

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **The origins of Christian anti-Semitism beyond the New Testament**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
Religious Studies  
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

**Doreen Phillips**

2001

## ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a study of anti-Semitism in Christianity from the first to the fourth centuries and the resulting relationship between Jews and Christians.

The focus of the thesis is to examine the degree to which Ruether's contention, that virulent anti-Semitism appeared only as Christianity became powerful enough to rival the status and respect given to the Jewish people throughout the Roman Empire, may be substantiated. This contention is examined in both the historical and contemporary settings.

The thesis contains five sections which explore the appearance and development of what may be termed 'anti-Semitism in Christianity'.

The first addresses the origins of anti-Semitism within Christianity in the first century, primarily from the perspective of Jules Isaac, and details some contemporary reactions to his work.

The second section details the early history of anti-Semitism in the Roman Empire and the work of the classical scholars Philo and Josephus who used their considerable skill to oppose it.

The third section explores such historical factors as the significance of the two Jewish revolts against Rome, the effect of the Council of Jerusalem on the development of Christianity, the impact of the new Rabbinic Judaism and the developing rivalry between the two religions.

The fourth section outlines the development of anti-Semitism as a theological imperative within the writings of the early church, and offers a historical survey of the relationship between Church and Synagogue.

The fifth section tenders the conclusions of the thesis.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have been very privileged to have attended Religious Studies lectures at Massey and Victoria universities.

These lectures have never failed to interest and fascinate me. For this I am grateful to Dr Peter Donovan, Dr Bronwyn Elsmore, Dr James Veitch, and Dr Brian Colless, who have completely transformed my view of religions.

I have also learned about the thoughts of leading theologians and philosophers such as Teilhard de Chardin, Martin Buber, and Rudolf Otto with his vision of a Council of World Religions to promote understanding among different religious groups, thereby promoting world peace.

As well we have studied major ancient and modern religions of the Middle East, Egypt, India, Japan, China and South-East Asia – a kaleidoscope of different ideas and cultural behaviour.

I wish to thank Dian Harper for her practical assistance in the final assembly of the thesis, and also for introducing me to the story of the Catholic Sisters of Our Lady of Sion.

I am very indebted to Dr Peter Donovan, my supervisor, and Dr Bronwyn Elsmore for their patience, their unflagging inspiration and encouragement.

# CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Chapter One Modern Awareness of Christian Anti-Semitism	1
Chapter Two Pre-Christian Anti-Jewishness	16
Chapter Three Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism Become Rival Religions	39
Chapter Four Ecclesiastical Anti-Semitism	52
Chapter Five Conclusions - Including the New Testament	88
Bibliography	94

## Chapter One

### Modern Awareness of Christian Anti-Semitism

During World War II, when Nazi troops were occupying France, a French historian, Jules Isaac,<sup>1</sup> was writing a poignant book called *Jesus and Israel* (Isaac, 1971). This book was the result of intense suffering and grief, as his wife and daughter had just been executed in a German concentration camp. Jules Isaac himself was a fugitive from the Nazis in France, and finished his book in solitude and seclusion in 1946. During the period that Isaac was hiding in France, his son Daniel was also hiding from the Gestapo in a French village. Both were being hidden and protected by Christians.

Jules Isaac was an eminent scholar with a reputation for meticulous integrity in his writing. He was trying to explain to Christians why he was convinced that the anti-Judaism present in the Christian scriptures was at the heart of the anti-Semitism whipped up by the German government against the Jews. From the time Isaac's wife and daughter were killed in 1943, Isaac began writing about the Christian origin of anti-Semitism. At the same time he worked for co-operation and understanding between Jews and Christians until he died at 86 twenty years later. (Gager, 1983, 15) Klassen writes that "Isaac had academic knowledge, the discipline of a scholar, the courage to speak out, and the nobility to offer the healing hand of friendship....Most importantly, as a Jew he led the attempts to get the liturgy of the Church changed so that it would no longer perpetuate contempt for the Jew." (Klassen, 1986, 3)

Although Professor Isaac was of Jewish birth he was not a practising Jew and he had great respect for both Christianity and Judaism. He was the author of a seven-volume world history used throughout secondary schools and universities for several generations. He was Inspector-General of Education for France, a Commander of the French Legion of

Honour, and decorated with the Croix de Guerre, 1914-1918 for bravery.  
(Bishop, 1971, xi)

Because of the invasion of France by the Nazis in 1940 and the subsequent persecution of French Jews, Isaac decided to use his skills as an historian and investigate why anti-Semitism had developed to such an extent in nations which had been Christian for nearly two thousand years. The persecution and murder of his wife and daughter, just because their name was Isaac, added to his resolve. *Jesus and Israel* was the result of that study. In it Isaac concludes that the "fault lay mainly with Christian tradition and teaching as exemplified in commentaries on the Gospels."  
(Bishop, 1971, xi)

Christian teaching on Sundays and Bible reading from childhood to old age for nearly two thousand years had developed a very adverse attitude to the Jewish people. This had become a subconscious attitude, unquestioned by the Christians concerned. Isaac decided to analyse current opinion among Christians and to find out whether they thought that "Jesus had rejected Israel – the Jewish people as a whole; pronounced its downfall, reproved it, and even cursed it; and conversely, whether it was true that Israel had failed to recognise Jesus, refused to see the Messiah and the Son of God in him, rejected him, scoffed at him, crucified him; whether it deserved for nigh on two thousand years the defamatory stigma of 'deicide people'." (Isaac, 1956, quoted by Bishop, 1971, xiv-xv) After his study Isaac considered that with a few exceptions this was the prevailing attitude of Christians at that time and in the past.

### **Jules Isaac's Propositions**

The book *Jesus and Israel* consists of 21 propositions dealing with many misunderstandings and myths held by Christians about Jews and Judaism. Most of these misunderstandings have existed since very early Christian times from approximately the third Century CE when Christians and Jews were competing vigorously with each other over acquiring Gentile

converts. These anti-Jewish allegations have been a huge stumbling block to Christian-Jewish relations and very harmful to Jews as generation of Christians succeeds generation, still believing untrue myths.

Isaac also refutes the very common Christian idea that Judaism was a moribund religion lacking vigour and spirituality. On the contrary the fact that the Jewish religion was so vigorous and acquiring so many adherents so rapidly in competition with the Christian missionaries, was one of the causes of serious Jewish-Christian tension in those early days of Christianity before Constantine's conversion in the early 400s. Isaac sets out to refute what he considers to be completely untrue allegations against Jews and Judaism, firmly, succinctly and with complete credibility.

Propositions 1-6 point out that Christianity was founded on Judaism, the Christian scriptures were founded on Jewish scriptures. Christian ethics, laws and faith are founded on those of Judaism. They also state that Judaism has always been a very strong and vigorous faith. Isaac's examples of these ideas are as follows:

In Proposition 1 he asks if "any Christian could refuse to agree that the Jewish Old Testament is the foundation, the unshakeable bedrock on which the New Testament and consequently the Christian faith are grounded?" (Isaac 1971: 5) He points to the Gospel of Mark (12:29-31, where a scribe asks Jesus which is the first commandment? Jesus answers, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as your self.' There is no other commandment greater than these." These principles for behaviour occur in both the Jewish scripture, (Duet. 6: 4-5 and Lev. 19:18) and in Jesus' mouth in Mark's Gospel (Mark 12:29-31). Therefore they are the most important precepts for faith in both religions.

In Proposition 3 (Isaac, 1971, 16) it is pointed out that the greatly loved Christian hymn the *Magnificat* is to be found in three parts in the Jewish Bible (1 Sam. 2:4-8, and then 1 Sam. 2:1, and Micah. 7:20), and put together in Luke 1:46-55. In the Church of England it has become part of Evening Prayer, where it is used to sing praise to God for the pregnancy of Mary the Mother of Jesus. To Christians it is a moving and beautiful hymn of praise. However, it has an old Jewish background, and is associated with being written and sung for Samuel's mother Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10). This hymn of praise to God by Hannah because of the birth of Samuel is very similar to the *Magnificat* in meaning.

Flusser (1988, 126-149) writes that the two Christian hymns, the *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus* (sung by Zecharias as the father at the birth of John the Baptist) are associated with the Essene movement of which John the Baptist was a dissident member. The *Benedictus* is to be found in Luke 1:68-79, and is sung regularly at the Morning Prayer service of the Anglican Church. Flusser writes that some scholars consider that the *Magnificat* may have been written by the Essene sect members for Elizabeth for the expected birth of John the Baptist rather than for Mary mother of Jesus. (Flusser, 1988, 128)

There is also a great deal of debate about the *Magnificat*, and the *Benedictus* may have been based on a Baptist militant hymn of praise to God to be sung on the day after victory at war. This hymn is known as the Essene War Scroll or Qumran War Scroll (I OM 14: 4-5). There are similarities in all three hymns - giving praise to God and thanking Him for His mercy and redemption as he promised in His covenant with Abraham for him "and his seed forever". There is a militant and apocalyptic theme running through these hymns which is very relevant to what we know of the Essene sect. Some scholars consider that the Qumran War Scroll (and thus the *Benedictus* and *Magnificat*) have been derived from an even earlier Essene writing. (Flusser, 1988, 126ff).

