

Christianity as the Root Cause of Anti-Judaism in the Western World

In the Beginning: A Family Feud (165 BCE to 150 CE)

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Introduction: Overview

There is a common misperception among people that Judaism at the time of Jesus of Nazareth was a unified, homogeneous religious community of believers who universally—whether in Palestine itself or among Jews scattered throughout the Roman world, i.e., the Jews of the diaspora—subscribed without deviation to accepted beliefs and practices held in common. There are further misconceptions among Christians and Jews alike that (1) Christianity was founded by Jesus as a religion opposed to Judaism and (2) Christianity from the beginning inaugurated and promulgated anti-Judaism. Such popular perspectives are at best half-truths and at worst quite erroneous.

The purpose of this essay, which is divided into four parts, is to provide a historical reconstruction of the relevant events of the ancient time period in question that will suggest a different understanding from the one commonly held on these critical issues in the Jewish-Christian dialogue today. The essay will first point out that Judaism from at least 165 BCE (**B**efore the **C**ommon **E**ra of Judaism and Christianity) to 100 CE (**C**ommon **E**ra of Judaism and Christianity) was a diverse religious community made up of different and sometimes competing groups, many of which groups often opposed the existing Jerusalem Temple establishment as corrupt and egregiously errant in its interpretation and execution of the precepts and pronouncements of the Torah (the Law of Moses or Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Second, the essay will demonstrate the following:

(1) Jesus was a Jew, born into a devout Jewish family. He became a *Jewish reformer* who opposed the Jerusalem Temple establishment and its various representatives' doctrinaire promulgation of Judaism as oppressive, exploitative and dehumanizing of Galilean Jewish peasants. For that reason Jesus attacked the Temple establishment, Judaism's parent political and religious institution, and denounced its leaders as false representatives of God.

(2) The movement inspired by Jesus that sprang forth in full force after his death was not just one movement, but rather diverse and sometimes competing movements. They were diverse and occasionally competing movements which all claimed Jesus as their God-anointed teacher and leader, i.e., the Messiah, and *all* of which were *Jewish* in religious orientation, if not in ethnicity, at least throughout the first century CE and into the first decade or so of the second century CE.

This essay is divided into four parts, namely: Part One: Judaism's Family Feud Prior to Jesus of Nazareth; Part Two: Jesus of Nazareth and His Vision of a New, Reformed Judaism; Part Three: Rise of the Christ Community and Its Continuance of Jesus' Reform of Judaism; and Part Four: From Judaic Family Feud to Anti-Judaism to Christianity as a separate Religion. In the course of the essay, dependency on the insights of other scholars will be briefly noted, when pertinent, within parentheses, with full bibliographical information cited in "Sources" at the end of the essay. All biblical quotations cited in the essay are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*.

Also, in this essay the followers of Jesus, at least in the first century CE, are not called "Christians," nor is the religious movement of which they were a part called "Christianity." The

reason is that the several generations of followers of Jesus up to the end of the first century CE did not identify themselves as “Christians,” nor did they identify their religious movement as “Christianity,” as scholars have recognized (see Wilkins). Nowhere in Paul’s letters does he identify himself or any other follower of Jesus as a “Christian,” nor do any of the Gospels or any other New Testament texts written before the second century CE identify followers of Jesus as “Christians” or their movement as “Christianity.” The term “Christian” was first used by Gentile opponents of Jesus’ followers, and was used derisively to label those “undesirable” people who believed in “the Christ,” i.e., “Christ people” or “Christ believers,” as they will be called in this essay.

The first New Testament indication that followers of Jesus were called “Christian” is found in the First Epistle of Peter (4:16), a letter written about 112 CE (see Koester). In the Acts of the Apostles, which was composed between 120 and 125 CE (see Tyson), its author, Luke, indicates that the followers of Jesus were first called “Christians” early on at Antioch (Acts 11:26); and Luke presents King Agrippa II using the term “Christian” in a speech (Acts 26:28). There is good reason to construe Luke’s uses of the term “Christian” as instances in which Luke projects back into the past what had become a practice of identifying Jesus’ followers in his own time. Luke is recognized by scholars as having a penchant for doing that. The only use of the term “Christian” in literature produced by followers of Jesus in this period is found in *The Didache* (12:4). That composition likely originated in the first century CE, though scholars have debated whether it should be dated as early as the first century CE.

So for historical accuracy, as far as giving a proper name to the first century CE followers of Jesus organized into a distinctive religious community, the name used in this essay to identify that community of faith is the “Christ Community,” with “community” rendered in upper case when referring in general to the entire body of believers in Jesus, and in lower case when referring to a specific, local community. Furthermore, as this essay will demonstrate, the followers of Jesus in the first century CE, when they became organized as a community of believers or a “church” (from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning the “assembly”; in Hebrew, *qahal*= “assembly”), still thought of themselves as Jews and representatives of Judaism, albeit a new, reformed Judaism.

Part One

Judaism’s Family Feud Prior to Jesus of Nazareth

I. The Religious and Sociological Character of Judaism from 165 BCE to the First Century CE

A. Judaism’s Family Feud

Following the successful Jewish revolt in 166-160 BCE, led by the priest Mattathias and his sons—particularly Judas Maccabee—against the tyrannical Seleucid Empire and its ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanies, Judeans began the process of freeing themselves from foreign domination for the first time in over four hundred years. By 142 BCE that freedom was secured, and Simon, brother of Judas Maccabee, became civil ruler and high priest of the independent state of Judea. He, also, became founder of the religious/political Hasmonean dynasty (142-37 BCE), a dynasty named after the great grandfather of Simon’s father. The renewal of Judaism had begun, launched in part by its precursor-event, the cleansing and reconsecration of the Temple—which had been intentionally desecrated by Antiochus IV through having a pig

sacrificed upon the altar—in the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), December 165 BCE (see Rajak).

But then almost immediately factionalism in the renewed Judaism began fermenting. A family feud of sorts took place when the Hasidim, a pious group of defenders of the Torah, a group which had participated in the Maccabean revolt, split into three separate parties: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes (see Kampen). From time to time these three parties or denominations of post-165 BCE Judaism either challenged the resident high priesthood and cultic practices related to it and/or jockeyed for power within “common Judaism,” i.e., the overarching Judaic religious-political system, Judaism’s “big tent.” Exactly who were these parties in Judaism’s family feud?

1. The Sadducees

The Sadducees were an aristocratic religious and political party or denomination that derived their name and claim to a priestly dynasty by tracing their authoritative lineage back to Zadok, a high priest at the time of King David. (On the Sadducees, as cited here, see Porton). The Sadducees were the dominant power and parent institutional body of Judaism, for the most part, from about 165 BCE to 70 CE, when the Temple was destroyed by the Roman army. During that time the Sadducees through their Sadducean high priests and priests controlled the Temple establishment, the foundation of Judaism’s religious ideology and system, as well as the seat of the Jewish political establishment.

With respect to their belief system, the Sadducees interpreted the Torah literally and strictly held to the laws of Moses in the Torah as the only authoritative source of divine law. They applied these Mosaic laws to the Temple establishment specifically, but not to public life generally. The Sadducees maintained that the Temple sacrificial system was the sole means by which the blight of sin can be removed and restoration to God can be attained. They insisted on the payment of the Temple tax to maintain the system. In their interpretation of the Holiness Code’s purity rules and regulations (Leviticus 17-26; see Wright), they strongly disagreed with the Pharisees (see below) over matters of purity, especially on the issues of the requirement of cleanliness of hands, the uncleanness of certain kinds of water, the status of cleanliness of Sadducean women, and the purity status of the Temple’s menorah. They renounced the concept of fate as a controlling force in life and believed in free will. They did not believe in life after death. Nor did they believe in either eternal reward or punishment.

2. The Pharisees

The Pharisees were a Jewish social and religious reform group intent upon wielding political influence in Jewish governance and religious control over Jewish society. The Pharisees came into being as a split-off of the Hasidim, likely some time from the 170s to 160s BCE, and organized themselves according to strict rules and regulations of purity. (On the Pharisees, as cited here, see Saldarini and Neusner). In stressing purity and holiness as indispensable criteria for a faithful Jewish life, the Pharisees advocated their own interpretation of purity rules and regulations which were not only derived from the Torah and its Holiness Code, but also from what the Pharisees claimed was divinely authorized oral tradition, a tradition which the Sadducees adamantly rejected. As a consequence, the Pharisees, with the aid of their oral law, interpreted the application of certain purity regulations of the Holiness Code in radically different ways from the Sadducees.

With respect to interpretation of and obedience to the Holiness Code, the Pharisees placed particular focus on strict ritual observance of purity regarding growing and harvesting

agricultural products, proper eating of food considered cultically clean, the ritual cleaning of hands prior to eating, the ritual cleanliness of food, as well as purity regulations regarding sex and marriage. The Pharisees, contrary to and in opposition to the Sadducees, applied the purity laws of holiness to the entire Jewish society. The rabbinic tradition remembers the Pharisees prior to 70 CE as primarily a table-fellowship society. For them the high point of their shared life was their daily table fellowship together. It was in those everyday gatherings that cultic ritual purity regarding diet and the cleanliness of food were assiduously practiced.

With respect to the Temple, the Pharisees insisted on the payment of tithes of agricultural products, etc to the Temple establishment. They did not generally involve themselves in matters related to Temple worship, although the rabbinic tradition identifies some priests of the Temple priesthood as Pharisees. The Pharisees' focus on worship was principally directed to ordinary Jews' strict observance of the Sabbath and Judaism's religious festivals. The Pharisees, unlike the Sadducees, believed in fate as the controlling force in life. They also believed in life after death and divine reward and punishment, all of which would occur at the apocalyptic end-time (God's dramatic ending of the world in the near time).

The Pharisees were an active religious and political force during the initial years of the Hasmonean dynasty (165-37 BCE), particularly in the period from 134-67 BCE, and especially during the Hasmonean reign of Queen Salome Alexandra (76-67 BCE). But, they lost their political power during the rule of the Roman appointed client king, Herod the Great (37-4 BCE). While they served as educated, legal experts on Jewish law, and served from time to time as bureaucrats for the Temple establishment, and were one of the most influential religious reform groups in first century CE Judaism, they lacked political power. That power belonged during the first century CE until 70CE, as suggested above, to the Pharisees' dominating and unyielding competitors, the Sadducees. However, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and the end of the Sadducean Temple establishment's political and religious control of Jewish society, the Pharisees filled the power vacuum left by the demise of the Sadducees. The Pharisees then became the principal power brokers of post-Temple Judaism's religious self-identity and social formation.

3. The Essenes

The Essenes were a party or denomination which also devoted itself to Torah. The Essenes are best known as the result of the 1947 discovery of the "Dead Sea Scrolls," their library of sacred writings which they preserved in sealed jars in caves at their community site, Qumran, located at the west bank of the Dead Sea (see Addendum for map). (On the Essenes, as cited here, see Collins, Freeman and Geoghegan, Murray-O'Connor, and Vermes).

Organizing themselves as a reform party of Judaism, the Essenes required demanding and binding oaths for membership. They insisted upon communal property, communal living, and celibacy. They interpreted the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible (for example, Isaiah, Hosea, Habakuk), as predictions of events for their own time and community. They believed in immortality and devoted themselves to the teaching and principles of the prophet Ezekiel, and of particular note, Ezekiel's perspective regarding the priesthood, namely that only those descendents of Zadok were eligible for the priesthood. In this respect, they were aligned with the Sadducees in their Zadokite lineage. Ezekiel was also important for the Essenes in their selection of the Dead Sea area as the location of their community. They were drawn to that spot because of their interpretation of Ezekiel's vision (47:1-12) prophesying a glorious future event of divine blessing in which natural life is miraculously restored to a dead body of water, i.e. the Dead Sea. In the course of the Essenes' evolution as a denomination, they disavowed certain Temple rituals, particularly the practice of Temple sacrifice. They, on the contrary, engaged in

rites of sacrifice within their community itself, along with the practice of ritualized communal meals.

The later development of their religious ideology can be directly traced to a defining event in their history. All three parties, the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes, almost from their beginning and in different stages of their evolution as parties, contended and competed with one another for religious, if not political control, of the renewal of Judaism following the Maccabean revolt. Sometimes their contentiousness and competition with each other led to combativeness and finally excoriating denunciation of one party by another. That was the case with the Essenes in their disputatious relationship with the Sadducees.

Some time in the Essenes' founding history there emerged a Zadokite priest, who became their revered, celebrated teacher, and whom they called the "Teacher of Righteousness." They attributed to the Teacher of Righteousness the founding of their community. He was perceived as an inspired prophet, who possessed knowledge God had revealed to him. In his teaching he espoused an extremely rigorist view of the Law. The Essenes considered the interpretation of the Law by the Teacher of Righteousness to be the only authentic understanding of Torah's demands. Thus, according to the Essene (Qumran) community, his teaching about the Law and fidelity to what he taught were the sole basis for salvation. Oddly, the Essenes never identified their revered teacher by his given name.

In any event, the Essenes' break with the Sadducees and the Temple establishment was triggered when the Teacher of Righteousness challenged the high priest—also unnamed, but plausibly Onias III who was the Zadokite high priest from ca. 196-175. The Teacher of Righteousness sent the high priest an epistle in which he pressed for his own interpretation on liturgical calendar matters and liturgical practices related to the Temple. Not only did the high priest reject the views of the Teacher of Righteousness, but he took such an affront to the Teacher's audacity in proposing them that in rage he vengefully retaliated and tried to quash the Essene community in a raid upon it on the Essene Day of Atonement. The high priest was subsequently vilified in the history of the Qumran community, and excoriatingly denounced as "the Wicked Priest." The animosity between the Essene community and the high priest had been raised to apocalyptic proportions.

Two documents from the Qumran community emphatically depict the memory of the origin and reason for that animosity. Consider this quote from the community's Damascus Rule (I-II; trans., Vermes).

Hear now, all you who know righteousness, and consider the works of God; for He has a dispute with all flesh and will condemn all those who despise Him.

For when they were unfaithful and forsook Him, He hid His face from Israel and His Sanctuary and delivered them up to the sword. But remembering the Covenant of the forefathers, He left a remnant to Israel and did not deliver it up to be destroyed. . . .

He raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart. And he made known to the latter generations that which God had done to the latter generation, the congregation of traitors, to those who departed from the way. This was the time of which it is written, *Like a stubborn heifer thus was Israel stubborn* [Hosea 4:16] when the Scoffer [i.e., "the wicked priest"] arose who shed over Israel the waters of lies. He led them astray in a wilderness without way by bringing low the everlasting hills, and by causing them to depart

from the paths of righteousness, and by removing the bound with which the forefathers had marked out their inheritance, that he might call down on them the curses of His Covenant and deliver them up to the avenging sword of the Covenant. For they sought smooth things and preferred illusions (Isa. xxx, 10) and they watched for breaks [Isaiah 30:13) and chose the fair neck; and they justified the wicked and condemned the just, and they transgressed the Covenant and violated the Precept. They banded together against the life of the righteous [Psalm 94: 21] and loathed all who walked in perfection; they pursued them with the sword and exulted in the strife of the people. And the anger of God was kindled against their congregation so that He ravaged all their multitude; and their deeds were defilement before Him.

Now consider another historical vitriolic remembrance of the animosity found in the Qumran community's Commentary on Habakkuk (X-XII), where the prophecy of Habakkuk is interpreted as predicting the conflict between the Jerusalem high priest and the community's teacher-founder, thus: (trans.: Vermes):

[T]he Wicked Priest committed abominable deeds and defiled the Temple of God . . . , [and] robbed the Poor of their possessions.

[H]e did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart, and he walked in the ways of drunkenness that he might quench his thirst.

[T]he Spouter of Lies [the Wicked Priest] led many astray that he might build his city [Jerusalem] of vanity with blood and raise a congregation on deceit, causing many thereby to perform a service of vanity for the sake of its glory, and to be pregnant with [works] of deceit, that their labour might be for nothing and that they might be punished with fire who vilified and outraged the elect of God.

[T]he Wicked Priest . . . pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to the house of his exile that he might confuse him with his venomous fury. And at the time appointed for rest, for the Day of Atonement, he appeared before them to confuse them, and to cause them to stumble on the Day of Fasting, their Sabbath of repose.

God delivered [the Wicked Priest] into the hands of his enemies because of the iniquity committed against the Teacher of Righteousness and the men of his Council, that he might be humbled by means of a destroying scourge, in bitterness of soul, because he had done wickedly to His elect.

That vengeful action of the so called "Wicked Priest" against the Essenes' Teacher of Righteousness and its community led to the Essenes disassociating themselves entirely from the Jerusalem Temple establishment and becoming a separatist group of Judaism. As separatists from the rest of Judaism, at least Judaism of the Jerusalem Temple establishment, these Essenes, now organized as a community at Qumran, took the perspective that they and they alone were God's chosen ones representing true Judaism, "the community of the everlasting Covenant." They vilified Jews outside their community as false Jews belonging to, variously, "the congregation of the men of falsehood," "men of the Pit," "the congregation of traitors," who belong to the army of Satan. Members of the community of everlasting Covenant were admonished to have nothing to do with these traitorous outsiders (see Vermes: "the Community

Rule;” “the Damascus Rule,” “the War Rule”). In their community gatherings priests invoked this curse on these Jews (see “The Community Rule, II; trans.: Vermes):

Be cursed because of all your guilty wickedness! May He [God] deliver you up for torture at the hands of the vengeful Avengers! May He visit you with destruction by the hand of all the Wreakers of Revenge! Be cursed without mercy because of the darkness of your deeds! Be damned in the shadowy place of everlasting fire! May God not heed when you call on Him, nor pardon you by blotting out your sin! May He raise His angry face towards you for vengeance! May there be no ‘Peace’ for you in the mouth of those who hold fast to the Fathers!

B. Judaism’s Family Feud Spawns Separatist Judaic Communities

The Qumran community of Essenes, however, was not the only community in Judaism prior to the time of Jesus of Nazareth that disputatiously challenged the parent body of Judaism in the Temple establishment and its priesthood leadership for being “wicked,” corrupt, and false to God, which then resulted in the community’s separation from Jerusalem and the Temple establishment. Another significant example of such a Jewish community in the period prior to Jesus and the Christ Community, and which has implication for understanding the early Christ Community’s posture toward Judaism, is the community which produced 1 Enoch.

