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THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE SAMARITANS

WAYNE A. BRINDLE

The development of Samaritanism and its alienation from Judaism was a process that began with the division of the kingdom of Israel, and continued through successive incidents which promoted antagonism, including the importation of foreign colonists into Samaria by Assyria, the rejection of the new Samaritan community by the Jews, the building of a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim, the political and religious opportunism of the Samaritans, and the destruction of both the Samaritan temple and their capital of Shechem by John Hyrcanus during the second century B:C. The Samaritan religion at the time of Jesus had become Mosaic and quasi-Sadducean, but strongly anti-Jewish. Jesus recognized their heathen origins and the falsity of their religious claims.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

RELATIONS between the Jews and the Samaritans were always strained. Jesus ben Sirach (ca. 180 B.C.) referred to the Samari-!ans as "the foolish people that dwell in Shechem" (Sir 50:26). There is a tradition that 300 priests and 300 rabbis once gathered in the temple court in Jerusalem to curse the Samaritans with all the curses in the Law of Moses. When the Jews wanted to curse Jesus Christ, they called him demon-possessed and a Samaritan in one breath (John 8:48).

The Samaritans are important to biblical studies for several reasons:[1] (1) They claim to be the remnant of the kingdom of Israel, specifically of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, with priests of the line of Aaron/Levi. (2) They possess an ancient recension of the Pentateuch which. is non-Masoretic and shows close relationship to a text type underlying both the LXX and some Hebrew manuscripts

[1] Cf. Theodore H. Gaster, "Samaritans," IDB, 4.190; and James D. Purvis, The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Origin of the Samaritan Sect (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1968) 2-3.

among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and are therefore important both for textual criticism of the OT as well as the study of the history of Hebrew. (3) They appear several times in the NT, especially in Luke, John, and Acts, and may provide the background for controversies related in Ezra, Nehemiah, and other post-exilic writings. (4) They provide much insight into the cosmopolitan nature of Palestinian religion and politics before and at the time of Christ. (5) At one time the community was large enough to exercise considerable influence in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, and even Rome. (6) And they were important enough to be a subject of controversy in Josephus and Rabbinic literature (notable among which are many references in the Mishnah and an extra tractate in the Talmud).

The principal questions addressed in this study are: (1) When did the Samaritan sect come into existence as a distinct ethnic and religious group, with its own traditions and teachings? and (2) What was the development and history of the enmity between Samaritans and Jews?

The sources for a history of the Samaritans are predominantly anti-Samaritan: 2 Kings 17; Ezra and Nehemiah; Sir 50:25-26; 2 Macc 6:2; the Assyrian Annals of Sargon; the Elephantine Papyri; the Mishnah; the Babylonian Talmud (Masseket Kutim); the New Testament (Matthew, Luke, John, Acts); and Josephus (especially Ant 9, 11, 12, 13, 18, 20).[2] Samaritan literature is largely late; the Samaritan Pentateuch, however, though copied in the 14th century, dates back in recensional form at least to the Hasmonean period (ca. 100-150 B.C.). Many of its peculiarities reflect Samaritan religious tendencies, and it is thus an early witness to their beliefs and claims.

The problem of sources is compounded by the fact that the name "Samaritan" occurs only once in the OT (2 Kgs 17:29-translated in the NASB as "the people of Samaria"), and there it refers not to the "Samaritans" as they appear in the Talmud, Josephus, and the NT, but rather to the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel before its captivity by Assyria! An accurate understanding of the Samaritans as a religious people must therefore depend on much more than a simple identification based on names and geography.

I. THEORIES OF SAMARITAN ORIGINS

The traditional theories of Samaritan origins are reduced by Purvis to four basic positions:[3] (1) the view of the Samaritans them-I selves, that their movement is a perpetuation of the ancient Israelite

[2] A. Ge1ston, "Samaritans," New Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 1132.

[3] James D. Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 4-5.

faith as it was practised in the pre-monarchical period at Shechem (ca. 1400-1100 B.C.); (2) the counterclaim of Judaism, that Samaritanism is a heresy derived from a corrupt worship of Yahweh which developed in northern Palestine after the Assyrian conquest of that area about 722 B.C.; (3) an interpretation based on Ezra, Nehemiah, and Josephus, that the Samaritans broke away from the Jews in the Persian period; and (4) the assertion that a Samaritan schism occurred in the early Greek period.

All views demonstrate that there was a definite schism,[4] followed by a long period of independent development of the two groups. The Samaritans place the schism in the twelfth century B.C., at the time of Eli. The Jews date it in the eighth century B.C.

Modern critics have tended to date the schism much later, but most have retained the schism concept. Some scholars, however, have begun to question this notion. As Coggins points out:

> Two points in particular have remained characteristic of many descriptions: the view of Samaritanism as a debased form of religion, containing many syncretistic elements; and the notion of a schism-with its twofold connotation, of a definite break that took place at a specific moment in history, and of that break as implying the departure of the schismatic from the accepted norm. ...It is hoped that it will become clear that neither of these features should be taken for granted as truly characteristic of the situation.[5]

Purvis stresses that "the so-called Samaritan schism, or withdrawal from the mainstream of Judaism, was not so much an event as a process--a process extending over several centuries and involving a series of events which eventually brought about estrangement between the two communities."[6] Historians have tended to select one event and to declare that it was this that caused the emergence of the Samaritan sect. They have also disagreed as to which element of Samaritanism represents its crucial distinction from Judaism. The as Samaritans, for example, say that worship at Gerizim rather than elsewhere has always been the determining factor. The Jews regard the intermarriage of Assyrian colonists and northern Israelites and the development of a syncretistic religion as the origin of the heresy. Others refer to the erection of a temple on Mt. Gerizim, or the rejection of the post-Pentateuchal scriptures, as the crucial event.

The thesis of this article is that the origin of Samaritanism was indeed a process--a process which began at least with the division of the kingdom (by ca. 931 B.C.) and continued through each successive

4 R. J. Coggins, Samaritans and Jews (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975) 7.
5 Ibid., 4.
6 Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 5.

incident, including the importation of foreign colonists and the building of the Gerizim temple, right up to their final excommunication by the Jews about A.D. 300. Thus even in NT times the process of estrangement was still going on, although the sect could surely be considered distinct once it had its own temple and worship on Gerizim.

Most modern critics tend to minimize the OT's witness to the origin of the Samaritan people and religion, assuming that such "Jewish" accounts are too prejudiced to be reliable. This attitude must be avoided, however, since the statements of Jesus Christ show that he also recognized the dubiousness of their origins and the falsehood of their religious claims.

II. THE SAMARITAN ACCOUNT

The Samaritans claim to be the true children of Israel, who have remained faithful to the Law of Moses.[7] The Torah in their hands is "the true, original and faultless Torah in all its sentences, pronunciations, and its style."[8]

The Samaritans claim to be descendants of the tribe of Joseph, and thus descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. Their priests are from the house of Levi, descendants of Aaron. When Israel entered Palestine, Joshua established the center of his administration at Shechem, in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal.[9] The high priest at the time was Eleazar, son of Aaron, who also lived in Shechem. Six years after the entrance into the land, Joshua built the Tabernacle on Gerizim, where all worship of the Israelites was centered.

After Joshua's death there was a succession of kings (called שֹׁפְטִים, "judges," by the Jews), the last of whom was Samson. Eleazar was succeeded at Gerizim by Phinehas, Abishua, Shesha, Bacha, and Uzzi.

When Uzzi became high priest at the age of 23, Eli (a descendant of Ithamar rather than of Eleazar[10]), then 60 years old, was director of revenues and tithes and director of the sacrifices on the stone altar outside the Tabernacle.[11] Eli became rich through revenues and jealous of Uzzi, and he decided to take the high-priesthood away from Uzzi.

[7] Jacob, Son of Aaron, "The History and Religion of the Samaritans," BSac 63 (1906) 393.

[8] Ibid.

[9] John MacDonald, The Theology of the Samaritans (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 16.

[10] Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 88, n. 1.

[11] Jacob, "History," 395.

