

the institution in its developmental stages.

The synagogue developed into the major gathering place for religious instruction, worship, and other purposes of the Jewish community. The Temple continued to be dominated by the priesthood. Formal liturgical services were held in the Temple, and some instruction took place in the open courts until the destruction of the Temple. The synagogue was a laymen's institution. Its twofold primary function of worship and instruction was directed and controlled by laymen.

The service in the synagogue was developed around prayer and instruction in the Torah. Scripture was read each Sabbath morning and, subsequently, on Sabbath afternoons, on Monday and Thursday afternoons, and at any other time a group of people gathered who wished to hear the reading of the Scripture. There is little evidence to suggest the development of a fixed liturgy before the end of the first century in the Christian era.<sup>56</sup> There is no evidence for the existence of a central, controlling tradition of practices of instruction or liturgical styles of worship in the synagogues. The synagogue, prior to and during the apostolic period, was a developing institution. Synagogues were being established in every town and village in Palestine and the Diaspora wherever Jews lived in sizable numbers.<sup>57</sup> There was no central authority to maintain particular patterns of practice and belief. Jerusalem, Rome, and other large cities had several synagogues. Acts 15:21 confirms the existence of such synagogues: "For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues." Preaching occurred in the synagogues on a regular basis in relation to the reading of Scripture. Peter and Paul are recorded as preaching and teaching in the synagogues of the dispersed Jews. Preaching was not a missionary activity in Judaism, but was that activity of instruction of the people.

The synagogue service most frequently consisted of a confession of faith, prayer, Scripture reading, address, and blessing. The Scripture reading had two parts, one from the Torah, the other from the Prophets. The Torah, meaning Pentateuch, had previously been developed into a three-year cycle of readings.<sup>58</sup>

There is confusion in the literature over the meaning of the word "Torah." It has the narrow, particular meaning of Pentateuch, but far more frequently it has come to mean "doctrine" or "teaching" in a general sense. It has been translated as "Law" with the implied meaning of formality, particularity, and rigidity. This is an inaccurate meaning of the word. Torah refers, in its broadest sense, to all that is important for the faith and the life of the people.<sup>59</sup>

The task of the teacher-preacher in the synagogue was to interpret the Torah for the people. He had maximum freedom to interpret. The address or homily was given by both priests and lay teachers. Their authority derived from the fact that they spoke in the name of the Torah. They had the right to interpret and answer questions according to their understanding of the Torah.<sup>60</sup> The life and the faith of the people were guided by the authority of the Torah as it was interpreted through the homily by the teacher. The local elected ruler of the synagogue was responsible for appointing the reader of Scripture and the person who delivered the homily.<sup>61</sup> F. C. Grant described the practice of teaching as follows: "The preacher — who was really a teacher — sat (Luke 4:20; Matt. 5:1), and any likely visitor might be asked to give the sermon, homily, or exhortation (Luke 4:17; Acts 13:15)."<sup>62</sup> The reading of the Torah and the subsequent address were the instructional, teaching aspects of the service.<sup>63</sup>

The exact date when the practice began of giving a homily in the synagogue service is not known. It was a common, established practice in both Palestinian and Hel-

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lenistic synagogues during the period covered by Philo's writings.<sup>64</sup> In addition to providing instruction in faith and life for members of the synagogue, the homily was also used for propaganda and proselytizing purposes. It was the central practice of the missionary enterprise of Judaism prior to the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. One needs to emphasize that this teaching practice of delivering a homily was for believers and unbelievers to learn of the Jewish religion, and the homily was used for this purpose.<sup>65</sup> The Jews of that period did not make the rigid distinctions in practices that we have read into their practices. The synagogue service could and did serve multiple functions. Since any person who was invited to do so by the leader of the synagogue could read Scripture and give the address, traveling lecturers could spread different schools of thought within Judaism. It is important to recognize in the background of Christianity the number of synagogues that were foci of different modes of thought.<sup>66</sup>

It is impossible to conclude that a particular pattern of practices prevailed among the synagogues. Missionary homilies, propaganda addresses, legal halakic discourses, and extremely loose haggadic instructive sermons were all characteristic of the intertestamental synagogue. Clear distinctions were not made between these, and all were part of the activity to instruct the people in the Word of God. Distinctions between preaching and teaching were not made. Nor was this instructive activity confined to the synagogue structure. Both preaching and teaching occurred in the open air. This was considered a common practice in Palestine and Babylonia. Courtyards, vineyards, shade of buildings and walls, marketplaces, open fields, and banks of rivers were used as sites of teaching-preaching.<sup>67</sup>

There was a great difference between the more popular haggadic style of homily or address and the strict halakic discourse. The popular address was given much more fre-

quently in the synagogue service. This popular address or homily was considered a teaching practice whether it was oriented toward making proselytes and converts or toward edification of the congregation. Neither preaching nor teaching denotes a distinct style or kind of activity. These words refer to the variety of activities that took place as the congregation was exhorted, instructed, and edified. It cannot be claimed on the basis of existing evidence that preaching was a more spiritual, emotional, or vigorous activity than teaching, or that preaching was a missionary activity while teaching was for the local congregation. These distinctions cannot be made on the basis of the existing evidence.

### *The Contribution of the Jewish Schools*

Since it is known that the schools that were related to the synagogue were another source of teaching practices, the contribution of the schools must be examined. The period of Jewish schools and their educational practices that is pertinent for our study has been divided into either two or three parts. These periods of history are named after the principal teacher of that time.

The first period, that of the Sopherim, began with the construction of the Second Temple about 515 B.C., and ended around 200 B.C. The Jewish leaders of this period were called scribes, Sopherim. This name was given to those men who worked at copying the Torah, and taught and interpreted it to the people.

The period of the Zugot began about 200 B.C. and ended around A.D. 10. The term "*zugot*," meaning "pairs," refers to the fact that during this time the Sanhedrin seems always to have been headed by two important people at the same time. During this period there were five pairs beginning with Jose b. Joezer and Jose b. Johanan and ending with the famous teachers Hillel and Shammai.