In the first-century world, marital problems were discussed with brothers and sisters, not with parents or friends. In the book of Sirach, there is a suggestive list of things to be ashamed of and not ashamed of (41:17–42:8), and the list is headed with this advice: “Be ashamed of immorality [literally: lewdness, sexual matters] before your father or mother.” But given the foregoing features of the first-century Mediterranean kinship system, the expectations engendered in the collectivistic personalities involved would not generate our sorts of marital problems. For social life is so organized that men and women move at ease in two exclusive circles that might touch but never overlap, even on domestic occasions. These circles coincide with the gender and moral division of labor mentioned in chapter 1 on honor and shame.

Marriage

In the first-century Mediterranean world and earlier, marriage symboled the fusion of the honor of two extended families and was undertaken with a view to political and/or economic concerns—even when it might be defensively confined to fellow ethnics, as in first-century Israelite practice. As a process, Mediterranean marriage is the disembending of the prospective wife from her family by means of a ritual positive challenge (i.e., gifts and/or services to her father) by the father of the prospective groom, along with her father's response. Should the father be unavailable, then responsible male members of the family, such as older brothers, paternal uncles, or the prospective groom himself, take part in the transaction. During this initial phase, the prospective spouses are set apart for each other; they are betrothed, “hallowed,” or “sanctified” (which is what “set apart” means in Hebrew/Aramaic). The responsible males draw up a marriage contract, and eventually the bride's father must surrender his daughter to the groom, who takes a wife by bringing her into his house. The parable of the ten maidens in Matthew 25:1–12 pictures the bridegroom coming home, obviously with his bride (not mentioned in many English translations but appearing in some ancient documents). With the ritual movement of the bride into the bridegroom's house, the marriage process is complete. The wife-taking always results in the embedding of the female in the honor of her husband. She, in turn, symbols the shame of the new family—its sensitivity to public opinion and for its own self-image.

These stages of the marriage process seem to be alluded to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:29–31 in somewhat of a reverse order: “Let those who have wives live as though they had none [= the married couple], and those who mourn as though they were not mourning [= bride's family losing their daughter/sister], and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing [=
groom's family and their gain], and those who buy as though they had no goods [= groom's family who must pay bridewealth at betrothal], and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it [= bride's family dealing at betrothal for suitable bridewealth]" (I follow J. Duncan M. Derrett in this explanation).

The bride's family looks for a groom who will be a good provider, a kind father, and a respected citizen. The bride does not look to him for companionship or comfort. Instead, as in all societies that exalt bonds between males and masculine lines of rights, the new wife will not be integrated into her husband's family but will remain for the most part of her life on the periphery of his family. As a rule, she is like a "stranger" in the house, a sort of long-lost relative of unknown quality. Just as life in the Mediterranean world is so organized that men and women move in exclusive circles that might touch but never overlap, so marriage is simply one phase of contact between male and female circles, with no overlapping expected. When does the wife shed the stranger's role? First of all, when she is the mother of a son; the birth of a son assures her security and status recognition in her husband's family. The son grows up to be his mother's ally and advocate of her interests, not only against his father, but against his own wife. In case of conflict in the household, daughters-in-law do not stand a chance. Thus the wife's most important relationship in the family is that with her son. Daughters are welcome but burdensome, since they can plague a father's honor. Sirach notes, "A daughter keeps her father secretly wakeful, and worry over her robs him of sleep; when she is young, lest she do not marry, or if married, lest she be hated; while a virgin, lest she be defiled or become pregnant in her father's house; or having a husband, lest she prove unfaithful, or though married, lest she be barren. Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter, lest she make you a laughing stock to your enemies, a byword in the city and notorious among the people and put you to shame before the great multitude" (Sir. 42:9–11).

Further, a female is not a stranger when she is a sister, especially with brothers. Brother and sister share the most intense cross-gender relationship in this sort of cultural arrangement, so much so that the brother readily gets highly incensed when an unauthorized male approaches either his wife or his sister. Should a woman misbehave sexually, the father will hold his daughter responsible, while the brother will seek out the other party and attempt revenge. The last point is illustrated in the Bible most clearly in 2 Samuel 13:1–29, and somewhat in Genesis 34:1–31, although this last passage indicates that Jacob was not angered over his daughter Dinah's behavior, just at her brothers' actions. We shall consider these passages shortly. Here we will only note that the husband-wife relationship does not supercede the intense relationship between brother and sister. Thus, should the brother reside near his sister, and his sister and her husband quarrel and separate, this would be a matter of little more than inconvenience and mild regret to her and her brothers and sisters. Consequently, stability of marriage would be highest when the wife is decisively separated from her kin group of origin and is socially incorporated (by means of a son) into the kin group of her husband.

Finally, the new wife would not be a stranger if she married a parallel cousin, a sort of surrogate brother. This is as close as she might marry in her kin group, given first-century incest taboos, although some males did marry nieces, as complaints from Qumran indicate. However, while the last category would not be that prevalent, cross-cousin marriage would be quite common. (In contemporary Islamic countries, cross-cousin marriages account for forty percent of actual marriages). Yet the most frequent situation for new wives is as strangers in their husbands' houses.

Given the foregoing definition of marriage, divorce would be the reversal of the process described above. Hence divorce means the process of disembedding the female from the honor of the male, along with a sort of redistribution and return of the honor of the families concerned. Now, the extent to which the wife becomes embedded in her husband upon marriage as well as the extent of the disembedding effected by divorce would depend on the type of marriage strategies and marriage norms involved. In the Bible there are three major sets of marriage strategies, and to gain a better understanding of what the New Testament says about marriage and divorce, it might serve us well to consider the Old Testament background to the New Testament discussion.

**Marriage Strategies in the Bible**

From beginning to end, the books of the Bible reveal people much concerned with honor and shame, interacting in an agonistic way. Marriage, too, is part of the agonistic give and take of challenge and response that we have previously considered. With this sort of social setting for interaction, it would follow that, like other challenge-response strategies, marriage strategies might be of three types. Thus in a challenge situation I might readily give in to you for my benefit (conciliatory); I might attempt to struggle with you to gain some sort of supremacy (aggressive); or I might just ignore you and stick to my group entirely (defensive). Each strategy would entail a range of styles or permissible expressions, yet the focus would be either conciliation, aggression, or defense. When it comes to marriage strategies, it does in fact seem that the broad periods of the history of Israel were characterized by distinctive strategies, with conciliation typical of the patriarchal immigrant period,
aggression typical of the Israelite preexilic period, and defense typical of the
Israelite postexilic period. Mediterranean endogamy, the preference for
keeping daughters close to the nuclear family, seems constantly to have been
the ideal. Let us briefly consider the evidence.

The Patriarchal Immigrant Period

The legendary story of Abraham's immigration into the land of Canaan
marks the beginning of the patriarchal period. In this period, Canaan (later
Palestine) was fully populated. Abraham was not a nomad moving about
trackless wastes. Rather he immigrated into a region controlled by monarchic
cities and their kings. While we obviously lack a wide range of data for this
period, it is not too difficult to see that Abraham and his "offspring" enshrined
the endogamous ideal. Abraham married his half-sister (Gen. 20:12); Nahor
married his brother's daughter, his niece (Gen. 11:29); Isaac married his
father's brother's son's daughter, his first cousin's daughter (Gen. 24:15);
Esau, among others, married his father's brother's daughter, his paternal par-
collage (Gen. 28:9); Jacob married his mother's brother's daughter, his
maternal parallel cousins (Gen. 29:10); Amram, Moses' father, married his
father's sister, his paternal aunt (Exod. 6:20; Num. 26:57-59).

From these legends recorded in the Bible, we find that the patriarchs took
a marriage strategy that was conciliatory—and by marriage strategy I specif-
ically mean behavior based on the perception of how the female is embedded
in the male's honor. As unstable immigrants, the patriarchs readily give their
women in exchange for political protection and/or economic advantage after
marriage, although preferring to retain them for themselves in marriage if
possible. They are willing to offer their wives and married daughters to
higher-status, local city-dwellers for political and economic ends. This was
the strategy of Abraham with the Pharaoh (Gen. 12:10-20); of Lot with his
dughters, even in the presence of their husbands (Gen. 19:12-16, 31-38); of
Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 20:2-18), and note especially v. 13 for Abra-
ham's habitual immigrant attitude: "And when God caused me to wander
from my father's house, I said to her, "This is the kindness you must do me:
at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.""; of Jacob
with his daughter Dinah (Gen. 34:1 ff., and note Jacob's curse on Simeon
and Levi for avenging their sister in Gen. 49:5-7). Thus sexual hospitality, specif-
ically to one of higher social standing and for the controlling male's benefit,
was the social norm. Sacred prostitution, a form of sexual hospitality in tem-
ples, could also be found in this period. The disembodied female, notably
widows in our evidence, could readily dishonor males by proving too aggres-
see (thus the daughters of Lot in Gen. 19:31-38; the daughter-in-law of
Judah in Gen. 38). Incest with one's father's wife or concubine dishonors
the father and hence is a grave insult symbolizing revolt against paternal authority
(for Reuben, see Gen. 35:21-22; Gen. 49:3-4).

Typical of the period are plural wives (i.e., a legal, first-rank wife along
with concubines or legal second-rank wives), as well as marriage with widows,
foreigners, slaves, and the like (see Gen. 16:1-4, 25:1-6 for Abraham; Gen.
Inheritance is patrilineal, and residence after marriage is normally patrilocal.

We might characterize the patriarchal period as symbolized by kinship ties,
a sacred or holy kinship group chosen by God and consisting of the patriarch
and his "seed." The first century author Seneque tells us what the ancients
believed the "seed" to be: "In the semen there is contained the entire record
of the man to be, and the not-yet-born infant has the laws governing a beard
and grey hair. The features of the entire body and its successive phases are
there, in a tiny and hidden form" (Naturales Quaestiones 3, 29, 3 LCL). In
antiquity, human "seed," which only males have, is much like Russian nest-
ing dolls or Chinese boxes, each containing the whole of forthcoming pos-
terity. The patriarch heads this family, with worship centered in the kin group
and with norms governing social interaction deriving from family custom.

