

## WHY THE SPLIT? CHRISTIANS AND JEWS BY THE FOURTH CENTURY

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### 1. *Introduction*

There has been much recent discussion of the split between Judaism and Christianity. As will be seen below, much of the discussion has been concerned with modern categories, and fails to place the separation within the larger context of the ancient world. This is especially true with regard to its bearing upon developments in the ancient world, including the growth of Christianity, up to the fourth century or Late Antique period.<sup>1</sup> However, it seems to us that there are several pertinent questions about the development of this split between Judaism and early Christianity that have a direct bearing on several important elements within this period. Perhaps the most obvious question (and the one to which many have tried to provide an answer) relates to the defining characteristics of the split.

A problem with obvious questions, however, is that they often do not yield incisive answers. In this case, the answers to the kinds of questions to which we have devoted parts 2 and 3 of our paper—and to which most of the history of discussion of the split between Christianity and Judaism is devoted—are primarily descriptive in nature. That is, they

1. For biblical scholars, the post-New Testament period, and the relation of Christianity to this period in Roman history, are not as well known as the earlier period. On the Late Antique period and Christianity, see R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (AD 100–400)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), esp. pp. 43-101; cf. W.M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before AD 170* (Mansfield College Lectures; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893), pp. 172-77.

answer historical questions using standard descriptive historical narrative.<sup>2</sup> The question posed in the title of our paper, ‘Why the split?’ cannot be answered in this manner, because we are interested in a complex interplay of factors that could have developed in a number of different ways, none of them pre-determined or inevitable. We are concerned with subjunctive conditional possibilities, that is, what could have happened.<sup>3</sup> The answer to this question cannot be confined to neat historical description, but must range into territory that allows for further questions which begin with the troubling ‘What if...?’, something for which novelists and script-writers are more known than are historians.

It is the assumption of inevitability or pre-determination that confuses the question of ‘Why the split?’. It also perhaps explains why this question remains virtually unaddressed by those concerned with the split between Christianity and Judaism. Why talk about why it happened, when history shows that it did happen? Does not the historical fact of the split between Christianity and Judaism in a sense preclude, or at least render pointless, discussions relating to why these two groups became *two* groups? We think the answer to this question helps to illuminate the defining characteristics of the split, as discussed above, as well as the historical development and/or timing of that split. We also think that this question is the only way to identify the growing importance of ethnicity in the split between Christianity and Judaism by the fourth century, and even to help us understand some of the most important fourth- and fifth-century Christian theological controversies. At the risk of criticism for straying into this territory, it remains our purpose in the last major part of this paper to address ourselves to this difficult question. In conclusion, we will discuss the relationship between theology and ethnicity in the split between Christianity and Judaism.

2. This is certainly the case with histories written in the nineteenth century, but remains true of more recent ones. For example, N. Brox, *A History of the Early Church* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1984).

3. In other words, there was nothing that determined in advance that Christianity and Judaism had to develop as they did, that they had to split, that they had to split in the way that they did, or that they even had to exist at all. The events of history are often best described as the accidents of history. We owe the formulation of these distinctions to our colleague, Mr Arthur Gibson.

## 2. *The State of Affairs between Christians and Jews in the Fourth Century*

At the beginning of the fourth century, at the tail-end of the pre-Constantinian period, the relationship between the two groups, Christians and Jews, was fairly equal within the setting of the Roman empire. Both were part of the larger body of Greco-Roman religions,<sup>4</sup> neither was an official state religion, and both had undergone varying levels of persecution for a variety of different, but related, reasons.<sup>5</sup> Samuel Krauss describes the situation boldly: ‘The long history of [the] polemic [between Christians and Jews] falls into two periods: that of the persecuted church, and that of the church in power’.<sup>6</sup> Krauss’s formula is, however, rather one-sided, for the relationship between Judaism and Christianity extends further back than this brief defining moment between persecution and official state recognition for Christianity. Arguably, the relationship began with Jesus himself, when ethnic unity characterized the first followers of Jesus as Jews.<sup>7</sup> The relationship, and with it the tension, became much more demonstrable when the new movement began to expand and spread under the leadership of such men as Peter, James and Paul.<sup>8</sup> By far one of the most noticeable elements of this expansion was the shift from early Christianity being a predominantly Jewish group to one with a large non-Jewish or Gentile contingent. As a result, the many interactions between ‘the Jews’ and

4. On personal religions in the Roman empire, see the survey of J. Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 99-131, in which Christianity and Judaism are treated as two of many.

5. For a brief summary, see M. Cary, *A History of Rome down to the Reign of Constantine* (London: Macmillan, 1967), chap. 43 *passim*.

6. S. Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy from the Earliest Times to 1789*. I. *History* (ed. and rev. W. Horbury; Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 56; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), p. 11.

7. See E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), for a study that attempts to come to terms with the Jewish dimension of Jesus.

8. Of these three, not much is known of Peter and James compared to Paul. Introductions to the life and thought of Paul abound (see below). On other figures in the early Church, especially James, see F.F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James and John: Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979); J. Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997); and B. Chilton and C.A. Evans (eds.), *James the Just and Christian Origins* (NovTSup, 98; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999).

various Christian leaders in the book of Acts would suggest that this relationship was already under question by the time that this book was written (opinion on which varies from the mid-first century to the mid-second).<sup>9</sup> Yet, judging from the evidence of Paul's letters (e.g. Galatians 2; Philippians 3), it would seem that these issues extend even further back to the work of the Apostle to the Gentiles himself. In this light, it would seem that the two-part schema proposed by Krauss should be expanded and divided into four phases: (1) the period of ethnic identification between Christians and Jews, because the earliest Christians were Jews; (2) the period of the early Christian movement being persecuted or threatened by other Jewish groups (whether in reality or perception), (3) the period of the Church's initial independence from 'Judaism', or as a sect in its own right (whatever date one assigns to this independence), when it was to varying degrees either persecuted or accepted by the Romans (Krauss's first period),<sup>10</sup> and (4) the period of the Church's legal and hence dominant status (Krauss's second period). Even this schema may be too simplistic, but it allows for a greater degree of development in the early stages of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and marks the development of that relationship post-313 as a solidification of earlier developments, when the relationship between the two groups was still (we would argue) somewhat in question.

There is, of course, some ambiguity regarding the identity of the polemic between Christianity and Judaism at this earlier time—the evidence we have at our disposal with regard to Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric is much more plentiful than Jewish anti-Christian rhetoric.<sup>11</sup> As

9. See the excellent discussion of issues of authorship of Acts in C.-J. Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen* (WUNT, 56; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), esp. pp. 8-68.

10. See section 3, below, with regard to the various theories regarding the identity of the split between Judaism and Christianity.

11. Summaries (and sources) of this anti-Jewish polemic, some of which is discussed in detail below, are found in L.M. McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers', in C.A. Evans and D.A. Hagner (eds.), *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 220-49; R.S. MacLennan, *Early Christian Texts on Jews and Judaism* (BJS, 194; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); S.G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70-170 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 169-94; and W. Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), esp. pp. 14-25 and 127-99.

a result—as was also the case with the relationship between Christianity and Gnosticism prior to the Nag Hammadi finds—the exact content of Jewish anti-Christian rhetoric has always been somewhat tendentiously reconstructed by undertaking a ‘mirror-reading’ of Christian *adversus Iudaeos*-type writings.<sup>12</sup> A good example of this is the way in which the *Toledoth Jesu* documents are treated by different scholars—dismissed as mediaeval gibberish by some, but taken somewhat seriously (if cautiously) by others.<sup>13</sup> The various versions of the collected talmudic stories associated with Jesus may actually provide us with important material for reconstructing Jewish anti-Christian polemic in the pre-Constantinian period.<sup>14</sup> Of course, in the forms in which we have them now, the various versions of the *Toledoth Jesu* probably date, at the earliest, to the fifth century (the eighth century or later is more likely),<sup>15</sup> and any earlier traditions must be carefully extracted from beneath several layers of later editing. Any attempt to do so is, by the very nature of the task, bound to be biased, but one example provides us with

12. Discussion of the reasons for the lack of such anti-Christian literature among Jews is found in McDonald, ‘Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers’, pp. 245-46. *Adversus Iudaeos* literature is named after the anonymous Latin work probably from the third century, passed down by Cyprian of Carthage, and found in A.L. Williams (trans.), *Adversus Iudaeos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935). On this document, see Horbury, *Jews and Christians*, pp. 180-99.

13. E.g. C.A. Evans, *Life of Jesus Research: An Annotated Bibliography* (NTTS, 24; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2nd edn, 1996), p. 287: ‘There are relatively few certain references to Jesus in the Talmud. Most of the references are of little historical value, for they usually represent nothing more than vague acquaintance with the Gospels or later polemic with Christians. A few of the references, however, may represent fairly early, independent, and possibly accurate tradition.’ Cf. M. Goldstein, *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition* (New York: Macmillan, 1950).

14. See C.A. Evans, ‘Jesus in Non-Christian Sources’, in B.D. Chilton and C.A. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (NTTS, 19; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 443-78, esp. 449-50, who gives a summary and bibliography. Some of the rabbinic sources regarding Jesus which are more widely accepted as useful for the study of the historical Jesus are found in Evans, *Life of Jesus Research*, pp. 287-89.