1. The 1 Enoch Separatists

The post-exilic, extra-biblical (not in the Hebrew Bible or its Greek translation, the Septuagint), Judaic composition, 1 Enoch, is not just one composition by one author but a compilation of writings or books originating in the same Jewish community over a period of almost 400 years (ca. 300 BCE to ca. 70’s CE), books which engage over that period of time in a polemical attack against the corruption, falsity, even idolatry of the Jerusalem establishment: the Temple priesthood and its other religious and political authorities. (See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, for the information provided here).

The authors’ community was located in Upper Galilee in the vicinity of Dan, the site of the ancient Israelite tribe and the site of Mount Hermon, the highest mountain (9,230 feet high) in the Palestinian-Syrian region (see Addendum for map). Mount Hermon served as the ancient locus of sacred epiphanies and divine revelation for the Canaanite religion, the ancient Israelites, Greco-Roman religious tradition, such as the Greco-Roman version of the cult of Pan, and, later, the Christ Community. Early on, in opposition to the Jerusalem religious-political hegemony, the “Enochic” community relocated to this Upper Galilean region. For them, then, Mount Hermon is where God made God’s presence known to the faithful and not Mt. Zion. It is at Mount Hermon that epiphanies of God, according to 1 Enoch, are experienced and divine revelation received.

Throughout the various books of 1 Enoch, the central figure is Enoch, the son of Jared and father of Methuselah (Genesis 5:18-21). In 1 Enoch, Enoch, as literary figure, discloses revelations he has experienced as the result of journeying through the heavens—up even to God’s heavenly throne room—over the earth, and throughout the cosmos. He functions in different guises: scribe, sage, prophet, priestly mediator, and end-time judge. He dispenses in all the various literary roles the divine wisdom which was revealed to him, and which he in turn communicates to his father and all future generations of faithful Jews, particularly those righteous Jews in the end-time who are blessed as God’s chosen ones. Enoch reveals the divinely ordained solar calendar of 364 days, divided into four

ninety-day seasons, with an extra day assigned to each season, a hotly debated—and not a trivial issue in the second century BCE—between Jews who adamantly held to a lunar calendar, e.g., the Temple establishment, and those who advocated a solar calendar, the Jews of the Enochic community (1 Enoch, chaps. 72-82).

a. 1 Enoch's Attack on the Temple Priesthood and Other Authorities

Throughout most of the books of 1 Enoch the authors, who belonged to the Jewish community in Upper Galilee near ancient Dan, polemicized, via Enoch, against the Jerusalem priesthood. In the guise of a mythic story about the heavenly priests of the heavenly sanctuary who have corrupted themselves and the sanctuary through polluting the altar (1 Enoch 15:3-4), one of the authors denounces the earthly Jerusalem priesthood for their own egregious sin. Another author through the narration of an allegorical dream (89:73-74) condemns the Jerusalem priesthood for profaning the Temple sacrifices. And yet another author vilifies the Jerusalem religious authorities who twist the Torah to their own advantageous interpretation in false teaching, and thus, by virtue of their lies, are blamed for leading many faithful Jews astray.

The Temple priesthood had defiled itself by violating sexual purity laws. As a result, from the perspective of the Enochic community, God condemned and passed judgment against the Jerusalem priesthood. The Jerusalem Temple and its sacrificial cult, the previous means of atonement, having been rejected by God is defunct (chaps. 12-16). In fact, it is even suggested in one of the Enochic texts (the so-called “Animal Vision,” chaps. 85-90) that the sacrifices offered on the Temple's altar were polluted from the very beginning. According to the author of 1 Enoch 12-16, the heavenly palace of God is the only true Temple. And when in the end-time Jerusalem will be transformed, since all sin will have ended, there is no longer any need for a sacrificial cult to atone for sin. In the meantime, according to 1 Enoch, salvation is attained through the revelation of divine wisdom which will keep believers in the revealed wisdom from sin. Furthermore, all their past sins God will mercifully forgive.

In 1 Enoch 102:4-104:8, there is an impassioned championing of the cause of the poor and needy who have suffered innumerable injustices and dehumanization at the hands of the powerful and wealthy. The rich and powerful are condemned by the author for exploiting and oppressing the poor through slave labor, exorbitant taxation and physical violence. The rich and powerful are also condemned for hoarding gold and silver through unjust acquisition, manipulating the court system, taking bribes, and executing unjust judgments. On top of that, they are excoriated for flaunting their elitism by parading around in their status “show off” clothes and enjoying sumptuous banquets, while ignoring the needs of the poor and needy.

b. A New, Reformed Judaism according to the Enochic Separatists

The authors of 1 Enoch, and the community they represent, espouse a new, reformed Judaism, which is a significantly different form of Judaism from that which is promulgated by the Jerusalem Temple establishment. Having disassociated themselves from Jerusalem and its central focus upon obedience to the Mosaic covenant, in the new, reformed Judaism of these authors and their community emphasis on the Mosaic Covenant recedes into the background of interest. There is virtually no reference or allusions to the commandments and laws associated with the Mosaic Torah. Absent from 1 Enoch is any attention given to such things as the commandments: for example, honoring

one's parents and faithful Sabbath observance, the requirement of circumcision or other rules and regulations found in the Holiness Code.

¹ Enoch lays claim to a new Torah received through revealed wisdom. At best, with respect to the old Torah, it has significance only when the *right* understanding of it is communicated through divinely revealed wisdom. Furthermore, the concept of covenant itself is rarely introduced as an issue that the authors and their community are particularly interested in. The word "covenant" makes rare appearances in the various Enochic texts. Strikingly, ¹ Enoch does not link the identity of Israel, and thus its own identity, with Moses. Rather the identity of Israel as the people of God is traced to and founded upon Abraham and Noah. Moreover, salvation for the authors and their community is not attained through faithful observance of any covenant, but rather in possessing the "right" knowledge revealed through divine wisdom.

2. Fundamental Principles of the Enochic and Qumran Communities

The Enochic and Qumran communities, each in their own ways, grounded their religious ideology and self-definition on four fundamental principles. First, they derived their authority from their claim that they are recipients of special divinely revealed wisdom. Second, they claimed that the divinely revealed wisdom, of which they are beneficiaries, was mediated through a prophet, seer, or teacher, singularly chosen by God to receive God's wisdom and impart it to those who recognize him as God's Chosen One. Third, they claimed that salvation is solely available through the Chosen One's divinely revealed wisdom, fidelity to which alone ensures that one is saved. Fourth, they adamantly averred that their authority, since it is divinely given, cannot be controverted. Those who hold positions contrary to theirs, or in any way challenge their position, were then by definition wrong and outside the circle of the saved (cf. Nickelsburg, "Revealed Wisdom").

These fundamental, foundation principles of self-definition as a people, and the authoritative, unquestionable truth of their religious ideology, are principles which will be seen as similar to those adopted by the various Christ communities. For the Christ communities used them in their contentious and sometimes combative family feud with their Jewish relatives as they sought to win over those relatives to their particular versions of a reformed Judaism. Their version of reform, of course, was grounded in their conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was ordained as God's "Chosen One," God's anointed one (Messiah) to bring God's new vision for the future of Judaism through Jesus' disclosure of the divine wisdom revealed to him. Our attention now turns to the emergence of the Christ Community, and begins with a profile of Jesus as a reformer of Judaism.

Part Two

Jesus of Nazareth and His Vision of a New, Reformed Judaism

I. A Profile of Jesus of Nazareth: His Person and His Message

A. Jesus' Hometown

Jesus' hometown of Nazareth was a small satellite village in the urban orbit of Sepphoris, one of the two major cities in Lower Galilee at the time, the other major city being Tiberius (see Addendum for map). A significant number of Sepphoris' inhabitants were devoutly observant Jews, mostly descendents of Judeans who had moved to this important political/religious

administration center. While by the time of Jesus, Sepphoris, which strangely is never mentioned in the Gospels, had been transformed into a Hellenistic city with Roman architectural features, it preserved its Jewish religious character and identity, derived from Judean (Jewish) ancestors.

Nazareth was important to Sepphoris for its agricultural land. As a small peasant village of about 400 people, the citizens of Nazareth, Nazareans, were apparently very devout in their faithfulness to the cultic practices of the Jerusalem Temple establishment. Archaeologists have uncovered four cultic indicators that demonstrate that this was the case (see Reed). As was the case with respect to excavations in Sepphoris itself, archaeologists found Judean cultic “DNA” evidence at Nazareth in the remains of (1) a ritual, stepped-plastered purification pool, (2) chalk vessels for preserving food purity, (3) ossuaries—ritual stone burial coffins used to inter bones of a deceased in a secondary burial after the flesh had decayed away following the first burial, and (4) bone fragments without evidence of pork-bones, an indicator that the Nazareans strictly followed the dietary proscription against eating pork. It is likely that people of Nazareth, as residents of a small rural village, were even more conservative in their observance of Judaic religious beliefs and practices than were the Jewish citizens of urban Sepphoris. Sepphoris was permeated with Greco-Roman (Hellenistic) culture.

B. Jesus’ Family: What’s in a Name?

There are strong indications that Jesus’ mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph—both peasants—were faithfully observant of and loyal to Judaism’s Judean heritage. (Information cited here is drawn from Sawicki and Williams). First of all, it is significant that Jesus’ mother was named “Mary” by her parents. In that time, many baby girls were named “Mary” in the symbolic hope that the Hasmonean dynasty of Judea would be restored. The Hasmonean dynasty had come to an end years before Jesus was born because of the murderous acts of King Herod the Great. Herod’s second wife, Mariamme, was the daughter of Alexander who was the son of the Hasmonean ruler, Aristobulus, II, the last Hasmonean to rule Judea, prior to the Roman conquest of Judea (63 BCE). Herod murdered Mariamme, her high-priest brother Aristobulus and her two sons, the only living descendents at the time of the Hasmonean dynasty, which traced its origin back to the Maccabean Revolt, the revolt that liberated Judea from foreign rule. The deaths of Mariamme, her two sons and her brother ended any possibility of the bloodline of the Hasmoneans continuing. In hopes that it would be “reborn” again, parents commonly named their daughters “Mariamme” or “Miriam” or “Mary” (“Miriam” and “Mary” are derivatives of “Mariamme”). So Jesus’ mother may well have come from a devout Judean family which at her birth named her “Mary—consistent with the practice of other girls named by parents “Mariamme,” “Miriam” or “Mary”—in the hope that through Mary’s own children the Hasmonean dynasty would be symbolically restored..

Then there are the strong indications that Mary and Joseph maintained a devout Jewish home as evidenced in the names given to the sons in the family: Jesus, James, Joses, Simon and Judas (Jesus also had sisters but unlike his brothers, their names are unknown: see the Gospel of Mark 6:3). It was customary in those days to name male children after the ancient patriarchs and epic heroes, such as the Maccabees, who secured Judea’s freedom from foreign domination, which led then to the Hasmonean epic dynasty. Thus, then, with respect to the patriarchs, Jesus’ brother James (a derivative of the name “Jacob”) was likely named after the patriarch Jacob. Jesus’ brother Joses (a diminutive of the name “Joseph”) was likely named after Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egyptian slavery. And Jesus (a derivative of the name “Joshua”) was likely named after Joshua, who successfully led the Hebrews of the Exodus in the conquest and resettlement of Canaan. Consequently, three of the names given to the male children in the family, Jacob, Joses and Jesus are symbolic representations of the

ancient Hebrew epic of settlement in Canaan (the patriarch Jacob), the Hebrew slavery in Egypt (Joseph), the exodus from slavery, and the Hebrew resettlement of Canaan by Joshua.

The Hasmonean epic dynasty is represented by Jesus' family, aside from Mary herself, in the naming of his two other brothers: Judas and Simon. Judas was likely named after Judas Maccabee who led the revolt against the Seleucids that brought about the liberation of Judea from foreign domination in the second century BCE. And Jesus' brother Simon was likely named after Simon Maccabee who established the Hasmonean dynasty. Thus the naming of Mary and Joseph's sons is a sign of what we would call today Judean "patriotism." Mary and Joseph were "patriotic" Judean Jews.

Further evidence of the likelihood that Jesus grew up in a devout Jewish home with Judean "patriotic" sympathies is suggested by the fact that James, Jesus' brother, who became the leader of the Christ community at Jerusalem, is depicted in the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and by the author of the Acts of the Apostles as a very devout Jew (Galatians 2:1-21; Acts 15:1-21). A strong indication of that lies in a family feud that developed within the early Christ Community. James insisted adamantly, in contrast to Paul, that any Gentile converted to the Christ Community must be circumcised. Paul argued strongly that Gentile converts to the movement did not need to be circumcised as a Jew in order to be a Christ believer. In the end they agreed to disagree, which may well have been the beginning of the separation of the Gentile Christ Community, still considering itself a part of a reform of Judaism, from the Christ Community of circumcised Jews, James and the like, who put priority on a stricter adherence to the Torah for all followers of Jesus.

C. Jesus' Break with His Family and the Temple Establishment's Judaism

At some point at the outset of his ministry Jesus broke with his family's tradition of unswerving loyalty to Judaism as promulgated by the parent body of Judaism in his day, namely: the Jerusalem Temple establishment, its priesthood, along with other recognized authorities of Judaism, such as the Pharisees and the scribes (legal experts on Judaism). Jesus' break with his family is evident in the passage found in the Gospel of Mark in which his family intervenes in his ministry because people think he is "beside himself," i.e., crazy, perhaps demon-possessed, as the Jerusalem scribes surmise (Mark 3:19-22). Subsequently, Jesus chooses not to recognize his family and instead claims his followers as his true family (Mark 3:13-35). The family feud within his nuclear family caused by this incident led to a family "divorce." That family "divorce" drove Jesus to leave Nazareth, where he had been rejected, and relocate his ministry in the territory at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, specifically in the region of the city of Capernaum. It was there that his ministry flowered and he attracted many disciples, among whom were the brothers Andrew and Peter, and the brothers James and John.

What was the character of Jesus' teaching and ministry that so offended people in Nazareth that they rejected him as out of his mind, demon-possessed? It appears to have been his vision for the transformation of Judaism into a radically reformed Judaism, a radically reformed Judaism that transcended everything that had gone before. What was the reform Jesus envisioned?

D. The Core of Jesus' Vision for a New, Radically Reformed Judaism

1. Jesus' Experience of God in Nature

Jesus' vision for the reform of Judaism was based upon his experience of God and the intuitive insights about the nature and purpose of God he gained from his experience of God.

(Information cited here is taken from Weeden, “A Faith Odyssey”). Jesus intuited God’s self-disclosure in the natural world. He was a careful observer of nature. Noting nature’s intricate processes, Jesus recognized that lilies of the field effortlessly achieve a beauty that exceeds the glory of Solomon himself, and that ravens do not have to labor to produce something to eat. Even grass, as short-lived as it is, is cared for by God (Gospel of Luke 12:24-28). Through the shining sun and the falling rain Jesus recognized that God provides a dependable process that benefits all life. In God’s plan the tiny mustard seed’s destiny is to become a great tree to offer birds a nesting place in its branches. Leaven or yeast plays its essential part in the natural process of making bread, and salt helps sustain life by its indispensable preservative role (see Gospel of Matthew 5:45; Gospel of Luke 13:18-21; 14:34; 17:3-4).

From his observation of the natural world Jesus arrived at two profound insights. First, the world of nature is God’s realm, where God reigns as a benevolent creator, providentially sustaining all life. Nature is not abandoned to chance. God compassionately supplies all its needs. While this represents an idealistic view of the natural world on the part of Jesus, he was not unaware of the violent, destructive side of the natural world when he spoke of sending his disciples out on a mission as analogous to sending “sheep in the midst of wolves” (Gospel of Luke 10:3). Second, from his observation of God’s benevolent provision for all natural life, Jesus inferred a corresponding relationship that God desires for and offers to human beings.

2. Jesus’ Perception of God as Human Parent

Jesus made a conceptual transition from his intuition of God as compassionate creator of the natural world to seeing God’s relationship with humans as symbolically represented by the role of “father.” Jesus apparently reasoned that if God benevolently sustains the natural world, then as an ideal parent who gives “good things to those who ask him,” God must provide for human needs as well. Thus, if, in trust, people petition God for daily bread, the bread will be theirs. Nor need people be anxious about finding clothes to wear: God sees that their needs are supplied, even as God supplies all the needs of the world of nature (see Gospel of Luke 11:2-3, 11-13; 12:22-30). Thus, whereas the Holiness Code of the Torah defined God’s nature as *holy* (“I the Lord your God am holy”: Leviticus 19:2), Jesus defined God’s nature as *love*, compassionate, unconditional love for all people and all creation, without exception.

3. Jesus’ Espousal of the Unique Ethic of the Kingdom of God

Having inferred God’s presence in the natural world as indicating God’s involvement in the human realm, Jesus espoused a unique and idealistic ethic. Based upon God’s beneficent, unconditional love, Jesus’ ethic follows the divine model that Jesus intuited from God’s providential care of the natural world. Jesus’ ethic called upon his followers to love not only friends and neighbors, but enemies as well, just as God shows no partiality in equally blessing the just and unjust with sunshine and rain (Gospel of Luke 6:27-31).

By invoking that universal care and love of God, Jesus was able to envision human relationships taking on a radically new disposition and dynamic. According to Jesus, by living his ethic we should not only love our enemies and pray for them when persecuted, but when slapped on one cheek, we must turn the other cheek to the slapper. When someone tries to take our coats, we should offer our shirts as well. When conscripted to walk one mile, we should volunteer to go a second mile. When approached to borrow, we should give expecting nothing in return. Our compassion for others is to match God’s compassion for us. Rather than pass judgment on others, we must forgive others no matter how much they offend us. For the way we should treat people is the way we would want them to treat us (see Gospel of Matthew 5:41; Gospel of Luke 6:34-37).

Jesus' ethic is in effect a radical reform of the *lex talionis* (the law of retribution) of the Torah, which establishes the acceptable and legal retribution for an injury inflicted and the limits of retaliation for harm suffered. Thus, when harm occurs as a result of an injury inflicted by another, Exodus 21:23-25 decrees: "If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Jesus' ethic renounces the application of *lex talionis* when one is offended or even harmed by another. Rather, Jesus believed that when harm is experienced from injury inflicted, by responding non-violently and altruistically, human relationships can be transformed from acrimony, animosity or demeaning servitude to mutual understanding, acceptance, and respect for one another, if not empathic appreciation of one another. It was an ethic that Martin Luther King, Jr. used successfully to liberate African Americans from segregation and transform race relations in the United States. It was an ethic Mahatma Gandhi employed to win the independence of India from British rule.