The frequently sung or spoken *Gloria* (Luke 2:14) is also from a Jewish source. It is from a remnant of a Jewish liturgical piece of the Qedusha. (Flusser, 1988, 127).

#### Proposition 10

Here Isaac remarks that “nothing would be more futile than to try to separate from Judaism the Gospel that Jesus preached in the synagogues and in the Temple. The truth is that the Gospel and its entire tradition are deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and in the attempts at renovation and purification which had been manifested for almost two centuries in Palestine.” (Isaac, 1971, 74)

#### Proposition 11

Isaac comments here that “Christian writers deliberately omit the fact that at the time of Christ the Dispersion of the Jews had been a ‘fait accompli’ for several centuries. The majority of the Jewish people no longer lived in Palestine.” (1971, 89) Sargon the Assyrian, 722 BCE, and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, 586 BCE, both conquered Jerusalem and captured hundreds of Jews. It is estimated that by the time of Christ there were between half a million and two million Jews in the Diaspora. Only a minority of Jews lived in Palestine. (Isaac, 1971, 92-93) So the large number of Jews in the Diaspora had nothing to do with a supposed punishment by God.

#### Proposition 12

Therefore, he concludes that “no-one has any right to say that the Jewish people ‘as a whole’ rejected Jesus. It is entirely probable that the Jewish people ‘as a whole’ were not even aware of his existence.” (Isaac, 1971, 94)

Proposition 16 states: “For eighteen hundred years it has been generally taught throughout the Christian world that the Jewish people, in full responsibility for the Crucifixion, committed the inexplicable crime of deicide. No accusation could be more pernicious – and in fact none has caused more innocent blood to be shed.” (Isaac, 1971, 233).

Proposition 21 concludes: "Whatever the sins of the people of Israel may be they are innocent, totally innocent of the crimes of which Christian tradition accuses them: They did not reject Jesus, they did not crucify him. And Jesus did not reject Israel, did not curse it: just as 'the gifts...of God are irrevocable' (Rom. 11:29) the evangelical law of love allows no exception. May Christians come to realize this at last – may they realize and redress their crying injustices. At this moment when a curse seems to weigh upon the whole human race, it is the urgent duty to which they are called by the memory of Auschwitz." (Isaac, 1971, 385)

### **Vatican II opens new dialogue**

*Jesus and Israel* came to the notice of Pope John XXIII who was so moved by it that he requested an interview with Jules Isaac which took place on June 13th 1960. Bishop (1971, XI) observes that the Second Vatican Council (1965) has made Christians realise "the necessity of revising their attitude regarding the Jews. However, it is doubtful whether the conciliar Statement on the Jews would have taken shape at all had not Jules Isaac, eighteen years prior to the Council's voting, compelled European Christians to come face to face with the responsibility of the centuries-old Christian teaching in the development of a mentality which made the Holocaust of six million Jews possible". (Bishop, 1971, xi)

Important points in the Vatican II Council's *Nostra Aetate* may be summed up thus:

First, Catholics were asked to engage in dialogue and co-operation with Jews: "Since the spiritual Patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogues." (Abbott, 1966, 665) As Baum<sup>2</sup> observes, "By thus recognising Judaism as a religion in its own right and an equal partner in dialogue, Vatican II abandoned, at least

implicitly, the Church's missionary stance toward the Jews." (Baum, 1974, 4)

"Secondly the Vatican declaration asked Catholic preachers and teachers to eliminate the various evil myths that have been projected upon the Jews in the Christian tradition, especially the myth that they are a rejected people, a people abandoned by God, condemned for their unbelief." (Baum, 1974, 4)

*Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should take pains, then, lest in catechetical instruction and in the preaching of God's Word they teach anything out of harmony with the truth of the gospel and the spirit of Christ. (Abbott, 1966, 666)*

*Far from being repudiated, the Jews, according to the teaching of Vatican II, continue to be God's chosen people... (Baum, 1974, 5, citing Abbott, 1966, 664-665)*

"Thirdly, the conciliar declaration gives expression to the common hope, shared by Christians and Jews, that God's ultimate victory will eventually overcome the powers of evil and liberate the human family from all the enemies of life." (Baum, 1974, 5) "In company with the [ancient] Prophets and the apostle Paul, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him with one accord'. [Zeph. 3:9; Isa. 66:23; Ps 65:4; Rom. 11:11-32]." (Baum, 1974, 5, citing Abbott, 1966, 665) However, conservative people in the churches have reacted against the Vatican Council's directive, because they feel that Christianity's central message is that Christianity is the only true religion and the only way to salvation.

Gregory Baum (1974, 5) wrote:

*As long as the Christian church regards itself as the successor of Israel, as the new people of God substituted in place of the old, and as long as the Church proclaims Jesus as the one mediator without whom there is no salvation, no theological space is left for other religions, and, in particular no theological validity is left for Jewish religion. The central Christian affirmation seems to negate the possibility of a living Judaism.*

Few people are aware of this change which has not been discussed widely by the Church because the concept is not compatible with the centuries-old Church proclamation that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, as stated by St Paul in the first century of the Common Era.

### **Growing scholarly awareness**

Since World War II, Jewish, Christian and secular scholars have begun to raise the issue of the Christian Church's responsibility for anti-Semitism. Centuries of Christian preaching from the New Testament may have resulted in much disdain for Jews and Judaism. The resulting anti-Semitic feelings could have been the precipitating agency for such intense and paranoiac racial hatred in Nazi Germany, that inexorable momentum of events which resulted in the "Final Solution" or extermination of millions of Jews because Germany no longer had space for them, and no other country would agree to have them as immigrants.

Marvin R. Wilson, in *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (1989, 78) asks why the Christian Church considers Judaism so unworthy of concern that most Christians, even highly educated people, are unaware of the tremendous debt owed Judaism. Excerpts from Jewish scriptures – Jewish prophets, Psalms, liturgy and even prayers to God – are in daily use in Christian churches, he points out. Even 'ordination' and the 'laying on' of hands had their origin with Rabbi Johanan ben Zakai at Javneh during the reconstruction of the Rabbinical Judaism, he observes.

Jesus was a Jew, and so most of his sayings also originated in the Jewish scriptures. Jesus was very familiar with Jewish scriptures, and frequently preached in Jewish Pharisaic synagogues as he journeyed from village to village. Some scholars now think it likely that Jesus was a Pharisee. Wilson, for instance, writes "In Matthew 23 Jesus is roundly critical of the Pharisees; but he himself was likely representative of the same Jewish sect." (Wilson, 1989, 92)

During what the Nazis called "The Final Solution", now known as the Holocaust or 'Shoah' (destruction) one third of the world's total population of Jews perished. The immediate cause of this persecution was the virulent hatred which had developed over years of hysterical propaganda in which Jews were blamed for plotting against Germany and Germans. "The European Jews were not the only victims of Nazi mass murder, but they were its special victims, and their destruction, and the manner in which it was conceived and executed (chronicled by Raul Hilberg and others), is both a dreadful judgement on our past and a sinister portent of our future." (Davies, 1979, xiii)

Other writers have made a range of similar observations about the sources of German anti-Semitism. R. Le Deaut, M. Gilles and M. Kelly wrote:

*Negative attitudes to Judaism began in theology. They gave rise to disastrous consequences, as the fate of the Jewish Community in Christian society bears witness: a teaching of contempt, prejudice, denial of human rights, discrimination, ghetto existence, expulsions, pogroms. In the twentieth century this history played its part in the ultimate evil of the Shoah....*

*More than anything else it was the shock of this catastrophe that led the Church to see the Jewish People with fresh eyes and to ask disturbing questions about her own attitude and acts in relation to*

them. This is having a profound effect on Christian theology... (Le Deaut et al, 1991, 1)

David Rausch, in *A Legacy of Hatred*, writes:

*...the Germans drew a picture of international Jewry ruling the world and plotting the destruction of Germany and German life...The Jew was now the principal foe, the creator of capitalism and communism, the sinister force behind the entire Allied war effort...the all-powerful enemy capable of wiping Germany off the map...The Jews were a security risk...the spies, the enemy agents...the inciters of revolt...In Himmler's words: 'We had the moral right vis-à-vis our people to annihilate this people which wanted to annihilate us.'* (Rausch, 1984, 198)

The Jews were also portrayed as criminals and murderers. They were referred to as 'a lower form of life', that is, of the same value as lice, something to exterminate. In *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, the Reverend Father Edward H. Flannery<sup>3</sup> writes:

*antisemitism, the term used for this feeling of hatred toward the Jews has come to include anti-Jewish hatred of all types and of all eras....The distinguishing mark of all antisemitism in the strict sense is a hatred or contempt and a stereotyping of Jewish people as such. In the absence of either of these qualifiers antisemitism does not exist. It should be distinguished therefore from indiscriminate hostility to which all peoples and groups have been prey....* (Flannery, 1985, 4)