About the time of Eli, foreigners began to enter Israel and to teach the people sorcery and magic. Even a large number of priests learned it and left the ways of God. Eli was one of these, and he gathered a group of supporters. One day Uzzi the high priest rebuked Eli for some fault in his sacrificial work, and Eli with his followers immediately apostatlzed.[12] Some of Israel followed Uzzi (especially the tribes of Joseph), and some followed Eli (especially Judah and Benjamin).

Eli moved to Shiloh and took copies of the Law with him. There he made a counterfeit ark and tabernacle and set up a rival sanctuary. He claimed that God had commanded the tabernacle to be moved to Shiloh from Gerizim. A majority of the people of Israel began to follow Eli because of his sorcery, and a deep dissension began to grow between the two groups. Thus, for a time there were two sanctuaries and two priesthoods (one descended from Phinehas, the other from Ithamar), and the first division on religious grounds in Israel was created.[13] The Samaritans thereafter rejected the claims of the Ithamar branch of priests in favor of the sons of Phinehas. As a result of Eli's defection, Israel was split into three divisions: (1) the followers of Uzzi, the genuine high priest; (2) the followers of Eli; and (3) many of various tribes who lapsed into paganism.

This is the only schism that the Samaritans know.14 Eli's act ended the era of divine favor (רַכוּתָה, "Rahuta ") and initiated the age of divine wrath (פָּנוּתָה, "Panuta ").

One day God told Uzzi to put all of the vessels and furniture of the tabernacle into a nearby cave, after which the cave miraculously closed up, engulfing the entire sanctuary. The next day, the cave and its contents completely disappeared (not to be found again until the Taheb or Messiah comes).[15]

About this time, Samuel, a descendant of Korah, came to live with Eli at Shiloh. Eli taught him all his evil ways, including sorcery and witchcraft. When Eli died, the people made Samuel their ruler. The Philistines took advantage of the corruption and division to attack Israel. The people demanded a king, so Samuel appointed Saul.

Saul determined to punish the tribes of Joseph because they did not follow Samuel's cult in Shiloh, so he went to Shechem and destroyed the remaining altar on Gerizim, killed the high priest Shisha (son of Uzzi), and destroyed many of the tribe.[16] They began to

[12] Ibid.,397.
[13] MacDonald, Theology, 17.
[14] Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 88, n. I.
[15] MacDonald, Theology, 17.
[16] Jacob, "History," 406-7.

worship in their homes, and many moved to Bashan, east of the Sea of Galilee. But the Torah was kept in its original condition.
After Saul died, David came to Shechem and became king of all Israel. He captured Jabish (Jerusalem) and moved Eli's ark there. When David decided to build a temple in Jerusalem, the high priest at Gerizim, Yaire, told him that he would have to build it on "Mt. Gerizim instead, according to the Torah. So David, who was a friend of this high priest (cf. 1 Sam 21:1-7) and had always offered his tithes at Gerizim, refrained from building the temple and left,it for his son to do. Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem and led the people astray from God. Jeroboam later rebelled and led Israel even further astray. He made his capital in Sabastaba[17] (Sebaste, later called Samaria).

There were now three groups of Israelites: (1) the Samaritans, who kept themselves distinct from the rest and called themselves שֹׁמְרִים, keepers of the Law; (2) the Israelites of the north, who followed Jeroboam; and (3) the tribe of Judah, with a mixture of various other tribes, who followed the line of David.[18]

Assyria finally captured the Northern Kingdom and enslaved the people. An Assynan named Samar controlled Sabastaba, and an Israelite (of the tribe of Joseph) bought the city and it became known as Samaria. Its inhabitants thus became known as Samaritans.[19]
Some of the followers of Uzzi were also taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Later, Nebuchadnezzar deported people from all tribes (including the tribe of Joseph) to Babylon. Foreigners immigrated to Israel in order to settle, but had problems with famine and wild beasts. So Cyrus sent the "Samaritan" high priest Abdullah (or Abdel[20]), along with a host of descendants of Joseph, back to the Land. Abdullah wanted to build a sanctuary on Gerizim, but Zerubbabel the Jew wanted to rebuild in Jerusalem. Abdullah appealed to the Torah, whereas the Jews appealed to David and Solomon. Cyrus sided with the Samaritans, honored Sanballat their governor, and allowed many from the tribe of Joseph to return and to build a temple on Gerizim.

Enmity between the tribes of Joseph and Judah continued to grow. Zerubbabel bribed the King of Persia to allow the Jews to build a temple in Jerusalem, but the Samaritans then received permission to destroy what they had built. This caused yet greater division.

[17] Ibid., 414; actually, it was Herod the Great who gave it the name Sebaste, which is Greek for Augustus.

[18] MacDonald, Theology, 18.

[19] Jacob, "History ," 415.

[20] Ay. L., "Samaritans," Encyclopaedia Judaica, 14.728.

Ezra (the "accursed Ezra,,21) finally obtained a second decree (through Esther and by means of witchcraft) from King Ashoresh (Ahasuerus) to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem and to exercise authority over all the Land. Since the Jews had lost the Torah and all their books, Ezra began to collect legends and narratives and invented many things which never occurred. He falsely claimed (in 2 Kings 17) that the Samaritans were Gentiles with false gods (cf. Ezra 4). He also invented the idea, popular among later rabbis, that the Samaritans call Ashina (or Ashima) their god, whereas in reality they simply substitute the word "Shimeh" (from שֵׁם, "name") for YHWH, in the same way that the Jews use the substitution word, אֲדֹנָי, "Adonai,,).22 Ezra wrote in the "Assyrian" language (Aramaic), whereas the Samaritans retained Hebrew. Ezra was wicked and corrupted the Jews even more, and by persecutions and lies caused much of the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. These persecutions kept the Samaritan nation small, but Samaritans still claim to carry out the ancient customs according to the Mosaic Law.23

Thus, Judaism is an extension of Eli's heresy through Samuel, Saul, David, the Judean monarchy, and Ezra, with the rival cult shifting from Shiloh to Jerusalem and later developing a complete tradition on which to base it. The true Samaritan claims were dismissed with slander and persecution.

Several things may be said concerning this account by the Samaritans of their own history. Purvis declares that "to accept the Samaritan claim at face value would be extraordinarily naive."[24] Most of their sources are extremely late, although their later chronicles do make use of earlier ones.25

In their favor, however, is the fact that at regular intervals before the divided monarchy, all twelve tribes gathered at Shechem to worship their common God.[26] It was to Shechem that Rehoboam went to be anointed king of all Israel (1 Kgs 12: 1). Jeroboam built up Shechem as his first capital (1 Kgs 12:25). Gerizim was mentioned as a sacred mountain in Deuteronomy (11:29; 27:12), whereas Jerusalem and Mt. Zion were chosen much later.

Jeroboam also corrupted the priesthood by making priests of non-Levites (1 Kgs 12:31; 2 Chr 13:9). It may be questioned whether any of the legitimate priests decided to separate from Jeroboam's

[21] Gaster, "Samaritans,"191.
[22] Jacob, "History," 424.
[23] Ibid.,426.
[24] Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 92.
[25] Ibid.,90.
[26] Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University, 1952) 1.61.

apostate system in order to preserve the true worship of Yahweh. (Such priests may have simply gone south to Jerusalem, however.) It is not known whether the priesthood in northern Israel survived the Assyrian conquest.[27] But it does seem certain that "only a very small percentage of the Samaritan, or northern Israelite, people were exiled, to judge from Sargon's own account, and he makes no mention of any religious groups."[28]

All of these factors may be explained by the assumption that when the Samaritan sect finally developed its own identity and organization (during the last centuries B.C.), it was forced to reinterpret Israelite history in order to validate its claims to be the true remnant of Israel. The peculiarities of the Samaritan Pentateuch (which seem to be rather transparent alterations) also support this hypothesis. The progress of divine revelation in both testaments also supports this view, for, as Jesus himself said, "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22).