It is an ethic that Christianity and the institutional Church, with the exception of a few courageous leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr., has never—tragically for the world—taken seriously as a viable ethic to proclaim, much less to actualize for the transformation of adversarial and dehumanizing human relationships. The Church has been too focused upon preparing Christians for the afterlife to be concerned about, much less take seriously, the implementation of Jesus' ethic for the betterment of this life. Had the Church historically taken his ethic seriously and resolutely actualized it, the Holocaust would never have happened, to say nothing of the massacre of Muslims during the crusades and the death of so many in religious wars, most of Catholic or Protestant making (e.g., the "Thirty-year War" between Protestants and Catholics in 17th century Germany and the war between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics more recently).

4. From Ethic to Protest against Parent Judaism and Its Authorities

Jesus' vision of God's kingdom and its idealistic ethic arose largely in response to what Jesus experienced as the Jerusalem Temple establishment's oppression of Galilean peasants. The Temple establishment's authorities (priesthood, scribes, and Pharisees), according to Jesus, robbed poor Galileans of their personal dignity and self-worth by insisting that they were sinners unless they became holy by faithfully obeying the rules and regulations of Torah (particularly its Holiness Code), by keeping the precepts of the Pharisees' oral law on purity, and by supporting the Temple system with tithes and offerings (agricultural products as well as money). But Jesus saw that these were impossible demands for those who suffered the poverty and vicissitudes of peasant life to obey.

Consequently, he aligned himself with the downtrodden Galilean peasants against their Temple establishment oppressors. In his parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Gospel of Luke 10:30-36) Jesus attacked the insensitivity of the Temple establishment's priests and Levites toward the plight of the helpless by contrasting to it the innate compassion of a despised Samaritan, an ethnic hybrid vilified by the Temple establishment's "holiness" ideology as a contemptible idolater and heretic.

Jesus lambasted Pharisees for their hypocrisy and for always expecting at banquets to sit at places of honor and in synagogues in the front seat (Gospel of Luke 11:39, 43). Jesus condemned the scribes for flaunting their prestigious status by wearing their long robes and expecting to be greeted deferentially in the market place. Jesus also denounced the scribes for wanting the best seats in the synagogues and expecting to be seated at places of honor at feasts (Gospel of Mark 12:38-39). He utilized a self-effacing tax collector—often viewed as an agent of Roman oppression—to denounce the self-righteousness of Pharisaic authorities (Gospel of Luke

18:10-14). He rejected the strictures of the Pharisaic purity laws that rendered defiled any who failed to wash their hands before eating. He rebutted that purity law by declaring that what defiles a person is not outer uncleanness but inner uncleanness (Gospel of Mark 7:15). He dismissed kosher dietary laws by declaring that since what one eats is immaterial to God, his followers could eat and drink whatever was provided (Gospel of Luke 10:7-8). Contrary to the Pharisees' insistence on the strict observance of the Sabbath without exception, Jesus maintained that when one encounters dire human need, observance of Sabbath should be set aside to meet that need (Gospel of Mark 2:27).

Further rejecting holiness as the sole criterion of Godliness ("You shall be holy," for God is holy: Leviticus 19:2), Jesus employed, by ironic contrast to things construed as holy, things considered unclean and disreputable as symbols of God's kingdom. In addition to the aforementioned Samaritan and tax collector, he illustrated the presence of God's kingdom symbolically in a mustard seed (a weed) and leaven (Luke 13:18-21). In his Parable of the Prodigal Son (Gospel of Luke 15:11-32), the returning "fallen" prodigal son is embraced and affirmed to the dismay of his ever-obedient but rather self-righteous older brother. In his Parable of the Great Feast (Gospel of Luke 14:16-23), a parable about who is included in the kingdom of God, those who finally sit down at the kingdom's banquet are not the original invited guests—all of whom had excuses as to why they could not attend—but rather a random gathering of people swept up in a search of the city's streets and alleys, a procedure that inevitably resulted in a mixture of "saints and sinners," clean and unclean at table together.

Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God was liberating to his followers. His assurance that, though scorned as outcasts, they were loved by God and included in God's kingdom ("Blessed are you poor [i.e., destitute], for God's kingdom is for you!": Gospel of Luke 6:20) restored their lost dignity and self-worth. His regular practice of inclusive table fellowship of the cultically-considered "clean" and "unclean" alike was his demonstration of God's acceptance of all—even those despised and rejected by religious authorities claiming to speak for God. It may well be that Jesus modeled his practice of table fellowship after the table-fellowship practice of the Pharisees as an intentionally subversive measure to repudiate the Pharisees' inclusion of only the cultically clean around their tables and exclusion of the cultically "unclean" Galilean peasant rejected by them and through extension, from the Pharisees' perspective, rejected by God.

5. From Protest to Martyrdom

It was likely Jesus' opposition to the Temple establishment and his championing of the cause of its outcasts that finally led to his death. During a visit to the Temple (Gospel of Mark 11:15-18), he became so enraged at the fleecing of the poor by the sellers of sacrificial animals and the money-changers that he lashed out in protest. He overturned the money-changers tables, scattering coins all over—thereby enabling the poor to pocket the dispersed coins. Perceived then to be a thief trying to rob the Temple, Jesus was arrested by the Temple guard and turned over to the high priest Caiaphas, who delivered him to Pilate, who, in turn, had him crucified, the Roman capital punishment for thievery.

But despite his tragic death, Jesus' vision lived on in the hearts and minds of those who had found new life as members of God's family. Days after his death a number of his disciples experienced Jesus alive, resurrected from death, in an epiphany. That experience propelled them to continue Jesus' mission in order to bring to others his message of the kingdom and vision of a reformed Judaism. They were convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah who inaugurated the beginning of the kingdom of God which would come to full actualization soon by God's own intervention.

6. Parallels between Jesus and Other Reformers of Judaism before Him

What Jesus sought to accomplish in his vision for the reform of Judaism has some striking parallels to other inspired Jewish reformers who found the ideology and practice of Judaism in their day to be a corrupted and false interpretation of what God wanted for God's people. Like the Qumran Essene community's divinely inspired Teacher of Righteousness and the Enochic community's divinely inspired authors' figure of Enoch, Jesus attacked the Temple establishment, its priesthood and related religious authorities for their false representation of the purpose and will of God, thereby misleading, oppressing and exploiting helpless, poor peasants.

Part Three

Rise of the Christ Community and Its Continuance of Jesus' Reform of Judaism

I. The Christ Communities' Founding Principles of Religious Ideology and Self-Identity

The Christ Community of the first century CE became a continuation and an extension of Jesus' reformation of Judaism of his day. To achieve this and ground its efforts in an indisputable legitimacy, the Christ Community based its movement upon essentially the same four foundational principles upon which the Enochic and Qumran communities respectively constructed the legitimacy of their own religious ideology and self-identity as communities. To repeat as a reminder: the Enochic and Qumranian communities, each in their own respective ways, grounded their religious ideology and self-definition on these four fundamental principles.

- (1) They derived their authority from their claim that they were recipients of special divine revelation, a divinely revealed wisdom.
- (2) They claimed that the divinely revealed wisdom, of which they were beneficiaries, was mediated through a prophet, seer, or teacher, singularly chosen by God to receive God's wisdom and impart it to those who recognized him as God's Chosen One.
- (3) They claimed that salvation is solely available through the Chosen One's divinely revealed wisdom, fidelity to which alone ensures that one is saved.
- (4) They adamantly averred that their authority, since it is divinely given, cannot be controverted. Those who hold positions contrary to theirs, or in any way challenged their position, were then by definition wrong and outside the circle of the saved.

These fundamental, foundation principles of self-definition as a people and the authoritative, unquestionable truth of their religious ideology are principles which will be seen in what follows as similar to those adopted by the various representations of the Christ Community in their contentious and sometimes combative family feud with their own Jewish relatives—as in the case of the disputatious relationship between the Apostle Paul and James, the brother of Jesus (see below)—as they sought to win over other Jewish relatives to their particular versions of a reformed Judaism. Their version of reform, of course, was grounded in their conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was ordained as God's anointed one (Messiah) to bring God's new vision for the future of Judaism through Jesus' disclosure of the divine wisdom revealed to him.

II. Christ Community Cases for Reformed Judaism vis-à-vis Parent Judaism: 30-100 CE

A. The Sources

Attention now turns to show how the various Christ communities in the beginning of the Jesus movement applied the four fundamental principles to (1) support the legitimacy of their version of reformed Judaism, and (2) undergird their confidence in their own self-identity and definition of themselves as Christ communities in the face of opposition from parent Judaism and its authorities who promulgated the “official” exposition of Judaism. That defense of the Christ Community’s claim of authority and credibility of their legitimacy is found in the numerous writings produced by the respective Christ communities.

The writings of the Christ communities in the first century CE are these in the New Testament: the Letters of the Apostle Paul (see below), and those attributed to him—the Epistle to the Colossians, the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians—the Epistle of James, the First Epistle of Peter, the Revelation to John, and the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and John. The rest of the New Testament documents, including the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, were written in the second century CE. There are also Christ Community writings of the first century CE that are not in the New Testament. They are the Sayings Gospel Q, the Signs Gospel, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, and, probably, the Didache, a pastoral manual.

Despite the fact that all of these documents of first century CE Christ communities are from communities that are, for the most part, Jewish separatist Christ communities, many of them have been cited as being anti-Judaism. Space does not allow the opportunity to address the attitude of all the various Christ communities toward Judaism reflected in these first century CE documents. So attention will be directed to the Christ Community first century CE documents that are most often cited as having a pejorative attitude toward Judaism. They are the letters of Paul, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, and the Revelation of John. They are documents in which Jews are specifically singled out by name as enemies of the Christ Community and/or whose Jerusalem Temple establishment authorities are responsible for the death of Jesus of Nazareth.

Our attention turns now to these writings, beginning with the Revelation of John, to be followed by the Gospel of Mark, Matthew and John, and then the letters of Paul. Before looking closely at these writings and their relationship to Judaism of the first century, a word needs to be said about the compilation of the New Testament. There was no such thing as a New Testament of universally accepted and recognized inspired Scripture of the Christian Church, as we know it, until almost 400 years after Jesus. The decision as to what books should be a part of the Christian Bible was not made until the latter part of the fourth century CE and the early part of the fifth century CE. Up to that time the writings found in the New Testament were used by different churches throughout the Roman Empire, along with other Christian writings. None of them had been given Church-wide recognition formally by an official Church pronouncement as inspired Scripture, although many of the writings, for example the Letters of Paul and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, were highly revered and considered authoritative (see Gamble).

B. The Christ Community of John, the Apocalyptic Visionary

Two passages in the Revelation of John have been considered to be anti-Semitic and anti-Judaism (see Adela Collins for the information cited here). The first passage is in

Revelation 2:8-11 where in this visionary apocalypse a heavenly voice addresses the angel of the church at Philadelphia. The second passage is in Revelation 3:7-13 where the same heavenly voice addresses the angel of the church at Philadelphia. In sequential order, here is what the voice declares to the respective angels:

I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are **Jews** and are not, but are a **synagogue of Satan** (Revelation 2:9).

I will make those of **the synagogue of Satan** who say that **they are Jews** and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you (Revelation 3:9).

Scholars who have examined these passages closely have shown that, while these passages appear to be anti-Semitic and anti-Judaism, they actually were not intended as such by the author. The author of the Revelation of John is himself a Jew whose own Christ community is a Jewish Christ community. He is addressing, toward the close of the first century CE, the persecution of the Christ Community by Jews who do not belong to the Community, and who reject the Christ Community's belief in Jesus as God's anointed, the Messiah or Christ. The author, in the course of his writing, specifically draws attention, as cited in the above passages, to the persecution by Jews of the Christ communities at Smyrna and Philadelphia. He considers himself a true Jew and his community the true Jewish community. Jews on the outside of the Christ communities, who persecute those communities, are vilified as false Jews who belong to the synagogue of Satan.

This vilification of fellow Jews who have rejected the Christ Community's evangelistic mission and are persecuting the missionaries is almost a photo copy of the way the Qumran Essenes vilified Jews on the outside of their community as belonging to "the congregation of the men of falsehood" and "the congregation of traitors," who belong to the army of Satan (see above). In both the case of John's Christ community and the Essenes of Qumran we have classic examples of members of the same religious family embroiled in a family feud, with some members angrily attacking with vituperative slander other members who reject their interpretation of the faith. To see examples of it in modern history we need look no further than Catholics and Protestants, members of the same religious family, viciously slandering each other over the interpretation of the Christian faith. Likewise, the same has been characteristic almost from the beginning of Islam with Muslim Sunnis and Muslim Shiites, members of the same faith, vituperatively assassinating each others' character over historically inherent differences regarding which is the legitimate faith of Islam.

C. The Christ Community of the Gospel of Mark

1. The Markan Community in Its Historical Setting

Like the Jewish Christ community of the author of the Revelation of John, the author of the Gospel of Mark, writing ten years or more before (ca. early 80's CE), also addresses the rejection of his Jewish Christ community's faith in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. (Much of the information on the Gospel of Mark which follows is taken from Weeden, "Two Jesuses").

"Mark," the name we give to the author of the Gospel, lives with his Christ community in one of the satellite villages of the cosmopolitan city of Caesarea Philippi, situated in Southern Syria near the base of Mount Hermon (see Addendum for map). Caesarea Philippi, formerly Baniyas, served as the "capital" for the Jewish Herodian kings, Philip, Agrippa I and Agrippa II,

all of whom were Roman client kings from 4 BCE to 100 CE. Caesarea Philippi had a significantly large, long-established and very devout Jewish community, which King Agrippa II (54 CE-100 CE) took personal interest in protecting and defending from Gentiles in the city who were from time to time quite hostile to Jews (On the history of Caesarea Philippi, see Wilson).

While Caesarea Philippi is over 100 miles from Jerusalem, the Roman war against the Jews in Judea and Jerusalem came home firsthand to the Jewish community in Caesarea Philippi. After the war (70 CE), when Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins, the Roman general Titus, who led the siege of Jerusalem, brought his troops with thousands of Jewish captives to Caesarea Philippi. There he proceeded to engage in a “holocaust.” Here is the Jewish historian Josephus’ description of it in his *Jewish War*, VII, 23-24, 37-38:

Titus now passed to Caesarea Philippi . . . , where he remained for a considerable time exhibiting all kinds of spectacles. Here many of the [Jewish] prisoners perished, some being thrown to wild beasts, others compelled in opposing masses to engage one another in combat. . . .

During his stay at Caesarea, Titus celebrated his brother's birthday with great splendour, reserving in his honour for this festival much of the punishment of his Jewish captives. For the number of those destroyed in contests with wild beasts or with one another or in the flames exceeded two thousand five hundred. Yet to the Romans, notwithstanding the myriad forms in which their victims perished, all seemed too light a penalty.

There is a plausible reason why Titus decided to engage in this “holocaust” against the Jewish captives from Judea at Caesarea Philippi, rather than elsewhere. Titus likely knew that many Judeans during the course of the Roman conquest of Judea and siege of Jerusalem fled to the safety of the protected Jewish community in Caesarea Philippi. Titus, knowing this, engaged in the heinous atrocities against his Jewish prisoners as a gruesome and intentional “show and tell,” vengeful retaliation, not only against the Judean Jews he had captured, but also as a psychologically punitive retaliation against those Judean Jews who had escaped his grasp to the safety of Caesarea Philippi.

Likely traumatized by the ghastly massacre of their fellow Jews and devastated by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the Jewish community at Caesarea Philippi was, one can surmise, left bereft of hope for the future of Judaism, at least as they had known it. In that dark night of the community’s “soul,” the Pharisees who had fled to the community with other Judean Jews began to envision the possibility of a new Judaism without the Temple, a new Judaism rising out of the ashes of the old, a Judaism for the future. And, it is surmised here, that that new Judaism the Pharisees conceived is what rabbinic scholar Jacob Neusner has identified as “formative Judaism.”

It is likely that the Jewish Christ believers at Caesarea Philippi were similarly traumatized by the massacre of fellow Jews, but the loss of the Temple was not as grievous an event for them. They had already embarked on the actualization of a new, reformed Judaism without Temple, a reformed Judaism based upon the vision of Jesus. It was that vision that gave these Jewish Christ believers hope for and confidence in the future, God’s future as manifested in Jesus. So these Markan Jewish Christ believers sought to bring their hope for the future of Judaism through Jesus to the Jewish community in Caesarea Philippi and to Jews elsewhere in their area.

To their dismay, their preaching of their new, reformed Judaism provoked an acrimonious reaction upon the part of the Pharisees and Jews who had taken hope in their new

formative Judaism. That hostile reaction led to the Christ believers of Mark's community being persecuted by Jews who took offense at the Christ believers' proclamation of their vision and their belief that Jesus was God's anointed one (Messiah) whom God had declared as God's Son. The hostile opposition to their efforts devastated Mark's community of believers and undermined their confidence in their faith.

We learn of the persecution that Christ believers of Mark's community have faced from hostile Jews in the Jewish community at Caesarea Philippi when Mark towards the end of his story of Jesus informs us by having Jesus predict their persecution in advance (see Mark 13:9-13). Namely: the Jewish Christ believers in the Markan community have been beaten in synagogues, hauled up to stand trial before kings and governors to defend their faith. Even within their own Jewish families, members of families have betrayed Christ believers in their families for proclaiming faith in the Christ. Some family members have gone as far as to put to death Christ believers in the family for blasphemy in insisting that the crucified Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God.

2. Mark's Apologia for His Community's Faith

In the wake of this existential crisis plaguing his community, Mark created his Gospel in order to bolster the community's faith and convince it that it is right in its proclamation of faith in Jesus as the Christ, Son of God (see Mark 1:1). To prove that to the members of his community, and all others whom he could reach with his Gospel, Mark set out to establish impeccable credentials for Jesus being, as his community had been led to believe, God's anointed one. In this effort Mark drew upon the four fundamental principles cited earlier upon which the Enochic and Qumran community based the authority that vouched for the legitimacy of their faith against the Jerusalem Temple establishment in their respective times.

