to their bishops "as the holy Stephen did at Jerusalem to James."

⁸In preparing this study I have had access to only a few of the Nag Hammadi documents and to some secondary materials about them. Standard lists of these documents include an *Apocryphon of James*, *First Apocalypse of James* and *Second Apocalypse of James*. The name "James" also appears in other Nag Hammadi documents. It seems, however, that in the corpus as a whole James the relative of Jesus is probably confused with James the apostle, the son of Zebedee. Cf. R. McL. Wilson, "The Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi," *SJT* 12 (1959) 161 ff.; H. C. Puech, G. Quispel and W. C. van Unnik, *The Jung Codex* (ed. F. L. Cross; London: 1955); W. C. van Unnik, *Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings* (SBT; London: 1960).

J. Dorese (*The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* [London: 1960] 237) notes that James the Great is placed on a level with supernatural powers and put in charge of the great baptism. Van Unnik ("The Origin of the Recently Discovered Apocryphon of Jacobi," *VC* 10 [1956] 15 ff.) notes that the James document in the Jung codex depicts him dispatching early Church leaders to various tasks. A. Bohling ("Zum Martyrium des Jakobus," *NovT* 5 [1962] 207 ff.) says the Nag Hammadi codices contain an account of the death of James similar to that of Hegesippus, report a lengthy speech by James just before his death, and suggest messianic overtones for the death of James. R. B. Ward ("James of Jerusalem," *Restoration Quarterly* 16 [1975]) has dealt in some detail with the Nag Hammadi James material.

⁹According to P. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: 1910; reprinted, Grand Rapids: 1955), 1. 268.

The best known description of James is that of Hegesippus as recorded in Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.1-18. He describes James as something of a Jewish "holy man," an ascetic whose piety was controlled by ceremonial concerns. He was frequently in the temple, where he prayed constantly for the people. Because of his "excessive righteousness he was called 'the Just'." During the Passover season, Hegesippus says, the scribes and Pharisees attempted to have James dissuade the people from following Jesus. But James bore positive testimony "concerning the Son of man" and was thrown from the battlement of the temple, stoned and finally killed by a blow to the head.¹⁰

Epiphanius *Haer.* 29.4 quotes a similar if not identical tradition to that found in Eusebius. However, while our Greek texts of Eusebius say only that James entered the temple, Epiphanius and others¹¹ say that he actually went into the Holy of Holies. Furthermore Epiphanius *Haer.* 88 says that James wore the high-priestly petalon on his forehead.

II. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CANONICAL AND POST-CANONICAL TRADITIONS ABOUT JAMES

There are at least three features of the portrayal of James in the noncanonical documents that are distinct either in fact or in degree from that suggested in the NT. The first is the character of James' religious outlook and the lifestyle that reportedly resulted from it. Hegesippus and others depict James as one holy from birth who drank no strong drink, ate no meat, did not shave his head, anoint himself with oil or bathe, and wore only linen. He is assumed to have been a narrowly legalistic Christian, devoted to the temple and other external and nationalistic emphases associated with certain forms of Second Commonwealth Judaism. For such a person Christianity would be little more than a Jewish sect or party that accepted Jesus as Messiah but recognized little or no resulting effects on established Jewish beliefs and practices.

In Acts 15 and 21 James advocates positions that show concern for Jewish interests and sensitivities. Galatians 2:12 uses his name in connection with Judaizing influences in the Christian community in Antioch. The epistle that probably bears his name has a distinctively Jewish Christian emphasis. Yet these NT references alone are hardly sufficient to identify James with an extreme Judaistic interpretation of Christianity. It is questionable if such an association

¹⁰Josephus *Ant.* 30. 9 § 1 (= 199-201) also describes the death of James: "The younger Ananus, who, as we have said, had been appointed to the high priesthood, was rash in his temper and unusually daring. . . . He thought he had a favorable opportunity because Festus was dead and Albinus was still on the way. And so he convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned. Those of the inhabitants of the city who were considered the most fairminded and who were strict in observance of the law were offended at this." Note that Josephus implies that James' death came after a formal trial whereas Eusebius/Hegesippus seem to blame it on a mob action or at least hastily conceived maneuvers by Jewish leaders.

Mention was made earlier of an account of James' death in the Nag Hammadi documents. The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (1:70) tell of an attack on James in Jerusalem but give no indication that it resulted in his death.