III. THE ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITAN PEOPLE

The Name "Samaritan"

About 875 B.C., Omri founded the city of Samaria on a hill about seven miles northwest of Shechem.[29] He bought the hill from a man named Shemer for two talents of silver, built a fortified city, and called it Samaria (שֹׁמְרוֹן), after the name of the previous owner (1 Kgs 16:24). Shemer was apparently a widespread clan name in Israel.[30]

Samaria became the capital of the northern kingdom and remained the capital until its destruction by Alexander the Great (ca. 332 B.C.). The capital soon gave its name to the entire nation (cf. 1 Kgs 13:32; Hos 8:5; Amos 3:9; Isa 9:9-12). Subsequently, the nation gave its name to its inhabitants, the Samarians.

[27] Ay. L., "Samaritans," 727.

[28] John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 236; G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957) 152; JamesL. Kelso, "Samaria, City of," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5.232. The date is not certain; cf. Eugene H. Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966) 251; Gaalyah Cornfeld and David N. Freedman, *Archaeology of the Bible: Book by Book* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1976) 119; Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 36, 88, who, among others, would date the founding of Samaria ca. 880 B.C.

[29] James L. Kelso, "Samaria, City of," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 5.232.

[30] James A. Montgomery, *The Samaritans* (New York: Ktav, 1968) 317.

Yet the name שֹׁמְרוֹנִים ("Samaritans") occurs only once in the entire OT (2 Kgs 17:29), and there it refers not to the so-called "mixed race" who appear in the NT, but rather to the former inhabitants of Samaria, many of whom were carried off into exile. As Unger states:

> It is customary to refer "Samaritans" in this passage to the colonists brought by the king of Assyria in place of the deported Israelites; but the text seems rather to mean that these colonists put their gods into the houses of the high places which the "Samaritans," i.e., the former inhabitants of Samaria, had made for their own religious use. ...[31]

Indeed, Coggins claims that "there are no unambiguous references to the Samaritans in the Hebrew Old Testament."[32] The LXX has **Samaeitai**, again only at 2 Kgs 17:29. This word also occurs in Josephus and the NT, and from it the English form is derived. The more usual name found in Josephus and the Talmud is Kutim or Cutheans, which refers to one of the groups of foreign colonists mentioned in 2 Kgs 17:24, 30. This name, of course, emphasizes the supposed heathen origins and syncretistic practice of the Samaritans. Another name used several times by Josephus is "Shechemites" (**Sikimitai**),[33] a name which refers to their principal city. Josephus also says that the Samaritans of the Hellenistic period called themselves "Sidonians in Shechem" when they wanted to dissociate themselves from the Jews and win the support of Antiochus Epiphanes.[34]

On the other hand, the Samaritans themselves do not use these designations at all. Usually they call themselves "Israel."[35] But they also frequently use the term שָׁמְרִים[36] or שָׁמְרַיִן,[37] which they contend means "keepers" or "observers" of the truth, the Law of God, derived from the verb שָׁמַר (to guard or observe). The use of this term is admitted early, since it was known by Epiphanus (A.D. 375) and Origen (ca. A.D. 240).[38] Ewing suggests that a derivative of שָׁמַר would

[31] Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1966) 958.
[32] Coggins, *Samaritans*, 9.
[33] Josephus, *Ant*. 11.8.6.
[34] Josephus, *Ant*. 11.8.6; 12.5.5.
[35] Coggins, *Samaritans*, 10.
[36] Ay. L., "Samaritans," 728.
[37] Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Samaritans," *Scientific American* (January, 1977) 104.
[38] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 9.1; Origen, *Homily on Ezekiel* 9.1-5; *Commentary on .John* 20.35; cf. G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961) 1222; N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1976) 36; Coggins, *Samaritans, 11*.

have fit even the city of Samaria in the sense of "outlook," since it had a commanding view of the Plain of Sharon.[39]

The suggestion has also been made that there is an allusion to the Samaritan self-designation in 2 Chr 13:11, where King Abijah of Judah condemns the Northern Israelites with the phrase "we are keepers [שֹׁמְרִים] of the charge of the Lord our God, but you have forsaken Him."[40] This speech comes shortly after the division of the kingdom in Chronicles and perhaps may be seen as Abijah's declaration of the "Jewish monopoly of salvation."[41] Abijah also emphasizes the true priesthood at Jerusalem, contrasting it with the illegitimate priesthood of Northern Israel which served false gods. The suggestion of some critics is that the author of Chronicles inserted or used this allusion as a polemic against the Samaritan system of his own day.[42] The use of the term here is striking, but in the complete absence of other evidence, it is doubtful that the technical use of the term was current at such an early date. It is more likely that the connection with "keeping" the law was a reaction against the pejorative use of the name "Samaritan" by the Jews in Rabbinic or later times.

The Samaritan People

When Jeroboam declared himself king of Israel, his kingdom included the entire northern two-thirds of the earlier kingdom of Solomon, from Bethel in the south to Dan in the north, with authority stretching probably to the Euphrates River (1 Kgs 4:24).[43] This dominion was quickly lost,[44] however, and during the Assyrian invasions of the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., Israel lost progressively more territory.[45] Finally in 722/21 B.C., the city of Samaria was taken after a three year siege.[46]

> The fall of Samaria ...marked a new era in the history of the northern kingdom. The leading citizens were deported by Sargon, while exiles from other parts of the Assyrian Empire were imported by Sargon, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal.[47]

[39] W. Ewing, "Samaria," *ISBE* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939) 4.2671.
[40] Coggins, *Samaritans*, II.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The MacMillan Bible Atlas* (New York: MacMillan, 1968) 68.
[44] Ibid., 76.
[45] Ibid., 86-97.
[46] Ewing, "Samaritans," 2672.
[47] A. Gelston, "Samaritans," *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 1131.

Sargon carried off 27,290 people, as he recounted in his annals,[48] probably mostly influential people from the city of Samaria itself. Yamauchi estimates that 500,000 to 700,000 people lived in Israel at this time.[49] Thus Sargon neither desolated nor depopulated the land; he merely took away its independence and its leading citizens. In 720 B.C. Samaria, together with Arpad, Simyra, and Damascus, joined in a revolt against Assyria headed by Hamath.[50] It is likely that large-scale deportations were carried out by Sargon as a result of this and similar revolts.[51]

According to 2 Kgs 17:24, "the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from A vva and from Hamath and Sephar-vaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel." If these were limited mainly to the vicinity of the city of Samaria, this would account well for the fact that the Galilee of NT times remained a Jewish region.[52]

The conquests of several of these nations were referred to later, in 701 B.C., by Rabshakeh when he taunted the people of Jerusalem with these words:

> Has anyone of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? (2 Kgs 18:33-34; cf. Isa 36: 18-20)

Additional colonists were imported by Esarhaddon about 680 B.C. and by Ashurbanipal about 669-630 B.C.53 Many of these peoples kept their separate identities for several generations, as is shown by their statement to Zerubbabel (ca. 535 B.C.) that "we have been sacrificing to Him [Yahweh God] since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here" (Ezra 4:2).

It is indeed important to recognize that the question of the national heritage of the Samaritans is to some extent distinct from the question of their religion (which will be considered below). However, modern critics have tended to adopt the misguided view that

[48] ANET, 284-85; cf. Wright, *Archaeology*, 162; Bright, *History*, 274.

[49] Edwin Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Ezra," *BSac* 137 (1980) 195. Coggins (*Samaritans*, 17) estimates a deportation of between 3% and 4% of the population.

[50] Bright, *History*, 274; Unger, *Dictionary*, 958.

[51] Coggins, *Samaritans*, 17.

[52] Unger, *Dictionary*, 958; cf. Ezra 4:10.

[53] Ibid.; Herbert Donner, "The Separate States of Israel and Judah," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, eds. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) 434; Siegfried Herrmann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament Times*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 251; Thiele, *Numbers*, 178.

2 Kings 17 says nothing about the origin of the Samaritans.[54] It will be shown below that the rejection of these people by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah because of their heathen ancestry and the beginning of the worship on Gerizim because of the same kind of rejection by the Jews are but two milestones in the process of the development of the Samaritan sect.