15. See H.I. Newman, ‘The Death of Jesus in the *Toledot Yeshu* Literature’, *JTS* 50 (1999), pp. 59-79, who, in an article which suggests that the *Toledoth Jesu* is a Jewish parody of Christianity as no more than a poor-man’s Adonis cult (cf. J.G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris: Studies in the History of Oriental Religion* [London: Macmillan, 1906], esp. pp. 154-59), argues for a date no earlier than the ninth century.

a good picture of the kinds of rhetoric levelled by Jews against Christians in the pre-313 period, and its possible development during the years after 313. In the *Toledoth* story (based upon *b. Sanh.* 107b) with the infamous discussion of Jesus ‘putting up a brick’, a controversy which takes place in the setting of a synagogue or perhaps *Bet Midrash*,

Jerusalem is described as a forsaken wife waiting for her husband. When [the persecuted rabbis, including Jesus, who were forced to flee Jerusalem during the persecution of Alexander Jannaeus] arrive, they are accorded a great reception. The place where this takes place is just called *סניסניס*, the double meaning of which word, inn and hostess, is the starting point for the following conversation with its punning progression. Joshua [b. Perachjah—Jesus’ teacher in this story] says: How good is the *סניסניס*, which means how good it is to be back in Jerusalem, the place which is sometimes paraphrased as inn [Teh. to Ps. 16.13; 76.1]. Jesus in his answer says: How dim her eyes are... This means that they wish to picture Jesus as wanting to say: Not everything is for the best with the holy city in spite of our rehabilitation. Joshua is so shocked by this critical remark that he excommunicates Jesus (or rather removes him from his circle) and refuses to accept him again, even when the latter approaches him. Later on, Jesus misunderstands a sign given by the teacher which might have indicated his readmission, and he ‘puts up a brick’, beguiles the multitude and refuses now to do penance.<sup>16</sup>

The most significant element of this story, despite any relevance it may or may not have to the historical Jesus, is that it portrays the split between Christianity and Judaism as, at least in part, a Jewish responsibility. This is proved, says Bammel, by the development of the tradition in, for instance, *b. Ber.* 17a/b (shorter parallel in *b. Sanh.* 103a), where the split between the ‘Nozri’ (for ‘Nazareans’) and the rabbis is entirely the fault ‘of the pupil who went astray’, as opposed to the teacher.<sup>17</sup>

An interesting dimension of the extant Jewish rhetoric, as well as that which can be reconstructed from Christian writings, is that it seems to focus primarily upon Christian origins, specifically the life of Jesus. Mention of Paul is non-existent—unless one credits the talmudic story (*b. Shab.* 30b) of Gamaliel I’s nameless renegade student as speaking of

16. E. Bammel, ‘Christian Origins in Jewish Tradition’, *NTS* 13 (1966–67), pp. 317–35 (321–22), repr. in E. Bammel, *Judaica: Kleine Schriften I* (WUNT, 37; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), pp. 220–38 (224–25).

17. Bammel, ‘Christian Origins’, p. 322 (repr. p. 225).

Paul.<sup>18</sup> The Church as an entity in its own right is not mentioned. Even if one does credit the story about Gamaliel's student as an attack upon Paul, the identity of that story appears to be similar to the story we just discussed from the *Toledoth Jesu*—suggesting that one of the major lines of attack in Jewish anti-Christian rhetoric, like Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric, revolved around authority in the interpretation of the Scriptures. In the case of Jewish anti-Christian rhetoric, aspersions are cast on Jesus on both a moralistic level (e.g. the story that he was the son of a whore by a Roman soldier [Origen, *Cels.* 1.28-32; cf. *b. Sanh.* 67a]) and, as in the 'putting up a brick' story, with regard to Jesus' lack of authority, and rejection by his elders.

Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric often mirrors this last element of Jewish anti-Christian rhetoric, in that disputes over interpretations of Scripture form the basis of most anti-Jewish or anti-Judaism rhetoric from the New Testament onwards (esp. Justin Martyr). It even appears that the particularly Christian interpretations of many passages in the Septuagint may have formed the basis of the rejection of that translation by Jews in the first few centuries of the Common Era. The rabbinic passages which display this rejection include *Massakhet Sop.* 1.7-10 and the gaonic addition to the *Megillat Taanit*. The former compares the day that the translation was completed with that on which the nation of Israel made the golden calf, while the latter asserts that the world grew dark for three days when the Law was translated.<sup>19</sup>

Although the central controversy between the two groups may have begun over interpretative authority (and the related implications of this authority),<sup>20</sup> it seems that both groups also made liberal use of current pagan criticisms of the other group, casting various aspersions of a less savoury character.<sup>21</sup> Other motivating factors for such antagonism may

18. As does J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (trans. W.F. Stinespring; New York: Macmillan, 1943), pp. 309-12. See also F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit/Heart Set Free* (Exeter: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 51.

19. See E. Tov, 'The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning the "Alterations" Inserted into the Greek Pentateuch and their Relation to the Original Text of the LXX', *JSJ* 15 (1984), pp. 65-89; and B.W.R. Pearson, 'Remainderless Translations: Implications for Modern Translational Theory of the Tradition Concerning the Translation of the LXX', in S.E. Porter and R.S. Hess (eds.), *Translating the Bible: Problems and Prospects* (JSNTSup, 173; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 63-84.

20. Cf. Horbury, *Jews and Christians*, pp. 200-25.

21. For a list of the various negative characterizations of Jewish practices, beliefs and character traits from pagan critics as found in their later Christian counterparts,

also have included rivalry for converts or the need to retain those within the group, the need on both sides for self-definition, an underlying sense of insecurity that perhaps the other group had something more to offer, and, at least in the earliest stages for Christianity, the intimidation of being so greatly outnumbered by Jews.<sup>22</sup> In a sense, this rivalry simply highlights the continuing connection between these two religious groups—what may have begun as a parent–child controversy has, by the end of the pre-Constantinian period, been transformed into a sibling rivalry.

### 3. *Perspectives on the Split between Judaism and Christianity*

It is at this point that the question of the identity of the split between Christianity and Judaism takes on its full importance. There are two broad sets of perspectives on the split—those that originated in the ancient world, which continue to have advocates today, and those that have originated in modern scholarship. While several of the perspectives are confined to being constructs of modern critical analysis, they are held no less fervently by their advocates. We will categorize them and discuss them under these two broad headings, with the ancient perspectives given before the modern ones. We can do nothing more than offer a brief sketch of this fundamental controversy, which has in some ways extended over almost two millennia. For each position, a brief summary will be given, followed by an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the position. The dispute over the separation between Christianity and Judaism is usually conducted simply in terms of what Christians thought of Jews, that is, from a Christian perspective. However, there are other perspectives worth considering also, including those of the Jews and of the Romans, since they all co-existed together within the Roman world of the time.

see Krauss, *Jewish–Christian Controversy*, pp. 19-26; cf. McDonald, ‘Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers’, pp. 220-25.

22. See McDonald, ‘Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers’, pp. 237-45. These reasons all indicate that, contrary to some previous scholarly thought, Judaism continued to thrive in the second to fifth centuries CE. See M. Simon, *Verus Israel* (trans. H. McKeating; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), whose position has now been adopted by a number of scholars, including J. Lieu, ‘History and Theology in Christian Views of Judaism’, in J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 79-96.

a. *Ancient Views of the Split between Christianity and Judaism*<sup>23</sup>

As noted above, there were at least three major groups that had a stake in this religious controversy. They include, of course, Christians and Jews, but also the Romans. The Romans were not directly involved in the religious element of the dispute, at least in its early stages. However, because the conflict was occurring within their realm of influence and power, and the conflict had potential to cause social disruption, the Romans too had an interest in it.

1. *Supersessionism*. The supersessionist position, which has been the most prevalent in New Testament studies until the middle of this century and is still widely held among popular Christian thinking, is likely also the oldest position held by Christians. It dates to the earliest period of the dispute, and probably early on came to represent the position of the vast majority of Christians. The theory essentially holds to the view that whatever merits Judaism had had, Christianity supplanted it. This supersession meant that, whatever the typological or prophetic roles played by such Jewish institutions as the Temple, circumcision or the Torah, they were all rendered no longer valid, supplanted by Christian institutions and beliefs.

Jewish Christianity, as especially represented by the Jerusalem church, did not apparently hold to this position, however, which led to one of the first major conflicts within the Church, and, ironically, probably hastened the development of supersessionism. If Acts is to be believed, this problem was seen, at least from the Jewish-Christian perspective, to be largely the doing of Paul (Acts 15, 21), who had had noteworthy success in converting Gentiles on his missionary ventures (often after being expelled from the synagogue). Scholars disagree about the factual basis of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15,<sup>24</sup> but what is stated there certainly appears to represent a major conflict within the early Church and the kind of compromise solution that may have been suggested. The controversy revolved around whether those who converted to

23. See an earlier version of this section in S.E. Porter and B.W.R. Pearson, 'Ancient Understandings of the Christian-Jewish Split', in S.E. Porter and B.W.R. Pearson (eds.), *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries* (JSNTSup, 192; RILP, 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

24. On these issues, see J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB, 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998), pp. 538-67.

Christianity from outside of Judaism needed also to become Jews as well. For those who were already Jews, this posed no problem, but for Gentiles, this posed considerable difficulty. The conflict is reflected in a number of sources in the New Testament. These include, for example, Paul's conflict with the Judaizers in Galatia, as well as the conflict between James and Paul lurking in the background of Galatians 2 but more to the forefront in Acts 21 and possibly even James 2.<sup>25</sup> For Jewish Christians, the relation between Christianity and Judaism probably meant that Jesus as Messiah fulfilled the original purposes of Judaism, in which institutions such as circumcision and food laws could and should be maintained. Gentile Christians, according to Paul, did not need to become Jews to become Christians. This led to one of the first major splits within Christianity, and helped to draw the lines of demarcation between Christianity and Judaism. As Gentile Christianity grew in significance, soon outpacing Jewish Christianity, its supersessionist position also became prominent.

The supersessionist position is arguably represented in virtually every stratum of the New Testament writings, but the earliest evidence is probably to be found in Paul's writings. There has been much controversy over a number of passages in Paul's letters where he appears to state in strong terms his antagonism to Judaism (e.g. 2 Thess. 2.14-16).<sup>26</sup> Some have, as a result, accused him, and the rest of the New Testament along with him, of being anti-Semitic. Such passages, however, must be put in their proper context. There is a long-standing tradition within Judaism of offering a critique of its institutions, a tradition within which Paul appears to be functioning when he uses such strong language.<sup>27</sup> There is the further question, however, of how Paul saw himself in relation to Judaism. It is indisputable that Paul was,

25. Certain aspects of the F.C. Baur hypothesis, we believe, have much to offer in the reconstruction of the development of early Christianity (see below). For a recent articulation of this hypothesis, with modifications, see M.D. Goulder, *A Tale of Two Missions* (London: SCM Press, 1994).

26. This passage has been highly debated regarding its anti-Judaistic or anti-Semitic features, as well as its authenticity. For discussion of this passage in the scholarly literature, see J.A.D. Weima and S.E. Porter, *An Annotated Bibliography of 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NTTS, 26; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 161-73.