The Israelite Period

The story of Shechem (Genesis 34) foreshadows a new set of kinship
norms that characterize the marriage strategy of the Israelite period and that
are codified in the early laws of Israel. In the story, Simeon and Levi, unlike
their father Jacob, display an aggressive marriage strategy. They would deny
their women to higher-ranking outsiders and even attempt to take the out-
siders' women. In other words, their wives and sisters are perceived as
embedded in their honor to such an extent that they feel compelled to defend
don honor even in face of encroachment by higher-standing persons. Sexual
hospitality is a thing of the past.

With this sort of behavior and its expression in subsequent law codes, the
purity or shame of women becomes attached to male honor in such a way that
it cannot be even temporarily disembodied. Once this happens, marriage
strategy loses the potential for reciprocity that it has in the conciliatory mode.
Now marriage strategy emerges exclusively as an agonistic value, a conflict in
which the winners are those who keep their daughters, sisters, and wives and
take the women of other groups in addition, giving only their patronage,
their power, and their protection in exchange.

In the new ideology, males are now clearly vulnerable to varying degrees
through their wives, daughters, and sisters. Aggressive strategy demands that
fathers attempt to choose as mates for their daughters those who are closest and best known and who somehow already share in the collective honor of the patriline. The fathers of the patriarchal period, on the other hand, were more concerned about their sons than their daughters. In the aggressive perspective, daughters should marry relatives as close to home as incest laws allow. Sons, on the other hand, should marry nonrelatives but bring the spouse into the patrilocial community. In this way the honorable, aggressive head of the house gains sons-in-law, retains sons and daughters, and gains daughters-in-law along with a range of offspring. Given this sort of preference, marriage ends up being a competitive, agonistic affair of power in which there are winners and losers of women, more powerful and less powerful patrons and clients, and social statuses among which a certain mobility of family statuses takes place. This is simply an expression of the agonistic quality of social relations typical of sedentary Mediterranean communities from antiquity.

For the winners the result of such strategy is an increase in numbers, hence political power, along with the ability to acquire more women in exchange for patronage while avoiding the risks to honor by giving one’s daughter away. Thus the competition for women in marriage negotiations is a competition for power. Provided that sons born of such unions can be kept faithful to the patriline, those heads of families with the most women expand fastest and attain a position of domination. This, of course, presupposes polygyny, with the corresponding problem of how much trust a father can have in his out-group wives and their sons.

Consider the biblical documents from the preexilic period. The importance of many wives in the struggle for power is noted by Gideon (Judg. 8:30), and subsequently for the kings of Israel, notably David (1 Sam. 25:39–43; 27:3; 2 Sam. 3:2–5), and notoriously Solomon (1 Kings 11:1 ff.). The problem of the degree of trust one can have in foreign wives and their like is signaled in the story of Abimelech’s return to his patriline (Judges 9) as well as in the various stratagems of the king’s sons, beginning with Absalom (2 Sam. 13:30). Numerous out-group wives mean trouble, or so the authors of the book of Kings think (of Solomon, 1 Kings 11:1–3; of Rehoboam, 1 Kings 14:21–24; of Asa, 1 Kings 15:11–14; 22:46).

The ideology of conquest and consolidation in the Israelite period envisons a land in which the Israelites will gain wives and daughters but give away no sons (e.g., Exod. 34:14–16, later tempered by Deut. 7:1–6; Josh. 23:11–13). The legislation of the period, both the early material in Exodus and Numbers and the later formulation in Deuteronomy, looks to solidifying as well as controlling those aspects of the aggressive strategy that might disturb the public order sanctioned by God and the king. Sexual hospitality, both public and private (i.e., the offering of one’s daughter, sister, or wife), is now perceived as an affront against the male in whom the female is embedded (Deut. 23:17–18). The married female is now so fully embedded in the male that any dealing with the wife is invariably perceived as an affront to male honor; it now becomes inconceivable for an honorable man to offer his wife in hospitality to another (Exod. 20:14, 17; Deut. 5:18, 21; 2 Sam. 3:6–11). Adultery, of course, symbols grave trespass into the space of a fellow honorable male, a clear negative challenge requiring vengeance as a response.

The limits of incest are spelled out (Deut. 22:20 [in Hebrew texts 23:1]; 27:20–23; yet in 1 Chron. 2:24, Caleb is said to marry his step-mother), and incest still serves as an outraging symbol of revolt against one’s paternal-father (2 Sam. 16:20–22: Absalom and David’s concubines; 1 Kings 2:13–17: Adonijah and Solomon’s concubine). Concubines might be available from war (Deut. 21:10–17; see Num. 31:18) and through debt-bondage from one’s fellow Israelite (Exod. 21:7–11). However, eloping with an unmarried and unbetrothed girl—the passage is often interpreted as rape and seduction—does not make the girl one’s own, but rather the girl’s father alone has the right to determine the girl’s future (Exod. 22:16–17; Deut. 22:23–27). The father has the right because sexual dealings with his daughters are an affront to his honor and would lead her brothers to avenge her.

Since marriage transactions entail the mutual honor of the families concerned, such dealings are to be carried out fairly and without deception to prevent vengeance and feuding. The regulation on the tokens of virginity in Deuteronomy 22:13–21 point to this. However, the tokens of virginity—the female’s blood from the ruptured maidenhead shed on first intercourse—have somewhat deeper symbolic implications. Just as the maidenhead symbols shame, so in the process of first intercourse a young man’s first wife becomes the bearer of the man’s and the subsequent families’ positive shame—their sensitivity to honor. Further, the blood on both conjugal partners symbols that their marriage is a type of blood relationship—the husband “cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Thus the emphasis on blood in the marriage process indicates that marriage is not simply a sort of legal contract, but essentially a blood relationship in which the stranger wife becomes a member of the husband’s patriline. This blood relationship subsequently entails certain contractual obligations between the families and the marriage partners as well. In the aggressive strategy, the husband retains the right to disembody his wife from his honor should she dishonor him. This is the right to divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1.

This right to divorce in the Deuteronomic legislation is probably a compromise solution in favor of peace between families and public order. The reason I say this is that in situations that dishonor the male and involve blood
relatives, the normal solution is to kill the one who causes dishonor (thus the wicked son in Deut. 21:18-21; the wicked daughter in Deut. 22:20-21). In the case of the duly married dishonoring wife, divorce is the available compromise solution. The certificate of divorce of Deuteronomy 24:1 indicates that the previous male cedes his rights over the female, hence that he will not be dishonored if the female marries again. However, he cannot take her back after a subsequent marriage because such behavior is tantamount to sexual hospitality. Sexual hospitality is prohibited in the aggressive strategy; any return to conciliatory strategy is "an abomination before the Lord" (Deut. 24:4). Finally, to prevent embedded females from dishonoring the male by entering into formal contractual obligations, the male has the right to rescind them (Num. 30:2 ff.). Only males have the prerogative of entering formal contractual arrangements. Yet widows and unmarried divorcees—unembedded, previously married females—can act as males in this regard, hence their ambiguous social status. The parameters for vengeance that might arise from aggressive strategies are also spelled out (Num. 35:16-28).

The laws of Israel from this period come from the political institution symbolized by the palace-temple (in Hebrew, the same word stands for both palace and temple, normally built adjacent to each other). The political institution would seek to impose its laws by force, while custom would work to contravene the law. That customs from the conciliatory phase were still present is evidenced by the complaints of the prophets against sacred prostitution, for example, Hosea 4:14-19 and Jeremiah 5:7-9; 7:16 ff. (the queen of heaven in this last passage is probably the virgin to whom Job [31:1] does not lift his eyes). For a fuller picture, see the exilic reminiscences of Ezekiel 16:22.

We might characterize the Israelite period as symbolized in the holy land, the land set apart by God for God's people, a land ultimately under God's control. Authority over this land lies in the hands of a leader/king. Political worship is disengaged from traditional domestic religion and situated first in various local political shrines, then in a centralized political shrine under the control of priestly families. The norms found in the customs of the elite become codified in law—the law of Moses, which is the law of God.

The Postexilic Period

Judaism gets its name from the Israelite kingdom of Judah, called by Greeks and Romans "Judea." It was common in the Graeco-Roman period to categorize people (and animals) by place of origin, so a "Judean" was a person from Judea. Judaism, in turn, referred to the behavior and customs of persons living in Judea. The Israelite tradition came to be focused on Judea and the Jerusalem Temple found in Judea when Judean elites returned to their preexilic homeland. The experience of the period of exile and subsequent return mark a change in the central symbols of Israel, hence in marriage strategy as well. The elite accounts of the return in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah indicate that not a few of the returning exiles, in order to fit into the prevailing society of Judea as they found it, divorced their wives and married into local non-Israelite families. Such behavior on the part of both the families owning the land and the returnees was a mutual conciliatory gesture. The book of Malachi sets the tone for this period in the area of marriage strategy, with its insistence that what God desires is "Godly offspring... For I hate divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel, and covering one's garments with violence" (Mal. 2:13-16). In the circumstances addressed by Malachi, what God hates is the divorce of members of the house of Israel married to each other. There is silence about the divorce of Israelite and non-Israelite.

Be that as it may, the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah require the divorce of all wives (and their children) acquired by the returning exiles from native non-Israelite families, along with marriage to fellow Israelites only. Thus, due to the priestly reform of postexilic Israel and its interpretation of fidelity to the covenant, the marriage strategy worked out in Ezra-Nehemiah leads to a defensive strategy: Females born within the covenant are to be kept, and entanglement with out-group women is to be resolutely avoided (read Nehemiah 9-10 and Ezra 9-10; a resident of the Israelite colony in Alexandria, one Demetrius, "proved" that even Moses' wife, Zipporah, was actually an offspring of Abraham, cited by Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica 9.29.1-3). This defensive strategy would lead the newly formed, closed Judean community to monogamy (unlike the aggressive posture adopted in the earlier Israelite period and in later Islam). Further, the prohibition on divorce as proclaimed by Malachi is antipolygamy in its effects, whether polygamy be successive or simultaneous. It is this defensive marriage strategy coupled with the perception that embeds female sexual purity in male honor that lies at the bottom of the sexual behavior found in the Priestly writings of the Old Testament. These gradually are developed by "tradition" into the norms of first-century Israel. The laws from the previous strategy, as well as the customs of the patriarchal stories, have to be reshaped to fit the new strategy. The earlier creation story of Genesis 2:4ff. is prefaced by a Priestly creation story in which God's first command to the Earthling (this is what "Adam" means in Hebrew) is to increase and multiply (Gen. 1:28), which is, of course, in line with the defensive marriage strategy set out in the rest of the Priestly writings.