That the Samaritan people did have their origin with these importations of foreigners by Assyria into the region of Samaria is shown conclusively by three statements made by Jesus: (1) Matt 10:5-6: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The promise of salvation was first to the entire seed of Abraham, to the whole house of Israel. Clearly Jesus did not consider the Samaritans (perhaps the "cities of the Samaritans" were not synonymous with the province of Samaria, but were certain cities which were predominantly Samaritan--cf. Luke 9:52) to be part of the "house of Israel" (though not quite Gentiles, either). And this was despite the fact that they then worshiped the God of Moses and kept the pure Law even more stringently than the Jews. This fits well with taking 2 Kings 17 as the description of their origin.

(2) Luke 17: 18: Jesus calls the Samaritan who returned to thank him for healing him a "foreigner" (**a]llogenhj**). In view of Jesus' comments elsewhere concerning the Samaritans, it is doubtful that he would use such a designation simply to accommodate popular Jewish opinion. He obviously considered Samaritans to some extent non-Israelites, not simply sectarians or heretics.

(3) John 4:22: "salvation is from the Jews." This statement was intended to show the accuracy of genuine Jewish faith as against the Samaritan system. But it also shows that Jesus distinguished between the national origins of Jews and Samaritans, for he would never have made such a distinction with Galileans.

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SAMARITAN RELIGION

The roots of the enmity between Jews and Samaritans go back to the antagonism between the north and the south.[55] But this was only one of the tensions within Judaism (in a Palestinian sense) from which Samaritanism sprang.

Foreign Settlers and Foreign Gods

When the foreign settlers from Syria and Mesopotamia began to colonize Samaria, a problem developed. As 2 Kgs 17:25-33 puts it:

[54] Cf. Coggins, Samaritans, IS.

[55] Reinhard Pummer, "The Present State of Samaritan Studies," JSS 21 (1976) 52; cf. Coggins, Samaritans, 81; Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 9, n. 13.

> And it came about at the beginning of their living there, that they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them which killed some of them. So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have carried away into exile in the cities of Samaria do not know the custom of the god of the land; so he has sent lions among them, and behold, they kill them because they do not know the custom of the god of the land."
>
> Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Take there one of the priests whom you carried away into exile, and let him go and live there; and let him teach them the custom of the god of the land." So one of the priests whom they had carried away into exile from Samaria came and lived at Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the houses of the high places which the people of Samaria had made, every nation in their cities in which they lived. And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the A vvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech the gods of Sepharvaim. They also feared the Lord and appointed from among themselves priests of the high places, who acted for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the Lord and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile.

Thus, as Montgomery says, "According to this narrative, the early Samaritan religion was syncretistic, that is, a mixture of different elements, having arisen from the amalgamation of the ancient religion of Northern Israel with the heathen cults which the Assyrian colonists had brought with them to their new home."[56] At first the new peoples still worshiped their own gods, but in the course of time they intermingled with one another and with the native Israelites of Samaria.[57] They learned from the Israelite priest and soon adopted the worship of Yahweh along with their old gods.

Tadmor relates that "the Assyrians regarded it as a primary state function to unify the heterogeneous ethnic elements in the main cities of the kingdom and the provinces and to turn them into cohesive local units within an Assyrianized society."[58] Thus, as time went on, and at least by the third century B.C., there came into being a new ethnic and religious entity (apart from the Hellenists introduced by Alexander and the Seleucids), the "kernel of what later became known as the Samaritans."[59]

[56] James A. Montgomery, "Were the Samaritans Worthy or Unworthy?" The Sunday School Times 48 (1906) 383.

[57] H. Tadmor, "The Period of the First Temple, the Babylonian Exile and the Restoration," in A History of the Jewish People, edited by H. H. Ben-Sasson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1976) 137.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

It is here that a serious problem' arises. On the one hand 2 Kings 17 definitely implies the development of a syncretistic religion (cf. v 33: "they feared the Lord and served their own gods"). But on the other hand, as Kelso expresses it, "Samaritan theology shows no sign of the influence of paganism among the colonists sent by the Assyrians."[60]

What is the solution to this paradox? Gaster refuses to harmonize the two:

> The most plausible conclusion is, then, that after the fall of Samaria in 722, the local population consisted of two distinct elements living side by side-viz., (a) the remnant of the native Israelites; and (b) the foreign colonists. For tendentious reasons, however, the Jewish version ignores the former; the Samaritan version, the latter.[61]

It is the opinion of this writer that the religious situation in, Samaria moved through several phases from 722 B.C. to the Christian era: (1) At first the Israelites and the foreigners co-existed side by side; (2) when the teaching priest arrived (2 Kgs 17:28), the religion of the colonists almost immediately became syncretistic with Yahwism; (3) during the religious campaigns of Hezekiah and Josiah and thereafter, the bulk of the population of Samaria became more and more Yahwistic in the Jewish sense, although much of the foreign element failed to give up its gods (2 Kgs 17:41); (4) when the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim was built (ca. 332 B.C.),62 the priest Manasseh actively began to teach the Samaritan people a strict Yahwism based on the Torah and to develop a more sectarian, but conservative and quasi-Sadducean, religious system, with an active temple worship; (5) after the destruction of the Samaritan temple about 128 B.C., the Samaritans put even more emphasis upon the Law, and their particular brand of theology began to solidify in conjunction with the Samaritan Pentateuch and their anti-Jewish attitudes and conduct.

Though some of the foregoing is conjecture, the scheme fits the facts of Scripture and the nature and history of the sect. It hinges on references in the Bible and elsewhere to an ongoing teaching ministry among the Samaritans.

The teaching priest

Some have thought that any priest from the Northern Kingdom would be syncretistic or pagan in outlook, since the religious system

[60] James L. Kelso, "Samaritans," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5.245; Gaster, "Samaritans," 192.

[61] Gaster, "Samaritans," 192.

[62] Josephus, *Ant*. 11.8.4.

founded by Jeroboam introduced idol-worship. It is not certain, however, that Jeroboam intended to substitute idolatry for the worship of Yahweh. Wood contends that "the intent was still to worship Yahweh, but in a new way."[63] As Unger points out, the schism was more political than religious, and Jeroboam's purpose was not to separate Israel from the true God, but from Jerusalem and the Davidic succession.[64]

Many scholars note that this was not necessarily a change of religion. De Vaux, for example, thinks that "the God Jeroboam asked his subjects to adore was Yahweh who had brought Israel out of Egypt."[65]

> The novelty lies in the cultic symbol, the 'golden calves.'...They were wooden statues covered with gold plate. It seems certain that these statues were not thought of, originally, as representations of Yahweh. In the primitive religions of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Egypt, the sacred animal is not the god and is not confused with the god; it merely embodies his attributes, is an ornament of his throne or a support for it, or a footstool for his use. There are several examples extant of gods riding on the animal which is their symbol. The Temple of Jerusalem had the Ark, and the Cherubim above it formed the throne of Yahweh; Jeroboam needed something similar for the sanctuaries he founded, and he made the 'golden calves' as the throne for the invisible godhead.[66]

Archaeologists are in general agreement. Albright was an early supporter of the idea that "Jeroboam represented Yahweh as an invisible figure standing on a young bull of gold."[67] He points to cylinder seals of the second millennium B.C. on which the storm-god of Mesopotamia is represented as a schematic bolt of lightning set upright on the back of a bull.[68]

Wright agrees that for Jeroboam the golden calves (or bulls) "may have been the pedestal on which the invisible Lord was thought

[63] Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970) 304; cf. C. F. Keil, *The Books of the Kings*, trans. James Martin (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 198.

[64] Unger, *Dictionary*, 958.

[65] R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2 (New York: McGraw-Hili, 1961) 333.

[66] Ibid., 333-34; cf. Donner, "Separate States," 387-88; note I Sam 4:4 and 2 Sam 6:2, where Yahweh is said to be "enthroned above the cherubim."

[67] William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1957) 299; cf. Merrill (Survey, 248), who states that "these calves certainly were not images of Yahweh, but only representations of the throne upon which Yahweh stood."

[68] Albright, *Stone Age*, 300; cf. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (London: University of London, 1968; reprint; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1978) 197-98; *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1956) 156.

to stand."[69] As an example he refers to a carving from northern Syria (8th century B.C.) picturing the storm-god Hadad (Baal) standing on the back of a bull.