27. See C.A. Evans, 'Faith and Polemic: The New Testament and First-Century Judaism', in Evans and Hagner (eds.), *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, pp. 3-13; cf. L.T. Johnson, 'The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic', *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 419-41.

ethnically, a Jew, and remained so for his entire life. In Gal. 1.13-14, however, he draws a contrast between his former life in Judaism and his current life in Christ, rejecting his former life of following the traditions of the fathers. In that sense, although remaining an ethnic Jew, Paul appears to have rejected Judaism. His acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Christ superseded the conventions of religious belief to be found in Judaism.<sup>28</sup> In Galatians, Paul roundly condemns those who appear to be abandoning the Christian faith to return to various Jewish practices; those who do works of the law he describes as being under a curse, with Christ having redeemed Christians from the curse of the law (ch. 3). In Rom. 10.4, Christ is said to be the end of the law. Whether this means the abolition or fulfilment of the law, the result is much the same. Regarding the dispute between the weak and the strong, Paul admonishes the strong in Romans to have concern for those who still pay attention to food laws and holy days. Similar sentiments are found in Philippians 3, where Paul labels those who practice circumcision as mutilators of the flesh. After he runs through his 'Jewish' qualifications, Paul labels them as rubbish compared to his calling in Christ. Paul apparently believed that such practices that would have distinguished those in Judaism had been nullified with the advent of Christianity, and, in Gal. 6.16, even speaks of the Israel of God with apparent reference to the Church.

Scholars often do not differentiate other strata in the New Testament with regard to their views of Judaism.<sup>29</sup> However, at least three other strata with a similar position are also worth noting. First is the Synoptic Gospel material. Mark 13, for example, depicts the Temple as being destroyed. Matthew sees Jesus at odds with the Pharisees throughout (e.g. chs. 3, 23), even in what is often considered the most Jewish of the

28. See S.E. Porter, 'Was Paul a Good Jew? Fundamental Issues in a Current Debate', in Porter and Pearson (eds.), *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries*.

29. One of the few to treat this material in a stratified way is W.A. Meeks, 'Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities', in J. Neusner and E.S. Frerichs (eds.), *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 93-115. Cf. S. Freyne, 'Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus', in Neusner and Frerichs (eds.), *To See Ourselves*, pp. 117-43; D. Georgi, 'The Early Church: Internal Jewish Migration or New Religion?', *HTR* 88.1 (1995), pp. 35-68, esp. pp. 37-56.

Gospels. Another stratum is that of the Johannine literature, especially the Gospel, where, in chs. 9, 12 and 16, the issue of expulsion from the synagogue is raised as a serious threat (cf. also ch. 8).<sup>30</sup> The third stratum to note here is that of the book of Hebrews, which some in the early Church apparently considered Pauline.<sup>31</sup> Wilson treats Hebrews under a chapter heading of ‘supersessionism’, finding in that book the clearest statement of a clear break with Judaism.<sup>32</sup> The book is apparently written from the standpoint of warning Christians about the dangers of reverting to Judaism (ch. 6). Whether one argues for early or later dates for many of the writings noted above, it is clear that, by the end of the first century, virtually all of the New Testament writers considered a serious development to have taken place, in which Christianity was seen to have taken the place of Judaism.

Similar ideas were picked up by a number of other writers in the early Church, writers whose anti-Judaistic comments have often been chronicled. We can see that such comments began early. In his letters, Ignatius condemns Judaizers, with their impositions of practices such as Sabbath worship (*Magn.* 8–10), and their teaching of such ideas (*Phld.* 5–6), which are incompatible with preaching Christ (*Magn.* 10.3).<sup>33</sup> In *Barnabas*, there is constant opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’, representing Christians and Jews (chs. 2–5, 8, 10, 13, 14). Particular Jewish customs, such as fasting (ch. 3), are ridiculed, the law is reinterpreted and christologized (chs. 9, 10), as are the Temple and covenant (chs. 2, 4).<sup>34</sup> The *Epistle to Diognetus* condemns the fussiness of the Jews regarding various ritual practices, which Christians are not to follow (chs. 3, 4).<sup>35</sup> The later Church Fathers are notorious for saying

30. See H.J. de Jonge, ‘Jewish Arguments against Jesus at the End of the First Century CE According to the Gospel of John’, in P.W. van der Horst (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Contact and Conflict in the Ancient World* (Utrecht: Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, University of Utrecht, 1995), pp. 45-55.

31. For discussion, see H.F.D. Sparks, *The Formation of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1952), pp. 81-84.

32. Wilson, *Related Strangers*, pp. 110-27.

33. See J. Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), pp. 26-39.

34. Wilson, *Related Strangers*, pp. 127-42.

35. For discussion of this issue at a somewhat later (although still relevant) date, see P.W. van der Horst, ‘Jews and Christians in Antioch at the End of the Fourth Century’, in Porter and Pearson (eds.), *Christian–Jewish Relations through the Centuries*.

similar things. Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, claims that ‘we [the Church] are the true Israelite race, the spiritual one, that of Judah and Jacob and Abraham’ (11.5).<sup>36</sup> One of the best known comments is by Melito of Sardis, whose homily *On the Passover* states the supersessionist position clearly:

The people was [sic] precious before the church arose and the law was marvellous before the Gospel was illuminated. But when the church arose and the Gospel came to the fore the model was made void giving its power to the truth and the law was fulfilled giving its power to the Gospel... so too the law was fulfilled when the Gospel was illuminated and the people made void when the church arose (42-43).<sup>37</sup>

Irenaeus speaks of the Church as the synagogue of God (*Adv. Haer.* 3.6.1). Lastly, Tertullian says that the law was given by God because of the hardness of the Jews (*Adv. Marc.* 2.19), whose observances have now been eliminated (*Adv. Marc.* 5.4). Reflecting their supersessionism, the fear of these Church Fathers seems to be, not that Gentile Christians will start acting like Jewish Christians, but rather that Christianity as a religion made up primarily of Gentiles will actually become Jewish if they continue to be involved in the synagogue and other Jewish practices, when Christianity has fulfilled and replaced Judaism.

Among modern writers, perhaps the best known to take such a position is Adolf Harnack. He states that, by rejecting Jesus, the Jewish people disowned their calling, and that the place of the Jews ‘was taken by the Christians as the new People, who appropriated the whole tradition of Judaism, giving a fresh interpretation to any unserviceable

36. Cited in J. Lieu, “‘The Parting of the Ways’: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?”, *JSNT* 56 (1994), pp. 101-19 (104). On Justin’s dialogue, cf. *idem*, *Image and Reality*, pp. 103-53; G.N. Stanton, ‘Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho: Group Boundaries, “Proselytes” and “God-Fearers”’, in G.N. Stanton and G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 263-78.

37. Cited in Lieu, ‘Parting of the Ways’, p. 103, who provides many insightful references to the history of discussion. On Melito, see *idem*, *Image and Reality*, pp. 199-240; Wilson, *Related Strangers*, pp. 241-56, who notes that Melito’s strain of anti-Judaism was to dominate Christianity from then on; *idem*, ‘Passover, Easter, and Anti-Judaism: Melito of Sardis and Others’, in Neusner and Frerichs (eds.), *To See Ourselves*, pp. 337-55, esp. pp. 343-53.

materials in it, or else allowing them to drop'.<sup>38</sup> Simon refuted much of Harnack's analysis, but nevertheless himself spoke of the church 'having seceded from Judaism with the object of supplanting it'.<sup>39</sup> As recently as 1984, the Church historian Frend can speak in similar terms, when he depicts Judaism of the first century as chaotic, a chaos that was given direction by the coming of Jesus and development of the Christian Church.<sup>40</sup>

This position is clearly at ease with much of the early evidence, as seen at least through the eyes of contemporary and later Christianity. There is certainly enough polemical language within the early Church, some of it even to be found in the New Testament (e.g. 1 Thess. 2.14-16; Acts 13), to justify such a position. For all practical intents and purposes, this is the position that the Church has apparently followed for much of its history, so that Christianity and Judaism are today (and apparently were much earlier) seen to be separate religious groups. An unfortunate and deeply regrettable by-product of this position has been the confusion of anti-Judaism with anti-Semitism, and the abusive extremes to which this has been taken.

2. *Apostasy by Christians.* Whereas the supersessionist view is one that is distinctly Christian, there is an equivalent position that also apparently developed early on and was widely held to be true by Jews in the ancient world. It stands to reason that, as Christianity developed and began to attract more and more people both within and outside of Palestine, Jews would need to face their relationship with this group that still had ties to the synagogue. The response of some Jews was to take what amounts to an anti-supersessionist view, that is, that Christians, by departing from the teaching and beliefs of Judaism, were apostate, and needed to be condemned as such.<sup>41</sup>

38. A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (trans. J. Moffatt; 2 vols.; London: Williams & Norgate, rev. edn, 1908), I, pp. 69-70.

39. Simon, *Verus Israel*, p. xiii.

40. W.H. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984), esp. pp. 43, 126-28.

41. For an attempt to define such apostasy, see J.M.G. Barclay, 'Who Was Considered an Apostate in the Jewish Diaspora?', in Stanton and Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance*, pp. 80-98. He notes that disputes over interpretation were often involved in such discussions (see section 2, above, for discussion of some key passages).

The evidence for this view is to be found in a number of ancient sources, some of it involving mirror reading of New Testament texts. Noted above was Paul's ejection from the synagogue in a number of cities where he did his missionary preaching, as recorded in Acts, and discussion of exclusion from the synagogue in John's Gospel, perhaps reflecting the situation in the last quarter of the first century. This scenario may be confirmed by contemporary Jewish sources. In the Eighteen Benedictions, recited daily in the synagogue, a twelfth benediction was inserted, perhaps by around 90 CE, written by Samuel the Small, a contemporary of Gamaliel II. It may be that this was not intentionally antagonistic towards Christians, at least at the start. However, on the basis of its wording in its historical context, as well as later comments by Justin Martyr (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 16), Epiphanius (*Adv. Haer.* 29.9), and Jerome (*In Isaiam* 5.18), and the discovery in 1898 of the text in a medieval fragment from the Fustat Genizah, some—but certainly not all—scholars maintain that this benediction was directed against Christians at least by the second century, if not earlier.<sup>42</sup> The fragment reads:

For apostates let there be no hope, and the dominion of arrogance do thou speedily root out in our days: and let *nosrim* (Nazarenes) and *minim* (heretics) perish as in a moment, let them be blotted out of the book of the living and let them not be written with the righteous. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.<sup>43</sup>

The recitation of this benediction, if it was used against Christians that early, would have posed an insuperable challenge to any Christian still within the synagogue where it was recited. During the Bar Kokhba revolt also (132–35 CE), there is some evidence that Christians were compelled to be circumcised (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.5.1-2), something

42. C.W. Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* (London: Faith Press, rev. edn, 1964), pp. 3-4; cf. McDonald, 'Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers', pp. 246-47. For a contrary position, see R. Kimelman, 'Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity', in E.P. Sanders with A.I. Baumgarten and A. Mendelson (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition. II. Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 226-44.