Irvin J. Borowsky, in "Foreword" to *Jews and Christians Exploring the Past, Present and Future*, points out that during the Holocaust Jews who managed to escape the Nazis could find no refuge in another country. Many were turned back at frontiers of other countries and forced to return to Germany and execution. Fifty years ago boatloads of Jewish refugees

were refused entry into the USA or Latin American countries and had to recross the Atlantic to certain death. Other European countries also refused them entry. "This hatred of Jews is neither emotional nor accidental. It is planted in the pages of translations of the New Testament. Hatred of Jews increased over the centuries." (Borowsky, 1990, 10)

Borowsky goes on to write that the Sanhedrin (or Jewish leaders) and leading priests and people present could not have numbered more than two hundred and fifty people, and yet:

*For nineteen hundred years the concept of Jews killing Jesus has been so formulated in the Christian tradition that responsibility has rested not only on Jews in the age of Jesus but on Jews of all ages, of all times, in every geographical area. It is this deicide charge that Christians are, only now, rejecting. It is this deicide charge that has had unholy influence; that has led to evil that denies the very words and work of Jesus.* (Borowsky, 1990, 11)

The Rev James Parkes<sup>4</sup>, in *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism*, writes that the term "Anti-Semitism" was first used in a "sensational pamphlet" written by a racist German "political agitator", Wilhelm Marr, *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*, (1879). Marr's pamphlet and a few other similar books fanned the flames of an already rising anti-Jewish feeling in the late 19th Century. (Flannery, 1985, xiii) Since the publication of Wilhelm Marr's pamphlet the term anti-Semitism has been used to describe all types of antipathy to Jews and Judaism in all eras anywhere in the world.

Anti-Semitism is usually due to either racist animosity as in Nazi Germany, or a religious animosity due to Christian or Islamic confrontation with Judaism. Anti-Semitism in Germany began as religious anti-Semitism but later developed into racist anti-Semitism and extreme racial hatred.

A slightly different explanation is put by Alan T. Davies in an article "Anti-Semitism", where he writes:

*Racist anti-Semitism is usually distinguished from medieval Christian anti-Semitism and its antecedents in the Patristic and New Testament periods in which the religious element was paramount.*

*For James Parkes (1934), Jules Isaac (1959) and Rosemary Radford Ruether (1974) the true roots of even secular anti-Christian forms of anti-Semitism in the contemporary world lie in Christianity and its classical theological formulations of the old "adversus Judaeos" tradition. (Davies, 1987, 323)*

Rosemary Radford Ruether<sup>5</sup> has made major contributions to the recent discussion of Christian anti-Semitism, particularly within feminist theology. In *Faith and Fratricide* (1974) she set out to detect the source and origin of anti-Jewish opinions in Christianity, and found that they were linked to the church's proclamation of Jesus as the Christ. The affirmation of Jesus as the promised Messiah and hence as the fulfilment of promises made to Israel in the past, brought with it a special way of reading the ancient Scriptures. (Ruether, 1974,11).

Gregory Baum states that Isaac:

*...brought out, as no study had done before, how closely the contempt for the Jewish people and vilification of Jewish religion were linked to Christian preaching from the New Testament on. In particular, Jules Isaac showed that even the sacred books of the Gospels contained much polemical material that drew an unfaithful picture of Jewish religion and created disdain for Jews and Judaism. (Baum, 1974, 2)*

These are very important points, completely unrecognised even today by highly educated Christians who assume because the New Testament is the word of God it cannot be questioned. The New Testament does not give a complete or fair picture of Pharisees who were very highly regarded

among their contemporaries for living very virtuous kindly hard-working lives striving to obey their God's commands just as Christians do today.

Christian scholars who read Isaac's book were very disturbed to think that anti-Jewish sentiments could be due to Christian writings and the awful implication that the cumulative effect of these anti-Jewish writings could have eventually after twenty centuries been the cause of the Holocaust. Many Christian scholars at first thought that this anti-Jewish influence in the New Testament could be only peripheral but as they studied this problem and discussed it they slowly and reluctantly came to the appalling conclusion that Jules Isaac was probably absolutely correct in his views.

James Parkes, Anglican clergyman, theologian and historian, wrote his first book about Christian anti-Semitism, *The Jew and his Neighbour: a Study in the Origins of Antisemitism*, in 1930. He was a persistent and meticulous scholar and supporter of Jules Isaac. Isaac and Parkes were among the earliest of significant modern scholars to point out that Christians are unfair for condemning Jews for the crimes alleged by New Testament writers. As will be seen in following chapters, the early Christian writers had an agenda to rival and defeat the obvious appeal of Jewish philosophy and religion to the Gentiles of that time. Because of this the picture given of Judaism in Christian scriptures and teachings is inadequate and distorted, and not a true picture of Jews or Judaism in the first century CE.

Isaac wrote that whereas the Bible should rightly be regarded as the Word of God, it has nonetheless been written by humans who are prone to both accidental and deliberate error. Other modern scholars likewise consider that the New Testament is in error in places, often due to mistakes and differences in translation. Many of the critics are Christians with great love and respect for the Bible, but they hesitate to believe that every word

or phrase is irrevocably true. They point out that there are times when Jesus says things in the New Testament which are completely against his general philosophy and commandments of "love your neighbour" and "love your enemy".

John G. Gager, in *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, says that Isaac lays the blame for anti-Semitism on Christianity and that anti-Semitism is the result of Christians misinterpreting their own scriptures and founder. This misinterpretation is "in fundamental opposition to the historical origins and basic tenets of Christianity." (Gager, 1983, 15-16)

How modern a phenomenon was the appalling anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust? And was it entirely, or even largely, a legacy of Christian anti-Judaism? There is no doubt that anti-Semitism has a long history, extending even to the ancient world before the rise of Christianity. Edward H. Flannery (1985, 4) writes that pre-Christian anti-Semitism was not as serious as the anti-Semitism that is associated with Christian anti-Semitism. Many scholars consider that Hitler used this anti-Jewish prejudice latent in the community over centuries, because of centuries of New Testament reading, to persuade the people to agree with the hysterical Nazi propaganda denigrating the Jews.

In Chapter Two, pre-Christian attitudes to Jewishness will be examined as background to the later chapters which deal with anti-Semitism as it arises within Christianity.

## NOTES

1. Jules Isaac. Eminent French Historian responsible for the teaching of history to all schools and Universities. Isaac wrote two prominent books on anti-Semitism – *Jesus and Israel* (1948) and *The Genesis of Anti-Semitism* (1956).

2. Gregory Baum. Roman Catholic Professor of Religious Studies, St Michael's College, Toronto. He has written many books and articles on anti-Semitism. Introduction to Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide* (1974). *Is the New Testament anti-Semitic?* (rev. ed. 1965)

3. Edward H. Flannery. An American Roman Catholic priest who was disturbed about anti-Semitism in the scriptures. He became a theologian, and wrote *The Anguish of the Jews*. Flannery has also been prominent in Jewish-Christian societies, and in the Vatican as an adviser to the Pope.

4. James Parkes. An Anglican clergyman who became an historian and has written many books on anti-Semitism from 1925 until 1981. He was one of the first Christian scholars to write on this topic, and a noted supporter of Jules Isaac. His work is noted for his integrity and thoroughness.

5. Rosemary Radford Ruether. An eminent Roman Catholic theologian and academic who has written many important books on anti-feminism and anti-Semitism as they are present in the Roman Catholic Church. *Faith and Fratricide* (1974) is probably the best known.

## Chapter Two

### Pre-Christian Anti-Jewishness

The Diaspora or Dispersion of the Jews is frequently alluded to in discussions about Jewish history. E. Mary Smallwood, in *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian*, says the Dispersion of the Jews began with the sack of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. (Smallwood, 1981, 120) Flannery, however, writes that the:

*Diaspora of Jews began as early as the ninth century B.C.E., and, fed by a series of deportations and emigrations from Palestine, grew until well before the Common Era began; Babylonia, Egypt, and finally Rome became important Jewish centres...the most reliable estimates place it at some four million persons during the first Christian century with another million in Palestine, the total comprising about one-eighth of the Roman Empire. (Flannery, 1981, 8-9)*

This was when Nebuchadnezzar captured and took the Jewish population to Babylon. After they were freed from their captivity many decided to stay in Mesopotamia and so began a large nucleus of a Jewish community in the Diaspora of Mediterranean lands and other lands such as Egypt and Italy. Later the Jewish people spread from Great Britain and Spain to Persia and Abyssinia and many other nearby countries. The population of the Diaspora according to "the most reliable estimates" was about "four million persons during the first Christian century with another million in Palestine, the total comprising about one-eighths of the Roman Empire." (Flannery, 1985, 9)

Smallwood writes:

*Their refusal to compromise one jot or tittle of their religion either by abandoning or modifying their own practices or by making courteous concessions to paganism turned them into closely-knit,*

*exclusive groups. Their exclusiveness bred the unpopularity out of which anti-Semitism was born. (Smallwood, 1981, 123)*