Whatever the origin and intention of the golden calves, it is clear that they were a serious offense to God[70] and represented a grave danger to the continued worship of Yahweh in Israel The bull was the animal which symbolized Baal, and the mass of people would confuse the "bull of Yahweh" and the "bull of Baal."[72] The door was thus opened to syncretism and idolatry. According to Wood, "Jeroboam's innovation made the later introduction of Baal worship into the land under Ahab and Jezebel (I Kgs 16:30-33) much easier."[73]

The prophet Ahijah condemned these "molten images" (I Kgs 14:9). Jeroboam is said to have sacrificed to the calves as though they were gods (I Kgs 12:32).[74] His great sin, shared by all his successor~ (d. 2 Kgs 10:29) and the people of Israel (2 Kgs 17:8, 12, 16, 21, 22), consisted especially in setting up these images. More broadly, however, Jeroboam violated God's law in four principal ways:[75] (1) he changed the symbols of worship, introducing images associated with pagan worship clearly prohibited by God[76] (Exod 34: 17); (2) he changed the center of worship (I Kgs 12:29-30), away from God's appointed center; (3) he changed the priesthood, abandoning the chosen tribe of Levi (I Kgs 12:31; 13:33; 2 Chr 13:9); and (4) he changed the schedule of feasts (I Kgs 12:33).

[69] Wright, *Archaeology*, 147; cf. Bright, *History*, 234; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. I, trans. J. A. Baker (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 117.

[70] Wood, *History*, 305.

[71] Bright, *History*, 234; R. K. Harrison (*Old Testament Times* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970] 210) contends that Jeroboam was essentially an apostate who created a thoroughly pagan system.

[72] De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2.334; Wright, Archaeology, 148; cf. Eichrodt (Theology, vol. 2 (1964) 22, n. I), who is among many who contend that the bull-image of Jeroboam had nothing to do with the Egyptian bull-cult of Memphis.

[73] Wood, *History*, 305; cr. Shalom M. Paul and William G. Dever, eds., *Biblical Archaeology* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1973) 270.

[74] Jeroboam's declaration, "Behold your gods, 0 Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt" (I Kgs 12:28) is probably meant to refer directly to an identical statement by the Israelites in Exod 32:4. There they "worshiped" a golden calf and "sacrificed" to it, for which God desired to kill them (32:8-10). God called Aaron's calf a "god of gold" (32:31), and Paul later referred to this incident when he related God's judgment of some Israelites as "idolaters" (I Cor 10:7). It is noteworthy, however, that Jeroboam's system is not specifically called "idolatry" in either Kings or Chronicles, and whether Jeroboam intended to copy Aaron's sin is not clear.

[75] Cf. John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb, *A History of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 359.

[76] James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951) 257, n. 4.

The outcome of these changes was that many of the priests and Levites of the North migrated to the South (2 Chr 11:14-16). However, even at the peak of Baal-worship in Israel, at least 7,000 men were still following the true God (I Kgs 19:18).

The point here is that Jeroboam's religious system was not necessarily designed to turn the people away from Yahweh to idolatry and paganism. It is possible that the worship of Yahweh continued in Israel even among the priesthood and that the teaching priest of 2 Kings 17 may have helped to introduce a Mosaic Yahwism to the foreign settlers.[77] Both the priest and the settlers recognized that the "god of the land" was Yahweh. At the very least, he taught them to "fear the LORD" (2 Kgs 17:28), and his teaching had some effect (v 32).

The Kings of Judah

Montgomery assumes that the teaching priest had the benevolent assistance of Hezekiah.[78] Gelston contends that the Israelites who were left after the Assyrian deportation formed the core of the new Samarian community and, "despite the introduction of various cults, guaranteed the continuity of the worship of Yahweh."[79] Closer relations, he believes, were maintained with Judah before and after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

At any rate, about 715 B.C. Hezekiah issued an invitation to all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover together (2 Chr 30: I, 5-6). Many people, especially of Ephraim and Manasseh, mocked the messengers (v 10), but many others attended (from Asher, Manasseh, Zebulon, Ephraim, and Issachar-vv 11, 18). A revival took place, and the people went out to destroy all the high places and altars throughout Ephraim and Manasseh (2 Chr 31:1). .

Josiah (ca. 622 B.C.) initiated another revival, and 2 Chr 34:9 records that contributions were received "from Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel." Jeremiah records a visit of 80 men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria (the chief cities of Samaria) who came on the day after the murder of Gedaliah (586 B.C.) "with their beards shaved off and their clothes torn and their bodies gashed, having grain offerings and incense in their hands to bring to the house of the Lord" (Jer 41:4-5). Evidently the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah had made some lasting inroads into the north.80

[77] Cf. Keil, *Kings*, 423-27.
[78] Montgomery, *Kings*, 473.
[79] Gelston, "Samaritans," 1131.
[80] Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 9.

Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel understood God's plans as including all Israel: "Again you shall plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; . . . For there shall be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim shall call out, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God'" (Jer 31:5-6); "For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born" (Jer 31:9); "Say to them 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand"'" (Ezek 37:19). God's plans thus include the remnant and exile of Israel as well as Judah.

Manasseh and the Samaritan Temple

It will be shown below that a crucial factor in the "Judaizing" of the Samaritans was the erection of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim and the creation of the Samaritan high-priesthood by Manasseh, Jewish son-in-law of Sanballat III. Modern critics usually recognize that Samaritanism shows a strong dependence on and indebtedness to post-exilic Judaism.[81] Cross indicates that

> it is evident that the religion of Samaria derived from Judaism. Its feasts and law, conservatism toward Torah and theological development, show few survivals from the old Israelite religion as distinct from Judean religion, and no real evidence of religious syncretism. Even the late Jewish apocalyptic has left a firm imprint on Samaritanism.[82]

Such a perspective allows one to explain not only Samaritanism's conservative (Pentateuchal) Jewishness, but also its early striking similarities to the priestly Sadducees.

The foreign gods

Before leaving the subject of the foreign colonists, it will perhaps be instructive to note whence they came and what kind of religions they brought to Samaria. According to 2 Kgs 17:24, the settlers came from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim (the location of Avva is unknown, but may be identical with the Ivvah of 2 Kgs 18:34,[83] which is also unknown).

[81] Ibid.

[82] Frank M. Cross, "Aspects of Samaritan and Jewish History in Late Persian and Hellenistic Times," *HTR* 59 (1966) 205-6.

[83] Avva," *ISBE*, 1.340.

Babylon was defeated by Sargon II in 710 B.C. and again by Sennacherib in 703, 700, and 695.[84] Tadmor feels that it was Sennacherib, being anti-Babylonian, who carried off people from Babylon and Cuthah to Samaria.[85]

Cuthah was also one of the most important cities of Babylonia, situated about twenty miles northeast of Babylon.[86] It was destroyed by Sennacherib. Apparently these deportees were predominant among the colonists, for the Samaritans were long called Cutheans by the Jews.

Hamath was a city of Syria about 125 miles north of Damascus, on the Orontes River. Sargon II destroyed it in 720 B.C.[87] Sepharvaim was probably a Syrian town captured by Shalmaneser also called Shabarain,[88] located between Hamath and Damascus.[89]

Seven gods are listed among the religious I cultural baggage of the immigrants. (1) Succoth-Benoth means. "tabernacles or booths of girls" in Hebrew. It has been identified with Sarpanitu, the consort of Marduk, god of Babylon.[90] She also appears as the "seed-creating one." (2) Nergal was the god of pestilence, disease, and various other calamities.[91] He was worshipped with his consort Ereshkigal at Cuthah. Temples at other sites (Larsa, Isin, Assur, etc.) were also dedicated to him. (3) Nothing is known of Ashima, though the suggestion has been made that it is a corruption of Asherah the Canaanite mother-goddess.[92] (4) Nibhaz perhaps refers to a "deified altar."[93] On the other hand, it may have been worshiped in the form of an ass.[94] (5) Tartak is possibly a corruption of Atargatis, a goddess worshiped in Mesopotamia.[95] (6) Adrammelech means "Adar is

[84] Donald J. Wiseman, "Babylon, OT ," *ZPEB*, 1.444; cr. Merrill, *Survey*, 278; Bright, History, 285.