43. Translation adapted from Dugmore, *Influence of the Synagogue*, p. 4, who traces the textual history, esp. in n. 1. The terms *nosrim* and *minim* are problematic, but may point to Nazarenes being equated with followers of the Nazarene and *minim* with other kinds of heretics. Contra Lieu, 'Parting of the Ways', p. 114.

that Jewish Christians may have agreed to, but that Gentile Christians rejected.

Other later Jewish writers apparently held similarly strong views, labelling Christians as apostate to Judaism. *Contra Celsus*, Origen's response to the otherwise unknown Celsus, a Middle Platonist thinker from the second century, is written from a Christian standpoint, but perhaps gives insight into the actual thoughts and beliefs of at least one Jew of the time, who acts as one of Celsus's sources for his attack on the origins of Christianity. This Jew questions what was wrong with Christians, who 'left the law of your fathers, and, being deluded by that man whom we were speaking of just now, were quite ludicrously deceived and have deserted us for another name and another life?' (2.1). This Jew, if he is being accurately represented and quoted, sees Christianity as 'despising' its origins in Judaism, the only origin it can claim (2.4). Celsus himself repeats this same charge (5.33), describing Christians as those who have revolted against Judaism (3.5).<sup>44</sup> There is also the much later rabbinic tradition of anti-Christian statements found in the Talmud and the *Toledoth Jesu*. As discussed above (section 2), however, the evidence from Jews directly is slender, probably because such writings did not survive well in the climate of post-Constantinian Christianity.<sup>45</sup>

It is only logical to think that, if Christians were bent on separating themselves from Jews by virtue of differing beliefs, then Jews would wish to distance themselves from those who held to what must have inevitably looked like aberrant, to say nothing of ungrateful, beliefs. It is clear even from the New Testament and other documents of the first century (such as Josephus) that the concept of Messiah was a difficult one, and resulted in a number of people making claims to be messianic

44. It is worth noting that Eusebius cites Porphyry, the polemicist against Christianity, as holding that Christians of Jewish descent 'have deserted the God honoured by the Jews and his precepts', and Christians from a pagan background as having 'deserted their ancestral ways and adopted the myths of the Jews, the enemies of humankind' (*Praep. Evang.* 1.2.3-4). This reflects the importance in Roman thought of the issue of loyalty to one's ancestral religion (cf. Cicero, *Flacc.* 28; G. La Piana, 'Foreign Groups in Ancient Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire', *HTR* 20 [1927], pp. 185-403, here p. 325).

45. For discussion of the issue of Jewish persecution of Christians, see J.M. Lieu, 'Accusations of Jewish Persecution in Early Christian Sources, with Particular Reference to Justin Martyr', in Stanton and Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance*, pp. 279-95.

figures.<sup>46</sup> Those who identified with Jesus as Christ were another such group, which began as a small one, but grew much larger and more powerful, especially as it became a predominantly Gentile establishment. It was not the only group to hold to such beliefs, and other Jews must have thought that those who held to these beliefs were simply another group of misled people. The chief problem in attempting to reconstruct this position is the lack of direct evidence for what the Jews did actually think of Christians. Too much of the evidence is based on Christian documents and/or skewed reconstructions of the ‘original’ form of Jewish writings on the subject to achieve the kind of solid foundation desirable for further study.

3. *Roman Definition.* Whereas the first two positions represent views held by the most highly involved parties in the first centuries of the Common Era—Christians and Jews—they were not the only groups involved. Jews and Christians, whether distinguished or distinguishable from each other in this earliest period or not, lived within the parameters of the Roman empire throughout the first several centuries of their relationship. It is understandable that the Romans themselves, including and perhaps especially those in authority who came into contact with the Jews and Christians, and who were called upon for rulings regarding their practices, would have a view on their relationship. A larger essay could undoubtedly study in more detail the range of so-called pagan

46. A representative sample of the literature on this popular topic includes C.A. Evans, *Jesus and his Contemporaries: Contemporary Studies* (AGJU, 25; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 61-73; E. Bammel and C.F.D. Moule (eds.), *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); M. Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 AD* (trans. D. Smith; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989); R.A. Horsley and J.S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985); J. Neusner, W.S. Green, and E. Frerichs (eds.), *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); W. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998); B.W.R. Pearson, ‘Dry Bones in the Judean Desert: The Messiah of Ephraim, Ezekiel 37, and the Post-Revolutionary Followers of Bar Kokhba’, *JSJ* 29 (1998), pp. 192-202; *idem*, ‘The Book of the Twelve, Aqiba’s Messianic Interpretations, and the Refuge Caves of the Second Jewish War’, in S.E. Porter and C.A. Evans (eds.), *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (JSNTSup, 26; RILP, 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 221-39.

reaction to Christians and Jews, but we will concentrate here upon the reaction of those in official capacities. From the evidence that is available, it appears that the Romans themselves may have had a fairly clear view on the Jews and Christians.

Several factors should be considered here. The first is that there is a long-standing tradition in Roman antiquity and before that in Greek antiquity of comments about the Jews, much of it negative. Undoubtedly some of this had to do with their significant population throughout the Roman empire, totalling about 4 to 6 million out of 60 million,<sup>47</sup> and their practices such as circumcision (Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.1-13; Juvenal, *Satires* 1.3.10-16, 296; 2.5.542-47; 5.14.96-106; Seneca, cited in Augustine, *Civ.* 6.11) that clearly kept them apart from other religio-ethnic groups. Despite freedoms that the Jews enjoyed, and their own openness to others, they were apparently always held in some suspicion by the Romans, incurring a wealth of vitriolic and negative comment (e.g. Cicero, *Flacc.* 28.69; 60; Dio Cassius 37.16-17; cf. Josephus, *Apion* 2.79-96, 109-114). Compounding this was the fact that, within the first 150 years of the Common Era, there were at least three major revolts by Jews in various areas (65–70 CE, 115–17 CE, 132–35 CE), and several expulsions of Jews from Rome (e.g. 19 CE and 49 CE, although the latter date is disputed—see below; cf. also 137 BCE) and even Jerusalem (135 CE, in the aftermath of the Bar Kokhba revolt).<sup>48</sup> Despite

47. R.L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 113.

48. For a number of important texts, see M.H. Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diaspora Sourcebook* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1998), esp. pp. 98-99. On the expulsions of Jews from Rome, see H.D. Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking and the Early Imperial Repression of Judaism at Rome* (SFSHJ, 160; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997). One of the key problems with most scholarly literature on this subject revolves around the fact that many who discuss the expulsions do so from a purely Jewish or Jewish-oriented perspective, and the identity of the expulsions is missed. Few realize that, for example, the 19 CE expulsion (see Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.85) was of both Jews and followers of the Isis cult. This oversight falls victim to the rhetorical strategy of Josephus, who, in his discussion of this expulsion (*Ant.* 18.65, 66-80, 81-84), divides the Jews and the Egyptians into two clearly identifiable groups, and discusses the expulsion of each group from a different perspective (essentially, the Egyptians deserved to be expelled, while the Jews did not; see Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, esp. pp. 67-69, who fails to analyze Roman attitudes towards foreign religions). A more nuanced approach to the reasons behind the Roman expulsion of Jews (and others) would be necessary to any subsequent discussion of the relationship between Christians and Jews in the

the negativity of Roman comments about the Jews, they do not seem to have been applied to the Christians, certainly not the Gentile Christians. As Judge states, ‘The Roman writers do not connect them with Judaism in any respect’.<sup>49</sup> Christians are discussed in their own right, as early as the reign of Nero.<sup>50</sup> For example, Suetonius (*Nero* 16.2), in describing social disorders, lists Christians as practising ‘a novel and threatening superstition’,<sup>51</sup> as does Tacitus, who claims to not know how the superstition spreads, even though he knows it began in Judea (*Ann.* 15.44.4; cf. book 5).<sup>52</sup>

The second consideration is the early second-century correspondence between Pliny and Trajan regarding Christian practices. In *Ep.* 10.96, Pliny enquires of the emperor how he is to handle their trials, since he has never observed one before. He outlines his procedure:

I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it I repeated the question twice again, adding the threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For whatever the nature of their creed might be, I could at least feel no doubt that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved chastisement (LCL).

As Judge points out, the question with Christians is not their foreign practices, as it was with Jews, but several things that they do that seem to suggest insurrection, such as taking an oath and singing a hymn to Christ ‘as to a God’. Hence Pliny compelled them to curse Christ and make offerings to Caesar. Trajan’s response in *Ep.* 10.97 is that Pliny is

eyes of the Romans. Even if Christians were expelled from Rome right alongside Jews in later expulsions (which, as we shall see, is highly questionable), this would no more constitute evidence that the Christians were seen as Jews than does the earlier expulsion of Jews and followers of the Isis cult suggest that the two groups are to be collapsed into the same identity.

49. E.A. Judge, ‘Judaism and the Rise of Christianity: A Roman Perspective’, *TynBul* 45.2 (1994), pp. 355-68 (359).

50. See D. Golan, ‘Hadrian’s Decision to Supplant “Jerusalem” by “Aelia Capitolina”’, *Historia* 35 (1986), pp. 226-39, esp. p. 236.