¹¹The Syriac and Latin versions of Eusebius; Jerome, *Of Illustrious Men* 2; Andrew of Crete, *The Life of James* as cited by R. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (London: 1913) 541.

would ever have been made¹² were it not for the influence on the interpretation of the NT evidence exerted by post-canonical tradition.

The second distinctive element is the nationalistic motifs in some non-canonical notices about James. Most important is the implication of Hegesippus' statement that immediately after James' death Vespasian began besieging the Jews (Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.18). Also, both Eusebius (citing Clement) and Origen mention a statement by Josephus, not found in extant texts of his works, in which the Jewish historian is reputed to have said concerning the fall of Jerusalem, "And these things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ, for the Jews killed him in spite of his great righteousness."¹³ The traditions behind these statements associate James with those individuals whose person, piety and prayers were the only real defence of the nation.¹⁴ As Elijah and Elisha had been Israel's horsemen and chariots (cf. 2 Kgs 2:21; 13:14), for some Jewish Christian groups James was her "rampart" or surrounding protective influence (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.7).

The final feature of the James material from outside the NT of concern to this study is the position he is said to have held in the leadership of the early Church. There is no question that James played a significant role in directing the affairs of the Christian community in Jerusalem during the middle third of the first century. What is not clear is the precise nature of his leadership position and how he attained it.

In Acts 12, 15 and 21 James seems to occupy some special position in the Jerusalem church. Paul in Galatians 2 restricts James' authority to the same level as that of Peter, John and possibly others. Some of the noncanonical materials appear to elevate James above other early Christian officials, including the twelve. *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, for example, claims for James a place at the last supper, a personal appearance (possibly the first) of the risen Jesus, and, in contrast to the twelve, says he understood that Jesus would rise again. In such documents as the Pseudo-Clementines and some from Nag Hammadi, James, appointed by Jesus himself, is virtually the absolute leader of the Jerusalem church, which in turn is regarded as the center of authority for the whole of Christendom.

¹²Interpretations of James that assume the accuracy of the extreme Judaistic character ascribed to him in noncanonical writings are common. For example F. W. Farrar (*The Life and Work of St. Paul* [London: 1897] 131) calls James "a Legalist, a Nazarite, almost an Essene"; W. L. Knox (*St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem* [Cambridge: 1925] 226) thinks he was "a Christian Pharisee." S. G. F. Brandon (*The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* [2d ed.; London: 1957]; cf. K. L. Carroll, "The Place of James in the Early Church," *BJRL* 45 [1961] 49 ff.) attempts to reconstruct the Tübingen theory of early Christian history by making James, not Peter, the leader of the extreme Jewish faction and the great adversary of Paul.

¹³Here quoting from Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.40; cf. Origen *Against Celsus* 2.12: "Titus destroyed Jerusalem, on account, Josephus says, of James the Just, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ."

¹⁴Cf. Ezek 22:30; 14:14 and the possibility of preserving Sodom because of the presence of the family of Lot, Gen 18:22 ff. Also a Jewish tradition affirms that there are in every generation thirty-six (frequently unrecognized) men with whom the Shekinah rests and because of whose presence the community or nation is preserved. They are sometimes called "The Lamed-vav-niks" (since the Hebrew letters *lamed* and *vav* stand for the number thirty-six) or "the Just Ones"; see "Lamed-vav," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, p. 596; G. Scholem, "The Tradition of the Thirty-six Hidden Just Men," *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: 1971) 251 ff.

The studies of Arnold A. T. Ehrhardt¹⁵ further underscore the significance of the James traditions in the development of the organization of early Christianity. He shows that although the various succession lists of bishops are beset with problems and the sources exhibit a competition between James and Peter for first place, in the Canon of Eusebius-Jerome this competition is decided in favor of James. Thus succession in such centers as Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and originally even Rome is traced back to James.¹⁶ Furthermore, Ehrhardt suggests, the episcopal succession based on James was modeled after that of the Jewish high-priestly succession, and to many in the early Church James as first among the bishops stood at the head of an order of Christian priests.¹⁷ Ehrhardt's opinion is supported by statements in an early Syriac document¹⁸ in which the parallel between Jewish and Christian organization is specifically drawn¹⁹ and in which priestly ordination within the Church is clearly traced to James.²⁰

Several circumstances may have contributed to James' rise to prominence in the early Church and to the growth of later traditions about him. James may have practiced a form of personal piety especially appreciated by the type of Christian groups remaining in Jerusalem after the exodus of the hellenistic Jewish Christians.²¹ He may have had the type of outstanding personality, ability and wisdom that thrust him to the fore in the presence of such potentially difficult and dangerous situations as those mentioned in Acts. Certainly James' membership in the family of Jesus was significant in establishing his role in the history of the early Church. But I am interested in another phenomenon that may also have played a part in the formation of the James traditions and may have been especially significant in producing some of the disparity between the NT and non-canonical reports about him.