In *From Pagan Protection to Christian Oppression*, Smallwood describes how Jews in the Diaspora continued living among Gentile pagans and Christian groups. In the days of the Roman Empire it was religion rather than race or ethnicity or skin colour which made a group stand apart. In being resistant to the Roman policy of binding all groups together into a united whole as a successful method of Empire building, the Jewish stance was awkward for other peoples around them. "It was the Jews' inevitable and self-imposed 'apartheid' and not primarily his race, that led to the misunderstanding and consequently to the unpopularity on which ancient anti-Semitism rested." (Smallwood, 1979, 5)

The educated Romans were supercilious about Jewish customs, their food laws, circumcision and observation of the Sabbath, but because the Jews kept Roman laws, were quiet and unobtrusive and good citizens, they were accepted. (Haim, 1972, 766-767)

### **Official toleration as 'religio licita'**

In 48 BCE Julius Caesar brought in laws giving the Jews considerable religious freedom. This included right of assembly, protection for synagogue buildings and sacred scriptures therein, protection for communal funds and temple-tax funds, and respect for Jews to be left in peace on the Sabbath. It extended also to exemption from military service because of the Sabbath and dietary habits, and no obligation to worship the living Emperor – a cult which was brought in by the next Emperor, Augustus. Julius Caesar's stipulations lasted for three centuries. (Smallwood, 1979, 6) and still held even after the devastating Jewish Roman revolts CE 66-70 and CE 132-135 in which the Temple and most of the city of Jerusalem was demolished. The arrangements made between Julius Caesar and the Jews were largely recognised by following emperors and were the basis on which the Jewish religion was accorded the status of

a 'religio licita'. According to Church Father Tertullian, 'a religio licita' meant 'a religion certainly tolerated'. (Smallwood, 1979, 6) The concept of a 'religio licita' was adhered to from the time of Julius Caesar, CE 48 until that of Constantine when he declared Rome to be a Christian state in CE 312 – almost four hundred years. Rome had been seeking an answer to incorporating scattered minorities of unique religions peacefully into their communities.

*The answer of pagan Rome was not merely to tolerate Judaism but positively to protect it, because as a religion it posed no threat to the state cults or to the social and political order....and contact with their high ethical code was unlikely to undermine the moral fabric of Roman society. (Smallwood, 1979, 6)*

As we will see in Chapter Three, Rome becoming Christian resulted in a decline in the Jews' favoured position – from a position of protection and respect to one of restrictions and disability. Edicts favouring and protecting Jews were slowly replaced by edicts favouring Christianity. Until approximately two hundred years later in Justinian's reign, CE 527, the Jews were in positions of under-privilege, poverty and harsh restrictions. Usury was about the only occupation available to them but, because it was prohibited for Christians to follow this occupation, Jews became the butt of hatred, prejudice and derision. The main cause of this derogation of Jews was because they would not accept the Christian religion.

*What had begun under Constantine as an attempt to protect Christianity from Judaism, while at the same time safeguarding the Jews' own religions right had 'developed' by the time of Justinian into the start of serious oppression of Judaism by the government in the name of Christianity. (Smallwood, 1979, 24)*

In *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, John Meagher also considers the level of unpopularity of the Jews in Greco-Roman times. While they were distributed throughout various occupations "...and were

not thought to be especially wealthy, or morally malformed, or imperially conspiratorial" (Meagher, 1979, 4) there was a degree of popular anti-Jewish sentiment – a little like the British attitude to gypsies. "Early contacts of the Jews with antiquity were generally harmonious...the earliest literary references to Jews in the fourth and third centuries BCE...were not favourable." (Flannery, 1985, 9) Among the earliest known writers in the fourth and third centuries BCE, Theophrastus, Clearchus of Soli (a disciple of Aristotle), Megasthenus and Hermippus appeared to regard the Jewish people as "a race of philosophers" or "descendants of the philosophers of India". Hermippus even claimed some of Pythagoras' ideas had a Jewish origin. (Flannery, 1985, 9)

But in much later Greco-Roman times indications of feelings of hostility have been gleaned from members of the intelligentsia as well as casual letters of ordinary people. Noted scholars who referred to Jews disdainfully included Cicero, Apion, Tacitus, Martial and Persius, Horace, Juvenal, Petronius, Plutarch, Quintilian, Seneca and Suetonius. The Jews' main fault appeared to be their determination to keep stubbornly apart and doggedly loyal to their ancestral traditions despite the obvious virtues and civilised advantages of this great vision of fellowship offered by the gentile society. (Meagher, 1979, 4 & 6)

Meagher construes these classical writers, despite their standing in literary antiquity, as unfortunately merely perpetuating "petty injustices and malicious gossip." "There are virtually no corrective attempts among many influential writers and few praises for Jews." He considers these great ancient authors were "disgraceful and embarrassing" in their unthinking acceptance of common prejudice. (Meagher, 1979, 6-7)

### **Popular anti-Jewishness**

Popular anti-Jewishness, then, did flourish in particular times and places. "The foundations for later injustices had unfortunately been rather widely laid by the time Christians came to contribute their own versions

of antisemitism." The ancient writers who helped establish these foundations had probably had little or no experience of Jews, but were repeating petty gossip – which probably became foundation for later injustices. As Meagher puts it, "writers at an emotional distance and with faulty information tended...to condemn [the Jews]...those who came much closer to their truth sometimes imitated and occasionally joined them." (Meagher, 1979, 8)

The Jews were also considered to be atheistic because they would not worship the gods of the local gentiles. They would not observe religious customs such as the standard decorous libation or grains of incense at the commencement of gentile meals. They were also thought to be barbaric and misanthropic because they perpetuated ancient customs abandoned by other ethnic groups, and superstitious because of the ritual observance of dietary laws, circumcision and the Sabbath. However they did earn respect for their ancient philosophical writings, history and religion.

There is evidence that Jewish Religion and life appealed greatly to many Gentiles in spite of the rebellions and revolts of the Jews and the disdain of the Romans. The evidence is in the complaints of Roman poets about numerous countrymen adopting the superstitious ways of the Jews; and also some Roman Emperors imposing harsh punishment on Gentiles who became circumcised in certain periods. This was because so many Romans were attracted to Judaism. (Meagher, 1979, 7)

*The entire collection of stories by which the negative characteristic of intolerance [of the Jews] was transformed into a positive characteristic of hostility to all humanity can be traced to a single source, Alexandrina. Thence came all the slanders which later writers repeat, and which Tacitus made familiar to the whole Roman world and to our day. (Parkes, 1981, 14-15)*

Meagher explains that the cardinal sin of the Jews was their strangeness. Despite the obvious virtues and civilised advance of the Greek and Roman culture the Jews kept stubbornly apart. Some Jews however did mingle with their surrounding society "because of the social and commercial advantages" but most Jews were loyal to their ancestral traditions. He agrees with Ruether in distinguishing among the ancient evidences about the Jews "a special strain of anti-Judaism that has a specifically Egyptian provenance." (Meagher, 1979, 8; Ruether, 1974, 24) "The Egyptian priest Manetho was one of the earliest writers to record defamatory gossip about the Jews and *The Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs* forms one of the most inflammatory anti-Jewish statements of the latter part of the period in question." (Meagher, 1979, 8)

There was a great deal of violence against Jews in both upper and lower Egypt which appears to have been "more consistent and more savage" than it had been in other places in the Roman Empire. Egypt had many foreigners and the Jews do not appear to have had peculiar colonial status; the native Egyptians had long been subject to the Greek founders of the city, who were in turn under the ultimate governance of Roman authority. (Meagher, 1979, 9)

The Greeks disliked the Romans but the Jews were sympathetic to the Romans which increased the tension between the Jews and the Greeks. The citizens of Alexandria were not Egyptians who had been oppressed by Greek Ptolemies, but Greeks, who disliked the Jews not because of any privileges the Jews received but because of "bitter resentment of Jewish apartheid" and a history of clashes with them. These "Alexandrian riots" continued and the Jews became notorious for being dangerously cruel and merciless. (Meagher, 1979, 9) Although the Greeks had founded Alexandria they were a minority group in this city as were the Jews. The Romans were in charge and the Egyptians the most populous nation.

Meagher disagrees with Ruether's explanation for the riots and her view of the importance of the Egyptians being "on the negative side of the Jewish salvation drama", as in the biblical texts. He states it was not the Egyptians but the Greeks who were involved in the rioting. Meagher does, however, state that the Egyptian intellectuals were enraged because Jewish writers were "exalting Jewish history and culture at the expense of that of the Egyptians" as well as in the Exodus story. He concludes:

*the visible legacy of 'classical' times was anti Semitic in tone. The charges were often thoughtless, petty, unjust, but they were made by writers and rulers whose influence had considerable power, not only in the ancient world but in subsequent European culture. (Meagher, 1979, 11)*

Unfortunately these words still influence present-day readers because of the tremendous reputation of these classical writers. Few readers would doubt the truth of these revered writers who were members of the community they are describing.