3. Mark's Use of the Fundamental Principles to Bolster His Community's Faith

Mark builds his case for Jesus being the recipient of divine wisdom and the one authorized by God to reveal this wisdom to those who believe in him by first establishing Jesus' credentials as God's Son. Mark does so at Jesus' baptism. After being immersed in the water of baptism in the Jordan River, upon rising from the water, the heavens, according to Mark, suddenly open and the Spirit of God comes down upon Jesus. The descent of God's Spirit is followed by a voice from heaven, God's voice, declaring: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:9-11). Jesus is then driven by the spirit of God into the wilderness, where he is tempted for forty days by Satan, a Markan parallel allusion to the temptation of the Hebrews in their forty-year wandering in the wilderness (Mark 1:12-13). Having passed that test, Jesus, per Mark's portrayal, is now ready to reveal the divine wisdom which God has given him. He returns to Galilee and starts teaching (Mark 1:15). It is clear that Mark seeks to establish Jesus as a teacher, and a successful one at that. Mark makes a point to underscore that he is a teacher by having Jesus' disciples on three occasions address him as "Rabbi" (Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45). As a result of the positive response to his teaching, Jesus attracts enormous crowds, so much so that on two occasions when Jesus attracted as many as 5,000 and then again 4,000, Jesus had to find food for them when they became hungry. He does, and miraculously all are fed.

Jesus' teaching, as Mark presents it, is clearly a teaching revealed to him by God, for Jesus teaches about the imminent arrival of God's kingdom (Mark 1:15). To further credential Jesus' teaching as no ordinary wisdom, but rather divine wisdom, Mark has Jesus reveal to his disciples that his teaching about the kingdom of God, which he communicates through parables, has a secret associated with it. It is a secret shrouded within his parables that is revealed only to

his disciples, for they are the inside group who alone can understand the message. He informs them (Mark 4:10-12: with the help in part of Isaiah 6:9-10): “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables [i.e. riddles], in order that they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.” Mark has proved his point. Jesus is a revealer of secret wisdom, a secret wisdom which Jesus received from God. The sole beneficiaries of Jesus’ secret wisdom are his disciples. Thus, from the point of view of the Christ believers in Mark’s community Jesus’ secret wisdom, and their possession of it, is thereby legitimized and uncontroverted, despite the fact that hostile Jews claim in opposition the authoritative ideology of formative Judaism promulgated by their authorities, the Pharisees of Caesarea Philippi—as well as despite the fact that Jesus’ disciples, as portrayed by Mark, prove incapable of understanding the secret wisdom Jesus imparts to them (see e.g., Mark 4:13; 9:30-32).

As the narrative progresses, Mark arrives at the point of having Jesus reveal his fate to his disciples. He predicts that because of his message and his ministry, he as “the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31). Following that revelation, Mark presents Jesus as taking his three closest confidants, Peter, James and John up to a high mountain (Mark probably has in mind Mount Hermon, not far from his Christ community), where in a dazzling event Moses and Elijah appear and engage in conversation with Jesus, apparently to confirm Jesus’ authoritative legitimacy. And then Mark reports that once again God gives divine imprimatur to Jesus by proclaiming to all those present, the three disciples, plus Moses and Elijah: “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (Mark 9:1-7). In Mark, even the unclean spirits confess that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 3:11). As the narrative progresses Mark informs us that Jesus two more times predicts his fate of persecution and death by the Jerusalem Temple authorities (Mark 9:31; 10:33-34), a fate in which Jesus is clearly cast by Mark as the suffering servant which Isaiah spoke about (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). For like that servant Jesus offers up his life as a ransom for others (Mark 10:45).

In a trip to Jerusalem at Passover, Jesus enters the city to the acclaim of a crowd of faithful Jews who are there to attend the Passover festival. According to Mark, when Jesus makes his appearance on a colt, they immediately recognize him as one who will restore the kingdom of David (i.e., he comes as the new Messiah), for they shout out (Mark 11:1-10): “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” That overwhelmingly positive reception Jesus receives upon entering the city of David is not the reception Jesus receives from the Temple establishment. Its authorities are decidedly hostile toward Jesus, particularly when he enters the Temple and provocatively drives out the merchants and overturns the money tables, condemning the Temple as no more than a den of thieves, and pronouncing the Temple, its sacrificial system and priesthood defunct (Mark 11:15-18)—somewhat like the Enochic and Qumran communities in their own respective ways.

Subsequently, as the story unfolds, Jesus is arrested, placed on trial and curiously charged with blasphemy because he claims to be the Messiah and the Son of God (14:61f.). That claim would not be cause for charging him for blasphemy. There were in the first century CE several men who claimed to be the Messiah, but they were never charged with blasphemy. It is likely that Mark is trying to pattern the charge against Jesus after the charge against Christ believers in his community who acclaim Jesus as the Christ and are charged with blasphemy. That would constitute blasphemy for some literalistic interpreters of the Torah with respect to Moses’ dictum found in Deuteronomy 21:22-23:

When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse.

Now, apparently, the Jews hostile to the Markan Christ community's proclamation of Jesus of Nazareth as God's son, the Messiah, quoted Moses and interpreted Moses' dictum in this way: Since Jesus was crucified, he died hanging on a tree (i.e., the cross); therefore since Jesus died hung on a tree, then he was cursed by God not anointed by God to be his Chosen One. Thus, for members of the Christ community to claim that Jesus was the Messiah is blasphemy! Moreover, these Jews, offended by the blasphemy of their fellow Jews claiming Jesus to be the Christ, followed the example cited in Torah regarding the punishment for blasphemy: namely, stoning to death (Leviticus 24:10-14, 23), and put to death some of the Jews in the Markan Christ community for their blasphemy.

Then why did Mark depict the charge against Jesus in his trial as blasphemy? Since he had not been crucified (died hanging on a tree), Moses' dictum would not apply to him. But Mark made it a charge against Jesus in his trial in order for those Christ followers in his community who were being charged with blasphemy for proclaiming Jesus, the crucified, as the Christ, could take solace in the awareness that Jesus was also charged with blasphemy.

So it was! According to Mark's revision of Jesus' actual life story for the benefit of his community, the high priest and those present at Jesus' trial pronounced judgment upon Jesus for blasphemy. Jesus, then, was ushered off to Pilate, who crucified him (Mark 14:63-64; 15:1, 15). Ironically, at the point that Jesus dies by crucifixion Mark records that it was a Roman centurion and not the Jewish authorities who recognized in Jesus' death that he was the Son of God (Mark 15:39). Just prior to the centurion's confession, Mark describes the curtain of the Temple being rent from top to bottom by divine judgment, symbolically confirming that the Temple and its authorities are condemned and the Temple as the religious center and symbol for Judaism, at least according to the Temple establishment, is defunct (Mark 15:38). Confirmation that the Temple authorities were wrong and Jesus was right follows with the story of the empty tomb and the mysterious messenger inside proclaiming that Jesus has been raised from the dead (16:1-8).

In these different ways, Mark scores his point against the hostile Jews in his time who persecute Jews who believe in Jesus as the Christ. Thus: the authority of Christ believers' anointed leader is confirmed. The authority of the message about the kingdom which Jesus has revealed to them as given by God to him is confirmed. The fact that Christ believers are the insiders who have the secret interpretation of the message and that those on the outside "don't get it" is confirmed! Like the Enochic and Qumran communities, Mark has engaged combatively against formative Judaism of his day and its rejection of Jesus as reformer and visionary of a new Judaism. And on the basis of his narrative, he has won—from his perspective anyway—even as the Essenes and the devotees of Enoch from their perspective won in the battle against Judaism as promulgated by its parent body in Jerusalem, the priesthood and their successors, prior to Mark's time.

D. The Christ Community of the Gospel of Matthew

1. Matthew, the Former Pharisee: Convert to the Jesus Movement

The Gospel of Matthew is often cited as one of the most anti-Judaism writings in the New Testament—the Gospel of John being the other most cited as being anti-Semitic and anti-

Judaism. But a close look at Matthew, the author of the Gospel of Matthew, and the case he makes for his community's version of a reformed Judaism, suggests that he is far from being anti-Jewish or anti-Judaism. (The information which follows is dependent upon the insights of Freyne, Overman and Runesson).

In all likelihood Matthew was himself a Pharisee who had converted to the Jesus movement, and as a convert he celebrated his Judaism. Not only did he celebrate Judaism, but he was invested in redeeming it from what he believed was the corrupt Jerusalem priesthood and more recently hypocritical and misguided Pharisee party—the party which has now become the power broker in the development of a post-Temple formative Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Writing in the 90's CE, from the point of view of this essay, Matthew belonged to a Christ community, perhaps not far away from the Markan community, in Caesarea Philippi.

Prior to his conversion to the Jesus movement, Matthew likely looked back as a Pharisee and grieved the destruction of the Temple—the place where God was once understood to be present to people, at least to the high priest in the Temple's inner sanctum, the “holy of holies.” Matthew may well have even been one of likely many Pharisees, as well as other Judeans, who fled Jerusalem during the Roman attack upon it and sought safety in the Jewish community at Caesarea Philippi. Perhaps, it is speculated here, in his grief over the demise of Judean Judaism, as it was once known, and wanting desperately to preserve the ideals of Judaism he cherished, Matthew came in contact with certain Jewish members of the Christ Community. Their sharing of their vision for a new, reformed Judaism derived from Jesus persuaded him to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was God's anointed one, God's chosen Messiah, to transform and renew Judaism. Matthew became a follower of Jesus and joined the Christ Community, in much the same way and for some of the same reasons that the Apostle Paul, a former Pharisee, became converted to the gospel of the Jesus movement and joined the Christ Community (see below).

Matthew has often been seen as anti-Judaism in his excoriating attack upon the Pharisees, as well as the scribes (see Gospel of Matthew 23:1-39). But Matthew in his vituperative vilification of them, calling them all kinds of slanderous names, such as “hypocrites,” “blind fools,” “snakes,” not unlike names the Qumran Essenes used to vilify their Jewish opponents, is not thereby denigrating Judaism. It is only Matthew expressing his contempt for Judaism's self-appointed new leaders.

2. Matthew's Imaging of Jesus as the New Moses

Contrary to his Pharisee opponents, Matthew became convinced that Jesus as the Christ was God's new Moses. Setting out to prove that Jesus was a new Moses, he borrowed the basic outline of Moses' life as a literary template to make his case. Thus, it is no accident that in telling the story of the birth of Jesus, Matthew has non-Jewish aristocratic authorities (the so-called “wise men” or “kings”) to be the first to become aware of Jesus' birth—aside, of course, from Mary and Joseph—and greet him in his infancy (Gospel of Matthew 1:7-11). That then parallels the non-Jewish aristocratic daughter of Pharaoh discovering the baby Moses among the reeds on a river bank, hidden there by his mother to save him from being put to death by the decree of Pharaoh. In a Holocaust-type atrocity against the Hebrews during their Egyptian captivity, Pharaoh had decreed that all Hebrew male children be killed at birth (Exodus 1:22-2:10). It is no surprise then that Matthew, in modeling Jesus' life after Moses, creates the story of Herod the Great massacring all the Jewish male children who were under two years of age (2:16-18).

Apparently anticipating Herod's own murderous decree against the Jewish male children, as Matthew tells the story, an angel appears to Joseph and tells him to take the child Jesus and his mother to Egypt. Once Herod is dead, an angel again appears to Joseph and tells him this time to take the child Jesus and his mother back to the land of Israel, thereby paralleling the Exodus story of Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egypt to the promised land (Matthew 2:13-15, 19-21). To complete the new Moses identity of Jesus, Matthew adds two additional, significant touches to his profile of Jesus as his new Moses. First, he presents Jesus' initial teaching on top of a "Sinai-like" mountain where Jesus delivers a sermon, the so-called "sermon on the mount," to an eager crowd of listeners. In his sermon, Jesus reveals to them God's new Torah, a recognizable revision of the old Torah (Matthew chaps. 5-7). For example in his new Torah proclamation, Matthew depicts Jesus as saying (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-35):

You have heard that it was said [by Moses] to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgment." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment . . .

You have heard that it was said [by Moses], "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. . . .

It was also said [by Moses], "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Again, you have heard that it was said [by Moses] to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

In depicting Jesus as the new Moses presenting the new Torah, Matthew is careful not to suggest that the old Torah is thereby scrapped as passé, nor the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible either, for that matter. For Matthew has Jesus declare just prior to presenting this new Torah (Matthew 5:17-19):

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

To drive home his point that observance of the Torah is paramount in his Christ community and at the same time "one-up" the Pharisees and scribes who are attacking him for his heretical revisionism of Judaism, Matthew has Jesus emphatically declare: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

The final Moses-characterization that Matthew gives to Jesus is to present his teaching in five large discourses throughout the Gospel which are intended to parallel the five books of Moses of the Torah. Clearly for Matthew, Jesus is his new Moses of a new Israel of a new, reformed Judaism.

3. Matthew's Portrayal of Jesus as the New Moses: Devout in Judaic Practices

It should also be noted that Matthew clearly sets forth vis-à-vis his Pharisee opponents that Jesus, the new Moses, observes without fail the practices that have always defined the self-identity of Judaism. Those practices which Jesus keeps are the following: demonstrated observance of the Torah, as just noted, the practice of prayer, observance of dietary laws and purity laws in general, fasting, Sabbath and festival observance, almsgiving, tithing, adherence to Temple cult practices, and paying the Temple tax (see Matthew 5:23-24; 6:3-4, 17-18; 8:4, 5-13; 12:1-14; 15:1-20; 17:24-27; 19:17; 23:19-21; 26:2, 17-19).

In addition to his affirmation of these self-defining practices of Judaism via the words and actions of Jesus, Matthew, in conformity to a central tenet of Judaism, considers Jerusalem to have been established as the holy city of God (Matthew 4:5; 5:35; 27:53), whose holiness is derived from the Temple, even though, like the Enochic and Qumran communities before him, he considers the Temple priesthood and its Pharisee-bureaucrats to have been corrupt: guilty of both hypocrisy and the abuse of their authority by using that authority in ways contrary to the best interests of Judaism and the Jewish people, and, most condemning of all, the will of God. That abominable reality for Matthew explains why God allowed the Romans to destroy the Temple. The Romans were the agents of divine judgment against the corrupt priesthood and Pharisee leaders. Matthew also blames the Temple priesthood and the Pharisees for the death of God's Messiah, Jesus, the one sent by God to reform Judaism, as well as for the deaths of the prophets God had sent before Jesus (Matthew 23:34, 37). But while he castigates the Judean political and religious leaders and casts them in a very negative way, ordinary Jews, over whom these leaders have abused by their authority, are painted positively.

In all of these respects Matthew remains in the tradition of the Enochic and Qumran communities in their castigation of the institutional leadership of Judaism's Jerusalem Temple establishment, as well in the tradition of their own attempts to reform Judaism and restore it to God's original intent. Moreover in the formulation of the authority and self-identity of his own Christ community, Matthew also adopts the fundamental principles characteristic of these other separatist communities of Judaism.

4. Matthew's Validating His Community's Faith via the Fundamental Principles

Similar to the Enochic community with its legitimacy of its religious tradition based upon the authority and revealed wisdom of Enoch, Matthew demonstrates that the truth of his religious orientation, in his fight to reform Judaism against his Pharisee opponents, is grounded in impeccable divinely bestowed authority of God's Chosen One, namely Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew demonstrates that by narratively showing that in Jesus' baptism, an account he derived from Mark, God spoke directly to the bystanders proclaiming that Jesus "is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17), a proclamation which God again repeats at Jesus' transfiguration before Moses and Elijah and three of Jesus' key disciples, Peter, James and John (Matthew 17:1-8), again an account Matthew borrowed from Mark. With respect to Jesus revealing divine wisdom, Matthew presents Jesus as not only having divinely revealed wisdom but confirms that by sharing the following prayer of Jesus (Matthew 11:25-27):

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. **All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**

Contrast that prayer to Matthew's repeated insistence that his Pharisee opponents, along with the scribes, are blind guides (Matthew 15:14; 23:16, 24). By emphasizing the blindness of the Pharisees and scribes Matthew explains to his community why the Pharisees and the scribes cannot interpret correctly the things of God. Furthermore, Matthew remonstrates, their preoccupation with their purity rules, tithing and other such matters related to the practices of Judaism, has led them to neglect the most important things of God: mercy, justice, and faith (Matthew 15:1-6; 23:16-25).

To vouch for the fact that Peter and the other disciples who make up the twelve disciples are beneficiaries of and possess the authority of Jesus and his message of revealed wisdom, Matthew tells a number of stories to support the point. On one occasion, Matthew recounts that Jesus sent his disciples out with authority to exorcise unclean spirits and cure all diseases and sicknesses (Matthew 10:1). On another occasion, Matthew relates that Jesus made Peter, Jesus' chief apostle, the foundation and head of the church which Jesus will create for the Christ Community, and which can never be destroyed. In that post, Peter is given the very "keys of the kingdom of heaven." Not only that, Jesus also proclaims to Peter: "[W]hatever you bound on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," i.e., whatever teaching Peter permits in the Church on earth will be permitted in heaven and whatever teaching Peter forbids in the Church on earth will be forbidden in heaven (Matthew 16:13-19). In narrating this incident, Matthew proves that from the beginning there was established an earthly line of succession in authority with regard to authentic teaching, from Jesus to Peter, somewhat like Elisha inheriting the mantle of Elijah when Elijah is translated to heaven (2 Kings 2:9-15).

Again underscoring the unbroken line of authority between Jesus and his disciples, Matthew depicts Jesus in a resurrection appearance to the disciples on a mountain in which he restates his undiminished and non-diminisshable authority both in heaven and on earth: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." With that authority, Jesus then commissions his gathered disciples to go out into all the world and make disciples, teaching those that they baptize into the faith "to observe all that I have commanded you." Then lest some should challenge the continuity between Jesus and the disciples, Matthew depicts Jesus avowing to them: "lo, I am with you always," even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:16-20). In Matthew's mind, it is a seamless transition of authority, which no one can controvert.

So then, Matthew, following in the tradition of the separatist Jewish communities of 1 Enoch and Qumran, establishes (1) the impeccable legitimacy of his Jewish Christ community's religious ideology and its self-definition as a community, (2) the incontestable divine authority upon which they are based, (3) the unbroken continuance of that authority within the community itself, and (4) the divine rejection of those who challenge it or seek to quash it (the Pharisees in the role of Qumran's "Wicked Priest").