51. Cited in Judge, ‘Judaism’, p. 359.

52. Despite this, J.D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1991), p. 241, claims that the parallels between the descriptions of Jews and Christians points to Tacitus seeing the Christians as Jews. Judge, ‘Judaism’, p. 360 n. 4, claims that Tacitus’s use of the phrase *genus hominum* (‘a class of people’) indicates his not being able to correlate the group with any other.

correct in his procedure, but that Christians should not be pursued. According to Judge,

Incomprehensible as the activities of Christians were, they could be tolerated providing (as Romans) they did not abandon their national duty of sacrifice to the Roman gods. The Romans had always understood and accepted that this was impossible for Jews, for whom exemption was secured. Why did they not see that the Christians stood in the same tradition, and were often themselves Jews into the bargain? There is no hint that anyone ever tried to suggest such a solution.<sup>53</sup>

A third factor is that, in Roman eyes, the separation of Jews from Christians seems to have taken place at an early stage of their relationship. This is possibly indicated in the New Testament and other first-century evidence. Three examples are worth noting. The first is the very name given to Christians. Acts 11.26 says that the name ‘Christian’ was first given in Antioch. The name would not have been invented by Jews, since it would have admitted the messianic claims of Jesus; more likely it was given by Romans, since the ending is a Latin one (-ianus) to designate members of a group, perhaps with some contempt. Judge speculates that the name may have arisen from questions posed as to the loyalties of these followers of Christ, and may similarly be reflected in Herod Agrippa II’s response to Paul in Acts 26.28.<sup>54</sup> Further, Christians were not considered part of the imposition of payment of the *Fiscus Iudaicus*—the Jewish tax imposed after the defeat of Jerusalem in 70 CE (Dio Cassius 66.7.2; Suetonius, *Dom.* 12.2), as were Jews, possibly even including those who were not circumcised but followed what might have appeared to be Jewish practices and behavior (see Dio Cassius 67.14).<sup>55</sup> When the compulsory tax was revoked in 96 CE,<sup>56</sup> the rules for defining Jewish identity were changed in a major way, because it made payment of the tax, and hence identification as a Jew, voluntary.<sup>57</sup> If Christians

53. Judge, ‘Judaism’, p. 361.

54. Judge, ‘Judaism’, p. 363.

55. Cf. Williams, *The Jews*, p. 104, citing her article, ‘Domitian, the Jews and the “Judaizers”—A Simple Matter of *Cupiditas* and *Maiestas*?’, *Historia* 39 (1990), pp. 196-211.

56. Nerva revoked the law and had the following inscription on the first three coin issues of his reign in early 96 CE: ‘calumnies removed of Jewish tax’ (*fisci iudaici calumnia sublata*). See Williams, *The Jews*, p. 104, for plate.

57. See M. Goodman, ‘Nerva, the *Fiscus Iudaicus* and Jewish Identity’, *JRS* 79 (1989), pp. 40-44.

identified with Judaism at this time, Judge wonders, why on the basis of Mt. 17.24-27 (the incident in Capernaum over the Temple tax, in which Jesus instructs Peter to pay it so as not to give offence) did they themselves not pay the tax, and hence avoid unnecessary persecution?<sup>58</sup>

A possible exception to this separation of Christianity and Judaism in the minds of Romans is the incident of Claudius's banishment of the Jews from Rome, probably in 49 CE:<sup>59</sup> 'Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome' (Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4 [LCL]). Many biblical scholars think that this Chrestus is a reference to Christ, but this identification is unlikely. The reasons for doubting this connection are several: the name Chrestus is a very common one, no ancient source makes the identification with Christians, certainly not Suetonius, and there is no indication in the New Testament that conflict within the Jewish community over Christ had taken place this early (see Acts 18.2, where there is no indication of such trouble when Paul meets up with Jewish refugees; 28.21).<sup>60</sup> The name may well have referred to any number of possible troublemakers,<sup>61</sup> but the result of the banishment was that Jews were compelled to leave Rome. There is no evidence that Christians were likewise forced to do so.

Utilizing the preceding as a descriptive basis for further research takes the discussion outside of the two interested parties—Jews and Christians—and attempts to place the discussion in its larger historical context. This context involves not just religious beliefs, but the position

58. Judge, 'Judaism', p. 367.

59. This date has been challenged recently by G. Lüdemann (*Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* [trans. F.S. Jones; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], pp. 164-71), and more fully discussed and defended by Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, pp. 111-68, esp. pp. 131-50. The major reason for the challenge is that the dating is established through later sources, especially since Tacitus and Dio Cassius are not fully extant for this time period. The proposed date of 41 CE would simply push the lack of identification of Christians and Jews earlier. For a defence of the traditional date, see R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (trans. D. Stott; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 157-201.

60. See Judge, 'Judaism', pp. 361-62, citing *idem* and G.S.R. Thomas, 'The Origin of the Church at Rome: A New Solution', *Reformed Theological Review* 25 (1966), pp. 81-94; cf. Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, pp. 151-68.

61. Although, as mentioned, biblical scholars tend to identify Chrestus with Christ, most classical scholars do not. Cf. Slingerland, *Claudian Policymaking*, pp. 151-68, for a detailed literary analysis.

of these religious beliefs within the socio-political context of the time. This has the advantage of providing a more realistic perspective on the situation, since the Roman world of the first century consisted of more groups of people than simply Jews and Christians. Although the Jews were a group of significant size, and the Christians soon became one, they were simply two groups among many others in the empire. The empire was forced to have policies and positions on all of them that reached its notice. Unfortunately, there is a lack of specific early evidence for the Roman views on this situation, since the earliest direct evidence comes by means of Christian texts. The tenor and structure of the question that is being posed here regarding the relation of Jews and Christians is not one that necessarily reflects the Roman mindset or the framework of their concerns. To answer the question requires a set of reconstructions on the basis of the available evidence, as does discussion of Jewish attitudes towards Christianity.

b. *Modern Views of the Split between Christianity and Judaism*

Whereas the three ancient positions surveyed above were held by the respective groups involved, and can be seen in many ways to be complementary positions, the three modern positions surveyed below cannot entirely be identified with particular groups in the ancient world, although there are some correlations. Instead, much of the contemporary discussion seems to reflect the mind-set of the age in which the discussion takes place. Regardless of the differences between the ancient understandings of the split, they all have as a real strength the fact that they are based upon evidence from the ancient world itself. The following three formulations, however, do not always share this strength. They rely less upon what might be perceived as a stance within the ancient world, and more upon modern conceptions of the development of religious thinking among peoples.

1. *Cultic Development*. In some ways similar to the early Christian supersessionist position (a.1 above), the cultic-development view is heavily dependent upon the history-of-religions thought of the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> This position holds that, in the course of the

62. Standard works in this area include W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (trans. J.E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969); R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance* (trans. J.E. Steely; PTMS, 15;

development of various religions, some developed in distinctive ways from their predecessors. Christianity was one of those, in relation to Judaism. In this perspective, although having its roots in Jewish practices and beliefs, Christianity was a syncretistic religion that came under the distinct influence of the beliefs and structures of the Hellenistic world, as well as other religious thought of the ancient Near East. This developmental view with regard to the relation of Christianity and Judaism is perhaps most famously represented in the twentieth century by Rudolf Bultmann:

The Kyrios Christos is conceived as a mystery deity, in whose death and Resurrection the faithful participate through the sacraments... At the same time, however, the Hellenistic Christians received the gospel traditions of the Palestinian churches. Admittedly, the importance attached to this tradition varied from place to place. Paul himself seldom refers to it... Thus Hellenistic Christianity is no unitary phenomenon, but, taken by and large, a remarkable product of syncretism.<sup>63</sup>

According to this position, Christianity was simply another cult of the Greco-Roman world, reflecting the Hellenistic character of this world more than its Jewish background. Whereas there was an underlying set of Jewish presuppositions in Christian belief, such as the concern for the body, there was also an adaptation and incorporation of important and defining Greek-based thought. This would include belief in the importance of the soul as an independent attribute apart from the body. More importantly, however, Christianity adapted its Jewish-based belief to the thought-forms of the Hellenistic world—for example, concepts of resurrection,<sup>64</sup> worship of the divine, and belief in divine human beings.<sup>65</sup>

Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978); *idem* and H.H. Schaeder, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland* (repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965); and Frazer, *Attis, Adonis and Osiris*.

63. R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (trans. R.H. Fuller; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, repr. 1980 [1956]), p. 177.

64. The concept of resurrection has been highly contentious in New Testament study, since a dichotomy has been created between those seeing its basis in Jewish thought and those seeing it in Greek thought. See S.E. Porter, 'Resurrection, the Greeks, and the New Testament', in S.E. Porter, M.A. Hayes and D. Tombs (eds.), *Resurrection* (JSNTSup, 186; RILP, 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 52-81; and B.W.R. Pearson, 'Resurrection and the Judgment of the Titans: ἡ γῆ τῶν ἄσεβων in LXX Isaiah 26.19', in Porter, Hayes and Tombs (eds.), *Resurrection*,

This position has as a strength that it attempts to bring together what are often thought to be competing factors in Christianity, that is, elements of Judaism and elements of other Greco-Roman religions. Much of the last half of the twentieth century was dominated by looking almost exclusively to the Jewish backgrounds of the New Testament, certainly correcting earlier tendencies to impose far later Greco-Roman sources on the New Testament (such as Mandeism or Hermeticism), but neglecting the pervasive influence of the Greco-Roman world on every group and culture within its sway. The weaknesses of this position, however, outweigh its strengths. The model that is used reflects nineteenth-century social theory, heavily influenced by a teleologically motivated evolutionary model. Such positions have been severely and rightly criticized in twentieth-century social-scientific thought—a uniformitarianism like this is simply no longer credible. The second major weakness is that this model posits Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism as three relatively equal and similar systems of belief, with Judaism at one extreme and Hellenism at the other. In this model, Christianity then is a third system gradually, yet steadily, moving from the former to the latter. This depends on an untenable view of the relationship between Judaism and Hellenism that has received much negative attention from modern scholarship.<sup>66</sup> A more realistic view is that there already was a complex of intertwined religious belief, in which it would have been difficult to differentiate various systems in such extreme terms. Judaism, one of many cults within the Roman world, had varying depths of relationships with elements of other religious, social and philosophical systems of the time.