### **How Gentile and Christian anti-Semitism differed**

There is some disagreement between Meagher, Ruether and other scholars over how to regard pre-Christian anti-Semitism, and its relation to subsequent Christian opposition to the Jews. Is the latter, Christian anti-Jewishness, to be seen as largely theological in its origin, and only later taking up the pagan anti-Semitic positions and prejudices? The answer is 'No'.

Ruether holds, against Meagher, that it is inaccurate to state that "anti-Semitism is pagan, not Christian" and also that "the Christian opposition to the Jews was benignly theological until the Christians wrongly (and unthinkingly?) took over gentile anti-Semitic views". (Ruether, 1974, 23) Meagher, however, is of the opinion that "the motives of pagan dislike were not assimilable by the Church" and that Christian anti-Judaism "grew from a quite separate and distinct motivation." (Meagher, 1979, 12)

The gentile dislike of the Jews was because of their exclusiveness, their concept of the one and only God, their concept of the Sabbath as the day of rest. But Christianity also had, basically, these same three points; so Christian anti-Semitism could not have been directly based on gentile anti-Semitism. Christian anti-Semitism was much more intense, sustained and bitter than pagan anti-Semitism. It was theologically based on the Jewish inability to accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah and on the scapegoating of the Jews for the execution of Jesus Christ – the claim of Deicide.

Meagher also considers that Jewish history as well as Christian and also Greco-Roman history has been distorted for the purposes of propaganda and polemic. An instance of this is the frequent reference by historians to the decline and fall of Judaism after the razing of Jerusalem and the Temple – “a bad story that started early in Christian history and was elaborated subsequently. Both the Jesus movement and the rabbinic movement, told tales intended to validate their respective positions by substituting fairy-tale story for history.” (Meagher, 1979, 12)

Contrary to general assumption, the razing of the Temple in Jerusalem in CE 70 was eventually a great blessing for Judaism. This was because to continue as a viable religion it had to change greatly and in so doing it became a very vigorous religion with great drive and enthusiasm. Judaism attracted so many proselytes from among the Gentiles that Christianity had to become very competitive for proselytes too. So rivalry was intensified and eventually even worse ill feeling developed between the two religions.

The fact that the Temple had been destroyed meant that the Jews of Palestine were in the same position as the Jews of the Diaspora with no place for ritualistic sacrifice for atonement of sins. So Rabbinic Judaism developed with the use of synagogues which had been in existence for

centuries, the saying of extra prayers and atonement for sins by gifts to people who had been wronged and more emphasis on spiritual thought and compassion for others developed. This atonement for sins which used to take place in the Temple, then took place mainly in the homes.

The most significant writers of the first century for understanding early anti-Semitism were the Jewish authors Philo Judaeus (c. 20 BCE – CE 50) and Josephus Flavius (CE 37 to c. 100). Both were from the most powerful and wealthy Jewish families. They were therefore eligible to be members of the most powerful group in Jewish society, the Sadducean religious sect which controlled the Temple administration and liaised with the Roman procurator in conducting Jewish affairs through the Chief Priest. They both lived in the Diaspora, Philo in Alexandria and Josephus in Rome. Their books are still being read by history, theological and philosophy scholars throughout the Western world. It is because generation after generation of Christians have read their writings about life in Palestine and the Mediterranean in the era of Christ that they have been preserved and are still extant.

### **Philo's significance**

Philo was a renowned philosopher. An important aim in his writing was to synthesise Greek-Roman and Stoic philosophy with that of Jewish philosophy (Sandmel, 1979, 4) thus making Judaism more acceptable to the intellectuals leading Greco-Roman society. As we shall see, it was with similar aims that Josephus wrote *The Jewish Antiquities* – in order that Hellenic intellectual society would gain respect for the quality and antiquity of Jewish culture.

Both wrote books to oppose anti-Semitism and explain the Jewish point of view in conflicts which arose, and both were influential in shaping, to a slight degree, early Christian Scriptures and the writings of the Patristic Fathers in the third and fourth centuries CE.

Philo's life encompasses that of Jesus Christ, whom he does not mention, and also that of St Paul. (Sandmel, 1979, 3) He was an eminent member of the Jewish community in Alexandria, but unlike Josephus he was raised in a Gentile Greek-speaking community. It is not thought that he spoke Hebrew or Aramaic which was Josephus' native tongue. Yehoshua Amir, (1972, 409) writes that Philo's works:

*are written in exceedingly rich Greek, and show great erudition in classical literature and both classical and contemporary philosophy, a thorough training in the art of rhetoric, and a broad knowledge of general science... It is very doubtful if he had any knowledge of Hebrew...*

But he did have a very deep knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, and of Judaism. A great many of his numerous writings are allegorical and involve mystical philosophy and philosophic treatises. Samuel Sandmel states that most of Philo's writings are "expositions of the scriptures" in the forms of allegory with which "he interprets the Scriptures in terms of Platonism and Stoicism". (Sandmel, 1979, 28)

Philo is noted for his use of allegory in his writings, particularly when discussing the Pentateuch. The Stoics had used allegory too and maybe they had originated its use. (Sandmel, 1979, 19) In a similar way Philo also used the concept of Logos which had been used by Greek philosophers. So it is not surprising that Christian writers such as the author of the Gospel of John also used these ideas in Christian writings of the first century. Later in the third and fourth centuries the Church Fathers used the allegorical writing to denigrate Judaism by reading completely different meanings into Hebrew scriptures, from the literal translations used by the Jews.

However, Sandmel writes that The Gospel of John owes no direct debt to Philo, only to the milieu of Philo. (Sandmel, 1979, 159) I am unable to accept this statement of Sandmel's.

It is thought that the word Logos has the Stoic concept of Godhead, and thus the concept is used by Philo. (Amir, 1972, 413-414) At times the Logos is identified by Philo with the mind of God and thus may be considered as another name for God himself and instrumental in establishing God's relation to the world. Thus Philo teaches that the world is created by God. Where the word Logos is used in the Gospel of John and in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is meant to refer to Jesus Christ. One of the central concepts of Philo is the Logos with the meaning "at times God is unknowable", but at times his activity is known such as creating and governing the world (equals Kyrios, equals the role of God).

Philo thus used the word Logos to mean "God's mental activity while creating the world" (c.f. the use of the word Logos at the beginning of the Gospel of St John). The plural of Logos is Logoi, meaning the Ten Commandments, which are the human form of God's word. The Word was with God and the Word was God – that is, the Logos equals the wisdom and mental activity of God.

*Philo's mystical passages contain most of the characteristic marks of mystical experience: knowledge of God as man's supreme bliss and separation from him as the greatest of evils, and the soul's intense yearning for the divine. Philo was thus...an intellectual if not a practising mystic. (Winston, 1972, 289)*

Philo had an even greater influence on Christianity than on Judaism. This influence was not so much on the New Testament itself as on the Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, and many others, such as Augustine. They drew eagerly on his allegorical interpretations and adopted many of his concepts. However, owing to their different approach, many of his abstract concepts, such as Wisdom, Logos, and Faith were concretized in Christianity. (Amir, 1972, 415) "A vast range of writings by Philo has been preserved by the Christian Church in the original Greek...The bulk of these writings dealing with the

Pentateuch can be divided into three series of treatises.” The exposition of the Pentateuch as a legal code, the allegorical and philosophical interpretation of the Pentateuch, and Questions and Answers on Exodus. (Amir, 1972, 410)

In *On the Creation*, Philo explains the Pentateuch as a legal code, and used the story of creation to demonstrate that the laws of the Pentateuch are in harmony with the laws of Nature. It is thought that although Philo did not mention Christians or Christianity he influenced some New Testament writings, particularly the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Philo also wrote historical books. *On the Contemplative Life* is the only source about the Jewish monastic sect of the Therapeutae, thought to have been the very first monastic sect. *Embassy to Gaius* is about his diplomatic visit to the Emperor Gaius complaining about the prefect Flaccus. *Against Flaccus* is about the prefect who stirred up tremendous anti-Semitic feeling against the Jews, resulting in the first pogrom in Alexandria in CE 38. Philo witnessed these two events. The riots in Alexandria as the result of Flaccus’ attacks on the very large Jewish population in Alexandria resulted in bloodshed and bitterness against the Jews. (Sandmel, 1979, 12)

Both Philo and Josephus were chosen by their communities to head delegations to protest to the Emperor of their respective times about the anti-Semitic behaviour of particular Roman representatives – Philo about the prefect Flaccus in Alexandria in CE 39-40, and Josephus about the detention of twenty Jewish priests in Rome. Philo’s delegation approached Emperor Gaius Caligula in CE 39-40 and Josephus approached Nero in approximately 63-64.

Philo’s treatise *The Legation to Gaius* is both historical and theological – that is, it has a moral meaning as in *Against Flaccus*. The treatise begins

with the thesis that men are prone to judge the present blindly; they are unaware of God's Providence and of his care for his people Israel. (Sandmel, 1979, 43) Much of it is an account of the character and personality of Caligula. Philo pours scorn on Caligula's pretensions to being a god. He proudly claims that while all the Empire succumbed to Caligula's deification of himself, only the Jews declined to do so, on account out of their monotheistic scruples.