E. The Christ Community of the Gospel of John

1. The Setting of the Gospel

The author of the Gospel of John—a Jew whom we call "John"—and his community are based in Southern Syria, likely at Batanaea as some scholars have argued, some twenty to thirty miles away from Mark and Matthew's earlier Christ communities at Caesarea Philippi (see Addendum for map). (What follows regarding John and his Christ community is largely dependent upon the insights of Freyne and Meeks).

John writes around 100 CE to validate, in a similar way that Matthew does, the authority he contends indisputably legitimizes his separatist Jewish Christ community against the Pharisees of his day who seek to destroy it as a threat to their own reformed Judaism. John's Jewish Christ community, much as Mark and Matthew's communities in their day, had been trying to persuade Jews in Batanaea synagogues of Jesus' vision of a reformed Judaism to replace the Jerusalem Temple establishment brought to an end by the Roman destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem some thirty years earlier. The combative debate between Pharisees in synagogues and members of John's Christ community has been acrimonious and vitriolic, with name calling. Some members of John's Christ community, as in his story about Jesus, have been excommunicated and others banned from synagogues (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2), for failure to be observant Jews, for proclaiming belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and for advocating Jesus' vision of a new, reformed Judaism. Concomitant with being banned from synagogues, the members of John's community have suffered a denigration of their social and legal status. This loss of social and legal status, so important in the Greco-Roman world at the time, disadvantaged them in their defense against their Pharisaic adversaries, whom John derisively refers to as "the Jews," adversaries whom members of his community have feared for their lives.

As John writes, the earlier combative confrontation with Pharisees within synagogues is now a community memory. As a result of being banned from synagogues by decree of the Pharisees, these Jewish Christ believers have separated themselves from formative Judaism, the reformed Judaism the Pharisees have promoted after the end of "Temple Judaism." The Johannine Christ community's rupture from its synagogue affiliation remains in its memory as a formidable existential crisis, as well as a defining moment in its reshaping of its identity as a Christ community. John's community, at his writing, still remains within Judaism, but Judaism as reformed via its belief in Jesus as the Christ, God's Son. John intentionally projects back into his story of Jesus the history that led up to his community's break with formative Judaism in order to depict Jesus as having parallel experiences with Pharisaic opponents in his day. John's mirroring of Jewish Christ believers' experiences of his day back into his depiction of Jesus is a practice that other Gospel writers also followed, as we saw in the cases of Mark and Matthew. Such paralleling of experiences between Christ believers and Jesus served as comfort and solace to John's persecuted, beleaguered community.

The fact that John speaks so derisively of "Jews" has led many commentators to think that John is anti-Semitic and anti-Judaism. But that conclusion falls short of being an accurate reading and a comprehensive understanding of the Gospel. How is that so?

2. A Case for John's Jewishness and His Depiction of Jesus as an Observant Jew

First of all, the "world" of the Gospel narrative is constructed unmistakably from the perspective of Judaism's "world." Second, there is supportive evidence within the Gospel narrative to suggest that (1) John himself comes from a Jewish heritage and (2) that he paints Jesus—purposely so—as a devoutly observant Jew.

With respect to John's own Jewishness, John is quite familiar with the Torah, the prophets and traditions of Judaism, though he does not indicate that as much as Matthew does. John depicts John the Baptist as identifying himself as the divine voice proclaiming Israel's future restoration cited in 2 Isaiah 40:3 ("I am a voice crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord"). Only in this case, the voice is to be understood as the Baptizer proclaiming Jesus "the Son of God" (John 1:23) and "the Lord" who will appear/has appeared to restore Israel (John 1:34). John cites Scripture as being fulfilled in the disposition of Jesus' bones upon his death (John 19:33-36). John paints respectful portraits of Moses (John 5:46;

7:19, 22-23) and Abraham (John 8:39-40). John is aware of the various festivals of Judaism: the Festival of Passover (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55), the Festival of the Booths (John 7:1), the Festival of Dedication (John 10:22), and one unidentified festival (John 5:1). John is the only writer in the New Testament who indicates an awareness of Jewish festivals aside from the Passover. John evinces an awareness of the differences between Samaritans and Jews (John 4:9). John is aware of Jewish purifications prior to the observance of Passover (John 11:55) and of purity defilement (John 18:28). John depicts Jesus as declaring, without qualification, that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22), a declaration that it would be strange to have Jesus make if John were a non-Jew.

With respect to John’s depiction of Jesus as a devoutly observant Jew: more than any other Gospel writer, John presents Jesus in Jerusalem for the purpose of attending the various festivals of Judaism at the Temple (John 2:13-20; 5:1; 6:4; 7:1, 10-14; 10:22; 11:55). Even on one occasion of a Jewish festival, the Festival of Booths, Jesus is described as deciding first not to attend the festival “because the Jews sought to kill him.” But then after his brothers depart for the festival, Jesus decides to go up privately to Jerusalem to attend the festival (John 7:1-2, 10), thereby showing Jesus’ faithfulness in observing a Jewish festival, even if to do so places his life in danger. Aside from “Lord,” the most common way Jesus is addressed by his disciples and others in the Gospel is with the title “Rabbi” (John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). Jesus is addressed as “Rabbi” seven times in John compared, for example, to the Gospel of Mark in which Jesus is addressed as “Rabbi” three times (Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45) and the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus is addressed as “Rabbi” twice (Matthew 26:25, 29). Notably the Gentile writer of the Gospel of Luke, never has Jesus addressed as “Rabbi.” It is striking that John who has the most exalted view of Jesus’ divinity—namely, one with God before creation itself and then God incarnate in flesh (John 1:1-2, 14)—is most careful in having Jesus addressed as a respected Jewish rabbi by his followers. For these reasons, and others that could be mentioned, it is clearly John’s intent to present Jesus as a devoutly observant Jew. Consequently, evidence supports the conclusion that John himself is a Jew, who is a follower of Jesus the Jew, and who for John is the incarnation of God (John 1:14).

Then why, if John is a Jew, does he vilify Jews in his Gospel and refer to them derisively as “the Jews.” By “the Jews” John has in mind *Judean Jews*, *not all Jews*. With the exception of chapter 6, when Jesus encounters “the Jews” who suddenly appear in Galilee during his ministry to Galileans, they are narratively localized in Judea: at Jerusalem (John 1:19) or other places in Judea (e.g., Bethany, John 11:7-8, 19, 31). However, when Jesus interacts with Galilean crowds, they are not identified as “Jews.” As a group, they are not ethnically identified (John 2:1-13; 6:1-15; 7:1) but simply referred to as “Galileans” (John 4:43-46)—and welcoming Galileans at that (John 6:45), unlike the hostile Jews of Judea. On one occasion in John’s story, a Galilean is identified by Jesus ethnically not as a Jew but, interestingly enough, as an Israelite, i.e., when Jesus meets Nathaniel and calls Nathaniel an “Israelite” (John 1:43-47). It appears that John wishes to distinguish the hostile Jews from the friendly Galileans, for John tells us that on one occasion that Jesus chose to stay in Galilee rather than go to Judea because “the Jews” there would try to kill him (John 7:1). Yet, Galileans without doubt were ethnically Jews who were generally loyal to Judaism. Strangely, John does not identify them as “Jews,” though John does have the Samaritan woman identify Jesus, a Galilean, as a “Jew” (John 4:9), and Jesus speaks of salvation coming “from the Jews” (John 4: 22; more on this below).

It appears that “the Jews” for John are generally understood to be residents of Judea or former residents of Judea. In this regard, it is noteworthy that throughout the Gospel of John the Greek words which are translated as “the Jews,” namely *hoi Ioudaioi*, can also be translated “the Judeans.” How the Greek words are translated is a translator’s choice. Thus, when in Greek John speaks of *hoi Ioudaioi*, it is plausible to think that he has in mind *Judean Jews* as

the enemies of Jesus, *not all Jews*, certainly not Galilean Jews. In this regard, John appears to prefer the designation “Israel” as a historic, inclusive designation of all of God’s biblically chosen people, which for him includes Galilean Jews and Jews of the diaspora (Jews dispersed throughout the Greco-Roman world), and not just Judean Jews.

So John’s polemic is against Judean Jews and is stylized in much the same way as the polemics of the Qumran community of Essenes, the Enochic community, and the Christ communities of Mark and Matthew, all of whom, as Jews, attacked in one way or another Judaism’s institutional authorities, pre-70 CE and/or post-70 CE, as being hostile to the true, faithful Jews of a reformed Judaism, namely *themselves*. John then is actually neither anti-Semitic nor anti-Judaism. John is pro-reformed Judaism and dedicated to replace the Judaism represented formally by the former Temple establishment and more recently the new post-70 CE formative Judaism, whose Pharisaic leaders adamantly opposed any other reform of Judaism, particularly by heretical groups, as they viewed the Christ communities.

3. The Johannine Christ Community’s Crisis of Faith

To return to the socio-historical setting of John’s community, the Pharisees and their followers, former Judea-based Jews, with whom John’s community has been engaged in a pitched battle, are immigrants to the Jewish community in Batanaea where John and his community have been active. These Pharisees and their Jewish followers fled from the Roman army’s advance on Judea and the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem to the safety of the established Jewish community at Batanaea. Arriving in Batanaea, the Pharisees and their Judean cohorts began to take leadership roles in helping all Jews there to recover from the debacle of the Judean revolt against Rome and the tragic razing of Jerusalem, the holy city, and the destruction of the Temple.

In this situation John’s Jewish Christ community in the area was a threat to the Pharisaic attempt to renew and reform Judaism. Consequently, the Pharisees and the other former Judean Jews sought to quash their Jewish Christ-believing competitors for a new Judaism. In their disputatious conflict with these former Judeans, things did not go well for John’s community; in fact they went quite badly. That is remembered by John in the way he depicts the hostility and rejection Jesus experiences from “the Jews” and the Pharisees as a mirrored parallel to the experiences of his community members. As noted above, members of John’s Christ community were thrown out of synagogues for advocating their vision of a new, reformed Judaism, derived from Jesus their Christ. Some have been banned from synagogues for trying to win converts to Jesus as the *Son of God*.

Moreover their evangelistic mission had not been very successful among other Jews of Batanaea’s synagogues, as the Pharisees, leaders of synagogues, combatively challenged them on the issues of their authority and legitimacy as a Judaic community. The Pharisees charged these Christ believers with failure to observe the commandments of Torah and blasphemy for claiming that Jesus is God’s anointed one, the Messiah (John 10:33), God incarnate. The authority of the Pharisees within synagogues and their ability to use the interpretation of the Law against the Jewish Christ community have undermined and sabotaged the community’s authority and legitimacy for its proclamation. Even when an occasional younger member of a synagogue became persuaded by that proclamation, as illustrated by the story of Jesus’ healing of the young blind man (John 9:1-39), older members of synagogues, as illustrated by the young man’s parents John (9:18-22), withdrew from getting involved in the vituperatively polemical atmosphere. Others, as illustrated by the Pharisee Nicodemus who approaches Jesus under cover of darkness (John 3:1-3), kept their attraction to the Christ Community’s belief in Jesus and his vision of a new, reformed Israel to themselves for fear of the Judean Jews.

The hostility and rejection these Christ believers have experienced, even as they have separated themselves from synagogues and moved to meet in their own homes, have exacted a heavy toll upon their confidence in their faith. Recognizing this faith crisis John decides to write his Gospel for his community both to (1) bolster and renew its faith “that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God” (John 20:30-31) and (2) assure it that salvation and life eternal is derived only through Jesus, God’s Son (John 14:6).

4. John’s Strategy for Discrediting His Community’s Opponents and Validating Its Faith

John sets out to achieve these objectives by (1) discrediting the Pharisees and “the Jews” attacking Christ believers, (2) presenting impeccable evidence that Jesus was who Christ believers have been told he was and that Jesus’ authority was indisputably that of God, (3) establishing the indisputable authority of Christ believers’ proclamation of a new, reformed Judaism and the legitimacy of their community itself, and (4) assuring Christ believers that salvation is possible only through Jesus, the Son of God.

a. Discrediting the Pharisees and Their Judean Cohorts

Unlike Matthew, in John’s advocacy of his own version of new, reformed Judaism and its authority, John does not debate his Pharisaic opponents on legal matters pertaining to Torah and the finer points of interpreting Scripture, even as the Qumran Essenes did against their own Temple establishment adversaries. John instead fights fire with fire. He fights fire with fire by making the sweeping accusation via the words of Jesus that the Pharisees and their Judean cohorts’ claim for their authority being based upon Moses is a bogus claim. Rather than having the backing of Moses, John shows that the Judean Jews in fact misunderstand and misinterpret Moses. Worse still they fail to keep the Law (John 7:19). For that they are condemned by Moses, as John has Jesus state emphatically to “the Jews” (John 5:45-46.): “[Y]our accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?” Even Abraham, whom the Judean Jews claim to be descendents from (John 8:33), is presented as affirming who Jesus is when John has Jesus declare to the Judeans: “Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad” (John 8:53).

b. Establishing the Impeccable Authority of Jesus as the Son of God

From the beginning of his Gospel in its prologue and throughout in controversy with “the Jews” and others, as well as in proclamations to his disciples, John presents Jesus as one who was with God before the world was made. All creation was made through Jesus in his pre-existence with God. He came down from heaven to manifest God in the flesh, has had everything turned over to him by God, acts for God and speaks for God, disclosing divine wisdom as appointed by God (John 1:1-3; 5:17-20; 6:27, 38; 8:29, 42-43; 14:8-11; 17:6-8, 20). Such is the constant repetitive theme throughout the entire Gospel. Jesus’ authority as God’s is incontrovertible.

c. Establishing the Legitimacy of John’s Community and Its Faith

Throughout the Gospel, John depicts Jesus repeatedly assuring John’s Christ community of believers that they have been chosen by Jesus and God to be Jesus’ “sheep” to form the community of faith which Jesus has established. The members of John’s community are assured that God has chosen them and given them eternal life, and, finally, assured them that no one will be able to snatch them away from Jesus and God (John 10:27-29; 15:19; 17:6-10, 20-23). Even,

according to John, as Jesus has left them to return to God, his father, he has appointed an ever-present divine advocate for believers, the Holy Spirit. Moreover, on behalf of his followers Jesus is absent from the community for the purpose of preparing a place for them in God's heavenly home, to which place he will personally take them when he comes back to get them (John 14:2-3). The Johannine community's legitimacy and the authoritative grounding of its faith are indisputable.

d. Establishing Salvation as Derived Only from Jesus

According to John, salvation is of the Jews (John 4:29), but derived only through the Jewish Jesus, i.e., Jesus as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). His is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Whoever believes in him will have eternal life (John 11:26). They will pass from death to life (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:40,47; 10:28). His way is the only way to salvation: "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Whoever does not believe in him—the obstinate and recalcitrant Pharisees and Judeans, and the like—will not have eternal life but must suffer God's enduring wrath (John 3:18, 36). Salvation unquestionably is found only in Jesus.

5. John's Strategy for Defense: Parallels to the Enochic Strategy

John's defense of the authority for his version of the new, reformed Judaism and the legitimacy of his Christ community employs a tactic similar to that of the Enochic community. Like the Enochic community which narratively featured the revered Enoch as the literary voice through which divine wisdom is disclosed, so in John Jesus is the central narrative figure who reveals the wisdom of God. As Enoch journeyed into the heavens, even to the throne of God, where God resides, Jesus from the beginning was with God. He came down to earth and became the incarnate presence of God. Like the authors of 1 Enoch who, via Enoch, condemn the Jerusalem Temple establishment of their day for the wrong understanding of the Torah revealed by Moses, John condemns his Jewish Christ community's Judean opponents for misunderstanding Moses and twisting the interpretation of Torah to their own advantage.

Like the authors of 1 Enoch who, via Enoch, maintain that they alone are the beneficiaries of revealed wisdom of divine truth, contrary to their Temple establishment opponents, John, via Jesus as God's Son, maintains that believers in Jesus as God's Son are alone the beneficiaries of the divine truth—including truth about Jesus himself—which Jesus communicates to them. Like the authors of 1 Enoch who contend that the Temple cult and its sacrificial system is null and void because of the corruption of the priesthood, and aver that salvation is attained only through the right knowledge revealed through wisdom, John avers that salvation is only through Jesus, the Son of God and the divine wisdom which he reveals to his believers (see John 14:1-16:33). In fact, contrary to the Temple establishment's claim that only through its sacrificial system can sin be atoned through the ritual of animal sacrifice, John depicts John the Baptist proclaiming with regard to Jesus, as just noted, that he is "the [sacrificial] Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Thus, the Gospel of John, like 1 Enoch, is a composition originating in a Jewish separatist group that opposes and defends itself against its Judean Pharisaic antagonists and their promulgation of Judaism and their interpretation of what it means to be a true Jew. In presenting his apologia, the author John draws upon the same fundamental principles used by the Enochic and Qumran communities to legitimize their authority against their respective opponents.

6. John's Concept of Salvation in Judaic Context and in Historic Christian Interpretation

John's view of salvation is narrowly exclusive. From John's perspective no one can be saved and have eternal life unless one believes in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and

commits one's self to him as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). To fail to do so is to be damned to the wrath of God. In the immediate historical context of John's community at Batanaea, it is a resounding judgment rendered in retaliation for the persecution and humiliating repudiation Jewish Christ believers have suffered from hostile Judean Pharisaic Jews. In that historical context the exclusive concept of salvation promulgated by John is vituperative "payback," as well as vindication, for the psychological, if not physical, injury which the author and members of his Christ community have suffered.

Such a narrowly exclusive view of salvation—salvation for the believer, damnation for the unbeliever—is consistent with and parallels the same narrowly exclusive view of salvation avowed by the Qumran Essenes and to a large extent the Enochic community. According to the Essene Qumran community the teaching of the Teacher of Righteousness and fidelity to what he taught are the sole basis and hope for salvation. Those "false" Jews who do not accept, believe and faithfully follow the Teacher's teaching are consigned to the fate of being "cursed without mercy" and "damned in the shadowy place of everlasting fire" (see above, "The Community Rule," II). Similarly, the Enochic community claimed that salvation is solely available through divinely revealed wisdom disclosed by God's "Chosen One," Enoch, to the righteous ones, the Enochic community. Fidelity to that wisdom, which the Enochic community is the only beneficiary of, alone ensures that one is saved.