2. *No Relation between Christianity and Judaism.* In reaction to much of the discussion of what constitutes the relation between early Christianity and Judaism, and what led to and was the character of their separation, Jacob Neusner has posited a position that departs radically from the others. Neusner contends that ‘While these days Christians and

pp. 33-51, who argues that the Jewish translator of Isaiah and his audience were thinking of resurrection in Greek terms.

65. See Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, pp. 119-52.

66. See, e.g., the two important works of M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); *idem* with C. Marksches, *The ‘Hellenization’ of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).

Judaists undertake religious dialogue, there is not now and there never has been a dialogue between the religions, Judaism and Christianity. The conception of a Judeo-Christian tradition that Judaism and Christianity share is simply a myth in the bad old sense: a lie.’<sup>67</sup> Neusner does not deny that the two religions share some of the same Scriptures, but for both religions these writings are simply a part of their canon. For Christians the Bible is the Old and New Testaments (with the Old Testament defined differently for different denominations), and for Jews the written Torah is part of the whole Torah, including written and oral traditions. However, even early on the contact between the two was minimal. For Neusner, ‘Judaism and Christianity are completely different religions, not different versions of one religion’.<sup>68</sup> From the earliest times, the two religious groups addressed issues that were of concern to their particular followers, without attempting to recognize what was important to the other. This dissimilarity of concern and focus has characterized their relations ever since.

Neusner’s bold statement of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism may at first seem historically anachronistic, in the sense that he does not appear to address seriously the fundamental starting point of Christianity as a form of Judaism. One of Neusner’s important distinctions, however, is that he finds both Christianity and Judaism as expressions of Israel’s religion, but, as he says elsewhere, not necessarily agreed about the character of that Israel.<sup>69</sup> Thus, whereas both are forms of Israelite religion, one does not stem from the other. This formulation is very important for Neusner’s method and approach, and also has value for the nature of this discussion, since it compels interpreters to define terms carefully. In the discussion of Christian and Jewish relations, there has clearly been a high degree of failure to understand the other, a point that Neusner makes well. Nevertheless, despite the usefulness of

67. J. Neusner, *Jews and Christians: The Myth of a Common Tradition* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), p. ix. See also his *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1984), esp. pp. 17-33; *idem*, ‘Explaining the Great Schism: History versus Theology’, *Religion* 28 (1998), pp. 139-53, which is essentially a critique of Dunn’s *Partings of the Ways*, J.T. Sanders’s *Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants: The First One Hundred Years of Jewish-Christian Relations* (London: SCM Press, 1993), and Wilson’s *Related Strangers*.

68. Neusner, *Jews and Christians*, p. 1.

69. J. Neusner, ‘Was Rabbinical Judaism Really “Ethnic”?’, *CBQ* 57 (1995), pp. 281-305, esp. p. 304 n. 28.

Neusner's distinctions for explaining much of the resultant conflict between Judaism and Christianity in the last two millennia, because he does not pursue their history and relationship before 70 CE, there is a sense in which he has avoided the major question that we are raising in this paper. We are not concerned here with the common origins of these two religious groups in what Neusner defines as Israelite religion, but with the more fundamental issue brought about by the fact that the earliest followers of Jesus, himself a Jew, were Jewish, and what happened as a result of this.

3. *Parting(s) of the Ways*. Although the view of the parting of the ways—or, as Dunn calls it in his monograph, partings of the ways—is probably the best known view today among New Testament scholars, it is clearly the newest view on the scene.<sup>70</sup> This view holds that the separation between Christianity and Judaism was not a radical break or definitional distinction, such as all three ancient perspectives would seem to suggest, or an evolutionary transition from less to more developed religious belief, but a gradual moving apart of very similar religious groups as they came to appreciate important distinctions between them. The process of change was incremental and not inevitable, rather than being predictable or constant. This resulted (sometime in the second century, after a number of crucial events) in the realization that there were now two distinct groups of religious adherents. For Dunn, there were four pillars of Second Temple Judaism—monotheism, election, covenant focused in Torah, and the land focused on the Temple<sup>71</sup>—that defined Judaism in the first century, and that came to be the major points of conflict with one of the sects of Judaism, Christianity. The three major crises included the Stephen episode (Acts 7), Paul's Gentile mission (Acts 13–28), and Wisdom theology. The failed revolt of 70 CE was not the crucial turning point, but rather after this revolt the strands that were to become Judaism and Christianity began to define themselves. Christianity even at the beginning of the second century was Jewish Christianity, with there being significant evidence of interaction between Jews and Christians (e.g. Ignatius, *Magn.* 8–10 must warn his readers against the temptation to live like Jews; *Bar.* 3.6; Justin,

70. The bibliography is simply too large to cite. Besides Dunn's *Partings of the Ways*, see *idem* (ed.), *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70 to 135* (WUNT, 66; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

71. Dunn, *Partings of the Ways*, pp. 18–36, for summary.

*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 47.4). However, by the time of the revolt in 132 CE the partings had accumulated, and the recognition of Bar Kokhba as Messiah may well have been the final parting.<sup>72</sup> Jewish Christians were unable to acknowledge him as Messiah.<sup>73</sup>

This view maintains a high degree of continuity between the two groups, and so reads the early documents, such as the New Testament and the writings of the early Church, in this light. For example, Christians in Palestine, such as the Jerusalem church, are seen as being clearly Jewish in their beliefs and practices—more of a local synagogue than a separate ‘church’. A question that arises is whether Christianity outside of Palestine was seen in the same light. There are two factors to consider here. The first is that it was probably Gentile conversion to Christianity that was, inevitably, one of the major factors in the parting of the ways with Judaism, even though Dunn seems to focus upon Palestinian Christianity. The rate of change and parting was probably different in various locales, for example, separation in Rome probably occurred earlier due to stronger sentiment against Jews than in Alexandria, where there was a heavy Jewish population (although the events surrounding the First Jewish War and the subsequent uprising of Jews in Egypt during the so-called ‘War of Quietus’ in 115–17 CE negated some of this difference). Nevertheless, the large numbers of Gentiles who converted to Christianity helped to accelerate the process. The second factor to consider is the role of Diaspora Judaism. Paul reveals that he began his preaching within the context of the established structures of Judaism, so long as this was possible, and early on he was clearly identified with Judaism through the course of his ventures. For example, when he was taken before Gallio, the governor in Corinth (Acts 18), the charges against him were dismissed as being an internal squabble within Judaism. However, by the end of his missionary

72. On the non-Davidic messianism of Bar Kokhba, see Pearson, ‘Dry Bones in the Judean Desert’. It is entirely possible that the apparent importance of the hitherto unknown figure of the Messiah of Ephraim to the complex of Bar Kokhba messianism may reflect a rejection of Christian Davidic messianism.

73. Dunn, *Partings of the Ways*, pp. 230–43. Cf. R.A. Markus, ‘The Problem of Self-Definition: From Sect to Church’, in E.P. Sanders (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition. I. The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries* (London: SCM Press, 1980), pp. 1–15; Pearson, ‘The Book of the Twelve’, pp. 223–24 n. 10; R. Bauckham, ‘The Apocalypse of Peter: A Jewish Christian Apocalypse from the Time of Bar Kokhba’, *Apocrypha* 5 (1994), pp. 7–111, esp. pp. 24–43.

ventures, such as his appearance before Felix, he is identified with Christianity (Acts 26.28).

The strength of this position is that it recognizes the relationship of Christianity with Judaism in its incipient stages, that is, that the earliest Christians were in fact Jews. It also recognizes the fact that at some time later in their relationship, despite this common origin, they had separated from each other in significant ways. The evidence marshalled, however, does not give a clear idea of how this separation took place, and does not seem to present it in terms of a crisis situation of separation. Likewise, there is a serious question of whether the picture that is drawn, focusing upon Palestinian Christianity, is representative enough to include the major Gentile elements that soon came to dominate Christianity. There is also a sense in which the model is seen by its proponents to be one with which the ancients would have identified, yet, as discussed above, there is little evidence from the ancient world that indicates such an incremental parting.<sup>74</sup> As a result, it appears to be too much like a developed form of late-nineteenth-century evolutionary belief as summarized above in section b.1. Despite its recognition of the lack of predictability for the separation, this view seems to grant the separation an almost regrettable inevitability, and works from the end result back to the beginning of the process.

#### 4. *Explanations of the Split*

In a sense, although we are not satisfied with the idea of the ‘parting(s) of the ways’, or the theory that underlies that model, one of the position’s strengths is that it does attempt to address the question of why the split took place, although it, like all the other models discussed above, begins from an assumption that Christianity and Judaism are separate, and that they would have inevitably separated. This assumption is by no means justified, nor do the earliest records of Christianity suggest that this kind of assumption was operative at the earliest stages—on either side. Even though the supersessionary model—which, as we have seen, seems to have been the most prevalent Christian approach to describing the relationship between Christianity and Judaism—suggests that Christian institutions, interpretations and practices have replaced those of Judaism, this model only works if one

74. See above, and Lieu, ‘Parting of the Ways’, *passim*, who argues that the metaphor is a theological construct rather than one that arises out of historical reality.

assumes an initial relationship between the two which ends up in a split, but does not begin as one. In this regard, there may have existed, indeed, most probably did exist, a Christian attitude towards the mother religion which did not inherently push towards replacement or supersession. Of course, this is how the ‘parting of the ways’ model would have us see things, but the suggestion that the split was one which slowly and eventually took place between equal partners who had a serious difference of opinion on certain key points does not do justice to the range of evidence we have available to us. This is probably the chief reason why Dunn—one of the chief proponents of this view of the split—seeks in his work on Paul to explain away Paul’s various statements on and attitudes toward the Jewish Law.<sup>75</sup> Paul, or at least his interpretation of the Law, simply does not fit into the scheme that sees Judaism and early Christianity living in harmony, except for a few key interpretations and beliefs.