The holiness code of the Priestly tradition is a purity code (see next chapter), a set of explicitly formulated social lines that are to mark off clearly "us" (Israelites) from "them" (the rest of humankind). This set of boundaries is
replicated in temple structure, in sacrifice procedures, and, for our purposes here, in sexual behavior. The general principle is that everything is forbidden unless it fits within its designated social space. Legislation specifies designated social spaces. To begin with, early Israelite customs on forbidden sexual relations are restated as incest lines of prohibited degrees of marriage in Leviticus 18:6–18; 20:11–12, 14, 20. Adultery is not only an outrage to male honor but also an abomination (Lev. 18:20; 20:10). Sexual intimacy (Lev. 19:9), keeping Israelite women as slave-wives (Lev. 25:44–46), males acting as females in sexual encounters (Lev. 18:22; 20:13), priestly marriages with once-embedded or shamed women (Lev. 21:7, 13–14; see Ezek. 44:22)—all these are not simply affronts to male honor but equally abominations before the Lord. Male honor is symbolized in the male sexual organs, and both the priest (Lev. 21:20) and the nonpriest (as in the previous period, Deut. 23:1) must have their sexual organs intact to be full members of the community.

Since holy seed or holy offspring are paramount symbols, genealogies tracing holy seed come to have emphatic symbolic importance (read the genealogies in Ezra and Nehemiah; also in the books of Judith and Tobit). Sexual bodily effluvia render a person unclean (Lev. 15:16–18, 32 for the Israelite male; Lev. 22:4 for the priest; Lev. 15:19–30 for the female; the new defensiveness is clearly articulated in the rules about sexual relations during menstruation in Lev. 15:24; 18:19, 20:18). "Homosexuality" dishonors the male (one partner plays a female role) and confuses defensive boundaries—and it is an abomination to the Lord (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). Bestiality applies to both the sons as well as the daughters of Israel (Lev. 18:23; 20:15–16).

Finally, while sexual hospitality or sacred prostitution is dishonoring and forbidden (Lev. 19:29), sexual intercourse with a slave woman is frowned on as defiling (Lev. 19:20) and requires a guilt offering. So much for the law.

In the customs of the period, the sages warn against adultery because of the vengeance that will surely come from the outraged husband (Prov. 6:25–35). The women most likely to be unfaithful are those whose husbands do not stay at home: "For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home" (Prov. 7:19–20; see 9:13–18). This passage implies, again, that the trader not only offends against the common sense of limited good but has not enough honor to keep his wife properly cordoned off.

Perhaps the most information about the customs of defensive strategy is to be found in the book of Sirach, who wrote about 150 B.C. in Jerusalem. This is city–elite information, the sort of ideal norms toward which the non-élites aspire. To begin with, Sirach tells us that fathers arrange marriages (7:25; see 4 Esdras 9:47 for a mother who arranges the marriage, perhaps in default of a father). In the Hebrew and Syriac manuscripts of Sirach, the husband is told, "Do you have sons? Correct them, and choose wives for them while they are young" (7:23). This points to the practice of early arranged marriages in which the father engages the girl for his son and vice versa before either of them are of marriage age, which is puberty. Children owe their lives to their parents, a debt that they can never adequately repay (Sir. 7:28). In his advice to married men in 9:1–9, Sirach offers counsel on attitudes toward various classes of women. The married man ought to avoid married women because of penalties that might be exacted—presumably by their brothers and father (9:5)—and because married women can ensnare a man in the vengeance of their husbands (9:8–9). Prostitutes lead to a loss of inheritance, either because any offspring remains "fatherless," or because the man's father would be shamed by his sons' actions (9:6).

Sirach views the wife as embedded in her husband, since divorce means to "cut her off from your flesh" (Sir. 25:26); this is further indication that marriage is considered a sort of blood relationship, resulting in "one flesh," much as children are "one flesh" with their parents. Daughters marry out; they live in their husbands' families although even there a daughter can still shame her father (22:3–6, note v. 3: "the birth of a daughter is a loss"). Sirach 25:16–26:27 discusses the range of wisely behavior, from shameful to honorable, including rival wives. An important cultural value is alluded to by Sirach in 25:21, where the ideal wife is one who is beautiful and wealthy (note that Judith is such an ideal female, yet a widow who does not remarry: Judith 8:1–8; also Sarah, the future wife of Tobit, is such: Tobit 6:11–12). However, by means of marriage, the wealth of the female should pass to the male, for "there is wrath and impudence and great disgrace when a wife supports her husband" (Sir. 25:22). The story of the younger Tobit indicates his proper social placement, since Sarah belongs to his patriline and her wealth belongs to him should he marry her (Tobit 6:11).

As mentioned previously, the father is all too vulnerable through his daughters (Sir. 26:10–12 and especially 42:9–11). Hence the cultural imperative to marry them off as soon as possible, which means shortly after the onset of menstruation. Because they are embedded in the male, women can all too easily shame their fathers and husbands. Thus, "better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good; and it is a woman who brings shame and disgrace" (Sir. 42:14; note 40:19: Even in defensive strategy, where offspring are all important, a blameless wife is better than children and the honor that comes from giving public endowments).

This defensive marriage strategy stands as the basic perspective and chief mode of perception for the discussions of marital and sexual behavior in the Qumran writings as well as the reactions of Jesus recorded rather differently.
in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In the nonlegal documents of the period, such as Sirach, Tobit, and Judith, a person’s intentions, his heart, counts in sexual encounters. The focus of this intention in marriage is on offspring, on holy seed, this being the sole valid motivating factor for sexual encounters. Any other motives are shameful. Thus Tobit’s sexual union with Sarah on their wedding night is motivated not by her wealth and beauty, but by holy seed (the former being called immorality or immoral motives, the latter truth—Tobit 8:7). Likewise, in Israelite tradition, a man’s getting married because of the beauty or wealth of the bride is equivalent to immorality; the offspring of such marriages are almost tantamount to bastards, the symbolic opposite of holy seed. Given this emphasis on defensive strategy and holy seed, imputations of doubtful lineage are among the gravest insults in the culture, sure to get prompt attention. For example, John the Baptist’s calling the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jerusalem a “brood of vipers” (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7; Jesus uses the term according to Matt. 12:34; 23:33) means nothing less than “snake bastards,” a doubly offensive term. Similarly, Jesus calls his contemporaries an “adulterous generation” (Mark 8:38; Matt. 12:39; 16:4), literally “a generation of bastards,” the offspring of adulterous unions. These are powerful insults in a culture where purity of lineage is a central concern. Jesus’ parable on divorce, with remarriage called adultery, likewise implies bastard offspring in such a union (Mark 10:11; Matt. 5:32; 19:18; Luke 16:18). Jesus’ teaching on divorce will be considered later, in the “Study Questions for Hypothesis Testing” section at the end of this book.

Now, we might characterize the postexilic Israelite period as focused on the symbol of holy offspring. These holy offspring form a holy people, headed by priests, with worship in the central Temple in the central preindustrial city of Israel. Norms for the period derive from Priestly law that cover the behavior of priest and nonpriest alike.

When we turn to the New Testament and the typical marriage strategies developed in post-Jesus communities, we find that they are in most respects continuations of the defensive strategy of Israel. For these early communities, the Bible means Israel’s sacred scripture, the Old Testament. With this in mind, consider the churches of Paul and the churches after Paul as mirrored in the New Testament. I present them as prolongations of the defensive strategy, hence the name “Pauline interval.”

The Pauline Interval

With Paul and the early post-Jesus communities that nurtured him, a new twist on the defensive marriage strategy develops. The Pauline period does not cover any lengthy time span but is an interval between Paul and the post-Pauline churches. The basis for Paul’s strategy is his conviction that all people can have access to God in Christ regardless of gender roles, ethnicity, or social status (read Gal. 3:27–28; see also Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:11, which is probably a baptismal formula). Since in the community in which Paul was socialized (he called himself “a Hebrew” by birth and “a Pharisee” by Torah practice), norms about sexual behavior, ethnicity, and social status all derived from the prevailing understanding of the Torah, the Old Testament, and since Paul rejects this Torah as normative for post-Jesus groups, he thus rejects Torah laws about sexual behavior, ethnicity, and social status for post-Jesus group members. In fact, what he does is to reject “law” and to revert to “custom.” Let me explain this point for a moment.

For analyzing Paul, it is important to understand the difference between law and custom. Relationships between human beings are patterned and controlled by more or less obvious rules of behavior, by “oughts.” Such rules of behavior or “oughts” are called norms. Now, both law and custom have this in common—they are bodies or sets or collections of norms. The difference between law and custom is sanction, that is, who puts the teeth into the norms when you do not follow them, who enforces the norm. Custom is sanctioned by the same social institutions that the norms themselves create, while law is sanctioned by some other institutions, specifically some form of political institution. If this is too abstract, consider the following example. Why do you treat your parents like parents, and why do they treat you like their child? The norms and oughts of parent behavior and affection toward their children, as well as the norms and oughts of children’s behavior and affection toward their parents, make us an aspect of what is called the family. The family, in this aspect of parent-child relationship, consists of such reciprocal norms of behavior. The norms create the institution.