Such a narrowly exclusive and judgmental view of salvation belonging to "us" and not to "them" ("outsiders," non-believers) understood within the specific context of a first-century-CE family feud is one thing. But, from the perspective of this writer, when Christians historically have appropriated this narrowly exclusive understanding of salvation from the Gospel of John and applied it to those they consider to be the saved and the lost according to Jesus, it is a deplorable misrepresentation of the historical Jesus. To ascribe such an exclusive view of salvation to the historical Jesus contradicts everything he taught, lived and stood for. His vision of the kingdom of God and his understanding of God as a loving, merciful and caring father who inclusively embraces all people without exception, as described earlier in this essay, are antithetical to any idea of salvation that dictates who is "in" and who is "out" of the family of God. Tragically and inexcusably, the historic Christian belief in and advocacy of John's exclusive view of salvation has served as a contemptible justification for anti-Judaism upon the part of Christians throughout history. Such an exclusive dogma is pejoratively judgmental not only toward Jews, but also every other religious tradition, to say nothing about those who claim no religious tradition at all. It is despicably offensive, in the view of this author, for any one to make such absolute, self-serving and self-righteous claims for and about God.

F. Paul, the Radical Jew and His Radical Reform of Judaism

1. Profile of Paul

a. Sources

Many Pauline scholars agree now that, of the letters ascribed to Paul in the New Testament, Paul himself only wrote seven of them, and in the following sequence per the approximate dates: the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (ca. 51 CE), the First Epistle to the Corinthians (ca. 53 CE), the Epistle to the Galatians (ca. 54 CE), the Epistle to the Philippians (ca. 54 CE), the Epistle to Philemon (ca. 54 CE), the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (ca. 55 CE), and his last, the Epistle to the Romans (ca. 57 CE). Those letters are our only accurate sources for information about Paul. The Acts of the Apostles (written ca. 120-125 CE), in which Paul is prominently featured as the author's hero, is not considered by many scholars as an accurate presentation of Paul. There are six other letters attributed to Paul but which scholars

maintain he did not write. Those written by the end of the first century CE are, per the approximate dates: the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (ca. 75 CE), the Epistle to the Colossians (ca. 75 CE), and the Epistle to the Ephesians (ca. 80 CE). Those written in the early part of the second century CE are, per the approximate dates: the First Epistle to Timothy (ca. 112 CE), the Second Epistle to Timothy (ca. 114 CE) and the Epistle to Titus (ca. 117 CE).

b. A Thumb-Nail Sketch of Paul's Life

Paul was from Tarsus, a city in Asia Minor (now Turkey). He grew up as a devout Jew and became a Pharisee, years before Matthew became one. Paul was by his own account a Jew of Jews. He unabashedly acclaims in his Epistle to the Philippians that he was “circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin [one of the twelve original tribes of ancient Israel], a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless” (Epistle to the Philippians 3:5-6).

As a staunch Pharisee Paul set out initially to destroy the Jesus movement and its various Christ communities. But at some point in his encounter with the Christ believers whom he persecuted, Paul had an epiphany (ca. 33 CE) in which he experienced Jesus as the risen Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; cf. Galatians 1:1, 11-12), became converted to the Jesus movement, and was baptized into the Christ Community. He subsequently became one of the Christ Community's most celebrated missionaries, and established churches throughout the Mediterranean area. He was martyred in Rome some time in the 60's CE.

c. Paul's Hellenist Mind-set and His Brief with Judaism

In his book, *The Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, Daniel Boyarin, a Talmudic scholar, has provided the most insightful and helpful explanation of why Paul appears at a surface reading of his letters to have renounced his Judaism when he became a Christ believer. Boyarin, who describes himself (p. 4) as “an actively practicing (post)modern rabbinic Jew,” contends that we cannot fully understand Paul until we understand the cultural mindset of the man, a man who, as Boyarin argues (p. 2), “lived and died convinced he was a Jew living out Judaism.”

What was Paul's cultural mindset? How did it influence the way Paul looked at his own Judaism? And how did the Christ Community's belief in the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, as God's anointed one, the promised Messiah, provide the theological resolution to the psychological and philosophical conundrum Paul found himself in before his conversion? What follows for the rest of this essay section on Paul is dependent upon Boyarin's reading and interpretation of Paul.

As Boyarin (pp. 6-7) points out, all Jews of the first century CE, to a greater or lesser extent—much lesser among Hebrew or Aramaic speaking Jews in Palestine—were “Hellenized” Jews who lived out of the religious and moral thought patterns of a “Hellenized Judaism,” a Judaism influenced by the Hellenistic philosophical vision of and aspiration for a universal oneness of all humanity in all aspects of what it means to be human. Such an ideal human existence united in one universal essence would exist, it was envisioned, without divisive differences and hierarchal social structure. In particular, such a human oneness would be without ethnic, class, gender or genealogical distinctions.

The philosophical basis for this idealistic vision was derived from Plato's concept of reality. Plato conceived of reality as having two dimensions or structures. One was the physical,

the visible, that which manifests itself to our empirical senses. Within and beyond the physical manifestation of reality is the spiritual reality, the dimension of reality unseen with the eye. It is the spiritual dimension, according to Plato, that is true reality, that which is permanent ultimate reality, whereas the physical is changing and impermanent. There is a connection between the two dimensions of reality. The physical manifestation of reality points to the spiritual but as such is no more than a shadow of the spiritual reality, a poor reflection. Moreover, according to the Hellenistic view, to focus on physical reality alone, on the *physical particulars* of our existence—what we look like, our race, our gender distinctions, class, lineage, as well as our religious practices—detracts from and undermines our awareness and appreciation of the universal oneness we share in the spiritual realm of life, the true and authentic realm of existence.

Parenthetically, in the view of the writer of this essay, one way of understanding these two Hellenistic dimensions of reality is to consider the two dimensions of ourselves: the outer and inner self. The outer self is the self with visible behaviors, expressed attitudes, and shared emotions. It is the self we present to others. It may or may not represent our true inner self, and even if it does, only partially and inadequately so. Our inner self, our soul, which even we do not always fully comprehend, is our spiritual nature, our true self, the place of contemplated but not-acted-upon behaviors, unexpressed attitudes, unshared emotions. We often need to help people “decode” how they experience us outwardly in order to understand our inner self. Few of us would want people to judge us solely by what they visibly see or experience of us. Such public presentations may even mislead people, if they take them literally as representing who we are on the inside, into an entirely wrong or misinterpretation of our inner self. We have to help them decode our outward indicators in order to understand our inner intentions.

Likewise, most of us would never take a dream-story as literally representing reality but rather pointing to an inner reality dramatized by our unconscious. Thus, we decode or allegorize dreams, i.e., dream interpretation, to get at their hidden meaning being revealed by our unconscious. We allegorize the stories of our dreams by inferring that the elements in dream-stories must stand for certain aspects of our life-stories. We will return again to this need to decode or allegorize the external experience of existence in order to understand what is going on in the internal nature of existence when we consider Paul’s penchant for allegorizing the language of Scripture.

In the Hellenistic drive for universal oneness, Judaism garnered a great deal of respect among Hellenized Gentiles for its monotheistic belief, namely, there is *only one God*. That satisfied the Hellenists who found the belief in multiple gods to be a false understanding of the unified nature of one God required for the universal oneness of true and authentic reality. These Hellenists had come to the conclusion that the many gods of the Greco-Roman traditions were no more than different names for the same one God. So Judaism’s monotheism was very attractive to non-Jews of the time.

What was not attractive and what the Hellenists objected to was Judaism’s claim for and insistence upon the indispensable value of the distinctive particulars of its heritage and what it meant to be a Jew—particulars that are defined as physical, namely: ethnicity, genealogy (tracing lineage back to Abraham), kashruth (purity regulations regarding food), Sabbath and festival observances, and the religious rite of circumcision. They are Judaic particulars that distinctively set Jews apart from other people. Such insistence on the particular physical differences of Jews from other people in the judgment of the Hellenists subverts the spiritual pursuit of universal oneness of all (see Boyarin, p. 53). Therein lay Paul’s philosophical conundrum.

As a man of his time, Paul was strongly taken by and motivated toward the vision of a universal oneness in which former human differences which set people apart from one another must be erased as finally counterproductive to achieving and experiencing oneness as foreshadowed in the realm of the spirit. Paul's famous characterization of the members of the Christ Community as one people "in Christ," as he declares to his church at Galatia, reflects his incorporating of that vision of universal oneness in his interpretation of his faith (Epistle to the Galatians 3:26-28):

[I]n Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.**

But maintaining such a vision placed Paul in conflict with his own Jewish distinctiveness—that is, who he was as a Jew. To be consistent and not schizophrenic as a Hellenist, he saw that he could not hold on to his vision of spiritual oneness and still hold on to the distinctive physical manifestations that define his inherited Jewishness and faithful devotion to Judaism, at least not in its historic and traditional expression. To resolve this conundrum and free himself from inconsistency and from schizophrenia, at worse, Paul adopted a way of understanding Judaism not too unlike a famous Jewish philosopher at the time, Philo of Alexander (20 BCE-50 CE). Philo saw that one way of getting past the physical to gain access to the spiritual was to allegorize the physical to expose the true spiritual meaning of things that lay waiting to be revealed behind and beyond physical manifestation. Philo applied this allegorizing procedure specifically to uncovering the deeper meaning of Scripture behind and beyond its physical or literal meaning.

The Hellenistic theory of language enabled Philo, and Paul after him, to do that and have an authoritative justification for doing so. In Hellenistic theory, the interpretation of written language, as Boyarin (14-15) puts it, "operates in the platonic mode of external and internal realities, language itself is understood as an outer, physical shell, and meaning is construed as the invisible, ideal, and spiritual reality that lies behind or is trapped within the body of the language." By adopting this Hellenistic theory of language, as the understanding of the two-dimension structure of reality itself, Paul found a way out of his theological and psychological conundrum with the help of his new faith in Jesus as the Christ. The terms Paul uses for the two dimensions of reality are "according to the flesh" (physical reality) and "according to the spirit" (spiritual reality).

These metaphorical distinctions allowed him to understand Jesus in a two-dimensional way, namely: Jesus according to the flesh, i.e., the ethnic and genealogical particularistic, physical identity of Jesus as a Jew, and Jesus according to the spirit, i.e., Jesus as the Son of God as validated in the spiritual realm. At the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans (1:3) Paul speaks of Jesus as the Christ in these two ways: namely, Jesus "was **descended from David according to the flesh** and was **declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead**. Jesus as the risen one in the spirit is for Paul then the exemplification of universal man, divinely ordained, for whom Hellenistic universalists aspired. It is not surprising then that, with the exception of information about Jesus' death and resurrection, one can read Paul's epistles and find virtually nothing about Jesus' "physical" being, i.e., information about Jesus as physical man, even what he taught. Paul's primary focus was upon Jesus the Christ *according to the spirit*, and how Jesus' salvific death defined him as God's Chosen One, Christ according to the spirit. In fact, at one point in his second (extant) Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:16), Paul declares: "[E]ven though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way."

2. Paul's Reformed Judaism: Shoehorning Judaism into Christ Community Universalism

Paul, as Hellenistic man, began to view Judaism in the same two-dimensional way: **Judaism according to the flesh** and **Judaism according to the spirit**. For Paul, Judaism according to the flesh is represented and manifested by those physical distinctions which historically define it, circumcision, genealogy, kashruth, etc. Judaism according to the spirit for Paul is the true Israel which transcends its physical manifestations, and serves as a faith community that embraces all humankind without ethnic distinction. Paul saw that true Israel was envisioned by Jesus and was being actualized in the Christ Community, a spiritual community which after the example of Jesus the Christ sought to live according to the spirit and not the flesh (cf. Boyarin, pp. 74-75). Paul felt that historic Israel had pointed in that direction from the beginning but now needed to have its distinctive physical indicators transformed allegorically into their greater spiritual meaning.

Paul accomplished such an allegorical transformation of the Judaic particulars into their spiritual counterparts, most notably the Judaic physical indicators of the Torah itself, circumcision, and genealogy. He achieved this allegorical transformation in the following ways in the context of the Christ Community, its Christ believers and its Christ, who from Paul's perspective, as stated above, is the symbolic exemplification of the universal essence of oneness. Consider the following:

a. The Torah

Paul maintained that, despite its literal, physical character, the Hebrew Scriptures were the repository of the revelation of God and, further, that Jews historically had served as God's communicators of that divine revelation. Consequently, while Paul rejected the literal interpretation of the Torah which required that Jews manifest their distinctive ethnicity and historic religious tradition through physical indicators that set them apart from other people, he emphatically maintained that the commandments must be preserved, even though such things as physical circumcision must be done away with. Thus, he declared to his Christ community at Corinth (1 Corinthians 7:19): "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything."

What Paul meant by obeying the commandments was to move beyond the literal interpretation of the commandments and Torah itself to an allegorical interpretation or spiritual interpretation, to Torah's spiritual sense, in order to follow the "true" law which is the eternal Law, to which the external Law expressed in a written text can only point to as a sign points in the direction of a desired destination. That true Law, the universal law, for Paul, was the "Law of Christ," the spiritual meaning of the Law of Moses encapsulated in a written text. What enables the fulfillment of the spiritual meaning of the Law of Moses, Paul maintained, is faith and love. That means more than just routinely doing the commandments of the Torah as an obligation by rote, which for Paul is not fulfilling the commandments. It means rather, according to Paul, doing them out of faith and love, as exemplified in the spirit of Jesus the Christ himself, the only way, for Paul, the Law can be fulfilled (see Boyarin, pp. 132-135).

b. Circumcision

It is clear, particularly in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and Epistle to the Philippians, that he is adamantly opposed—cause célèbre—to circumcision as the physical act which Torah dictates in its literal presentation of Mosaic Law. Paul became incensed when Jews who had become Christ believers, such as Jesus' brother James and members of the church at

Jerusalem—in the course of a family feud in the Christ Community—insisted upon Gentiles being circumcised as a physical sign of membership, before they can become members of the Christ Community (see Galatians 2:1-16).

Despite circumcision's deep religious significance and indispensable importance for Judaism—"the most complete sign of the connection of the Torah to the concrete body of Israel" (so Boyarin, p. 36)—Paul became enraged with certain Jewish Christ-believers who insisted upon circumcising Gentile converts. His excoriating, vituperative rage virtually leaps out in a passage from his Epistle to the Philippians (3:2-3), as he addresses those he opposes on the disputed issue as "dogs:" **"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!** For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and [have confidence] in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh." In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul, in cutting sarcasm, dismisses the circumcision enforcers in his church at Galatia with these words of not-too-subtle meaning: "I wish those who unsettle you [with the obligation to be circumcised] **would castrate themselves!**"

That said, it must also be quickly pointed out that Paul was *not completely opposed to circumcision of any kind*. That is suggested in the verse cited above from his Epistle to the Philippians, when Paul declares: "For it is we who are the circumcision." What does Paul mean by that? While Paul was opposed to circumcision as a physical sign of ethnicity or religious identity, he advocated another kind of circumcision to replace physical circumcision, namely: a spiritual circumcision, a spiritual circumcision derived from an allegorical interpretation of the physical circumcision dictated by Torah. It is the **circumcision of the heart**.

Paul declares in his Epistle to the Romans (2:28-29): "[A] person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and **real circumcision is a matter of the heart**—it is spiritual and not literal." And where did Paul come up with that idea? A passage that Paul may well have had in mind here is Deuteronomy 30:5-6, in which Moses declares to the Exodus Israelites:

The Lord your God will bring you into the land that your ancestors possessed, and you will possess it; he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors. Moreover, the Lord your **God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.**

Earlier in his Epistle to the Romans (2:4-5), Paul, as Boyarin suggests (p. 89), appears to have appealed to a similar passage in Deuteronomy when he chastises members of the church at Rome for their "hard and impenitent heart" incurring the wrath of God upon them. Consider Deuteronomy 10:12-16:

Although heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth with all that is in it, yet the Lord set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today. **Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart**, and do not be stubborn any longer.

So in the final analysis Paul, to be consistent with his Hellenistic orientation toward achieving a universal oneness in the new representation of Israel, the Church—without the distinctions of ethnicity that divide one people from another—did not dispense with circumcision as an act of faith. Rather, he transposed it from the physical realm to the spiritual

realm as a circumcision of the heart. In doing so, Paul believed he was being both consistent in his advocacy of universalism and responsibly loyal to his Jewish heritage.

In commenting on Paul's opposition to physical circumcision in the interest of everyone belonging without ethnic differentiation to one universal body of humanity, Boyarin observes the following (see pp. 9-10):

[F]or a Pharisee of Paul's day, or a religious Jew of today, to be told that [in the spirit of universal oneness] it is a matter of indifference whether Jews circumcise their sons or not, and therefore that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles hardly feels like regard for Jewish difference. . . . [T]he question for me is not the relative statuses of Jewish and gentile Christians but the statuses of those—Jews and others—who choose not to be Christians. . . . Paul, were he here, would probably argue that he was defining Jewishness in such a way that everyone could be Jewish.

c. Genealogy

In an analogous way in which Paul allegorizes the literal Torah and physical circumcision to find a spiritual meaning that coheres with universal oneness and removes distinctive ethnic indicators that emphasize differences between people rather than harmonious oneness, Paul follows the same approach in removing the distinctively physical ethnic indicator of Jewish genealogy. What Paul finds is divisive in the goal for universal oneness is the Jewish claim for physical descent from Abraham, a line of descent which Paul identifies as his own heritage (Second Epistle to the Corinthians 11:22). To avoid narrow particularism that appears to benefit Jews over Gentiles, Paul through allegory and a bit of interpretative gymnastics turns everyone into a descendent of Abraham as a result of Jesus Christ. How does he do that? He does so in his declaration in his Epistle to the Galatians and again in his Epistle to the Romans, thus:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us -- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14).

We say, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." . . . He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised . . . and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised. **For the promise [came] to Abraham . . . through the righteousness of faith. . . . [T]he promise [rests] on grace and [is] guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of all of us—as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations."** (Romans 4:13, 16-17).