III. THE EXPECTATION OF AN ESCHATOLOGICAL PRIEST

An examination of the differences between the canonical and other James accounts indicates at least two tendencies. First, most noncanonical sources stress the presence of Judaistic features in extreme forms in James' life and activ-

¹⁵A. A. T. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* (London: 1953); *The Apostolic Ministry* (SJT Occasional Papers; Edinburgh: 1958).

¹⁶Ehrhardt, *Succession* 67-68.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 81 ff., 107 ff., 158; cf. preface.

¹⁸"Ancient Syriac Documents: The Teaching of the Apostles," ANF 7. 667 ff.

¹⁹"The apostles further appointed: Let there be elders and deacons, like the Levites; and subdeacons, like those who carried the vessels of the court of the sanctuary of the Lord and an overseer [footnote: equivalent, not to *episkopos* but to *skopos* = *watchman*, as in Ezek. 33:7], who shall be guide of all the people, like Aaron, the head and chief of all the priests and Levites of the whole city" (ANF 8. 668).

²⁰"Jerusalem received the ordination to the priesthood, as did all the country of Palestine, and the parts occupied by the Samaritans, and the parts occupied by the Philistines, and the country of the Arabians, and of Phoenicia, and all the people of Caesarea, from James, who was ruler and guide in the Church of the Apostles which was built in Zion" (ANF 8. 67 [*italics mine*]).

²¹Cf. Scott, "Parties" 217 ff.

ity. Second, a number of the noncanonical sources describe James in language or in roles usually reserved for the priesthood, the Messiah, or those associated with them.

We have already noted evidence that some early episcopal lists by implication ascribe to James a position something like that of a Christian high priest. Other priestly motifs in the James stories are even more striking. Eusebius/Hegesippus center his activities in the temple and ascribe to him the role of intercessor, a traditional priestly function. It is unclear whether Eusebius/Hegesippus claim only that James frequented the temple precincts or that he was allowed to enter the "court of the priests." Epiphanius' sources plainly claim both that he had access to those parts of the temple restricted to the high priest and that he wore the headress associated with that office. The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (58) seem to equate James' position in the Jerusalem church with that of the high priest in the Jewish community as they describe a dispute between "the chief of the priests" and "James, the chief of the bishops." In fact the title and activities of James as "bishop" or "archbishop" (as in *Recognitions* 1:73) in some early Christian writings may imply an equation of this office in the Jewish Church with that of priest or high priest in Judaism.

The dominant and at times absolute authority claimed for James in the Jerusalem church takes on special significance when set within the context of a group that regarded itself as a messianic community. Furthermore we might recall other parts of the noncanonical James traditions that closely associate him with the Messiah or messianic functions. They frequently note that he was from the family of Jesus, the messianic family. Some writers claim that James was appointed head of the Jerusalem church by Jesus himself.²² James' person, presence, prayers and piety are said to benefit and protect the nation. Eusebius/Hegesippus ascribe to James the same prayer for forgiveness for his murderers used by Jesus (*Hist. eccl.* 2.23.16; cf. Luke 23:43). Such elements as these may reflect a tendency in some Jewish Christian quarters to ascribe messianic qualities to James himself.

To postulate the development of some of the James traditions within a messianic context may help explain some otherwise puzzling statements about him. The affirmation in *Gos. Thom.* that for James "sake the heavens and earth came into existence" would not necessarily be a compliment in strictly gnostic circles. But it was similar to statements made by Jewish writers of the righteous, Torah, the temple, deeds of lovingkindness, David, Israel and the Messiah.²³ The ultimate extension of the sentiments of *Gos. Thom.* may be responsible for those of a later period, reflected in the *Liturgy of St. James*, where he is raised "to the dignity of the very brother of God."²⁴

²²Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 7.19. Again, quoting from the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria, *Hist. eccl.* 2.2 says James was appointed to his office by the twelve or by the twelve and Jesus. But the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1:43 clearly claims he was ordained bishop by the Lord.

²³See *m. 'Abot* 1:2; cf. L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: 1925), 5. 67-68; G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, MA: 1927), 1. 286, 383; 3. n. 37; Str-B 1. 917; B. Gärtner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas* (Uppsala: 1955) 57 n. 3.