Now, what if the state or national government passes a directive that says parents and children must treat each other properly and with affection. What the government is doing is taking a custom from family behavior, from the family institution, and doubly institutionalizing it by having government power enforce and sanction what was previously custom. Law is always a custom that has been doubly institutionalized—custom from the sphere of family, economics, religion, or education, all of which consist of norms that are customary. People follow rules in their family interactions, in their economic dealings, in their religious approaches to God and fellow humans, and in their teaching each other the traditions of our society. And they follow those rules even before they find out that the government in question might take certain aspects of their behavior in these areas and make those customary norms binding on all in the group with the teeth that government can provide.

Furthermore, social institutions can become so complex that they formalize
In the light of the prevailing cultural context, I would call Paul's marriage strategy a charismatic defensive strategy. It is charismatic insofar as it derives from post-Jesus group custom, and it is defensive insofar as the norms for sexual encounter have to at least match the best in Israelite and "civilized" (the meaning of "Greek") legal tradition, which was defensive.

The prevalent symbol of the Pauline interval is the holy group (the church of the saints) headed by charismatic leaders, with worship centered in the prayer and activity of the group. Its norms derive from its customs. Within the framework of these symbols, Paul is still concerned about holy seed (1 Cor. 7:13–14), a point he refers to as he deals with Jesus' parable about divorce, now taken as group norm (1 Cor. 7:10, 11). First Corinthians 7 deals mainly with the problem posed by the Corinthians as to whether sexual relations are allowed to post-Jesus group members. The chapter is not really about marriage and the relationship of husband and wife in marriage. Paul's advice, though, is that post-Jesus group members ought to stay in the marriages they had when they became group members, but if the unbelieving partner causes difficulty, peace is a greater value than preserving the marriage (1 Cor. 7:15). However, as regards new marriages and remarriages, these should take place "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1), presumably with fellow group members. This feature marks a centripetal direction of social interaction within the holy group, a form of defensive strategy in which those in the group intermarry without divorce. This strategy is further developed in the subsequent period.

The Post-Pauline Period

The post-Pauline development of post-Jesus group traditions discernible in the New Testament marks a consolidation of the charismatic customs developed previously. Post-Jesus group custom moves on the way to becoming post-Jesus group law, with sanctions deriving from the governing body (administration) of the group. Now, due to the general obligations of membership in a post-Jesus group and fidelity to the new covenant demanded by them, women born within the new covenant or entering the group in an unmarried state are to be kept, and marital entanglements with outsiders are to be avoided. This strategy is a defensive marriage strategy, but it now takes place in Christ and is hence a form of post-Jesus group defensive strategy. And predictably, the new post-Jesus group norms are much like the old defensive rules of Second Temple Israel, but are now outfitted with post-Jesus group motivation. We find such rules in Ephesians 5:22 ff.; Colossians 3:18 ff.; 1 Peter 2:11–3:12; 1 Timothy 2:8–15; 4:1–5; 5:3–16.

This post-Pauline period is likewise the time in which the Gospels were...
written down. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as previously mentioned, each present a tradition in which Jesus’ parable on divorce is shaped into a type of post-Jesus group norm, further underscoring post-Jesus group defensive marriage strategy. About A.D. 106, Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, urges that marriages of group members take place before the local bishop, a procedure that is within the same strategy.

What characterizes the post-Pauline development of Resurrected Jesus traditions is the symbol of holy church, an association of collectivistic personalities who are to keep the association holy. The association is headed by duly chosen officers, with worship gradually localized. Developing custom now takes on the quality of law, administered by duly chosen officers.

The main structural features of the kinship system described at the beginning of this chapter for the Mediterranean world would apply to both the defensive strategy of Second Temple Israel and the defensive strategy of post-Pauline groups. For the New Testament reader, it should be useful to know that these kinship features were the ones shared both by Jesus’ audience and by the early post-Jesus churches that collected the New Testament writings.

Summary

The models presented in this chapter include a set of features of the kinship system and a set of marriage strategies. Kinship and its major generating institution, marriage, deal with the meanings and values embodied by persons who are involved in the birth of a child and the process begun by birth. This process, from the perspective of kinship, covers the developing webwork of human relations—by blood and in law—rooted in the culturally interpreted fact of birth. Birth, of course, is the effect of the sexual union of a male and a female human being who share some sort of previous relationship. When this relationship is one that agrees with the kinship norms of a society, it is called marriage. Kinship and marriage are sets of social norms that can be analyzed into a range of features.

Distinctive features of kinship norms in first-century Israelite society include incest taboos, monogamy, a sort of endogamy, emphasis on the male line of descent, patriloc al marriage, a somewhat extended family living arrangement, the family as unit of production, emphasis on family traditions, arranged marriages, geographic and social immobility, ties of affection between brothers and sisters and mother and children rather than between husband and wife, and the wife as a blood relation who often remained a stranger in the house.

In the first-century Mediterranean world, marriage meant the fusion of the honor of two extended families, undertaken with a view to political and/or economic considerations. Marriage is a process of disembedding the female from her family and embedding her in her husband—and his family. Females are always perceived as embedded in some male unless they find themselves in the anomalous situation of being a widow or divorcée without kin.

The first-century house of Israel followed a marriage strategy that might be called defensive, while the Bible evidences two other forms of strategy as well, the conciliatory and the aggressive. The patriarchal period reveals a conciliatory marriage strategy marked by endogamy and sexual hospitality toward persons of higher social rank, with a view to the economic and political benefit of the male. The Israelite period is marked by an aggressive marriage strategy in which power comes from the possession of females and their offspring, with a resulting emphasis on polygamy, wife-taking from other groups, and the refusal of daughters to outsiders if possible. The Second Temple Israelite period, the period of the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus, is characterized by a defensive strategy in which the marriage partners should both be under the covenant, with the avoidance of foreigners altogether. During the interval of expectation of the return of the Jesus as Messiah with power evidenced in Paul’s writings, the defensive strategy of the house of Israel is maintained but interpreted in the light of developing post-Jesus group custom. In the post-Pauline writings, these developing post-Jesus group customs become law for at least the Pauline tradition of the Resurrected Jesus movement organization, and a distinctive defensive marriage strategy gets under way. The main features of each of these periods are set out in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Marriage Strategies in the Bible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marriage and Kinship</th>
<th>Conciliatory</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Defensive</th>
<th>Charismatic</th>
<th>Christian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Symbol</strong></td>
<td>Holy Family</td>
<td>Holy Land</td>
<td>Holy Seed</td>
<td>Holy Churches</td>
<td>Holy Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period</strong></td>
<td>Patriarchal</td>
<td>Israelite</td>
<td>Judean</td>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>Post-Pauline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Head</strong></td>
<td>Patriarch</td>
<td>Leader/King</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Charismatic Leaders</td>
<td>Church Officers (Bishop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norms</strong></td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Temple/Palace</td>
<td>Temple Group Activity</td>
<td>Church Group Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Pauline perspective (read Galatians 3–4), we can further describe these periods as:

- **Promise**
- **Abrahamic Covenant**
- **Old Jerusalem in Israel**
- **Fulfilled Promise**
- **New Law**
- **New Covenant**
- **New Jerusalem in Christ**
References and Suggested Readings


Clean and Unclean

Understanding Rules of Purity

With this chapter we take a further look at that group of foreigners who people the New Testament, this time considering their concern about and interest in persons and things that are clean or unclean. Certainly this was a central concern in the Second Temple Israelite period. Jesus directed a parable to this concern, as most New Testament readers know: “Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him” (Mark 7:14–16). Further, Jesus seems to have observed some of these purity rules himself, as witnessed by the fact that after he touches a leper (in Mark 1:40–45), and the leper tells people about it, “Jesus could no longer openly enter a town,” since he was unclean because of this contact. As for Peter, Luke informs us that in response to God in a vision experience, Peter avows, “I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean” (Acts 10:14). He subsequently interprets the vision to mean “I should not call any human being common or unclean”—so the vision was not about food at all (Acts 10:28; read the whole passage, 10:1–48). Finally, post-Jesus groups seem to have been bothered by “questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath” (Col. 2:16), as well as particular observances of “days and months, and seasons, and years” (Gal. 4:10). These sorts of indications point to purity rules. What are purity rules? What do they mean? Why are they of central concern in first-century Israel? What was the attitude toward them harbored by post-Jesus group members? To understand these questions, perhaps the best place to begin is with the common human experience called the sacred.

Sacred and Profane

Let me start with a series of examples. Imagine that you are in your favorite department store to buy a new pair of jeans. All of a sudden a little girl walks in, browsing and licking a full ice cream cone. To your surprise the
What I want to illustrate by means of these examples is that even in our individualistic, so-called secularized world, we still share in the basic human experience called the sacred. The sacred is that which is set apart to or for some person. It includes persons, places, things, and times that are symbolized or filled with some sort of set-apartness that we and others recognize. The sacred is what is mine as opposed to what is yours or theirs, what is ours as opposed to what is yours or theirs. (In our culture, it might be no one's, and we believe in all goods being limitless, but in the first-century world, there is nothing that is no one's—all goods are limited and distributed.)

Some common synonyms for the sacred include holy, saint, and sacred. We feel jealous about our sacred persons, places, and things (as noted in chapter 4).

The opposite of the sacred is the profane, the unholy, the non-sacred. The profane is that which is not set apart to or for some person in any exclusive way, that which might be everybody's and nobody's in particular to varying degrees. Thus the words sacred and profane describe a human relationship of varying degrees of exclusivity relative to some person or thing (and I include time and space under "thing"). For example, to say that human life is sacred is to point out that human life is set apart and exclusive among the forms of life we might encounter, and therefore that it should be treated differently from animal life. Again, to say that sex is sacred means that human sexual encounters are set apart and exclusive among the various forms of sexual encounters we might know, and therefore that human sexual encounters are unlike and not to be treated as carnal copulations. These examples derive from a comparison of the human with the animal domain and indicate belief in the exclusivity of the human. To profane human life and behavior is to treat them just like animal life and behavior.