Instead, it seems that the split between Christianity and Judaism actually occurred at a very early date indeed. The Jewish propaganda of Jesus’ split from his rabbinic teacher (as we saw above in the pericope from the *Toledoth Jesu*), as well as questions about his birth and teaching, while probably spurious in virtually all of their actual details, nevertheless suggest that the division between Christianity and other forms of Judaism took place as early as Jesus’ lifetime itself. However, this decision on dating masks a more serious question, with regard to the terms ‘Christianity’ and ‘Judaism’. In the discussion of first-century and earlier Jewish belief, it has become customary to speak of ‘Judaisms’ in the plural,<sup>76</sup> to distinguish modern discussion from that of an earlier era which envisioned a monolithic Judaism, from which there were various offshoots and splinter groups, but which was essentially a unified whole.<sup>77</sup> The investigation of the variegated Jewish literature which has

75. See Dunn, *Partings of the Ways*, pp. 117-39, esp. pp. 135-39. See also his *Romans* (2 vols.; WBC, 35A, B; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988); *idem*, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1993); and *idem*, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

76. See J. Neusner, *Studying Classical Judaism: A Primer* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), p. 33.

77. Generally associated with the work of G.F. Moore (*Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* [3 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–1930]), himself in conflict with an author such as Bousset, whom Moore accuses of using ‘non-normative sources’ in his reconstructions of early Judaism. It is interesting to note, however, that some

come down to us from this period, whether through literary transmission or archaeological discovery, has shown us that this model of unity is simply not descriptive of the first-century Judaism out of which Christianity sprang. However, for some reason, the more complex model has not penetrated the consciousness of many of those discussing the split between Judaism and Christianity. This is perhaps because, of the multiple groups that characterized first-century Judaism, only Christianity and rabbinic Judaism survive.<sup>78</sup> If we were to allow this model into the discussion, however, we would be forced to re-draw some of our previous maps of this problem, for even the language of ‘split’ suggests some kind of two-way movement, which may not be descriptive of the relationships between all of the various groups involved in first-century Judaism.

Scholars have long demonstrated Christianity’s lack of uniqueness as a messianic group within the milieu of first-century Judaism. Just the historical record of the Jewish wars is enough to demonstrate that there were many others who also claimed messianic status and managed to gain followings (see section 3.a.2, above). Something which has also received a great deal of attention, albeit mostly negative, is the relationship between early Christianity and the group living at Qumran on the Northwest shore of the Dead Sea. Theories identifying early Christianity with the Qumran community, such as Barbara Thiering’s<sup>79</sup> or Robert Eisenman’s,<sup>80</sup> have been resoundingly rejected by the academy, and rightly so. However, the idea that early Christians and the Qumran group could have had something to do with each other is not necessarily to be rejected out of hand. Of special consideration in this

influential recent work has revived aspects of Moore’s paradigm, with its insistence upon a ‘common Judaism’. Cf. E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992); R. Deines, *Die Phariseer* (WUNT, 101; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), esp. pp. 534–55.

78. This concurs with Neusner’s treatment of the subject (*Jews and Christians*, discussed above), although we are interested to nuance his concept of the ‘Israelite religion’ out of which both Judaism and Christianity grew, or, as we would see it, the period of Jewish religion before 70 CE that saw the development of multiple Jewish sects, one of which happened to also include a high proportion of non-Jews.

79. B. Thiering, *Jesus and the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Unlocking the Secrets of his Life Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992).

80. R. Eisenman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1996), combining several of his previous publications.

regard is the on-going debate regarding several fragments of papyrus documents from Cave 7 at the Qumran site.

Joseph O'Callaghan, followed by several others, most recently Carsten Thiede, has argued that a portion of 1 Timothy and a portion of Mark have been discovered in Qumran Cave 7, besides possibly some other New Testament books.<sup>81</sup> Cave 7 is a cave that had exclusively Greek documents discovered in it, numbered 1–19. In the published edition of these texts in 1962, 7Q1 was identified as a fragment of Exodus (Exod. 28.4-7), and 7Q2 as the apocryphal Letter of Jeremiah (*Baruch* 6) (vv. 43-44). These findings apparently prompted the original editors to question whether fragments 3–5 were biblical texts.<sup>82</sup> This was a sensible suggestion, in the light of the above evidence. Nevertheless, when O'Callaghan published his studies in 1972 suggesting the identification of 7Q4 as 1 Tim. 3.16–4.2 and 7Q5 as Mk 6.52-53, there was a huge outcry. The implications for finding New Testament documents among the Old Testament and other texts of the Qumran community—this Jewish sect that supposedly lived in isolation from the establishment religious community in Jerusalem—was too much,<sup>83</sup> since it would

81. Of the abundant literature, see J. O'Callaghan, 'Papiros neotestamentarios en la cueva 7 de Qumrân?', *Bib* 53 (1972), pp. 91-100; *idem*, '1 Tim 3,16; 4,1.3 en 7Q4?', *Bib* 53 (1972), pp. 362-67; *idem*, *Los primeros testimonios del Nuevo Testamento: Papirología neotestamentaria* (Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1995), pp. 95-145; C.P. Thiede, *The Earliest Gospel Manuscript? The Qumran Fragment 7Q5 and its Significance for New Testament Studies* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1992), *passim*; and *idem*, *Rekindling the Word: In Search of Gospel Truth* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1995), pp. 158-204. For bibliography up to 1990 of both O'Callaghan and his supporters and detractors, see J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for Study* (SBLRBS, 20; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 168-72; to be supplemented by G.N. Stanton, *Gospel Truth? New Light on Jesus and the Gospels* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 20-32, 197-98; and most recently R.H. Gundry, 'No NU in Line 2 of 7Q5: A Final Disidentification of 7Q5 with Mark 6:52-53', *JBL* 118 (1999), pp. 698-707.

82. M. Baillet, J.T. Milik and R. de Vaux, *Les 'Petites Grottes' de Qumrân* (DJD, 3; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 143: 'Texts bibliques (?)'.

83. There are, of course, alternative models which attempt to explain the relationship of the Qumran community to the rest of the world at large. N. Golb's idea (*Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? The Search for the Secret of Qumran* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994]) that the scrolls were spirited away from Jerusalem either just before or during the siege at the end of the First Jewish War, to be kept safe in the hiding places near Qumran, has been largely rejected (cf., e.g., L.L. Grabbe, 'The Current State of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Are There More Answers than

appear to force, if not a thorough revision, at least a re-examination of our thinking regarding the Qumran community and its relationship to other Jewish groups of the time, including Christianity. Further, the implications of finding Mark's Gospel and especially 1 Timothy in the caves at Qumran would mean revising several of the critically-agreed hypotheses for the reconstruction of early Christianity, since Mark's Gospel is usually dated to the time of the revolt or after, and 1 Timothy is held by the vast majority of scholars to be pseudepigraphal, written sometime after Paul's death, most likely at the end of the first century, if not later.<sup>84</sup> These reasons have seemed sufficient to dismiss O'Callaghan's hypothesis as 'fantasy',<sup>85</sup> an opinion followed by most. Even though he believes that 7Q3–18 are probably Greek translations of the Old Testament, Fitzmyer nevertheless states that 'the issue cannot be simply dismissed'.<sup>86</sup>

The resistance to accepting this as potential evidence—or even considering it—suggests that our model of the relationships between Christianity and other Jewish groups of the time needs to be re-examined. It also suggests that the primary reason that 'Christianity' and 'Judaism' diverged (bearing in mind the difficulties associated with using these terms this early) may not have been primarily theological. The role that theology had to play in the divergence was, without doubt, still a strong one, but the centuries-long intra-religious dialogue within Judaism itself had not yet produced (to our knowledge) the kind of divergence which was evidenced later between Christianity and Judaism. Even by

Questions?', in Porter and Evans [eds.], *The Scrolls and the Scriptures*, pp. 54-67, esp. pp. 60-63). A more recent interpretation of the data by H. Stegemann (*The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998]) suggests that Qumran was simply the nerve-centre of a more widespread Essenism. There is, of course, also the possibility that Cave 7 was completely unrelated to the other caves.

84. For discussion of these issues, see L.M. McDonald and S.E. Porter, *Early Christianity and its Sacred Literature* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), chaps. 8 and 10.

85. C.H. Roberts, 'On Some Presumed Papyrus Fragments of the New Testament from Qumran', *JTS* 23 (1972), pp. 446-47.

86. Fitzmyer, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 168. For a fuller discussion of these Cave 7 documents, see S.E. Porter, 'Why so Many Holes in the Papyrological Evidence for the Greek New Testament?', in K. van Kampen and S. McKendrick (eds.), *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* (London: British Library Publications; Grand Haven, MI: Scriptorium, forthcoming).

the mid-second century, when it seems that Bar Kokhba may have required Christians to denounce Jesus as Messiah (see above), it seems that this was primarily a political move, motivated by a fear of divided loyalties during the ensuing conflicts, rather than some sort of ‘religious persecution’ along theological lines.<sup>87</sup>

Our suggestion, as was hinted earlier, is that it was primarily the issue of ethnicity that opened up the divisions which led to the complete separation between Christianity and Judaism. Probably before that time (as indicated by the Roman evidence cited above),<sup>88</sup> but certainly in the aftermath of the First Jewish War, the ethnic division which had already been a problem for the Church in the New Testament period became the defining feature of Christianity as opposed to the other form of Judaism which survived that conflict, namely the rabbinic Judaism of the Pharisees (and probably many other groups as well). The real question should not be ‘Why did Jews and Christians split?’, but rather, ‘Whatever happened to Jewish Christianity?’<sup>89</sup>

87. N.H. Taylor (‘Palestinian Christianity and the Caligula Crisis. Part I. Social and Historical Reconstruction’, *JSNT* 61 [1996], pp. 101-24) argues that ‘any tensions between the Palestinian Christians and their social groups are likely to have been exacerbated rather than ameliorated during the Caligula crisis [39/40 CE]’ (p. 113), because of Christian views of the Temple and of eschatology.

88. See B. Reicke, ‘Judaean-Christianity and the Jewish Establishment, AD 33–66’, in E. Bammel and C.F.D. Moule (eds.), *Jesus and the Politics of his Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 145-52, who argues that Jewish Christianity is to be distanced from any of the Jewish insurgent movements that led to the revolt of 66 CE, thus implying that Jewish Christianity and Judaism were themselves in some ways distinct at an early period.