Philo's writings reflect Jewish life and experiences in the Diaspora outside of Judea of that time. According to Sandmel (1979, 39-40), the treatise *Against Flaccus* is "a review of the misdeeds of Aulus Avilius Flaccus" who was appointed Roman prefect of Alexandria in CE 32 by Emperor Tiberius.

Alexandria was the second most populous city in the Roman Empire, next to Rome, and because of its large volatile population, including the largest number of Jews in any city, it was the direct responsibility of the Emperor rather than that of the Roman Senate. For this reason Alexandria had a prefect to control its functions. According to Philo, Flaccus had been an able and fair administrator until Emperor Tiberius died and Gaius Caligula became the new Emperor in 37. Philo records that because of subsequent scandalous behaviour Flaccus was recalled to Rome after the Alexandrian riots in 38, banished to the Island of Andros, and eventually executed.

Philo tells us that Flaccus "became a pawn to some power-seekers", three of whom were Dionysius, Isidorus and Lampo. Flaccus was manipulated to cause the city of Alexandria to become an intercessor to propitiate Caligula. "Were Flaccus to damage the Jews the intercession would be the more effective." (Sandmel, 1979, 40)

The Emperor Gaius Caligula suggested that Herod Agrippa I, as King of Judea, and presently in Rome, should proceed to Alexandria before

returning to Judea. The manipulators of Flaccus, according to Philo, considered this visit could be used to undermine the authority of Flaccus. Flaccus "acted correctly to Agrippa, but only out of fear of Caligula. Yet he permitted 'the lazy and unemployed mob' to vilify Agrippa in theatrical farces. In not halting this vilification Flaccus in effect was...a party to it." (Sandmel, 1979, 41)

The mob proposed to install images in the synagogues, an illegal act, because of Julius Caesar's laws for protection of the Jewish religion. This was despite the great Jewish population of Alexandria and Egypt, and the awareness that any desecration of the synagogues was an attack on all the Jews. Flaccus sanctioned the installation of the images. The implication of this was that similar desecration of synagogues would take place in other cities. (Sandmel, 1979, 41) Philo asserts that to destroy the synagogues was to deprive Jews of the opportunity of paying homage to Caesar. "To disturb ancestral customs, outrage fellow citizens, and teach the inhabitants of other cities to disregard the claims of fellow-feeling was without honor". (Sandmel, 1979, 41)

Flaccus then denounced "Jews as foreigners and aliens thereby depriving them of their rights as citizens. In the ensuing violence Jews were forced out of four of the five sections of Alexandria where they lived into a single section. Their houses and shops pillaged, thereby impoverishing them." Furthermore, Jews were physically beaten, killed, with some burned to death. (Sandmel, 1979, 41)

The respected Council of Elders of the Jewish community was not immune. Thirty-eight of the members were arrested, compelled to march in procession in the market place, then stripped and lacerated with scourges, so that some died at once and others were long incapacitated. Some were crucified, and Flaccus abstained from having their bodies cut down for the relatives to bury. On the allegation that Jews had stocks of weapons in their houses, Flaccus had his soldiers fruitlessly search Jewish

homes. Jewish women, as the price for release from arrest were compelled to eat swine flesh. (Sandmel, 1979, 42) Added to this, Flaccus deliberately held up birthday congratulations to Emperor Caligula so he would assume that the Jews were hostile to him.

Philo concludes this narrative with relish as he records the eventual awful fate of Flaccus. He was captured and conveyed to Rome in disgrace to end his life by being executed on the lonely island of Andros, where he had been living in exile.

Philo's influence in the Epistle to the Hebrews is to be seen in the allegoric style of writing. However, as we will see, the author of Hebrews uses the anti-Semitic ploy of denigrating Judaism by means of the use of the concept of supercessionism. Allegorical argument can thus be used against Judaism, as well as in its favour.

The significance of Philo is that he reflects first hand knowledge of contemporary Greek culture, as well as all other contemporary cultures. Philo's thoughts culminated in influencing two religions – the Judaism of the Hellenistic Age and early Christian thought. Examples of this are in St John's Gospel and some of St Paul's early thinking. Philo's writings indicate how diverse Judaisms were. The four main streams of Judaism – Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots. Philo's stoic Judaism unified Judaism into a first Century multi-stream. Both Philo and St Paul were Jews of the Diaspora and both were concerned to interpret the Hebrew Bible to Greek civilisation.

### **Josephus' influence**

Josephus Flavius (CE 37 to c. 100) became one of the greatest First Century historians, an ambassador to Rome and a Jewish military commander. He claimed to have belonged to each of the main Jewish sects - the Essenes, the Zealots, the Sadducees, and to have trained as a rabbi in the Pharisaic sect. (Smallwood, 1981, 10; Sandmel, 1979, 45)

Josephus was so renowned for his religious knowledge at fourteen years of age that high priests and leading citizens would consult him. (Smallwood 1979, 10) Examples of how Josephus had experienced knowledge of the four main Jewish sects are as follows.

He alleges he spent three years in the wilderness with Bannus the Essene ascetic. At nineteen years of age he became a rabbi in the Pharisaic sect and was chosen by the Sanhedrin, which is composed of Sadducees and some Pharisees, to go on a diplomatic mission to Rome. The year was 64 and he was twenty-six. His mission was to free some priests who had been sent to the Roman emperor for judgement. His mission was successful and two years later, when he returned to Jerusalem, he was appalled to realise the high priests and Zealots (extreme nationalists) were preparing for war with Rome. (Smallwood, 1981, 10; Sandmel, 1979, 44)

Josephus used all his influence to try to stop the war, but found because of his status and connections to the Sanhedrin he was appointed to be military commander of Galilee at the town of Joapata. Thus he became involved in the Jewish Roman War CE 66-70 and was commanding fiery Zealots as his fighting men. On being captured, Josephus won the favour of the Roman General Vespasian by telling him that he foresaw the day when Vespasian would become Emperor of Rome. (Smallwood, 1981, 11) Thus was fulfilled the widespread prophecy at that time that "the ruler of the world was destined to come from Judea." This prophecy was understood by the Zealots (at least) to be referring to the coming of the Messiah.

Vespasian used Josephus as a go-between with the Jewish Zealots who were defending the ramparts of the Temple in defiance of Rome. Josephus attempted to persuade the Zealots on the ramparts to lay down their arms and cease fighting. The Zealots attacked Josephus as a traitor and henceforth he became Vespasian's protégé, hence the name Flavius.

Josephus alleges he had never approved of the Jewish insurrection inspired by the hot-headed Zealots. (Smallwood, 1981, 12)

Josephus was also very knowledgeable about the fourth Jewish religious sect, the Zealots, as he had fought with them as their commander at Joapata in the Jewish-Roman War. He did not approve of their stance because he thought it would be impossible to defeat the Roman army. As well as this, Josephus could not afford to portray himself as supporting the Jewish guerrillas against Rome so he had great difficulty playing down his part as a Jewish commander in the war, because Vespasian and Titus were his patrons. (Smallwood, 1981, 12)

Scholars view his work with some scepticism because he often appears to distort facts slightly in order to create a particular impression in order to please his very powerful patrons – the Roman Emperors Vespasian and his son Titus. Vespasian's second son Domitian was, however, not a particular admirer of Josephus, and Josephus had to be very careful during Domitian's period as Emperor.

Josephus was given Vespasian's palace to live in, and an estate in exchange for his confiscated estate in Jerusalem, also a pension and Roman citizenship. He also did not have to pay any taxes or enrol in the army. (Smallwood, 1981, 11-12) It is thought that in return for this Josephus wrote the history of the Jewish War in which the Roman generals Vespasian and Titus are not ever criticized for cruel or vicious behaviour, because they only acted as a tool in God's hands punishing the Jews for wrong doing by razing the Temple and destroying much of Jerusalem and Judea. (Simon, 1986, 5)

Josephus wrote four important books. The first, *The Jewish Wars*, in his native language, Aramaic, was aimed at Jewish readers. His later books, *The Jewish Antiquities*, *Vita*, and *Against Apion*, were published in

Greek, aimed at Greek and Roman readers living in the rest of the Roman Empire.