You have undoubtedly noted that marked-off set-apartness can take place in different dimensions: between mine and yours, between ours and theirs, and between the human and the nonhuman. Obviously, other lines can be drawn, and perhaps the set of lines we are most used to are those that mark off the area of persons, things, and events set apart by or for or to God. We often refer to this area as the sacred, the holy, the sacral. We speak of God's holy people—a group of people set apart by or for God or God's service; God's holy name—God's person symbolized by some specific name and belonging to a category that is fully unlike and not to be treated as an human name or person. We also talk of sacrifice, a word that literally means to make (-flee) sacred or holy (sanc-), hence, to set apart to or for God, the nation, the family, or some other person. The word sanctify means much the same thing.

The perception of the sacred, of the set-apart, clearly implies some sort of social lines marking off one side from the other, animal from human, mine from yours, ours from theirs, God's from ours. You might recall that in the
discussion of honor and shame, I began with the observation that human meaning building is a process of socially contriving lines in the shapeless stuff of the human environment, thus producing definition, socially shared meaning. Human groups draw lines through and around time (the social times of childhood, adulthood, old age) and space (the social spaces called your house and your neighbor’s, or called the United States and Mexico). They also mark off persons with social roles and statuses, things with norms of ownership, and God as a unique being controlling the whole human scene.

Human beings the world over are born into systems of lines that mark off, delimit, and define nearly all significant human experiences. Not only do people define and delimit, but they also invest the marked off areas (persons, things, places, events) with feeling, with value. Line drawing of this sort enables us to define our various experiences so as to situate ourselves and others and everything and everyone that we might come into contact with, as well as to evaluate and feel about those experiences on the basis of where they are located within the lines. Thus the set of social lines we learn through enculturation provides all of us with a sort of socially shared map that helps and compels us to situate persons, things, places, and events. Line making normally results in a special social emphasis on the boundaries, since clear boundaries mean clear definition, meaning, and feeling, while blurred boundaries lead to ambiguous perceptions and reactions.

Purity: Clean and Unclean

Consequently, social lines are quite necessary for us to perceive set-apartness. Set-apartness relative to persons and the sorts of exclusive relationships between persons and other persons, places, things, and events refer to the experience of the holy, the sacred. However, not all human experiences deal with exclusiveness in relationships. There are things and places and persons that we define, situate, and locate, but with which we have no sort of relationship of exclusiveness. We do not invest ourselves in everything and everybody in the same way as we invest ourselves in our possessions, our parents, spouses, children, or brothers and sisters, our special times and places, our God. Yet we do in fact use a set of lines to define, situate, and locate others, even those whom we might never see in a lifetime on this planet—for example, people, places, and things in other parts of our state, country, and world. Now, purity is specifically about the general cultural map of social time and space, about arrangements within the space thus defined, and especially about the boundaries separating the inside from the outside. The unclean or impure is something that does not fit the space in which it is found, that belongs elsewhere, that causes confusion in the arrangement of the generally accepted social map because it overruns boundaries, and the like. The sacred and profane, then, would be subsets of purity rules dealing with differences in exclusivity (sacred) and nonexclusivity (profane). Purity rules in general deal with places and times for everything and everyone, with everyone and everything in their proper place and time. Yet if the arrangements presented in purity rules are exclusive to our group and no other, we might readily consider them sacred purity rules.

Purity rules are much concerned with dirt. Garden dirt in the backyard is in its proper place. When the same dirt gets into the house, the house is considered “dirty, defiled, unclean, impure.” Dirt is a way of speaking of something out of place. Dirt is a sort of metaphor for matter (and sometimes persons) out of place. It is matter out of place that makes your room dirty. And of course, there are degrees of dirt. For example, college students usually clean their rooms for the upcoming visit of parents, yet when a mother sees the room she invariably says, “This is clean?” She finds dirt where the student purified and cleansed. Clean and dirty, then, are matters of degree. But please note one thing here. Wherever people perceive dirt, we can presume that some conception of an ideal order exists. Dirt presumes a system, a set of line markings or definitions. Otherwise one would never know that anything was dirty, unclean, or out of place to begin with. Further, dirt presumes that persons, places, and things do get out of place, since dirt is matter out of place. In this connection, our society calls people out of place (negatively) “deviants.”

Once persons, places, or things get put in their proper places, put in order, the result is a restoration of the clean and pure. The process of restoring things and people to their places can be called purifying or cleansing. Conversely, the process of putting things and people out of place can be called defiling or defiling. Now both defilement and purification presuppose some movement across a symbolic line that marks off the clean from the unclean. Such line crossing is a sort of transition from the clean to the unclean state, or vice versa. And this transition is across a boundary. As we have previously noted, boundaries are often ambiguous, often a source of anxiety and conflict as well as of satisfaction and fulfillment. For example, graduating from college is a transition, a line crossing. Some students are happy about the crossing; others feel anxious and unsure. In either case, graduating students go through a social transition, a line crossing. For the present, please note that between clean and unclean there must be a line.

Anomalies and Abominations

While every culture patterns reality by means of such line making, no culture thoroughly exhausts all the dimensions of human being and human experience, just as no human language makes use of all the sounds human speech
organs are capable of producing. Cultures are selective, limited, and limiting. So every culture eventually has to confront experiences that defy its cues, that do not measure up to its assumptions and classifications. Our culture, for example, cues us to perceive other human beings as individualistic personalities, while our first-century foreigners were cued to perceive others as group-oriented collectivistic personalities. What happens when one culture is confronted with the other’s prevalent personality type?

Our culture cues us to perceive the functioning of human organisms in terms of biological “laws” and to adjust malfunctions of such organisms by means of technological manipulations: when your appendix gets infected, you have someone cut you open and cut it out. Our first-century foreigners were cued to perceive the functioning of human beings in terms of personal causality in significant circumstances, so illness was healed by various interpersonal and non-technical means—for example, an exorcism along with an application of olive oil or the laying on of the hands of a healer. First-century folks would truly have been impressed by the miracle of modern medicine, just as we tend to disbelieve or wonder about the miracles of their quite usual wonder workers.

What I am driving at is that cultures have to deal with realities that do not fit their cues, and every culture eventually faces a greater or lesser number of such realities. These experiences that do not fit socially shared patterns or norms are called anomalies (the word literally means something irregular). If we are encouraged to react with strong negative feelings toward certain anomalies, to view them as triggers of disgust or hate, we would call this class of anomalies abominations. For example, we learn that it is proper to get rid of excess matter in the nose by blowing it out into a handkerchief or tissue, then carrying it around with us until we can dispose of it. We find it disgusting if a person bends over and blows the nose without benefit of tissue, directly onto the pavement. This latter type of behavior is an abomination in our culture, perhaps more abominable than killing someone who is trying to steal our TV set.

Be that as it may, cultures do not ignore the anomalies that specific cultural cues dredge up but cannot fit into their patterns. The reason for this is that if anomalies are ignored, people who embody the culture will lose confidence in the cultural cues. For example, our culture cues us to believe all goods are limitless, and this same culture recurrently forces us to face a job shortage, a case of something not being limitless. We must now fit this limit within our shared belief in limitless. If we can—for example, by the development of new jobs—then the system will go well because the limit has been removed and obliterated. But if we cannot fit the anomaly into our system, then we will be forced to adopt living arrangements that are limited—and there goes capitalism and the American way. Similarly, in the first century, members of the “house of Israel” believed they were the chosen people of their ancestral God, living in this God’s land, and worshiping that ancestral God of power who was capable of everything. What an anomaly it must have been to have the land occupied by the Persians and Greeks, and then ruled by Romans and their traditional gods. The longer the domination, the more urgent became the problem of reconciling the power and abilities of the God of Israel in the face of the anomalous unbelievers and their gods’ power. A similar anomaly faced European Jewry, God’s chosen people, when annihilated by a group with an equally “chosen people” ideology, Nazi Germany. Unless such a major anomaly were reconciled, the cultural system would run down or be radically changed. So every culture must have some ways for dealing with anomalies or abominations that fall between the cracks of its boundaries or lie outside its classification system.

There are at least five ways of facing up to anomalies. First, elites or opinion leaders can settle for one interpretation of life, thus reducing ambiguity and eliminating anomalies from attention. For example, we can settle for a belief in a mechanistic, technological view of reality, and thus any thing supernatural would be classified as superstition, hallucination, error, insanity, or heresy. Post-Jesus groups got rid of dissenting interpretations of the experience of Jesus by setting on a canon or collection of normative writings—our New Testament. This collection sustains a single range of interpretation of Jesus, with all other interpretations considered erroneous, heretical. Second Temple Israelites settled for one range of interpretation of marriage relations, with all others ranked unclean or abominations.

Second, any anomaly might be controlled physically. For example, people in our society who commit murder are generally physically removed from our midst. Criminal Roman elites were exiled or banished, thus physically removed from their society. Israel’s Torah directed that certain classes of people be removed to the peripheries of towns and cities, such as those afflicted with certain types of skin disease (notably psoriasis, which our translations give as “leprosy”; actual leprosy, or Hansen’s disease, was rare or nonexistent in the Middle East during biblical times).

Third, society might impose strict and clearly spelled-out rules for avoiding anomalous persons, things, and behavior. Such rules affirm and strengthen what is socially unacceptable and indirectly underscore what is acceptable. For example, our belief that smoking causes cancer is being worked out in rules for avoiding smoke, and hence smokers are confined to certain places, even though we believe in individualism to such an extent that a minor female or a married female needs no one’s consent to have an abortion. The smoke avoidance rules affirm what is socially unacceptable and
indirectly underlines what is acceptable. Roman citizens were forbidden to marry slaves, thus maintaining boundaries between statuses and their ascribed honor and indirectly highlighting the rank of citizen. Israel's food prohibitions imply a list of foods that are to be positively favored.

Fourth, the anomalous person, thing, or event can be labeled as a public hazard, thus putting the anomaly beyond discussion and furthering conformity. For example, nuclear plants that might break down are subsequently officially labeled a public hazard. Such a label makes discussion of the benefits of nuclear energy beside the point and aids in forming opinion against nuclear energy. By labelling the ideology of Judeans, both Ben Zakaists and post-Jesus groups, as “atheist,” that is, lacking belief in the traditional gods of the Romans, Roman leaders put any discussion of exclusivist Israelite Yahwism outside the realm of possibility and thus furthered conformity in rejecting it. By labeling Jesus’ healing activity as the work of Beelzebul, Jesus’ opponents try to make it highly unlikely that anyone would take him seriously, thus helping generate conformity in rejecting him.