89. We do know something of Jewish Christianity up until the beginning of the Constantinian era, but precious little upon which to reconstruct its history (or perhaps their histories?). Groups such as the Ebionites, which we learn about from Irenaeus, *Adv. Her.* 1.26.2, the Nazareans, etc., give us the sense that it did indeed continue to thrive in some form(s), but so much is shrouded in mystery as a result of a lack of evidence that we are forced to conjecture much. On this strand of early Christianity, see J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (trans. J.A. Baker; The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea, 1; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964). For brief discussion and bibliography, see G.A. Koch, ‘Jewish Christianity’, in E. Ferguson (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Early Christianity* (2 vols.; Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1839; New York: Garland, 2nd edn, 1997), I, pp. 613-16. As noted above, much of the anti-Judaistic language of the Church Fathers must be seen against the background of the development of Christianity into a religion made up primarily of non-Jews, whom some Fathers fear

Trying to discover the contours of the theological differences that probably provided the impetus for the first, intra-Christian, split between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, however, is no easy task. One of the most contentious discussions in New Testament studies has to do with the possibility of a major factional split between a group identified with the Apostle Paul, and one identified with Peter, or perhaps James. Although most who would stipulate such a split would describe it primarily in terms of a theological split, it seems that theology and ethnicity cannot be separated in this case—the split (as we see it in the New Testament sources) was brought on by what was primarily the ethnic division between Gentile (Pauline) Christianity and Jewish/Palestinian (Petrine? Jacobite?) Christianity. Because the ethnicity of the combatants' followings was the premiere factor (and dividing line) in the discussion, what might otherwise have been primarily theological discussions took on the flavour of inter-ethnic conflicts. Of course, the dividing lines were not that clear: Paul himself was ethnically Jewish, and was not against invoking his Jewish credentials to counter the arguments of his opposition. In Philippians 3, it seems most likely that he lists his credentials because some of his opposition were not Jewish, were not able to trace their lineage in Israel, were not circumcized on the eighth day, etc.—as he was.<sup>90</sup> Even so, the ethnic makeup of Paul's churches seems to have been largely Gentile, and many of the theological issues that occupy his letters revolve around this matter.<sup>91</sup>

Goulder's suggestion, however, is that these conflicts about ethnicity were not the most important of the various conflicts in which Paul and his churches were involved. He contends that the central conflict between Paul (or the Paulines) and Peter (or the Petrites or Jacobites) was actually christological.<sup>92</sup> This is of special importance for our essay,

will actually become Jewish, should their involvement in the synagogue continue (cf. van der Horst, 'Jews and Christians in Antioch').

90. The focus of this argument in Philippians 3, however, is not Paul's assertion of and identification with his Jewish background, but rather his conclusion in 3.7: 'But whatever was gain to me, these things I count as loss for the sake of Christ'.

91. On ethnicity in the Greco-Roman world from a New Testament perspective, see C.D. Stanley, "'Neither Jew nor Greek": Ethnic Conflict in Graeco-Roman Society', *JSNT* 64 (1996), pp. 101-24.

92. A point which Goulder outlines in *A Tale of Two Missions*, pp. 99-180, and deals with in depth in his 'John 1.1-2.12 and the Synoptics', in A. Denaux (ed.), *John and the Synoptics* (BETL, 101; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1992), pp. 201-37; *idem*, 'A Poor Man's Christology', *NTS* 45 (1999), pp. 332-48.

because the sticking point between Jews and Christians at a later period was (and still is for some) that Jews did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. However, Goulder suggests that the intra-Christian christological debate over the nature of Jesus in relationship to the Christ was the key source of conflict between the two major factions of earliest Christianity. Goulder's trajectory for answering this question is an attempt to understand the conflict between factions in the New Testament period by tracing the results of that multi-faceted conflict, as seen especially in the christological conflicts of the mid-second century. His approach seems sound—it may not be possible to determine the exact nature of the conflict between Paul and his opponents<sup>93</sup> at the point where it was in progress, but more simple to determine from its after-effects, much as Goulder has attempted. This is, perhaps, akin to the examination of a stress fracture—easier to see and understand once it has actually broken apart than at an earlier stage.

As a result, Goulder tries to trace the christological fractures of the second century back through the various New Testament writings, until we arrive at the genesis of that fracture, between Paul and the Jerusalem church. Goulder's revival of this thesis, which is, of course, a partial defence of ideas first propounded by Baur and the Tübingen School in the nineteenth century, rests on three key arguments: (1) 'The line for Paul does not run between two religions, Judaism and Christianity. It runs between those whose faith is in the gospel of the cross of Christ, Pauline Christians, and those whose trust is in the works of the law, whether they call themselves Jews or Christians.'<sup>94</sup> (2) 'The Petrine

93. One of the criticisms of Goulder's work, and others who follow this aspect of the work of Baur, is that it posits a simplistic binary opposition within the earliest Church: Paul vs. Peter (or James); Paulines vs. Petrites (or Jacobites or the Jerusalem church), whereas most scholars would see a much wider diversity and multiplicity of groups within the earliest Church than this seems to reflect. However, this criticism only holds weight if one suggests that each group within the earliest Church would have seen themselves as equal in authority to the others. That this was not the case is abundantly clear from the records of the New Testament, especially the narrative of the book of Acts, where Jerusalem as the birthplace of Christianity is unquestioned. That there was indeed one figure (and perhaps a community out of which he came) in the earliest Church who did threaten this primacy (namely, Paul and perhaps the Antioch community) begs the question of how others may have aligned themselves with regard to either Paul or Jerusalem.

94. M.D. Goulder, '2 Cor. 6:14–7:1 as an Integral Part of 2 Corinthians', *NovT* 36 (1994), pp. 47-57 (56).

Christian leaders were delivering halakha as under inspiration of the Spirit, “words of wisdom” interpreted from the Bible... It is the delivery of *dibre hokmah*, which are not (Paul says) divine law at all, but are mere human cleverness, taught in the Church as the Tannaim taught them in Judaism.<sup>95</sup> In other work, Goulder goes further and suggests that this non-Pauline group (or groups) were, at least in places, connected with mystical practices in keeping with Jewish mysticism, specifically Merkabah-related visions.<sup>96</sup> (3) The christological differences were between Paul and the Paulines on the one hand, who held to an incarnationalist Christology, and the Jerusalem church and its followers, on the other, who held to Christologies that were not incarnational.<sup>97</sup> Groups such as the Ebionites are to be identified with the non-incarnational theologies. The Ebionites maintained Jewish religious practices, such as worshipping on the Jewish Sabbath, but this was interpreted as a christological dispute in the early Church. For example, Ignatius views the failure to worship in the Lord’s Day as denying Christ’s rising from the dead and failing to share in Christ’s resurrection life (*Magn.* 9).<sup>98</sup> In addition, Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 1.26.2) asserts that the Ebionites had the same Christology as Cerinthus, who suggested that, essentially, the Holy Spirit descended on the man Jesus at his baptism, and left him at the cross (cf. Epiphanius, *Adv. Haer.* 281.5-7).

Interestingly, this last point is exactly that which continued to be the most important theological issue within the early Church, which formed the basis of at least part of the first three Ecumenical Councils (Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, and Ephesus in 431), and was the focus of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, at Chalcedon in 451. If Goulder is correct in his reconstruction, it may be that it was this intra-sectarian

95. M.D. Goulder, ‘ΣΟΦΙΑ in 1 Corinthians’, *NTS* 37 (1991), pp. 516-34 (523). See also *idem*, ‘Vision and Knowledge’, *JSNT* 56 (1994), pp. 53-71, esp. pp. 58-65.

96. Goulder, ‘John 1.1–2.12 and the Synoptics’, esp. p. 212: ‘Its members not only gave their devotion to the Law, but also experienced visions in which they were taken up to the Throne of God and given angelic instructions on its interpretation’. Cf. *idem*, ‘The Visionaries of Laodicea’, *JSNT* 43 (1991), pp. 15-39, esp. p. 33.

97. These forms of Christology have been characterized by various terms in later theological discussion, including docetism and possessionism. Whereas these forms of Christology are not necessarily to be equated, they have in common non-incarnational understandings of the mind–body problem, or the relation between Jesus and the Christ.

98. See J. Lawson, *A Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 122.

conflict within the early Christian movement itself that, because it was connected with the ethnic division brought on by Paul's work in Gentile circles, directly caused the split between Christianity and Judaism. This must be viewed as essentially two splits (that is, one within the early Christian movement and a later, final one between a largely Gentile Christianity and Judaism). The later conflict between Judaism and Christianity was not a split per se, but rather just that: a conflict between two groups who, although they had a common heritage, no longer walked the same paths. The split had taken place at a very early stage, and cannot really be described as a split between Christianity and Judaism, but rather as a split between Gentile (or Pauline) Christianity and Jewish/Palestinian (or Petrine or Jacobite) Christianity. Because the christological debate that caused this division was associated with the ethnic division of the Pauline churches in comparison to the Petrine/Jacobite churches, it facilitated the ease of the conflict between Jewish and Christian apologists in later centuries.

The implications of this model for the study of early Christianity are not fully realized in our essay. The importance of Goulder's arguments regarding the antiquity of the essential christological debates of the first six centuries of Church history is obvious, but there are other questions which could profitably be asked, and which might help us re-write much of the way in which we look at the first several centuries of Church history. One of these relates to the question of the relationship of Gnosticism and Judaism,<sup>99</sup> and the implications this has for the discussion of both Gnosticism and Jewish mysticism. If the fundamental division in earliest Christianity revolved around what are essentially Jewish christological (or messianic) formulations very similar to those distinctly Christian formulations of later centuries, then it may be that the kinds of developments that Judaism went through with regard to mysticism may actually help illuminate the development of Gnosticism out of a Christian faith which, in some of its parts, so vehemently opposed it.

99. See L.L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992; 1 vol.; London: SCM Press, 1994), pp. 514-19, with bibliography.

### 5. *Conclusion*

In conclusion, perhaps we can re-focus our gaze on the beginning of the fourth century once more, just on the cusp of those unprecedented changes within Christianity and the Roman empire itself. Far-reaching changes would take place very quickly post-313, and the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in the latter part of the fourth century would bear only passing resemblance to the pre-313 relationship. However, we hope we have shown in this essay that, to understand many of the later developments in this relationship, and indeed in the development of individual faiths (although we have focused more on Christianity in this regard), it is imperative that the earlier development of this relationship be not only examined, but considered from multiple perspectives.