The *History of the Jewish War* is often referred to as the *B.J.* or *Bellus Judaicum*, and is divided into seven books, completed in CE 75 or shortly after. This was only five years after the cessation of war, CE 66-70. (Smallwood, 1981, 9 & 14)

A. Schalit states:

*It is very probable that Josephus' decision to become the historian of the Jewish War stemmed primarily from the fact that he was subject to the Emperor's wishes and obliged to support his political aims. His history was probably the price extracted by the Emperor in return for the grant of freedom and property. Vespasian knew that the freedman could be of use to him in both his foreign and internal policy. After the events in the East and West of the Roman Empire, the fate of the entire state hung in the balance and Vespasian found himself obliged to warn the still powerful enemies of Rome that she could destroy any foe who intended to renew the war.*

*Josephus wrote two versions of his first major work The War of the Jews Against the Romans, the first one was in Aramaic, 'for the up country barbarians', that is, the Jews of the Diaspora. These were the Aramaic-speaking peoples in the lands of the Parthian kingdom, principally the Jews living in Babylonia. The Greek version also served the internal political purpose of bolstering the dynasty which had recently acceded to the throne. (Schalit, 1972, 255)*

Unfortunately, because Josephus did not want to be seen to blame the Roman Army generals for any atrocities, he depicted the fall of the Temple, the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and Judea in CE 133-35 as an act of God using the Roman Army to punish the Jews for being responsible for so much destruction and mayhem and thus breaking Jewish Laws. (Simon, 1986, 5)

As Josephus saw it, the Romans' methods of warfare are always 'pure and unsullied'. They refrain from excessive cruelty and are anxious to save the Jews but the "bandits" (zealots) are responsible for a deterioration in the situation. The Jewish people did not want war at all – it was forced on them by the "robbers". These comments of Josephus are a distortion of the messianic situation in Judea.

Vespasian had felt that he and his sons Titus and Domitian were despised as "sabine peasants" by the Roman aristocracy, and Josephus' *History* would greatly increase respect for him and his family. Josephus felt that the Jewish War being sanctioned by Vespasian proved that his history was absolutely factual. Josephus, however, emphasised particular areas and events where it suited him to do so and glossed over other events. He had personal reasons for revealing some things and concealing others. (Schalit, 1972, 255)

Josephus' style, it is said:

*is epic, his portrayals plastic, his gift of description captivates the reader alike by its fidelity and its colourful presentation. The pathos inherent in the occasion (i.e. Siege of Masada and the burning of the Temple) communicates itself to the reader...Nonetheless (as a historian) he occupies a place of prime importance...which is greatly increased because his work is the only source of the history of the Second Temple. (Schalit, 1972, 263)*

Josephus' incredible eye-witness accounts of scenes in the Jewish War, the burning of the Temple, and of the siege of Masada, leave an indelible vision in one's mind.

Josephus' second book *Jewish Antiquities*, or the *A.J.*, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, is a history of the Jewish people from the time of Adam until the Jewish War. Its purpose was to inform the Gentiles how ancient and how full of moral value the Jewish culture was. It was written almost

twenty years after *The Jewish War*, in approximately CE 93. It was Josephus' largest work, consisting of twenty books.

*Jewish Antiquities* "was the outcome of the objective circumstances of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and of Josephus' personal conclusions drawn from his experience in Rome, where he saw the Jewish people living in a non-Jewish environment and yet preserving its character and observing its religion." In essence, the book's purposes were: "The Enlightenment of the Gentiles; Proof of the Antiquity of the Jews." (Schalit, 1972, 257)

When Josephus came "face to face with the Gentile's hatred of the Jews, it appeared to him that nothing but their ignorance of the religion of Israel was responsible. Feeling that if only the Gentiles knew and understood the light that permeated Judaism, they would certainly forsake their capricious behaviour and cease their hostility toward the Jews", he had to teach the non-Jews a lesson in Jewish history so as to show them the error of their ways. Josephus, in doing this, took the approach of a Hellenistic audience, adapted his writing to their taste. (Schalit, 1972, 257)

Josephus is very important to Christians because he is one of very few authors who was writing about Christian events at the time of Jesus' life, and the only author of that period whose works have survived. For this reason many Christian scholars down the ages have had a copy of Josephus' *Antiquities* beside their Bible, and this may be the reason copies of Josephus' works are still in existence.

"One of the great riddles of the work is a well-known passage about Jesus of Nazareth in Book 18 which scholars have not yet succeeded in elucidating. Some regarded it as a Christian forgery of the third Century, others still consider it as historical evidence of the activities and death of Jesus: but the passage contains statements which could not have been made by a Jew such as Josephus." (Schalit, 1972, 261)

Josephus' third book *Vita* or *Life* was written as justification against strong criticisms of his behaviour in the battles for Galilee and for alleged inaccuracies in his book *The Jewish War* by a fellow soldier Justus who contradicts many of Josephus' statements. Josephus says that it would be a good idea to give a brief account of his own life while there are still people alive to refute or corroborate his statements. In *Vita*, where Josephus wants to play down his anti-Roman stance he tries to justify his behaviour in fighting against the Romans but can do it only by telling falsehoods.

In the first part of *Against Apion* Josephus attacks various anti-Semites and

*seeks to refute their accusations with logic and derision. It is a work of great literary skill and persuasiveness. This part constitutes a negative defence of the Jews. It sets out to refute the contentions of the anti-Semites. The purpose of the positive defence in the second part of the book was to reveal the inner value of Judaism and its ethical superiority over Hellenism. Josephus appears as a Jew completely committed to his people and his religion. Here the true Josephus is revealed, not the one who acted treacherously towards his comrades to save his own life in the Roman War, but Josephus the Jew who fights his people's fight and suffers with them. (Schalit, 1972, 262)*

Smallwood writes that Josephus, in *Against Apion* developed into:

*an impassioned but well-written and well-argued comprehensive apologia for the Jews and Judaism, a defence of his people, their religion, their law and their customs against the malicious and often ill-informed attacks made on them by anti-Semitic writers of the previous three centuries. One of the most vicious of these was Apion, an Alexandrian scholar and rhetorician a generation or more older than Josephus, whose calumnies are torn to pieces in the first half of book two, and whose name has been adopted in the title to*

denote the 'type' of the anti-Semite. The work is very valuable not only for what Josephus tells us in it about Judaism but also for his verbatim quotation of numerous excerpts from writers whose works are no longer extant.... (Smallwood, 1981, 18)

The motive for writing this book was the same as that of Philo in writing *Against Flaccus*, that is, to expose vicious anti-Semitism rampant in Alexandria in two different periods of time. It is thought that Apion was responsible for instigating the horrific anti-Jewish riots of CE 38 in Alexandria.

Josephus' background theme in his books is that God is in charge and he punishes those who deserve punishment and rewards those whose deeds he approves of; so God used a reluctant army general, Titus, "a compassionate and restrained man", to carry out God's wishes.

The Christians believed God did not approve of the Jews' behaviour over Christ's crucifixion but He approved of the Christians. This is the message thousands of Christians absorbed down the generations as they read their Bibles and their Josephus' *Antiquities*, kept side by side in the bookcase. Thus the Christians are responsible for the preservation of Josephus' books. This is very ironic because Josephus deplored anti-Semitism and specifically wrote to counteract it. In many ways Josephus' writings should have produced some sympathy for the Jews in Christian readers, but it probably was not so because of the Christian mind set in those days against the Jews.

Some scholars consider they detect a Hellenistic structure in the composition of the Gospel of St Luke. If this is indeed the case they consider it may be because Josephus apparently learned how to structure his histories from the structure of certain Hellenistic literary works. So possibly Josephus' *The Jewish War* written about CE 75-79, influenced the writing of the Gospel of St Luke written about 85-90.

Some people among the Jews considered the Jews were punished because there was too much concern about the expected Messiah and too much time wasted on that topic instead of normal Jewish daily concerns. Others, particularly Christians, considered God punished the Jews because they didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah. Others considered that God punished the Jews through Vespasian by arranging the Diaspora so that thousands left Palestine for other countries and they had no native country to return to.

Paul's early epistles appeared in the sixth decade of the Common Era, and the Gospel of Mark which had a long history was published in an earlier written version in the year 70. It is unlikely that Paul's earlier Epistles and Acts were influenced by Josephus' *The Jewish War* but the later Gospels of Matthew (published in 90) and particularly Luke and John both published later than Matthew, may have been influenced, particularly by the concept that God used the Roman army as a tool to punish the Jews as they deserved to be punished. It seems very likely that the Gospel of St John at least is largely influenced by Josephus because there are frequent negative remarks about "the Jews" having evil plans and carrying out evil deeds. The use of the term "the Jews" is unusual because at that time the Christian Nazarenes had not yet left the Jewish Synagogue, and everyone present in the incidents described in the Gospel are Jews anyway. This may be one of the first incidents of Christian anti-Semitism.

## Chapter Three

### Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism Become Rival Religions

Modern study of the origins of Christianity throws much light on the sources of Christian anti-Semitism. The historical and religious situation in which the Church emerged is far more complex than is recognised by the familiar Christian 'myths of origin'.

In his *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, David Flusser states:

*Ancient Christianity is constructed primarily upon Jewish premises. Neither Jesus nor the early Church lived in a vacuum: they had a broader knowledge of Jewish thought, Jewish sayings and the Jewish religious way of life than that which is extant in the New Testament and early Christian writings. Therefore Jewish matters and traditions which are not directly pertinent to specific passages from the New Testament form the milieu from which Christianity crystallised. Thus even these Jewish ideas and motifs whose traces are not present in Jesus' words and in the New Testament created the matrix for the new religion. (Flusser, 1988, XVI)*

The decision of the Council of Jerusalem, also known as the Apostles' Council (CE 49 approx.), to decree "gentile converts were not to be held to the legal observances, (Gal. ch. 2; Acts 15:5-11" (Flannery, 1985, 29) was to have a far-reaching effect on Christianity and Judaism, and eventually on the Roman Empire.