[85] Tadmor, "Period," 137.

[86] R. Clyde Ridall, "Cuthah," *ZPEB*, 1.1050; cr. John Gray, I & II Kings, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 651; Montgomery, *Kings*, 472.

[87] Gray, Kings, 651; Steven Barabas, "Hamath," ZPEB, 3.22.

[88] Montgomery, *Kings*, 472; Gray, *Kings*, 652; Andrew Bowling, "Sepharvaim," *ZPEB*, 5.342; cf. Albright, *Yahweh*, 241.

[89] T. G. Pinches, "Sepharvaim," *ISBE*, 4.2722.

[90] Gray, *Kings*, 654; Montgomery, *Kings*, 473; Harvey E. Finley, "Succoth-Benoth," *ZPEB*, 5.529.

[91] Albright, *Yahweh*, 139; Larry L. Walker, "Nergal," *ZPEB*, 4.410; cf. Gray, *Kings*, 654; Herrmann, *History*, 251.

[92] Duncan Mcintosh, "Ashima," *ISBE*, 1979 ed., 1.318.

[93] Gray, *Kings*, 654; Wilber B. Wallis, "Nibhaz," *ZPEB*, 4.434; Montgomery, *Kings*, 474.

[94] Steven Barabas, "Tartak," *ZPEB*, 5.603.

[95] Ibid.

king",[96] and may be related to the god Athtar-Venus Star (Atar Milki).[97] (7) Anammelech means "Anu is king." Anu was the great sky-god of Babylonia.[98] The latter two gods were Syrian or Canaanite deities,[99] and their worship included the offering of children as burn offerings (2 Kgs 17:31).

As was mentioned above, there is no sign of the worship of these deities in later Samaritan ism. Though their influence continued among many of the foreign families even to the time of the Babylonia captivity of Judah (2 Kgs 17:41), this does not imply an inherent syncretism among the Samaritans of NT times.

Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah

When the Jewish exiles had returned to Jerusalem and laid the foundation for the second temple (ca. 535 B.C.), the descendants of the foreign colonists came to Jerusalem and asked to take part, claim ing that they were true worshipers of Yahweh. Ezra relates the incident as follows:

> Now when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the Lord God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' households, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we, like you, seek your God; and we have been sacrificing to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here." But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of father's households of Israel said to them, "You have nothing in common with us in building a house to our God; but we ourselves will together build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us." (Ezra 4: 1-3)

Thus began another round of conflict between the people of Samaria (cf. Ezra 4: 10) and the Jews. The former are here called "enemies of Judah and Benjamin" (v i). This does not imply that they were considered enemies before their later attempt to stop the construction of the temple and the city. Unger notes that "in the refusal no charge of hypocrisy was made against them."tOO It was only that

[96] Willis J. Beecher, "Adrammelech," *ISBE*, 1.61.

[97] Gray, Kings, 654; Andrew K. Helmbold, "Adrammelech," *ZPEB*, 1.64; but cf,) Albright, Yahweh, 241.

[98] William W. Hallo and William K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971) 170; Gray, Kings, 655; Steven Barabas, "Anammelech," *ZPEB*, 1.153. :':i

[99] William Sanford LaSor, "Anammelech," *ISBE*, 1979 ed., 1.120.

[100] Unger, *Dictionary*, 959; Bright, however, regards their religion as "surely somewhat synchretistic" (*History*, 383). Perhaps a combination of nationalistic, racial, and religious motives was involved in the Jews' response (cf. William Barclay, et. al., *The*

the right to build belonged to the Jews, and they could have no part in it.[101]

Unger asks, "Were the Jews right?" He concludes that they apparently knew what they were doing, but that "their course in regard to aliens and children of mixed marriages, as shown in Ezra 10:3, and indicated in Neh 13:1, 3..., though natural and probably justifiable under the circumstances, was yet, so far as we know, somewhat in advance of what God had required."[102] Even aliens were allowed to eat the Passover if they were circumcised (cf. Exod 12:44, 48, 49).

When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem (ca. 457 B.C.), he was appalled at the news that many of the people, including priests and Levites, had intermarried with "the peoples of the lands" (Ezra 9: 1-3). He confessed this sin to God, quoting Exod 34: 15-16 and Deut 7:3, which forbade the Hebrews under Moses and Joshua to marry the people of the land of Canaan, which they were about to enter, because of their "abominations" (Ezra 9:12, 14). He thus saw himself in the role of a new Moses, delivering and applying the Law of God to the returned exiles exactly as Moses had done to the new nation of Israel 1,000 years earlier. The "Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites," etc., of old became the Samaritans, etc., of the post-exilic period, in spite of their claim to be worshiping Yahweh and following his Law. Ezra led the people to put away their foreign wives (Ezra 10:2-5) and even made a list of those who had married outside Jewry (10:17-44).

Nehemiah arrived about 444 B.C. as a special representative of the Persian king and was opposed by Sanballat, governor of Samaria (Neh 2:10). Apparently, Judah had been added to the province of Samaria by Nebuchadnezzar. Sanballat thus recognized that Nehemiah was creating a new political entity centered in Jerusalem and that this territory would be taken from his control.[103] Sanballat was a

Bible and History [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968] 130, 159). Derek Kidner (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries [lnterVarsity, 1979] 49) suggests that the Jews left their real (religious) motives unspoken.

101 In the light of Ezra 4:2, Bishop (Eric F. F. Bishop, "Some Relationships of Samaritanism with Judaism, Islam and Christianity," *The Moslem World* 37 [1947] 129) cannot be right when he says that "the Samaritans felt that the rebuilding of the Temple postponed the day when the Judeans might return to the true fold, and acknowledge the sanctuary on Gerizim rather than on Moriah," since they obviously had not yet (in 525 B.C.) developed the idea of a rival sanctuary for Yahweh on Gerizim.

102 Unger, *Dictionary*, 959; cf. Deut 7:1-4; 23:3; Exod 34:15-16; Judg 3:5-6; Mal 2:11.

103. James L. Kelso, "Samaritans," *ZPEB* 5.245; Barclay, et. al., *Bible and History*, 130; cf. Herrmann, *History*, 308.

worshiper of Yahweh,[104] as were most of the people of the province. This conflict, therefore, was a political one, not a religious issue. As Gaster shows, the Samaritans had a two-fold fear: that (1) Nehemiah's work in Jerusalem might lead to the growth of a dangerous Judean power, and that (2) it might provoke repercussions from the Persian Government that would work against them also.[105] Nehemiah prevailed, however, in spite of Sanballat's opposition (cf. Neh 2:19-20; 4: 1-2, 6-7; 6: I, 15-16), fortified the city, and increased its population. Nehemiah's separatism may have fueled the Samaritan-Jew alienation. He records in Neh 13:1-3 these words:

> On that day they read aloud from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and there was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, because they did not meet the sons of Israel with bread and water, but hired Salaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the; curse into a blessing. So it came about, that when they heard the law, they excluded all foreigners from Israel.

Note that the command to exclude Ammonites and Moabite from the assembly was extended under Nehemiah to exclude "all foreigners from Israel," regardless of ethnic mixture or religious practice. The Samaritans were automatically included in this group.

Toward the end of his governorship, Nehemiah discovered that one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, had married a daughter of Sanballat. He was so furious that he chased the young man out of Jerusalem (Neh 13:28). And so, he says, "I purified them from everything foreign" (13:30).

Naturally, the reaction of the Yahweh-worshiping Samaritan was resentment. They were faced with deciding what was the best way to worship the Lord apart from the Jerusalem cult. This led them inevitably to an even more crucial estrangement from Judaism about a century later.

The Samaritan Temple on Gerizim

According to Haacker, "The most important single event in the history of the rise of the Samaritan community was probably the construction of the temple to Yahweh on Mount Gerizim towards the end of the 4th cent. B.C."[106] Josephus relates the episode generally as follows:[107] Darius III of Persia (336-331 B.C.)[108] sent to Samaria a

[104] Bright, *History*, 383; James L. Kelso, "Samaritans," 5.245.
[105] Gaster, "Samaritans," 192.
[106] Klaus Haacker, "Samaritan," *NIDNTT*, 3.451.
[107] Josephus, *Ant*. 11.8.2-4.
[108] George E. Wright, "The Samaritans at Shechem," *HTR* 55 (1962) 361.