Fifth, anomalies can be used in ritual to enrich meaning or call attention to other levels of existence. Thus violence—an anomaly in our law-and-order society—can be used in our national ritual of football. It can also be used to remind us of the violence we must do to ourselves to lead a good life, or how hard we must compete to make it in the economic “rat race.” Jesus drives out a demon named “Legion” (an allusion to the Roman occupying forces) and sends the multiple demon into a herd of swine (a perpetually unclean, abominable creature in elite Israelite perception), thus calling attention to the relationship of the demon to the Roman presence as to the abominable. Undoubtedly you can think of more examples that might fit these categories. A whole series of them might be found in ordinary college bull sessions about science and religion, science here meaning technology, as it ordinarily does among college students and not a few of their teachers. Religions imported into the United States (such as the various types of Israelite religion in Christian and later Jewish forms, as well as Islamic religions) provide a host of anomalies that do not fit the technological paradigm, while technology provides a large number of anomalies that cannot fit religions of other cultures.

Be that as it may, purity rules deal with system and order, with definitions of general boundaries and of exclusivity, with the anomalies that simply defy classification or that are positively abominations. Every culture has such purity rules, for every culture has a classification system. Yet cultures adopt different emphases, perspectives, or horizons in developing their classification systems. Our culture is poised on an individualistic horizon of limitless good attained by the individual's mastery of the social and natural environment, hence by means of social and physical technology, like ten rules to manipulate another to get him or her on a date, or five rules to follow to get better gas mileage. From this horizon, we get a set of rules, of classifications, that differs notably from the first-century Mediterranean, which was pivoted on group-rooted, collectivist personality and the perspective of limited good to be maintained by interpersonal competence in line with honor and shame.

Furthermore, since purity rules present a sort of grid that covers all aspects of society, such rules are equally concerned with maintaining the wholeness or completeness of the social body. The pure social body is much like a perfect container with no overflow or oozing in or out, a complete body. From this perspective, purity rules are very concerned with the outer borders of the society and strive to maintain society's integrity or wholeness. For example, note our interest in illegal aliens, passports, visas, health certificates for immigrants, and the like. As I mentioned previously, purity rules have a place for everything and everyone, with everything and everyone in its place—and with anomalies properly excluded. And just as society as a whole is a social body defined by purity rules, so also is the individual. The individual in a given society is a personal body defined by purity rules that replicate the societal rules and fit the individual into the social body. In other words, the individual human being can be considered a sort of portable road map of the terrain and features that mark and define the larger social world. Thus the individual, too, will be concerned about wholeness and completeness, about being a perfect entity with no overflow or oozing in or out, hence with individual completeness. For example, note our zeal in curbing offensive odors in the individual with mouthwashes, deodorants, scented soaps, and the like, that keep odors from the borders of others and within our own. Finally, since God-talk, or theology, necessarily consists in comparisons drawn from human experience, God, too, will be described in terms of the concerns of society and of the individual in the society. God will be described as complete, whole, perfect, and this perfection will be discernible in God's relationship to God's people and God's world.

The common perception is that observance of purity rules brings prosperity both to the society and to the individuals in that society, while infringement brings danger. In our society, the main purity rules concern the symbol called money, with health running a close second. Money is a quantitative line marker serving as norm for social status; it enables the pursuit of individualistic happiness within those statuses that we consider significant. Health is individualistic, technological health (the body as a sort of mechanical organism is viewed technologically). Health marks the ability of the individual to compete with others, hence to function productively within society as a whole and within an individual's own status in particular. You might note
that the only forms of segregation and discrimination permitted in the United States (hence, the only overt boundary markers) are those deriving from money and health. You can live wherever you want, eat and buy whatever you want, regardless of who you are, provided that you have the money. If you lack the money, you are in effect segregated from those who have it, hence you are in a lower class. Similarly, you are considered a possible productive member of society when you are physically and emotionally capable of acting as an individual, individuallyistically. Adults who are physically or emotionally dependent on others are generally considered unclean, unable to respect societal lines. On the other hand, those who are a threat to the money or health of the moneyed or healthy are abominations, deviants. Deviants get excluded from ordinary social intercourse, while normal folks who find themselves in an unclean state by means of crossing boundaries into areas where they ought not be (e.g., breaking a parking law, infringing on your neighbors' rights to privacy) have to be purified and cleansed, normally with money (fines, fees, and so on).

In the limited-good perspective of our first-century foreigners, the main task in life was not sympathy or achievement in terms of money but rather by the maintenance of one's inherited position in society. This brought prosperity and insured the most harmonious relationship possible in terms of time, place, interpersonal relationships with one's fellows, and relationships with God. This kind of prosperity was the task of the group-oriented, collectivistic persons as well as of their society as a whole. The purity rules of the society were intended to foster prosperity by maintaining fitting, harmonious relationships. Thus perfection—the wholeness marked off by purity rules—characterizes God, the people in general, and the individual. This perfection gets spelled out in replicating patterns (recall that replication means the same rules in different areas), perhaps most apparent in the categories of persons and their interaction in marriage, in temple worship, as well as in the fellowship of the meal. Before we consider Jesus' reaction to Israel's purity laws, it is obviously necessary to have some idea of what those rules were and how they outfitted society with meaning.

**General Israeliite Perspectives**

For any first-century Israeliite, whether Judean, Galilean, Perea, or émigré, there would be little doubt concerning the center of the inhabited earth. Due to God's will, Israeliite orientation was focused on the central place of the land of Israel, Jerusalem. And even more sharply, the central focus of Jerusalem was the Temple of the God of Israel. Traditional Israeliite ideology was pivoted on the awareness of the holiness of the God of Israel. Holiness is social exclusivity, and the God of Israel demanded such exclusivity from the people who were chosen to be exclusively God's—or so went Israel's storyline.

In terms of Israel's ideology, then, what was sacred to God had to do with what was exclusive to God, while the profane or nonexclusive to God consisted of all creation categorized in terms of a system that would allow everything and everyone a certain meaning-endowing, sense-making situation or place. This was the purity system of Israel, providing a place for everyone/thing, and expecting everyone/thing in its place. Israelis believed that this purity system derived directly from the God of Israel who created all that exists. In the very act of creation, Israel's God set up the system of categories into which all created beings properly fit (Gen. 1:24a). Thus Israel's purity laws were in fact natural laws directly established by the creator (this was the prevailing, Priestly view; however in Genesis 2: Adam sets up the initial categories, a feature noted in the Pharisee and later Ben Sira tradition). For its own welfare and prosperity, it was up to Israel, as a people sacred and exclusive to God, to live in purity. And it was notably up to the sacred attendants of God, Israel's priestly tribe, as God's divinely chosen retainers, to see to the observance of purity rules, both for themselves and the people at large. To approach the sacred, one had to be sacred and pure. To approach the sanctuary in general, one had to be pure. This idea lies behind Israeliite classification of persons and animals, as we shall see.

As for morality, if Israelites are to be exclusive as their God is exclusive, they too will have to behave in a manner befitting their exclusivity over against the rest of humankind. This exclusivity includes living according to the categories established by Israel's God in the created world. It is these categories that serve as the matrix for Israeliite definitions of what is in place (pure, clean) and what is out of place (impure, unclean). With purity a condition for access to the exclusive, only the clean can approach the God of Israel with any hope of success in the interaction.

Thus the orientational map of Israel consists of two major category sets: the sacred and profane (exclusive and nonexclusive) and the pure/clean and impure/unclean (in proper place/out of place). These category sets cut through the five major classifications typical of all societies: self, others, animate and inanimate creatures, time, space. Temple arrangements point to the application of these category sets to space and to selves/groups permitted in this space.

Some categories of behavior, however, fall outside Israel's God-given purity system. They are simply anomalous. Those who perform such actions must be punished. The actions are irrevocable, and therefore the guilty person simply cannot make up or atone for them. Such crimes prohibited by
God and expressed in Israel’s conventions and customs are full of danger for the community. Hence there are permanently applicable, divine sanctions for such deeds, to be applied in one of two ways: either by God himself or by the Israelite community.

The sanctions applied by God are those in which a person is “cut off” (karet). These are penalties for persons defiling the sacred and thus violating the distinctions between sacred and profane, the foundational category for the whole system of meaning. Since God is exclusive (sacred) like the realms God marks off as exclusive, too, Israel is an exclusive people and must observe the boundaries of the sacred (Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2, 20:7, 26). Violators are therefore expected to incur the penalty of being “cut off”; in other words, their deeds are expected to result in calamity to their entire lineage through the direct intervention of God (“automatically”) and without any societal action. This belief in automatic retribution protects the realm of the sacred by deterring acts that would encroach on the realm of the sacred.

However, crimes whose sanction is the death penalty to be applied by society fall outside the boundaries of behavior controlled by “cut off” penalties. The behaviors requiring the death penalty are transgressions of the Ten Commandments. The first set of transgressions include crimes that dishonor the God of Israel to such an extent that the requirement for satisfaction of honor is irreversible and irrevocable. The offender must be put to death. This includes infractions of Sabbath observance. Then come crimes against parents, and finally crimes that dishonor a man and his family honor requiring vengeance and resulting in feuding. As Josephus observes, “Now the greatest part of offenses with us are capital, as if anyone be guilty of adultery, if anyone force a virgin, if anyone be so impudent as to attempt sodomy with a male; or if, upon another’s making an attempt upon him, he submits to be so used. There is also a law for slaves of the like nature that can never be avoided” (Against Apion 2.215).