²⁴Schaff, *History*, 1. 268.

Ward has called attention to a plurality of lines of development or trajectories in the traditions about James.²⁵ I suggest that there is reason to suppose that two of these elements in the James stories—the priestly and the messianic—may be closely related.

Some pre-Christian Jewish groups looked for the appearance of an eschatological priest to be one of the features of the final age. Some even expected a priestly Messiah.²⁶ The existence of this belief at Qumran and again in the person of Eleazar, the priestly accompaniment of the pseudo-Messiah Ben Koseba, demonstrates the strength of this expectation among some Jewish groups both immediately preceding and following the apostolic age.

Both canonical and later writings document the influence of the hope of a priestly Messiah within Christian thought.²⁷ In virtually all Christian references the one Messiah, Jesus, assumes the role of both Priest and Prince. Yet we might expect that some Christians whose Jewish backgrounds had taught them to look for a plurality of messianic figures, including a priestly one, would have sought among the principals of the gospel narratives for an individual in whom they

²⁵R. B. Ward, "James" 174 ff.

²⁶The expectation of the priestly Messiah was sometimes centered on such figures as Melchizedek (Gen 14:18 ff.; Ps 110:4) or Phinehas (Num 25:10 ff.); cf. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: 1957) 88 ff. QL demonstrates the expectation of a plurality of messianic figures, one of whom would be a priest (1QS 9.11; 1QSa 2; CDC 12.23; 14.19; 19.10, 21). Furthermore these writings indicate that the priestly Messiah would have primary place; cf. H. J. Schonfeld, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: 1956) 61 ff.; K. G. Kuhn, "The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (ed. K. Stendahl; London: 1958) 54 ff.; M. Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: 1958) 70, 310-311; A. J. B. Higgins, "The Priestly Messiah," *NTS* 13 (1966-67) 211-239.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs frequently point to the coming of a priest-leader of the tribe of Levi (e.g. *T. Levi* 8:15; *T. Reub.* 5:7 ff.; *T. Judah* 21:1 ff.; *T. Dan* 5:10-11; *T. Jos.* 9:5-6). However, these documents show the influence of Christian editors and must be used critically.

Samaritan eschatology contained the hope of the coming of a priestly accompaniment from the tribe of Phinehas for the Messiah-Restorer (*Ta'eb*). This priest would come from heaven with the *Ta'eb*, assist in his work, and be killed and buried on Mount Gerizim. See Samaritan book *Yom al-Din* 67; cf. M. Gaster, *The Samaritan Oral Law and Ancient Traditions. Vol. I: Samaritan Eschatology* (London: 1932) 260 ff., 271 ff. Other Samaritan sources, however, do not speak of a priestly accompaniment for the *Ta'eb* but rather stress his own Levitic origin and priestly functions; cf. J. Macdonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (London: 1964) 362 ff.

Coins struck in the first year (but in the first year only) of the revolt of the pseudo-Messiah Simeon Ben Koseba (ca. A.D. 130) contain only his name but that of "Eleazar the Priest" (cf. E. Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* [Edinburgh: 1890], Div. I, Vol. 2, pp. 299, 385 ff.; *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus* [rev. ed.; Edinburgh: 1973], 1. 544-545, 606).

²⁷The epistle to the Hebrews seeks to establish that Jesus (the Messiah) is a priest although not of Levitical descent (cf. Heb. 4:14). A fragment attributed to Irenaeus says, "Christ was typified, and acknowledged and brought into the world; for he was from Levi and Judah. He was descended according to the flesh as King and Priest" ("Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus," Frag. No. XVII, ANF 1. 571). Hippolytus, commenting on Gen 49:1, 28, speaks of the arrival of future blessing with "one of Judah and he who is typified in Joseph, and one who is found of Levi, a Priest of the one Father." Julius Africanus, in his epistle to Aristides, writes against those who "incorrectly allege that this discrepant enumeration [between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke] and mixing of names of both priestly men, as they think, and royal, was made properly, in order that Christ might be shown rightfully to be both Priest and King" (ANF 6. 125; the emphasis on the priestly implications of Jesus' genealogies is not so clear in the version of Africanus' epistle given in Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 1.7.2 ff.). If there are indeed Christian influences behind the present form of the *T. 12 Patr.* (see previous note), then this document when used critically may also testify to a Christian belief in a Levitic priestly Messiah (cf. Kuhn, "Two Messiahs" 57 ff.).

could seek fulfillment of their expectation of an eschatological Priest-Messiah.