Cuthean named Sanballat to be governor. This Sanballat gave his daughter Nikaso to be the wife of Manasseh, a brother of the high priest Jaddua, in order to develop good relations with the Jews in Jerusalem. The elders in Jerusalem, however, resented this marriage to a foreigner, and ordered Manasseh to have the marriage annulled. Sanballat, confident of the good will of Darius, promised Manasseh the high priesthood of the Samaritans. So Manasseh stayed with Sanballat, thinking that Darius would give him the high priesthood. Many from Jerusalem deserted to Manasseh, and Sanballat gave them money, land, and places to live.

When Alexander the Great began his campaigns against Darius, Sanballat and Manasseh were certain that Darius would win. The opposite happened. So in 332 B.C. when Alexander was besieging Tyre, Sanballat went up to see him, offered him 8,000 Samaritans to fight for him, and accepted his rule. In return Alexander gave his consent for the Samaritans to build a temple on Mt. Gerizim, since Manasseh, brother of the Jewish high priest, and many of the Jewish people had defected to Samaria, which became the natural refuge "for all who were dissatisfied with the stringent reforms taking place in Jerusalem."[109] Alexander apparently considered it an advantage to have the Jews split into two groups, instead of being united;[110] he was also grateful for the military support.[111] So the temple was built (very quickly) and Manasseh was appointed its high priest. Sanballat died after Alexander had spent seven months on the siege of Tyre and two ,months on the siege of Gaza.

Given the remarkable similarity of this story of the priest Manasseh to the account of the priestly son of Joiada by Nehemiah (13:28), many have doubted the historical accuracy of Josephus at this point. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* says, "It is most unlikely that there were two Sanballats whose daughters married sons (or a son and a brother) of high priests, and that these sons were expelled from Jerusalem at dates just 100 years apart",[112] and it concludes that Josephus intentionally tried to discredit Samaritan claims by connecting the temple with Manasseh as a bribe for his apostasy.

Rowley declares that Josephus' account is so "garbled" that there is "no means of knowing when the Samaritan Temple was built."[113] Unger assumes that it was Nehemiah who expelled Manasseh, and places the building of the temple about 409 B.C.[114] Others say that

[109] A. Co., "Samaritans," *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 10.671.
[110] Wright, "Samaritans," 361.
[111] Haacker, "Samaritan," 451.
[112] Co. "Samaritans," 671
[113] Harold H. Rowley, "Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple," *BJRL* 38 (1955) 187.
[114] Unger, *Dictionary*, 959.

Josephus has confused two separate incidents (the expulsion of Manasseh and the building of the temple), while some even move Nehemiah down into the fourth century.[115]

Until recently there was no evidence outside of Josephus for two Sanballats. A Sanballat is mentioned in the Elephantine papyri, but he is clearly the contemporary of Nehemiah.[116]

But in 1962-63, papyri of the fourth century B.C. were discovered in a cave of the Wadi Daliyeh north of Jericho.[117] The name Sanballat appears twice, described as the father of Hananiah, governor Samaria in 354 B.C. Now the Sanballat of Nehemiah's day was succeeded by his sons Delaiah and Shelemiah in the last decade of the fifth century.[118] So the father of Hananiah would be Sanballat (perhaps ca. 380-360 B.C.). If so, then the objections to a Sanballat as governor in 332 B.C. disappear. High offices often were hereditary.[119] And the practice of papponymy. (naming a child for its grand:' father) was much in vogue during this era.[120]

> We can reconstruct with some plausibility, therefore, the sequence of governors of Samaria in the fifth and fourth century. Sanballat the Horonite is evidently the founder of the line, to judge by the fact that he bears a gentilic, not a patronymic. He was a Yahwist, giving good Yahwistic names to his sons Delaiah and Shelemiah. Sanballat I must have been a mature man to gain the governorship, and in 445, when Nehemiah arrived, no doubt was already in his middle years. His son Delaiah acted for his aged father as early as 410. The grandson of Sanballat, Sanballat II, evidently inherited the governorship early in the fourth century, to be succeeded by an elder son (Yeshua^{c}?), and later by his son Hananiah. Hananiah was governor by 354 B.C., and his son, or his brother's son, Sanballat III, succeeded to the governorship in the time of Darius III and Alexander the Great.[121]

Thus Wright concludes that Josephus' story about the founding of the temple on Mt. Gerizim by permission of Alexander the Great is substantially reliable.[122] It was the founding of this rival temple which did more than anything else to aggravate the traditional bad relations between Samaritan and Jew.

[115] Cross, ..Aspects," 203.
[116] Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 103.
[117] Cross, "Aspects," 201.
[118] Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 104.
[119] Cross, "Aspects," 203.
[120] Ibid.; cf. the Tobiads of Ammon and the Oniads of Judah.
[121] Cross, "Aspects," 204.
[122] Wright, "Samaritans," 364.

Some have contended that "the mere existence of a Temple on Mount Gerizim need not itself have involved an irreparable breach."[123] They point to other Jewish temples at Elephantine in Upper Egypt in the fifth century B.C., at Leontopolis in Lower Egypt in the second century B.C., and at ᶜAraq el-Emir in Transjordan.[123a]

However, only the Gerizim temple became a real challenge to the Jerusalem temple, because it represented a considerable political faction and was also a rival for the allegiance of Yahweh-worshipers of the north.[124] The Jews understood the prophets and Deuteronomy to point to Jerusalem as the only legitimate place for sacrifice, at least in Palestine.

The new temple on Gerizim would have provided the base for a distinct and separate religious community. It also provided a "Jewish" priest, who probably brought with him a copy of the Pentateuch and began to teach the people the ways of God and worship along a line which became more and more Mosaic. The temple drove a wedge between the two communities, which in time was to split them into two hostile groups.

The Destruction of Samaria and the Rebuilding of Shechem

When Alexander the Great had finished with Tyre and Gaza, he installed Andromachus as governor of Syria (including Palestine) and went south to invade Egypt.[125] In 331 B.C., the city of Samaria revolted and burned the governor alive. Alexander immediately marched north against Samaria and captured it. Those who had killed Andromachus fled with their families to the Wadi Daliyeh, where they were found in a cave and suffocated to death by Alexander's soldiers.[126] Alexander then resettled Samaria with Macedonians and made the city a Greek colony.[127]

The Samaritans were then forced to establish a new capital, and the logical place was old Shechem.[128] It was a time-honored site, hallowed by the most ancient Hebrew traditions and adjacent to the holy mountain of Gerizim on which a new temple had just been built. With the development of Shechem, the Samaritan religious and cultural center was firmly established.[129]

[123] Rowley, "Samaritan Temple," 189.

[123a] Haacker, "Samaritan," 451.

[124] Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 12.

[125] Wright, Shechem, 178.

[126] Frank M. Cross, "The Historical Importance of the Samaria Papyri," *BARev* 4 (1978) 25.

[127] Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 107.

[128] Wright, "Samaritans," 365; cf. Cross, "Aspects," 25.

[129] Purvis, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, 109.

Waltke says that Wright has conclusively shown that Shechem was Samaria's replacement as the Samaritan capital after Alexander captured Samaria.[130] This accounts for: (1) the archaeological evidence for the reestablishment of Shechem in the late fourth century after having been virtually uninhabited during the Persian period; (2) the elaborate attempts the Samaritans made to refortify Shechem--to maintain their claims against the Jews; (3) Josephus' implication that Shechem was the Samaritan capital in the period of Alexander and thereafter (cf. Ant. 11.8.6-7); and (4) Sir 50:25-26 (ca. 180 B.C.) which refers to "the foolish people who dwell in Shechem."[131]

Bickerman notes that "it often happened that when a Greek colony was established, native villages under its control formed a union around an ancestral sanctuary."[132] It was possibly after such a pattern that the Samaritans were organized at Shechem and Mt. Gerizim. There can be little doubt that the city was rebuilt by the remnant of the Samaritans driven out of their newer capital at Samaria.[133]

The Destruction of the Temple and Shechem

With their establishment at Shechem and Gerizim, the Samaritans began a long and painful process of self-identification.[134] And the enmity toward Jerusalem and the Jews grew rapidly.