Boyarin (p. 144) comments upon the Galatians passage, with possibly the Romans passage also in mind:

Paul here, as elsewhere, spiritualizes and allegorizes the notion of kinship. If for rabbinic Jews the crucial signifier is actual, physical descent from Abraham, for

Paul, it is descent from Abraham according to the spirit, which is constituted by entry into the faith community of Christ. He equates the promise made to Abraham that Sarah would bear Isaac to Abraham's spiritual paternity of Jesus, "the seed" to whom the promise was made, and through Jesus, "the seed" of all who believe. . . . [T]he blessing [Abraham received] is for the descendants of Abraham by the "promise" and not to those who are the descendants of Abraham "by the flesh" [It is the promise] fulfilled in time by God through the sending of the Messianic seed through which the promise was made.

Is Paul anti-Judaic or even anti-Semitic when he allegorizes away the literal interpretation of the Torah, circumcision and the distinctive Jewish genealogy which is traced to Abraham? Boyarin (p. 105) does not think that is necessarily the case, as he reflectively declares: "A hermeneutic theory [theory of interpretation] such as Paul's by which the literal Israel, literal history, literal circumcision, and literal genealogy are superseded by their allegorical, spiritual signifieds is *not* necessarily anti-Semitic or even anti-Judaic" (emphasis: Boyarin).

3. Paul and the Seeds of Christian Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism

Paul was deeply grieved that his fellow Jews had not responded in mass to the Gospel of Jesus the Christ and become one with others in the universal spiritual community of faith symbolized by the Christ Community. So aggrieved was he that in the Epistle to the Romans 9:2-4 he declares that he would even sacrifice his own salvation in order for his fellow Jews to be saved:

I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For *I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever.*

Paul holds out hope that in the end all Jews will be drawn to Christ and be saved (Romans 9-11). In the meantime he reminds the Gentile believers that the root of their faith is founded in Israel and the promise to Abraham fulfilled in Christ. He goes further to admonish the Gentiles not to "lord it over" the Jews because they, as Gentiles, believe in Christ, while the Jews do not. Paul encapsulates this counsel in a metaphorical analogy in Romans 11:16-24, in which he speaks of a holy olive tree and a wild olive tree. Paul imagines that some branches of the holy olive tree were broken off and wild olive shoots replaced them. The root of the holy olive tree is Israel. The wild olive shoots are Gentiles who have been grafted onto the tree. He admonishes the grafted branches, Gentiles, not to boast of their place as branches as though they support the root of the tree. Rather, Paul avers, it is the root, Israel, that supports them. Thus Paul's analogy:

[I]f the root [of the tree] is holy, then the branches also are holy. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. . . .

And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Boyarin (pp. 204-206) reflects upon this Pauline metaphorical analogy regarding the Jewish non-believers vis-à-vis Gentile Christ believers and makes the following insightful, incisive and telling comments which are quoted here extensively:

There is, on the one hand, what I take to be a genuine, sincere passion for human (re)-unification and certainly a valid critique of “Jewish particularism,” but on the other hand, since the unification of humankind is predicated on sameness through faith, those humans who choose difference end up effectively non-human. . . . [F]rom the point of view of a member of that Jewish group that refuses to believe in Jesus and abandon our ancestral practices and commitments . . . Paul is clearly arguing against a certain kind of anti-Judaic boasting, for the wild olive shoots would not have nourishment without the sap of the root (Israel). Therefore, they have no grounds for boasting that they support the root. But on the other hand, imagine reading this from the perspective of a broken branch [a Jew who does not believe in Jesus as the Christ], and you will see why it is cold comfort indeed.

However, while in the Pauline metaphor lay the unmistakable seeds of later Christian supersessionism—which holds that Israel has been denounced by God for its obstinate refusal to accept God's son, Jesus, and thereby rejected as God's chosen people and replaced by God with Christians and Christianity—Boyarin declares (pp. 206-207):

There is an enormous difference between the nascent Pauline doctrine of supersession, and those of some other later Christian theologies. . . . Paul's doctrine is not anti-*Judaic!* [emphasis: Boyarin, including the exclamation-point punctuation]. It [the Pauline doctrine] does not ascribe any inherent fault to Israel, Jews or Judaism that led them to be replaced, superseded by Christianity, except for the very refusal to be transformed. . . . I treat Paul's discourse as indigenously Jewish, thereby preempting (or at least recasting) the question of the relationship between Paul and anti-Semitism. This is an inner-Jewish discourse and an inner-Jewish controversy. The only flaw in the rejected branches is their rejection. Indeed, they still retain their character as Israel, and if they will only return they are assured of a successful regrafting. The point will only be clear if we forget for moment the subsequent history and imagine ourselves into the context of the first century. One way to do that will be through an analogous situation in our time, where, once again, the meaning of Torah is extremely contested. Reform Jews consider Orthodoxy seriously flawed in its “refusal” to see that the Torah “intended” itself to change with the times, and Orthodox Jews see Reformers as heretics, but no one doubts the Jewishness of either group, nor considers the other “anti-Semitic”! I would argue for the analogous analysis of the situation of first-century Judaism with the Qumran covenanters, Pharisees, Sadducees, Paul, and others all on the same footing as competing and mutually exclusive claims of having the truth of Torah. They all attack each other intemperately but none can be considered *anti-Judaic* (emphasis: Boyarin).

From the perspective of this writer, Boyarin is not only right about Paul, but significantly so with respect with what happens in the course of a family feud over matters of absolute importance to the identity of a family. Furthermore, while, as Boyarin has pointed out, Paul did not intentionally sow the seeds of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, they are nonetheless there in the structure of Paul's thinking. They are there waiting to be sown, watered and cultivated by any enterprising Christian who might follow after Paul. Enter Marcion, the planter and cultivator of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism.

Part Four

From Judaic Family Feud to Anti-Judaism to Christianity as a Separate Religion

I. The Inception of Anti-Judaism and the Initial Response to It, 100-150 CE

A. The Prologue

As has been presented thus far, throughout the first century CE Christ believers whose extant writings we possess, and which have been examined here, were themselves Jews and considered Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God and his ministry a new, reform movement of Judaism. Persuaded that Jesus was the anointed one of God, the Christ and Son of God, they set out to win converts to Jesus' reform movement and actualize it in their own efforts according to how Jesus' reform vision could be adapted and translated into the circumstances of their own contemporary situation.

In the early years of the various Christ communities, they saw themselves as an extension of Jesus' reform movement and, like Jesus, continued to contest the Jerusalem Temple establishment's promulgation of Judaism pre-70 CE. Such is clearly illustrated in Paul's writing. After 70 CE, when the Temple lay destroyed and the Pharisees assumed the role of promulgators of formative Judaism, following the end of the Sadducean priesthood, the various Christ communities contested and competed with the Pharisees over what constitutes the true new, reformed Judaism. Up to this point the contentious relationship between the Jesus movement and forces of institutional Judaism amounted to a family feud.

But by the early second century, we have the first indication that the family feud would soon globally erupt into a family divorce, with most of the various Jesus movements separating themselves from Judaism, except for Christ believers who remained as "Jewish Christians." That rupture led then to a complete disassociation from the parent religion and finally repudiation of Judaism, with the resultant promulgation of Christianity by Christ believers as the one true God-ordained religion. Christianity as a religion, separate and distinct from Judaism—though with its roots still traced by Christian proto-orthodoxy, albeit in significant transvalued form, to Judaism—was born. The precursor to that final break with and repudiation of parent Judaism emerged definitively in the second decade of the second century CE.

B. Marcion: Anti-Judaism Raises Its Ugly Head

1. Marcion of Pontus: A Brief Profile of His Life

Sometime between 115 and 120 CE, a radical repudiation and renunciation of Judaism was made public by a Christ believer known as Marcion of Pontus, a Gentile convert to the Christ community, soon to be formally identified as Christianity. We know little of Marcion (on Marcion, see Tyson). Our sources, the writings of the so-called "early Church fathers," such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian of Carthage, present an adversarial, biased,

even confused picture of the man, and they often contradict each other. The best we can reconstruct of Marcion's life is that he was born in Pontus on the Black Sea and became a shipmaster by occupation. At one point in his life he was a Christian missionary in Asia. He later came to Rome where he made a large donation to the Church at Rome and became a significant presence and voice in it.

2. Marcion's Repudiation and Renunciation of Judaism

a. Marcion's Two Gods: God of Judaism and God of Jesus

In his radical formulation of the Christian faith, Marcion argued, based upon his reading of the Apostle Paul's epistles and a Gospel he secured (see below), that the teachings of Jesus were sharply antithetical to the Hebrew Scriptures. Marcion concluded that when Jesus spoke of God, he was not speaking of Judaism's God but rather an entirely different God, Jesus' God, who had been previously unknown prior to Jesus. Furthermore, Marcion averred that there was no connection between Judaism's God and Jesus' God. The God of Judaism, Marcion maintained, created the material world and demanded that human beings observe certain laws promulgated in the Hebrew Bible, and, if they did not do so, the Jewish God would retaliate with wrath and physically punish them. Marcion found such divine retaliation objectionable and entirely out of character with the God Jesus revealed. Jesus' God, according to Marcion, was a God of love and mercy who justified sinners rather than condemning them.

b. Marcion's Literalistic Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible as Support for His Views

By way of a literalistic interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, Marcion contended that the God of the Jews was an inconsistent God. Their God, Marcion observed, prohibits working on the Sabbath, but when the Hebrews attacked Jericho, he commands that they carry the ark around the city for eight continuous days, which would also include the Sabbath day. By his literalistic interpretation, Marcion maintained that the God of the Hebrew Bible was capricious or lacked foresight. To cite examples: Marcion pointed to Judaism's God approving certain persons and then later disapproving them, and his propensity to regret a previous decision, as in the case of making Saul king (1 Samuel 15:11). Pressing his case further against the Jewish God, Marcion found that he is not an all-seeing God; for in the Garden of Eden the God of Judaism has no awareness of where Adam is hiding from him (Genesis 3:8-10), or that Cain killed Abel, his brother (Genesis 4:9-10). Furthermore, Marcion considered the morality espoused in the Hebrew Bible inferior to the morality Jesus taught.

Yet, on the other hand, Marcion respected the authority of Hebrew Bible and did not challenge Judaism's legitimacy and its continuance as a religion after Jesus. In fact, Marcion accepted the authority of the Hebrew Bible for Jews. He believed that the Hebrew Bible's prophecies of a future Messiah were true. But he maintained that the Messiah the prophets spoke of was a different Messiah from Jesus. For the Jews were the people of a different God, the God of the material world. By contrast, the God of Jesus was a spiritual God of the spiritual world. Logically, then, as the Son of the spiritual God Jesus himself must have been totally spiritual in his appearance in the world. He was not present in the flesh. He only appeared to be a physical person. It would be impossible, Marcion averred, for the spiritual God to have a physical son. Marcion had contempt for the physical or material world. He, even, found the act of procreation repugnant, including birthing itself.

Marcion believed that his insights were supported by the letters of Paul and a Gospel known to him at Pontus—perhaps Luke’s first attempt at writing a Gospel—a Gospel which originated at the end of the first century (ca. 90 CE). Marcion took the Gospel, stripped it of significant content, and altered it to make it conform to his own beliefs. That Gospel, revised by Marcion, and the letters of Paul were Marcion’s “Bible.”

d. Marcion’s Views: Accepted by Some; Rejected and Denounced by Others

When Marcion presented his radical views at Rome, they were rejected by the church there and he was forced to leave Rome. He founded his own church and published his teaching in a document entitled *Antitheses*, a document that no longer exists. Marcion attracted a large number of followers with his teaching. They became known as “Marcionites.” The Marcionite movement lasted for several centuries in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

Marcion was denounced by the wider Church and declared a heretic, and has been considered a heretic by orthodox Christianity ever since. Many significant early Church “fathers” excoriated Marcion and Marcionites for their views and rose up to repudiate them and to prove them false. Irenaeus and Tertullian are particularly noted for having done so. An early second century Christian author who took strong exception to Marcion’s views was the author of the New Testament Gospel of Luke and also the Acts of the Apostles, often referred to together as “Luke-Acts.” All we know about the author of Luke-Acts, whom we call Luke, is that he was a Gentile convert to the Jesus movement and wrote his two volume story of Jesus and the early church, Luke-Acts, around 120-125 CE. While at one time it was thought that the author of Luke-Acts was a companion of Paul, that hypothesis is now discounted by many scholars.

C. Luke’s Polemic against Marcion’s Anti-Judaism

1. Luke’s Strategy for Refuting Marcion

Luke was resolute in refuting Marcion’s disassociation of Christianity from Judaism, his disassociating of Jesus, Paul and early Christ believers from having any connection to the traditions and practices of Judaism, and his rejection of the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture. To controvert Marcion’s views, Luke mounted a polemic against Marcion and the Marcionites by (1) taking Marcion’s Gospel, rewriting it with anti-Marcionite revisions, and producing, thereby, his own anti-Marcion Gospel, the canonical Gospel of Luke in the New Testament, and (2) portraying the earliest Christ believers in his Acts of the Apostles as devout Jews who were faithfully observant of the Torah and Judaism’s tradition and practices. (The source for most of the information here is Tyson).

2. Luke Contra Marcion: Credentialing Mary, Joseph, and Jesus as Devout Jews

With respect to (1), Marcion had used his Gospel as a basis for his claim that Jesus was unconnected to Judaism and Judaism’s God. When Luke read Marcion’s Gospel, he did not find any reference to Jesus’ or his family’s Jewish heritage, nor reference to Jesus or his family engaging in or being a part of Judaic ritual observances, practices or traditions. Marcion’s Gospel did not contain the predictions of either the birth of John the Baptist or the birth of Jesus. It did not contain stories of the Baptist and Jesus’ births, Jesus’ circumcision, or the story of Jesus’ appearance in the Temple at the age of twelve, etc. Marcion’s Gospel did not contain any mention of John the Baptist’s preaching and baptizing or Jesus’ own baptism, Jesus’ temptation by Satan, his visit to the synagogue at Nazareth, where he read to the worshippers from the book of Isaiah, or any reference to Jesus’ Jewish genealogy. Nor did Marcion’s Gospel contain any stories about Jesus’ resurrection.

All of the above mentioned material, absent in Marcion's Gospel, Luke added in his rewrite of Marcion's Gospel, transforming it into his own anti-Marcion Gospel, the New Testament Gospel of Luke. In his rewrite, Luke affixed two chapters to the beginning of Marcion's Gospel, namely: what now consists of chapters 1 and 2 of Luke's Gospel as it appears in the New Testament. In chapter 1, Luke contributed the story of the conception and birth of John (Gospel of Luke 1:5-26), later known as John the Baptist, to Zechariah and Elizabeth, the *Jewish kinswoman of Mary*, Jesus' mother. Luke depicts Zechariah, John's father, as a faithful priest in the Temple (Luke 1:5, 8-9). And Luke underscores the indisputable devotion of both Zechariah and Elizabeth to Judaism by stating that they "were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord" (Luke 1:6). With respect to Mary and Joseph, Luke added material that unquestionably linked them directly to Judaism and its heritage. With regard to Joseph, Luke informs us that Joseph "was of the house and lineage of David" (Luke 2:4). With regard to Mary, Luke has the angel Gabriel appear to her to predict the conception and birth of Jesus. Mary is told by Gabriel that she is favored by God—the God of Israel, contra Marcion—and that she will conceive a son, to be named Jesus, who will be given "the throne of his ancestor David" and from which "[h]e will reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:26-33). Thus, Luke establishes incontrovertibly that, contra Marcion, Jesus is the Judaic Messiah, the Messiah predicted by the Hebrew Bible.

In his anti-Marcionite rewrite of Marcion's Gospel, Luke depicts Jesus' parents as observant Jews by having Jesus circumcised after eight days, as well as depicting them present in the Temple and engaged in prescribed Judaic rituals with the child Jesus. Luke reports that Jesus' parents were faithful attendees of Jewish festivals and brought Jesus at the age of Twelve to the Temple at Passover, where Jesus engaged in discourse with the learned authorities there (Luke 2:21-52). Luke, also, augments Marcion's Gospel by adding the material now found in the canonical Gospel of Luke between 3:1 and 4:31, namely: accounts of John the Baptist's preaching, the baptism of Jesus, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, and Jesus' appearance in the synagogue at Nazareth where he claims to be the Messianic fulfillment to the prophecy found in Isaiah 61:1-2). Luke also augmented Marcion's Gospel with Jesus' genealogy, which Luke traces back through Israel's history to Adam (see Luke 3:2-4:30).

To controvert Marcion further, Luke in his rewrite added to Marcion's Gospel the resurrection stories found in canonical Luke 24:1-52, stories which demonstrate that Jesus' resurrection was a physical and not a spiritual resurrection, as Marcion maintained. Moreover, in the course of one of those resurrection accounts, the story of Jesus appearing to two unidentified disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke casts Jesus as validating himself to those disciples by interpreting Moses, the prophets and all of scripture as pointing to him (Luke 28:13-27). Thus, Luke puts the lie to Marcion's claim that Jesus was not associated with Judaism by portraying Jesus and his parents unmistakably as Jews, faithfully devoted to their Judaism, as well as inextricably tying Jesus to Judaism by indicating that all that happened to Jesus had been anticipated and dictated by the Hebrew Bible.

3. Luke contra Marcion: Credentialing Early Christ Believers as Devout Jews

In his Acts of the Apostles, Luke rebuts Marcion's claim that the early Christ believers were anti-Judaic by demonstrating through their activity and speeches that they were in fact faithful Jews. Luke casts these early Christ believers as devout Jews, celebrating Israel's history and strongly affirming it as the historic and religious root of their own Christ community and its salvific message for the world. Such figures as Stephen, Paul and Peter are presented as Luke's paragons of virtue when it comes to being true Jews, faithful to the Torah and all the teachings of Moses.

Luke's hero Paul is indisputably cast in Acts as a devout devotee of Judaism in radical contrast to Marcion's image of Paul, also Marcion's hero. Unlike Marcion's depiction of Paul as disassociated from Judaism, Luke presents Paul as a faithful Torah-abiding Pharisee, observant in Temple sacrifices, Jewish festivals, almsgiving, ritual purification (Acts 20:16; 21:26; 24:17-18), and swearing allegiance to Judaism (Acts 26:4-8). Luke presents Paul as deferring to Moses and the prophets, speaking nothing else but what Moses and prophets predicted would occur (Acts 24:14; Acts 26:22). Fleshing out this strictly Judaic profile of Paul, Luke informs us that Paul had his hair cut in accordance with a Jewish vow (Acts 18:18), and even had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), a "central casting" of Paul that the historical Paul of his epistles would likely squirm over.