Consider the Torah prohibition of men lying with men as with a woman (Lev. 18:22). This prohibition is found in the passage running from Leviticus 18 to 20, a subset of crimes judged to be typical of non-Israelite behavior. In Israel such crimes deserve the death penalty to be applied by Israelite society as explicitly commanded in the Torah: “You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you” (Lev. 18:3). Hence these are behaviors typical of the non-Israelites that Israel knew. In his letter to the Romans, Paul found that these behaviors were typical of the non-Israelites that he knew as well. The listing of behaviors in Leviticus 18 is outfitted with penalties in the parallel Leviticus 20; actions requiring the death penalty, should they be found in Israel, include the following: offering children to Molech (Lev. 20:2), cursing father or mother (Lev. 20:9), adultery (Lev. 20:10), incest with mother/mother-in-law (Lev. 20:11) or daughter-in-law (20:12), a man lying with a man as with a woman (Lev. 20:13), man or woman lying with a beast (Lev. 20:15-16, and the earlier Exod. 22:19: “Whoever lies with a beast shall be put to death”), and acting as medium or wizard (Lev. 20:27). Such acts are said to pollute the land of Israel and the pollution of the land cannot be rectified by ritual purification.

It seems that when Paul speaks of things “according to nature” (κατά φυσιν) and “contrary to nature (παρά φυσιν),” as in his letter to the Romans, he adopts a Hellenistic Judean appropriation of traditional Israelite categories: (a) according to nature = according to the conventions (nomoi) and customs (ethos) of Israel, that is, holy and pure behavior as well as clean and unclean behaviors that can be “naturally” purified; (b) against nature = prohibitions in the conventions and customs of Israel sanctioned by a communal death penalty or direct divine punishment. These categories can be diagrammed as follows:

- **Israelite according to nature:**
  - Exclusive (holy, sacred)
  - Nonexclusive (profane)

- **Israelite contrary to nature**
  - No place (anomalous)
  - Exclusive (holy, sacred)
  - Nonexclusive (profane)

In this regard, it is important to note that for Paul, the presence of non-Israelites in his post-Jesus groups is something “contrary to nature” (Rom 11:24). The few non-Israelites in the Roman Jesus groups “have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree” (Rom 11:24). This “cultivated olive tree” is the group consisting of Israelite followers of Jesus.

### Classification of Persons in Israel

For Jesus and Paul, Israel’s categories of pure and sacred persons were something obvious. After our discussion of kinship and marriage in first-century Israelite ideology, we know that the defensive marriage strategy of Second Temple Israel required marriage partners to come from within the house of Israel. However, as we might expect from a limited-good society, this Israelite community was highly stratified into categories of persons who
received their place by birth. Genealogical purity, the lines defining one's inherited status within the defensive community, was certainly a major concern of the elites, and perhaps of the non-elites as well. In Ezra 2:2-58 and Nehemiah 7:7-60, we find a simple classification of the population in terms of degrees of purity deriving from proximity to the Jerusalem Temple, the political-religious focus of Israel. The Temple was a large area of courts and buildings with the central pivotal locus being the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. From the viewpoint of the kinship system and the defensive approach to life, since the whole genealogical community is perceived as God-given, its genealogical purity lines are considered to be God's will for God's people. God's promises of life in the age to come hold for the people, the offspring of Abraham, to the degree of their God-appointed purity. The period after the rise of post-Jesus groups saw the formulation of Ben Zakkai and the rabbinic traditions that marked the formation of Israelite non-Temple domestic religion in the third century A.D. These traditions, some of which probably mirror the situation during New Testament times, report that the genealogical categories of persons one might find in Second Temple Israel—from an Israelite perspective—included the following (cited from Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, p. 271 ff. and conflated):

a. 1. Priests

b. 2. Levites

c. 3. Full-blooded Israelites ("laymen")

d. 4. Illegal children of priests
   5. Proselytes or Gentile converts to Judaism
   6. Proselytes who once were slaves, hence proselyte freedmen

b. 7. Bastards (those born of incestuous or adulterous unions)

e. 8. The "fatherless" (those born of prostitutes)
   9. Foundlings
   10. Eunuchs made so by men

f. 11. Eunuchs born that way

x. 12. Those of deformed sexual features
   13. Hermaphrodites
   14. Persons of all other ethnic groups (= "Gentiles")

What is the basis of this set of categories? You will remember that in the defensive marriage strategy, it is imperative to intermarry solely with those belonging to the Israelite community—and within one's social status, if possible. Hence potential marriage partners must be members of the house of Israel by birth or by ritual birth (converts, called "proselytes") and occupy a given social status. Further, the defensive strategy calls for holy seed, hence offspring exclusive to God because born of parents respecting God's rules for God's holy people. Thus the persons marrying must be capable of having children, thereby transmitting their own inherited status—inheritance of status follows the father. Therefore, the criteria for fitting into the purity lines of this group include membership in the house of Israel and capacity to procreate. Further, this defensive community possessed a fundamental, overt status structure based on birth: priest, Levite, and full Israelite. Thus membership in Israel likewise implied inherited status.

The marriage rules, that is, purity rules applied to marriage, were obviously the work of the preindustrial city elites. They went as follows:

1. True Israel consisted specifically of priests, Levites, and other full-blooded Israelites (categories a, b, c). These persons were genealogically clean, with proper pedigrees. They could all freely intermarry.

2. Proselytes and proselyte freedmen were ranked separately, since they might be said to bear a slight genealogical doubt. Along with them were included the illegal children of priests. These latter were not illegitimate, but rather children of priests who married prohibited women such as widows, divorcees, or seduced women (see Lev. 21:7). Technically, a priest must always marry a female of true Israelite pedigree, "unused" or untouched by any other male; otherwise, his offspring are ranked with proselytes. Persons in this category (d) did in fact belong to Israel and could marry Levites and full Israelites, but never priests. Hence they were clean for some Israelites, unclean for others.

3. Category (e): Bastards, the fatherless, foundlings, and eunuchs had a grave genealogical impediment about them: they were simply not whole and complete. They could not properly trace their ancestry, might derive from highly disreputable ancestors, and in the case of the eunuch, could no longer transmit covenant status. These persons do not possess both covenant membership by birth and the capability of transmitting the status of proper covenant membership. They might possess one feature or the other, but not both. These could intermarry or even marry proselytes, but they were forbidden to marry priests, Levites, full Israelites, and the illegal children of priests—the group functionally forming "true Israel" and intimately bound up with the Temple.

4. Category (f): Eunuchs from birth, those of deformed sexual features, and hermaphrodites could not marry at all. They were incapable of sexual relations, hence incapable of transmitting Israelite status.

5. Category (x): Persons of all other ethnic groups (= Gentiles) were an abomination, simply off the purity scale altogether.
If we view these inherited statuses and the permissible defensive marriage interactions in terms of a Venn diagram, the picture would look as follows:

The categories derive from proximity to the Temple (and its holy place)—priest, Levite, Israelite—along with two qualities: being a member of the Israelite community by birth or ritual birth and the capacity to transmit one’s status within the Israelite community:

- **x**: abomination: off the purity scale entirely, hence necessarily unclean
- **f**: always unclean for marriage since they cannot fit the criteria for inclusion on the purity scale
- **d**: Israel, including those by ritual birth (proselytes). Some in this category are capable of marrying into “true” Israel at the Levite and Israelite level, but not at the priest level, hence they are clean for some, unclean for others in the inner circles.
- **c**: those who are Israelite by birth, “true” Israel, but among these there is a special category (b)
- **b**: Levites: these persons are fit for Temple service, but lack the qualities to fit them into category (a)
- **a**: priests: fit both for the Temple and for the altar (holy place)
- **e**: those of (d) who either fit dubiously in Israel or have a questionable inherited status to transmit or cannot transmit it any longer.

These categories of persons in first-century Israelite society represent an abstract conception of the purity lines of Second Temple Israel, a symbolic statement of who is in the social body of Israel. Entrance into the house of Israel is by birth, and circumcision marks the rite of entry. It should come as no surprise if we find that the classification of clean and unclean animals—what in the realm of animals is allowed to enter the individual body of the

Israelite or the worshiping body at the Temple—closely fits these categories of persons. This would be another instance of replication: the same rules in another dimension.

**Classification of Clean and Unclean Animals**

In fact, much as the holy land is holy because it is exclusive to the God of Israel, so is all Israel along with Israel’s domestic animals. This parallel between Israel and its domestic beasts can be seen in the fact that the first-born, “the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast,” is the Lord’s (Exod. 13:2; 22:29; 30; Lev. 27:26–27; Num. 3:13; 8:17–18; 18:15), as well as in the fact that temple sacrifices are to come only “from the herd or from the flock” (Lev. 1:2), that is, from domestic animals. Domestic animals are to observe the Sabbath, just as their owners and masters do (Exod. 20:8–11; Deut. 5:12–15; for the Sabbath year, Lev. 25:6–7). Finally, just as Israel is to avoid marriage with other ethnic groups—as though other ethnic groups formed another species—so too the cross-breeding of domestic animals of different species is forbidden (Lev. 19:19).

By replication, the categories that divide one class of Israelites from another in the marriage purity rules will divide their animals. However, there are nondomestic animals in the land as well, and these too must be patterned to make sense of the total environment. This is precisely where the categories of clean and unclean in Leviticus 11 fit in. These categories cover all the animals of the environment: water, air, and land creatures. The replication of marriage purity rules mainly looks to land creatures, as we shall see. At present, consider Leviticus 11.

The categories of Leviticus 11 cover all the animals of the environment, with only the domestic variety fit for the Temple. The animals are divided, first of all, according to their habitats: water, air, or land. The anomalous are rejected immediately; they are an abomination because they fall outside the categories—for example, amphibians that live between two spheres and in both (Lev. 11:10). Then specific criteria for each category are spelled out: proper land animals are “whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud” (Lev. 11:3). The proper water animal is “everything in the waters that has fins and scales” (Lev. 11:9). Finally, proper air animals are those that do not eat blood and carrion, can fly or hop with their wings and two legs (like the locust: Lev. 11:13–22).