Josephus relates that when Alexander granted the Jews freedom from tribute every seventh year, the Samaritans requested it also, claiming to be Jews.[135] But whenever any Jew was accused by the authorities at Jerusalem of breaking the Law or of any other crime, he would flee to Shechem and say that he was unjustly accused. About 193 B.C., Antiochus III gave Samaria and Judaea to Ptolemy Epiphanes as his daughter Cleopatra's dowry. Josephus says that during this time the Samaritans were flourishing and doing much mischief to the Jews by cutting off parts of their land and "carrying off slaves."[136]

When Antiochus Epiphanes was harrassing Judea (ca. 168-67 B.C.), the Samaritans at Shechem sent a letter to him disclaiming any relationship to Jews or to their God and asked that their

[130] Bruce K. Waltke, "Review of The Samaritans, by James A. Montgomery," BSac 126 (1969) 84.

[131] Wright, "Samaritans," 359, 365-66.

[132] Elias Bickerman, From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees (New York: Schocken, 1947) 43-44.

[133] Cross, ..Aspects," 207.

[134] Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 109.

[135] Josephus, Ant. 11.8.6-7.

[136] Ibid., 12.4.1.

temple on Gerizim be named the Temple of Zeus Hellenios.[137] It is this opportunism which Haacker labels "decisive for the ultimate schism."[138] Thus, the Samaritans escaped persecution, while the Jews resisted with their lives. The success of the Maccabean revolt led later to the expansion of Judaea at the expense of Samaria (cf. 1 Macc 10:38; 11 :24, 57).

Josephus relates an interesting story which supposedly took place in Alexandria (Egypt) about 150 B.C. in the days of Ptolemy Philometer. The Jews and Samaritans there were disputing about which temple was the true one. Ptolemy became the judge at a debate, and the Jewish side won, appealing to the Law and the succession of high priests and the age and prestige of the Jerusalem temple.139 (The appeal to Moses and the priesthood shows that the basic Samaritan doctrines had already solidified in general form by this time.)

John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) decided-to put an end to the Samaritan rivalry. In 128 B.C. he destroyed the temple on Mt. Gerizim, and in 107 B.C. he destroyed both Samaria and Shechem.[140] Purvis sees several motivating factors behind these acts.[141] First, the Samaritan temple was an irritating and divisive factor in Palestine. Second, animosities between Shechem and Jerusalem had been rapidly increasing, leading to actual harrassment by the Samaritans. And third, Hyrcanus wanted to solidify the extent of Judaean authority and hold firmly to the "inheritance of our fathers" (1 Macc 15:33-34).

The Samaritans must have breathed a sigh of relief when Pompey conquered Palestine in 64-63 B.C. They developed good relations with both the Romans (until A.D. 52) and the house of Herod (which was closely tied to Rome).[142] Shortly after A.D. 70, Emperor Flavius Vespasian rebuilt Shechem (about one-half mile west of the old city) and named it Flavia Neapolis (New City), which survives as the modern S city of Nablus.[143]

The Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan recension of the Pentateuch also played its part in the development of the sect. Purvis believes that "the Samaritan ir Pentateuch is the chief sectarian monument of the community, and it

[137] Ibid., 12.5.5.
[138] Haacker, "Samaritan," 452
[139] Josephus, Ant. 13.3.4.
[140] Wright, Shechem, 183-84; cr. Josephus, Ant. 13.10.2,3.
[141] Purvis, Samaritan Pentateuch, 113-15.
[142] Haacker, "Samaritan," 452.
[143] Bishop, "Relationships," 112.

is hardly possible to conceive of Samaritanism as a sect apart from it."[144]

The most prized possession of modern Samaritanism is its scroll of the Pentateuch, known as the Abisha scroll.[145] Abu'l Fath, in his Chronicle (written in A.D. 1355), says that the Abisha scroll was "discovered" in A.D. 1355.[146] Crown contends that the scroll is "not to be regarded as a unitary work, but as a manuscript assemblage of fragments of various ages."[147] He believes that Abisha, son of the high priest Pinhas (d. A.D. 1364), fabricated the scroll between A.D. 1341 and A.D. 1354.[148] Whatever the case, similar scrolls are also in existence, and the text type is definitely pre-masoretic. The date of this recension is helpful in determining the time of the Samaritan emergence from Judaism as a distinct sect.

Purvis, in his exhaustive study of the Samaritan text, offers the following observations and conclusions:[149]

(1) The script of the Samaritan Pentateuch is a sectarian script which developed from the paleo-Hebrew forms of the Hasmonean period. This script is not a descendant of the paleo-Hebrew of the earlier Persian or Greek periods or of the later Roman period.

(2) The orthography of the Samaritan Pentateuch is the standard full orthography of the Hasmonean period, which contrasts with the restricted orthography seen in the Pentateuchal text of the earlier Greek and the later Rabbinic periods.

(3) The textual tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch is one of three textual traditions which are now known to have been in use in Palestine during the Hasmonean period. Moreover, it is most likely that this textual tradition completed its development during this period, rather than at an earlier time.

(4) When the final break between the Shechemites and the Jews was consummated, the Samaritans took as the basis of their biblical text proto-Samaritan tradition, a Palestinian text type preserved in the paleo-Hebrew script. The proto-Samaritan had been in process of development from the Old Palestinian textual tradition from the fifth to the second centuries B.C., when it reached its fullest stage of development during the Hasmonean era. Hebrew orthography also reached its fullest stage of development at this time, and the comparable phenomena of full text and full orthography may be due to more

[144] Purvis. Samaritan Pentateuch. 13-14.
[145] Alan D. Crown. "The Abisha Scroll of the Samaritans," *BJ RL* 58 (1975). 36.
[146] Ibid..39.
[147] Ibid.. 37.
[148] Ibid.. 64.
[149] Purvis. Samaritan Pentateuch. 16-17.84-85. 118.

than coincidence. For their sectarian recension, the Samaritans selected the full text of the proto-Samaritan tradition and the full orthography in vogue at that time.

(5) The complete and irreparable break in relations between the Samaritans and the Jews occurred neither in the Persian nor the Greek periods. It occurred in the Hasmonean period as the result of the destruction of Shechem and the ravaging of Gerizim by John Hyrcanus.

Waltke declares that "Professor Cross has now shown that the Samaritan recension proper branches off in the early Hasmonean Period."[150] Cross concludes as follows:

> We can now place the Samaritan Pentateuch in the history of the Hebrew biblical text. It stems from an old Palestinian tradition which had begun to develop distinctive traits as early as the time of the Chronicler, and which can be traced in Jewish works and in the manuscripts of Qumran as late as the first century of the Christian era. This tradition was set aside in the course of the 1 st century in Jerusalem in favor of a tradition of wholly different origin (presumably from Babylon), which provided the base of the Massoretic Recension. ...The Samaritan text-type thus is a late and full exemplar of the common Palestinian tradition, in use both in Jerusalem and in Samaria.[151]

CONCLUSION

The development of Samaritanism and its alienation from Judaism may thus be seen as a process with important milestones which promoted the antagonism: (1) the division of the kingdom into north and south (ca. 931 B.C.); (2) the conquest of Israel by Assyria, with resulting importation of foreign colonists and religions (ca. 722-630 B.C.); (3) the rejection of the new Samaritan community by Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and later leaders (ca. 535-332 B.C.); (4) the building of a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim (332 B.C.); (5) the reconstruction of Shechem as the capital of the Samaritans, followed by growing harrassment of Jews (ca. 332-170 B.C.); (6) political and religious opportunism shown by the Samaritans during the persecutions of Antiochus IV (ca. 168-67 B.C.); (7) the destruction by John Hyrcanus of both the Samaritan temple and Shechem (ca. 128, 107 B.C.); and (8) growing hostilities and harrassment on both sides during the next several centuries.

[150] Waltke, "Review." 84.
[151] Cross. "Aspects." 208-9.

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