Another of Luke's heroes, a Hellenist Jew named Stephen, is depicted as charged with blaspheming Moses and God. In a speech defending himself, Stephen rehearses Israel's history, citing prominent figures, such as the patriarchs, as well as Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon. He peppers his speech with quotations from and allusions to the Torah. Luke presents the charges against Stephen as false charges. For he is a faithful Jew, Luke tells us, and like other such faithful Jews, such as the prophets in the past, Stephen was persecuted unjustly by Jewish authorities because they were "stiff-necked people uncircumcised in heart and ears," opposed to God, and disobedient to Torah (Acts 7:51-53). It is striking, on this point, that Luke takes a tack similar to the Qumran community, namely, that Jews who do not respond to the Christ believers' message about Jesus, and salvation found in him, are obstinate, rebellious, heart-hardened Jews. Their problem, as Luke depicts it, is that *they have not circumcised their hearts* (Acts 7:51), a condemnatory explanation used also by the Qumran Essenes vis-à-vis the "Wicked Priest," as well as Paul vis-à-vis Jews unreceptive to his message..

With respect to Christ believers in general, throughout the Acts of the Apostles, Luke portrays members of the early Christ Community faithfully observing the traditions and practices of Judaism. The Temple serves as the scenario for many of the stories Luke tells about Christ believers (Acts 2:46; 3:1-10; 4:1; 5:20-26, 42). The original Christ believers, the apostles, meet there on a regular basis and participate in Temple observances (Acts 2:47; 5:12). They speak in the Temple and carry on a healing ministry there. In all of this, the early Christ believers are well-received and highly respected by other Jews, many of whom seek the believers' healing ministry (Acts 2:47; 5:12-16). The Temple establishment authorities, consistent with how such authorities are viewed in their portrayal by the Qumran and Enochic communities, are adamantly opposed to this upstart version of a new Judaism and even want to kill the Christ believers (Acts 4:1-21; 5:17-33). Yet, according to Luke, one Pharisee, named Gamaliel, does come to their defense (Acts 5:34-39).

4. Luke's Accomplishment in Refuting Marcion's Anti-Judaism

In pursuing this strategy of undermining Marcion's contention that Christianity is an anti-Judaism religion, Luke shows in these assorted ways that Christianity is not anti-Judaic. Christ believers from the start rooted their faith in Jesus via Judaism, avowed the Hebrew Bible as their Scripture, and faithfully observed Judaism's traditions and practices. Further, in pursuing this strategy against Marcion, Luke, as an end result, enabled the Hebrew Bible to be preserved irrevocably, throughout Christian history, as an essential, indispensable part of Christian Scripture.

In speaking of Luke's achievement in combating and discrediting Marcion and his anti-Judaism, the Lukan and Marcion scholar Joseph Tyson observes (p. 131):

In its own time and in its legacy Luke-Acts participated in a defining struggle [against the anti-Judaism of Marcionism]. It drew Christian believers to reflect

on the close relation of their faith to the Hebrew Scriptures and to see their lives in the Christ as the fulfillment of long-held Jewish expectation and ancient prophecy. But in regard to Christian-Jewish relations, the proto-orthodox victory, in which Luke-Acts played such an important part, was a two-edged sword. On the one side it secured the retention of the Hebrew Scriptures for Christian use. On the other it opened the way to a Christian interpretative strategy that supported virulent and frequently disastrous forms of anti-Judaism.

Unfortunately, as Tyson, implies, Luke's squelching of Marcion's anti-Judaism did not exorcise the demon from Christianity.

A last point on Luke: What did Tyson have in mind when he states that Luke-Acts "opened the way to a Christian interpretative strategy that supported the virulent and frequently disastrous forms of anti-Judaism? It is clear in Luke's polemic against Marcion's anti-Judaism that Luke is not anti-Judaic. But could Luke be anti-Semitic?

5. The Flip-Side to Luke: Gentiles and Anti-Semitism

There is a flip-side to Luke. While clearly establishing that the roots of Christianity are solidly grounded in Judaism, Luke, nevertheless, creates speeches of Peter in Acts in which Peter blames Jews for killing Jesus (Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13, 14; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39). And while in Acts, Luke does have a favorable view of Jews initially who, per Luke, respond enthusiastically to Christian preaching, by the time he turns his attention to the Christian missionary efforts throughout the Roman Empire, he adopts a virulent attitude toward Jews of the diaspora, as well as Jerusalem. Luke, in effect, narratively castigates them for rejecting, opposing and obstructing the Christian missionary enterprise (e.g., Acts 13:43-50; 14:1-5,19; 17:1-5,13; 18:12-17; 20:3,19; 21:11, 27-31; 23:12-15).

Moreover, as he concludes Acts, Luke presents a scene in which Paul, while imprisoned in Rome, invites the local Jewish leaders to hear his apologia for his evangelizing in the name of Jesus the Christ, in which, as Luke frames it, he contends that the acceptance of the truth of his message is "the hope of Israel." Upon hearing Paul's defense, some of these Jewish leaders, according to Luke, "were convinced" that Paul was right. But "others disbelieved." So Paul, with the help of a quote from Isaiah 6:9-10, as Luke again frames his speech, denounces the disbelieving Jews for their imperceptivity, disbelief and obstinacy. Then Luke has Paul follow that denunciation with this ringing declaration: "Let it be known to you [recalcitrant Jews] then that this salvation of God [through Jesus the Christ] has been sent to the Gentiles: they will listen" (Acts 28:17-28).

In vilifying disbelieving Jews, Luke has been judged as anti-Semitic. Yet, as we have seen, the Qumran Essenes, the Enochic community, Mark, Matthew, John and Paul, respectively, vilified their Jewish adversaries and none of them as a result of the historical analysis pursued in this essay have been judged *anti-Semitic* for doing so. Then, why should Luke be judged anti-Semitic for doing the same? There may be a catch, even a "catch 22," with regard to Luke. All the others were Jews vilifying Jews who opposed them or whom they castigated for falsely representing or practicing Judaism. But Luke was a *Gentile*. Thus, in Luke's case we have a Gentile vilifying Jews, which has been the pattern in Christianity ever since Luke. So Luke, perhaps unintentionally, has given license, or at least has served as a Christian model, for Gentile Christians to be anti-Semitic. What Luke has tragically given countenance to has served as a confirmation for all the Jewish Christ believers' writings examined in this essay to be interpreted by Christians as intentionally—and presupposed

justifiably so—anti-Semitic, and, finally, anti-Judaic. Anti-Semitism historically in the orthodox Christian context is *anti-Judaism*.

II. Conclusion: Looking Back on Judaism's Family Feud and the Origin of Christian Anti-Judaism

This essay, by virtue of its historical reconstruction of the relationship of Judaism to the Jesus movement and the inception of the Christ Community which followed after Jesus, elicits the following observations from this writer:

(1) Judaism in the period following the Maccabean liberation of Judea from foreign rule (165 BCE) and throughout the first century CE was not one unified homogeneous faith of universally accepted beliefs and practices, without divergence or differences among those who professed Judaism as their faith. Rather, Judaism in this period of time was marked by diversity of beliefs and practices. Different groups within Judaism emerged from time to time to challenge and compete with one another over who are the true, the faithful and the righteous Jews, i.e., those who inculcate and manifest in their lives the commandments of Torah and the precepts and traditions that set Judaism apart from every other religion.

The fact that during the Maccabean period there emerged out of the piety of the Hasidim essentially three denominations of Judaism, i.e., Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, each claiming to be the true representatives of authentic Judaism, underscores the point—not to mention the later separatist Essene Qumran community and the Enochic community to score the point further. Throughout this period of time one could mount a persuasive argument for being a true, faithfully devout observant of Judaism without following the party line of Judaism's parent body, the Jerusalem Temple establishment, or any other Judaic party line of any other Jewish group of the period whose views differed from one's own Judaic group. The same is the case today within Judaism, as Boyarin has drawn attention to, with respect to the differences of views regarding the interpretation of Torah between Orthodox and Reform Jews, not to mention Jews of other Judaic persuasions.

(2) Jesus was ethnically a Jew and devout in his adherence to the best in Judaism as he intuited it from his own experience of God. Where he broke with the Jerusalem Temple establishment, it was not to disassociate himself from Judaism, but rather to break with what he found to be the exploitative, oppressive rules and regulations regarding purity issues related to the Holiness Code of Torah and the strict and literalistic application of the commandments. He broke with parent Judaism in Jerusalem on these accounts because in enforcing its hegemonic rule he saw parent Judaism robbing the poor Galilean peasants of their self-worth as sacred gifts of God, and leading them to think that they had been rejected by God by virtue of the Temple establishment's scorning them as sinful outcasts undeserving of acceptance by God. Jesus in his vision of the kingdom of God and the inherent inclusiveness of God's family, in which God is father of all, caused him to launch a movement of radical reform of Judaism. In doing so, he was no different in intent from the Teacher of Righteousness of the Qumran community or the founder(s) of the Enochic community. Jesus' purpose was not to do away with Judaism and create a new religion but to reform Judaism!

(3) The earliest followers of Jesus who pursued his vision and tried to actualize it by the creation of the Christ Community were themselves Jews, devout in their allegiance to Judaism as Jesus had envisioned its transformation, renewal and reformation. They did not see themselves initially as separatists. Only later when repudiated, denounced and rejected by competing Jewish groups, such as the post-70 Pharisees, did they separate themselves from Judaism as it was being imposed in a form alien to their reform vision.

(4) Each of the various Christ communities which emerged had distinctively different takes upon how Jesus' vision for a new, reformed Judaism should be actualized within their own community settings and in keeping with the existential exigencies of their respective cultural and historical circumstances. There is perhaps no more radical difference among early Christ Community views of how the new, reformed Judaism of Jesus' vision should be shaped and realized than between the "liberal" Paul, and the way he tried to actualize the vision in the Christ communities he organized, and the Jerusalem church under the leadership of the "conservative" James the brother of Jesus. The same can be said with respect to the enormous difference between Paul and Matthew, several decades later, in their conceptualization and implementation of Jesus' vision.

Paul is obviously the most radical of all in his formulation of the vision of reformed Judaism, given his commitment to the Hellenistic ideal of universal oneness without any distinctions that separate one people from another by way of ethnicity, social status, gender, religious rituals and genealogical inheritance. Paul's insistence on doing away with the physical indicators of Judaism by spiritualizing them into a Hellenistic oneness practically marginalizes him as a Jew. But it hardly marginalizes him any more than it marginalizes Philo of Alexander, the revered Jewish philosopher of the time, who pursued a similar path in translating the essence of Judaism by allegory into the spiritual reality to which the literal word of the Torah pointed.

(5) All of the written documents that we have access to from the Christ communities of the first century were written by Jews. They were Jewish Christ believers who held that their respective interpretations of a new, reformed Judaism were a faithful effort in restoring Judaism to its innate authenticity, as they envisioned it. Even those compositions which we no longer have tangible access to, but have been reconstructed from evidence of them within the four canonical Gospels of the New Testament, were written by Jews in the same spirit. Those particular documents, which we have not had an opportunity to treat here, are the Sayings Gospel of Q, the Signs Gospel and the Gospel of Thomas.

It needs to be underscored here that the results of the foregoing historical analysis demonstrates that neither Jesus nor any of the New Testament texts, and the communities they represent, were anti-Judaism. The perception that they were, particularly in a number of the texts which have been examined here, is a perception read back into the texts as result of the indisputable reality of anti-Judaism's incursion into Christian history by Marcion, whose views were condemned but whose anti-Judaism legacy has been despicably kept alive to the present day.

(6) It is only with the writing of a Gentile Christian, Marcion, that anti-Judaism, as such, raises its ugly head for the first time in Christian thought and the Jesus movement—founded upon Jesus' vision of a reformed Judaism—becomes a separate religion. It becomes at that point a religion that looks pejoratively upon Jews for their failure to believe in Jesus and denigrates Judaism as a failed faith that has incurred the judgment of God for its rejection of Jesus as God's Son. This failed Jewish faith, according to the thread of anti-Judaism that tragically and reprehensibly gets woven into the Christian tapestry, is then, as a consequence, declared divinely superceded by the only true and authentic faith, from the Christian perspective: the faith based upon belief in Jesus as God's Son through whom alone can fallen humanity be redeemed and salvation made possible: Christianity.

Moreover, despite the Gentile Luke's best efforts to refute Marcion's anti-Judaism, he, perhaps inadvertently, gave license, or at least has served as a model, for Gentile Christians ever since to be anti-Semitic. What he has tragically given countenance to has served as a confirmation for the Jewish Christ believers' writings to be interpreted by Christians as intentionally—and

presupposed justifiably so—anti-Semitic, and, finally, anti-Judaic. Anti-Semitism historically in the orthodox Christian context is *anti-Judaism*.

(7) The Christian dogma of supersessionism has led to the self-righteous doctrine of Christianity that only those who profess faith in Christ and believe that he died for their sins can be saved and be assured of eternal life with God rather than damnation in hell, which is the lot of all others. It is a deplorable doctrine, falsely represented throughout Christian history as originating with Jesus himself, and based upon the Gospel writer John's complete misrepresentation of the historical Jesus.

(8) The dogma of supersessionism has also promoted ethnocentrism upon the part of Gentiles, particularly of Western European heritage. That ethnocentrism holds that Gentiles are the superior race and only Aryans of pure stock, to put it in the terminology of German National Socialism of the 1930's, are authentic human beings. It is an ethnocentrism that is inherent historically in Orthodox Christianity and persists today in some Christian circles even when Jews, for example, convert to Christianity. Even as Christians, to pursue the Jewish Christian example further, they remain with the stigma of being lesser persons ethnically as "Jews," and prejudicially diminished as such, as was the case in Nazi Germany which meant under Hitler they could not escape as "*Christian Jews*" from the Holocaust. It is a heinous ideology that still controls the mind-set of many Christians today.

Two millennia have come and gone and Christianity's soul is still possessed with the demons of anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism, with its arrogant, self-righteous doctrine of supersessionism. And, except in rare instances of individual efforts, Christians have not yet *en masse* found the conviction and had the resolute will, to say nothing of the passion, to exorcise these demons from the soul of Christianity.

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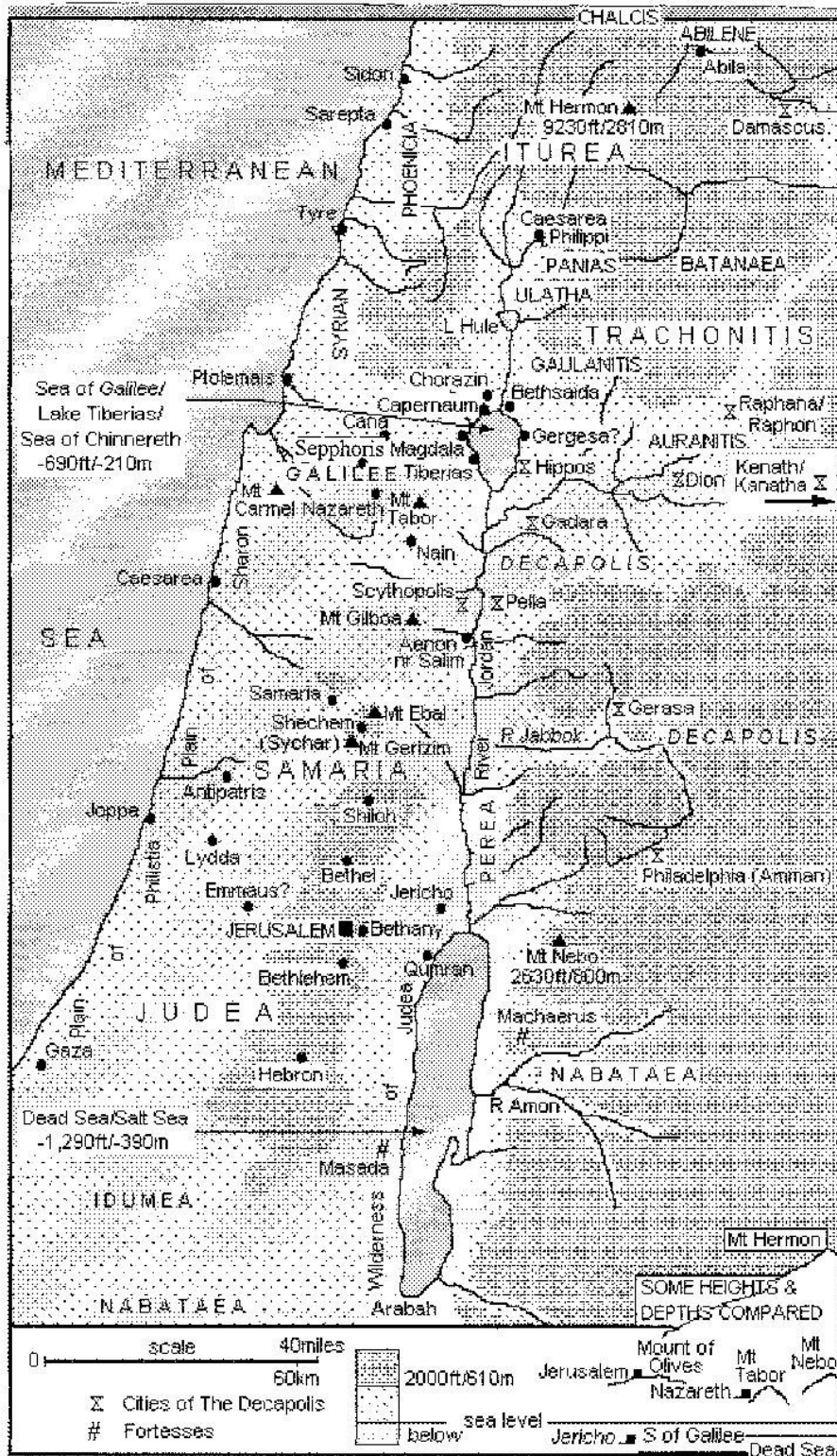
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Addendum

Map of Palestine and Southern Syria*



*Map used by permission: <http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/JBPhillips.htm> and modified by insertion of Sepphoris