The unique place of the person and work of Jesus in the thought of early Christianity precluded the ascription to anyone of a priestly messianic role superior or even equal to that of Jesus. But certainly there was room in Jewish Christian thought for the identification of a Christian priestly accompaniment for the Messiah, someone to occupy a place similar to that of the priestly associate of the *Ta'eb* in Samaritan thought or of Eleazar in Ben Koseba's organization. Once such an identification was made, with the passage of time it would be almost inevitable that Jews who had looked for an eschatological priest before becoming Christian would begin to see the details of this expectation fulfilled in the person and activities of the one they recognized as the Christian priestly messianic accompaniment. Thus pre-Christian Jewish expectation could have provided a fertile seedbed from which numerous legends and traditions with both priestly and messianic overtones could have grown up around the name of some early Christian leader. Of all the leaders of the early Church²⁸ it was James, the relative of Jesus, who by his background, nature, life and sympathy for the more Jewish elements in Christianity was the most likely candidate for the legendary position of priestly accompaniment of the Messiah.

Unfortunately little is known of the functions ascribed to the eschatological priest(s) in Jewish thought. In QL he presided over the assembly, stood over other priests, blessed the meal and the army, and (although not taking part himself) directed the battles. The activities of the priestly accompaniment of the Samaritan *Ta'eb* were primarily associated with the Mount Gerizim temple. The Levitical Messiah of the *T. 12 Patr.* was both a political and a religious leader, received personal praise, and brought protection and salvation to Israel. Much of what is said of James in noncanonical Christian literature is consistent with these functions.²⁹

The Jewish Christian sources from which Hegesippus drew his material, the

²⁸The most obvious candidate for the role of eschatological priest in Christian thought might have been John the Baptist, the son of the priest Zechariah. Evidently this identification was never made (in spite of the assertions of Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus* 259 ff.). John is presented as a prophetic (Elijah-like) herald; his priestly background is mentioned only incidentally. Probably John's own specific denials (John 1:19 ff.) and the limited contact, both geographically and temporally, between John and the public ministry of Jesus prevented the growth of messianic traditions around the Baptist.

There seem to have been some Christian group(s) who thought of the apostle John in a way akin to priestly-messianic lines explored in this paper. Eusebius twice refers to a tradition that describes "John, who lay on the Lord's breast, who was a priest wearing the petalon, and a martyr, and a teacher" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.21.3; 5.24.3). Lack of additional information prevents further investigation of this line of thought.

²⁹James' office is said to have come by direct and special appointment of the Messiah (Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1:74, etc.). From Jerusalem he ruled the whole Christian-messianic community (*Recog.* 1:43; 4:35), assigned tasks to other leaders (1:72; *Apocryphon Jacobi*), and delegated priestly-episcopal authority throughout the whole church (Bishop lists; Syriac *Teachings*). Subordinate officers are said to have been in subjection to him and served him (*Recog.* 1:72; Pseudo-Ignatian *Epistles*). James was addressed as "archbishop," "bishop" (a messianic title in 1 Pet 3:25) and "Lord." It was claimed that he was a man of great personal righteousness, that he used priestly dress and that he lived a life of priest-like intercession, frequently in the Temple (Hegesippus/Eusebius; Epiphanius). James led his followers into battle (verbal battle=debate) against the enemy (*Recog.* 1:67 ff.) and suffered at his hand (1:70; cf. 73). For his sake, it is claimed, heavens and earth were created (*Gos. Thom.* 12), and his death is interpreted as the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem (Hegesippus/Eusebius, Clement, and Origen's quotation from Josephus).

Ebionites of the Pseudo-Clementine sect, those concerned with the writings of Josephus, the Jewish Gnostics behind *Gos. Thom.* are precisely the Christian groups most likely to have been acquainted with the Essenes, Samaritans and others who looked for an eschatological priest. It is not unreasonable to suppose that some of these who identified Jesus as "a prophet like Moses" began to think of James, his relative, as "a priest like Aaron."

I suggest that the noncanonical sources about James, the relative of Jesus, contain traditions that began with a kernel of historical fact but in their present forms contain both exaggerations and additions. Particularly I believe that the extreme Judaistic outlook and activities claimed for James, the nationalistic significance of his person, and the virtually absolute authoritative place in the leadership of the early Church ascribed to him have been read into his character and activities by later Jewish Christians. I propose that the expectation of the coming of an eschatological priestly figure within some segments of first-century Judaism provided the stimulus and framework for the development of some of these traditions and legends about James.