Anomalies in these categories include any creatures having the defining features of members of another category, like land animals that swim like fish or insects (Lev. 11:29 ff.), winged creatures that go on all fours like land
animals (the insects, Lev. 11:20), or creatures lacking in the main defining features (e.g., crabs and eels are water creatures lacking fins and scales). However, creeping, crawling, and/or swarming and teeming creatures lack criteria for allocation into any one class, since there are animals in all three areas that behave this way. Thus “every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth is an abomination; . . . Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, all the swarming things that swarm upon the earth, you shall not eat; for they are an abomination” (Lev. 11:41–42). Now for purposes of comparison with the previous classification of persons, consider the following Venn diagram of land creatures (taken from Mary T. Douglas):

These categories, like those for persons, derive from proximity to the Temple (and the altar) along with two qualities: domestication and cud-chewing, parted-hoofed features.

x: abomination: any land animal that swarms is off the purity scale entirely, hence, necessarily unclean
f: always unclean for table use, since they cannot fit the criteria for inclusion on the purity scale. These have neither cloven hoofs nor chew the cud, are not domesticated, and they would include predators and carrion-eaters such as lions, bears, foxes, and dogs (which were not pets in the ancient Near East).
d: animals of the land of Israel that are domesticated or not domesticated, but have cloven hoofs or chew the cud or both. These can be clean or unclean for table use.
c: those animals that have parted hoofs and chew the cud are clean and fit for table use (Lev. 11:3; Deut. 14:4–6 for nondomesticated). Among these there is a special category (b)

b: unblemished clean animals of domestic herds and flocks; these are fit for the altar (Lev. 22:20 for the general rule), unless an added requirement is demanded (e.g., Lev. 1:3, 10; 4:3, 23, 28; 5:15, 18).
a: unblemished clean animals of domestic herds and flocks fit for the altar with added requirement of age (e.g., a year old—Lev. 9:3; 23:18) or quality (e.g., all first-born are to be given to the priest (Num. 18:15)).
e: those of (d) that do not have cloven hoofs and chew the cud, i.e., do one or the other but not both, even when domesticated (Lev. 11:4–7). The pig is listed here quite neutrally but in the second century B.C. becomes an especially unclean animal because of its use as sacred animal by outsiders, notably from the Maccabean period on (see 1 Macc. 1:41–64 and 2 Macc. 6:4–5).

Thus, as Mary Douglas has pointed out, we find a parallel set of purity lines marking off Israel and its animals. These might be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israelites:</th>
<th>Their animals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b: fit for Temple worship or sacrifice: only the clean without blemish</td>
<td>b: unblemished clean animals of domestic herds and flocks; these are fit for the altar (Lev. 22:20 for the general rule), unless an added requirement is demanded (e.g., Lev. 1:3, 10; 4:3, 23, 28; 5:15, 18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: clean animals of domestic herds and flocks fit for the altar with added requirement of age (e.g., a year old—Lev. 9:3; 23:18) or quality (e.g., all first-born are to be given to the priest (Num. 18:15)).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d: animals of the land of Israel that are domesticated or not domesticated, but have cloven hoofs or chew the cud or both. These can be clean or unclean for table use.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: those animals that have parted hoofs and chew the cud are clean and fit for table use (Lev. 11:3; Deut. 14:4–6 for nondomesticated). Among these there is a special category (b).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relative to category (b) above, those fit for Temple worship or sacrifice, our previous classification of persons dealt only with their clean or unclean state relative to birth. Birth marks only the beginning of a process in which persons have further occasion to be blemished or rendered unclean, hence unfit for social intercourse with their fellows in various degrees, running in concentric circles from the central hub, the Temple. For example, Leviticus 12–15 lists those who are unclean and must withdraw from social relations with their fellows. These include persons suffering from skin disorders or unusual, abnormal bodily flows such as menstruation, seminal emission,
supputation. In these instances the personal boundaries of the individual prove to be porous; the individual is not whole. The same holds for contact with a cadaver. Further, a blemished priest or Israelite was not allowed to offer sacrifice. What might constitute a blemish is duly noted in the following prescription: "For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback, or a dwarf, or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles" (Lev. 21:18–20). In these cases, the persons described are likewise not whole. The unclean and the blemished simply cannot symbol wholeness and perfection, and hence they cannot replicate the ideal: the perfect individual in the perfect society under the perfect God.

Now that we have some idea of how persons fit into their proper places, and how animals replicate persons and fit into their proper places, we will turn to the processes by which persons and their animals symbolically interact with God. One process is called sanctification or sanctifying. To sanctify is to set apart for God, to make holy to and for God. Another process is a specific form of sanctifying called sacrifice. Underlying both processes is the human way of making someone or something sacred to another.

Sanctifying and Sacrifice

At the beginning of this chapter, I set out a number of examples pointing to how we experience the sacred in terms of what we consider exclusively set aside for ourselves. Recall the jeans in the first example. How did the jeans get set apart to or for you? The process, which we might call buying or purchasing, has three abstract steps to it. At the beginning the jeans are rooted in their normal merchandising position, the property of some impersonal corporation such as the manufacturing company or the department store. As you start making your selection, you set some jeans apart from this normal state as you try them on, consider their qualities, and the like. And as your interest in a particular pair grows, you consider them as possibly yours, as not exactly the same as all the rest on the tables or racks, and you would be offended if another customer came and took them from your hands—even though they are not yet yours. The jeans as a possible purchase, as potentially yours, are in a middle phase, separated from the merchandiser’s pile, but not yet yours. This is a sort of boundary or marginal state. To help you through the marginal state, you get yourself a ceremonial leader, a salesperson, who runs through a ceremony or rite by means of which the marginal jeans are passed on to a new status: they become yours, set apart to or for you. They become sanctified to or for you. This little rite of sanctification, then, consists of three phases that might be depicted as follows:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>potentially yours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>normal condition</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>profane to you</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>normal condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sacred to you</td>
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This sort of process can be discerned in our dealings with many things. However, it also underlies the significant social changes that persons undergo. For example, a person’s movement into the marginal condition called college is toward a new sort of sacred state, a profession or life career. Students begin this movement from a normal condition of being qualified for nothing in particular. Similarly, getting married is a sort of process from the normal condition of being unmarried through a marginal condition of decision, planning, and rite, to a new normal condition of being married. In the first phase, potential mates are profane to each other; in the second phase they become potentially sacred to each other and eventually go through some sort of ritual that realizes the mutual setting apart. The result is the new normal state of being holy to or for each other, being married. Note that both throughout college and in getting married, there are ritual leaders, socially acknowledged, who bring a person through the marginal condition.

This description is temporal since it looks at the process in terms of time. However, we can also depict the process from the viewpoint of space. Relative to things, you already own a number of things in a spatial sphere that we might call your sacred area (your house, your room, your closet). Then there is obviously an enormous amount of things outside your sacred area that are not yours, that are profane to you. Finally, there is the overlapping area where you interact with the profane and acquire new items that become sacred to and for you, a sort of spatial marginal area (the area around a cash register or in a layaway room, for example). Spatially, the arrangement would look as follows:
The way you set apart or sanctify things is by moving them from their world (or nobody's world in our limitless-good culture) to your world. Your world, including the persons and things in that world, are sacred to you. You shaped and acquired your world because your parents introduced you into your world (which was their world with you as outsider) from the marginal area of birth. At this marginal area, they could either accept or reject you, and in this sense there is little difference between being born to or adopted by a given set of parents: in either case parents have to choose to accept their child.

Now, take the time to apply these two models of space and time to the relationship of human beings to God. From the viewpoint of time, what is the process of setting apart to God like? From the viewpoint of space, how do the areas of God and humankind intersect? In first-century Israel, the space of God was symbolized by the political-religious edifice, the Temple, which replicated both the entire holy land and the whole world, like a set of Chinese boxes or Russian dolls within each other. The process of setting persons and things apart to or for God is called sanctification, "holy-ing," or hallowing (as in "hallowed be thy name"); the process of interacting with God by means of persons and things thus set apart is called worship. The purity rules of our first-century foreigners point to the categories of persons and things and their proper condition and location for taking part in this interaction between God and humankind—in the Temple, in the holy land, and in the world at large. Such rules also replicate in the division of time throughout the year, which covers Temple time, time in the holy land in terms of a week punctuated by Sabbath rest, and the broader annual time, punctuated by special feast days. Temple time, Sabbath time, and feast-day time are all marginal times, transition times, times when you can ignore your watch, much as you do when you are at a party that you really enjoy or when you are in love or on a fantastic vacation. Watch time makes little sense in those circumstances, much as focusing on everyday routine matters makes little sense at parties, on dates, or on vacations. Such times are holy times and require a different set of focuses.

To get back to our foreigners, consider the spatial arrangement, the holy spatial lines, of the Jerusalem Temple in the first century. The Temple, much like later Christian church buildings and shrines the world over, consisted of three general areas: A) a place where properly prepared persons can assemble; B) a place marking God's space, the sanctuary proper, such as the altar area in some Christian churches; B) an intermediate space where interaction can take place. Of course these general areas can be and are subdivided, but for starters, take the overall view. The areas would thus correspond to the circles of space that is yours and not yours, depicted above. However, for greater exactness, I will surround both circles with a line that embraces persons not belonging to God's people, hence not fazed by the interaction:

The Temple arrangement replicates that of the holy land in which it is situated. The Temple is found in Jerusalem, on one of the three hills called the Temple Mount in the first century. Now, just as the holy land is God's land relative to the world created by God, so Jerusalem is God's city (Matt. 4:5; 27:53) relative to the holy land, and the Temple Mount is God's special mountain relative to the city of Jerusalem. Finally, the sanctuary building (Matt. 24:15; 1 Cor. 3:17) in the Temple area is God's space relative to the Temple area in general. Again, we have a set of Chinese boxes or Russian dolls that divide up space to fill it with meaning by reference to a center. In each case the problem area, the area of anxiety and concern as well as of joy and emotional highs, is the area of interaction, the margin or borderline. Judean émigrés coming from abroad are happy to see the holy land; on pilgrimage they are happy to see Jerusalem on the horizon; as worshipers they