There were two Christian communities who were involved in this decision – the Gentile Christian Church led by Paul at Antioch and the Jewish Christian Church, the mother Christian church at Jerusalem led by James the brother of Jesus who was also the overall Church leader. The Jewish Christians wished the status quo to prevail but the Gentile

Christians led by Paul “confronted Peter insisting that while Jewish Christians might practise the Law, faith in Jesus Christ was necessary and sufficient for salvation. Gal. ch. 2; Acts 15:5-11.” (Flannery, 1985, 29)

Jewish proselytes who had hitherto been attracted to Christianity but had hesitated over circumcision, now found they could join a community with very similar aspirations of morals and ethics and one God and the same scriptures as Judaism. Because of the network of synagogues throughout the Diaspora and because Christian missionaries travelled through a network of established synagogues to spread their message, Christianity developed throughout the Diaspora with remarkable speed until in CE 324 the Roman Empire became a Christian state. (Shanks, 1992, x-xi)

So the Gentile Christians from Paul’s Antioch Church had expanded rapidly till they became a predominantly Hellenist church rather than the Jewish church they had been originally, and this type of Christianity became the orthodox Christianity of the second century on.

The Jerusalem Church of Jewish Christians was composed of both Hellenistic and Hebraic Jewish Christians. The martyr Stephen was a Hellenistic Jew and the church there was composed of mainly Hebraic Jews with close links to the Temple which they attended regularly, as well as going to the church. With the martyrdom of Stephen most of the Hellenist Jewish Christians fled from Jerusalem. (Wilson, 1989, 45) Other Jerusalem Church Christians were also martyred, including the Apostle James, brother of Jesus, Simon Peter, John, and Paul from the Antioch Church.

The Jewish Christians were known as Nazarenes and there was another slightly different sect known as Ebionites. Those Christians who survived the destruction of the First Jewish Revolt in CE 70 fled either to Pella or to the Diaspora where they set up other small Jewish Christian communities

of Nazarenes and Ebionites. These communities were still in existence in the fourth century. Gager considers the orthodox Christian eliminated all traces of their writings.

### **First century sees dramatic changes for Judaism**

It is not recognised by most Christians that their first Century was an extremely creative period for Judaism also. Lewis Feldman writes:

*Perhaps no century in the entire history of Judaism saw more revolutionary change than the first century of the Common Era. In this relatively short period of time two great religions developed – Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. During this period the man Christians consider the Son of God lived and was crucified. During this period his greatest apostle wrote the canonical scriptures to struggling new churches. During this period the Jewish Temple was destroyed. With the destruction, major changes occurred in the role of the high priests. Apocalypticism, proselytism and sectarianism all of which had flourished before the destruction of the Temple drastically declined. This period also produced the two most outstanding Hellenistic Jewish writers – the philosopher Philo and the historian Josephus. Finally this period laid the foundations for the Jewish academies that debated the Law and ultimately led to its codification in the greatest Jewish work since the Bible – the Talmud.*  
(Feldman, 1992, 1)

The rise of a flood of Messiahs in Palestine in the first half of the first century was harmful to the Jewish reputation, and these prophets were attacked and destroyed by the Romans. This produced general ferment in the Jewish world and the Zealots among the Jews organised and helped to precipitate the Jewish Revolt of CE 68-70. It was therefore not the actual principles of the Jewish religion but the effervescence of Messianism and the missionary proclivities of the Jews in the Diaspora which destroyed the peace between Rome and the Jews. (Parkes, 1981, 22-23)

Also during this war it is alleged that a Jewish leader, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, escaped from the besieged Temple in a coffin and was taken for an audience with the Roman General Vespasian. Vespasian agreed to some Jewish leaders and scholars setting up an academy at Javneh to the West of Jerusalem to start reconstructing the Jewish religion.

The movement of the Church's scholars to Pella in the province of Perea, and the Jewish leaders to Javneh, meant there was no common meeting ground for unobtrusive dialogue between Jews and Nazarenes.

The Jewish War CE 66-70 (referred to as the First Jewish Revolt) resulted in complete upheaval of Jerusalem society. Of the four main Jewish sects – the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Zealots – only the Pharisees survived to form mainstream rabbinical Judaism. The aristocratic and very wealthy and powerful priests, the Sadducees no longer had work, status or income because of the destruction of the Temple. The Essene sect, also associated with the Temple, disappeared – possibly because their encampment was destroyed by Roman soldiers. Most of the Zealots, mainly insurrectionists, were killed in this war and many would have died in the siege of Masada in CE 73. The first Jewish Revolt marked a turning point in the history of Jewish Christian relations, but it was only after the Second Jewish Revolt ending in CE 135 that the final rupture took place. (Wilson, 1989, 77)

It was during this period also that the leaders of the Jewish Christian movement set up an academy to study the philosophy, doctrine and liturgy for the new Christian Church. Soon after the commencement of the First Jewish War the Jewish Christians, or Nazarenes as they called themselves, moved to Pella which was sixty miles north east of Jerusalem. Pella became an important centre for Christian leaders and scholars. (Wilson, 1989, 76)

## Church and Synagogue practices diverge

Outrage against the Nazarenes was felt when the Christian day of rest was changed from the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian 'Lord's Day', Sunday, the day their Lord rose from the dead. This change made the meeting of Jews and Nazarenes on Church or Synagogue premises almost impossible.

It is thought that the refusal of the Nazarenes to support the Jews in the revolt, and the changing of their day of rest to Sunday, was to distinguish the Christian Church from the (then) unpopular Jewish people in Roman eyes. Jews who refused to deny Jesus were not permitted in the synagogues:

*The Jews saw the Church's move to Sunday worship as a call to abandon the Law and embrace a 'new covenant' that had now replaced the 'old covenant' which was thus declared ineffective and passé. (Wilson, 1989, 80)*

In the words of historian Jules Isaac:

*The Jewish rejection of Christ was triggered by the (Christian) rejection of the (Jewish) Law. The rejection of the Law was enough; to ask the Jewish people that they accept this rejection was like asking them to tear out their heart. (Quoted in Wilson, 1989, 80)*

The institution of the Synagogue was of vital importance to the rebuilding of Judaism. The beginning of the Synagogue movement had started around the time the Jewish people were taken as captives to Babylon after the razing of the first Temple by King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE. When the Jewish people were released from captivity in Babylon many of them decided not to return to Israel but stay in the Mediterranean area, thus beginning the Jewish Diaspora. The synagogues served as a meeting place for Jews where they could worship God, say prayers and sing hymns and listen to the Torah being read, start a school,

and offer hospitality to travellers, as the Temple was no longer available. The Jews in the Diaspora based their communities around synagogues.

Birkath-ha-Minim was the malediction inserted into the daily Blessings recited in the Synagogue of a declaration about heretics so worded that the Judeo-Christians could not pronounce it." (Parkes, 1981, 77) It contained the express condemnation of Nazarenes and was aimed at expelling them from the synagogues even though they regarded themselves as Jews who happened to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. It is thought to have occurred about CE 80-90 and is considered to be the sign of the final break between Christians and Jews.

The Pharisees at Yavneh (Jabne or Jamnia) faced the tremendous task of building a strong vigorous faith independent of the Temple. The rituals of the Temple were now transferred to the home and Judaism became more spiritual. Acts of kindness, charity and prayer as means of atonement were substituted for Temple animal sacrifices. Members of the Sanhedrin leading scribes and prominent Pharisees assembled at Javneh considering the scriptures and converting the oral Torah into the written Talmud. They were also responsible for "reworking the Temple ritual so as to standardise it into the order and liturgy of the synagogue service." (Wilson, 1989, 77-78) The Pharisees at the Javneh Academy for scholars were led by Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai. This was the beginning of Rabbinic Judaism.

Unlike the former Temple priests, the Rabbis became highly educated in the Jewish Scriptures and leaders of their communities. Great emphasis was placed on education and schools were associated with each synagogue. The Rabbinical Jews were the doctrinal successors of the Pharisees and Judaism became a very vigorous and fast growing religious group in the first three to four centuries. The network of synagogue communities throughout the Diaspora was vital also for the rapid spread

of Christianity at that time because it was to the synagogues that Church missionaries came to spread their message.

The chief priest was replaced by a Patriarch was appointed by the Romans to lead the administration of the Jewish people. As Jews were no longer permitted to enter Jerusalem, and with the establishment of synagogues throughout Galilee and the Diaspora. the former central administration in Jerusalem was abandoned. Jews everywhere had to send their taxes to the Patriarch centred in Galilee, via agents or apostles, for benefit of the Jewish people. In the Diaspora these taxes amounted to considerable sums of money leaving particular cities, and caused anger against the Jewish population. With the destruction of the Temple and use of synagogues throughout Jewish communities the Jews of the Diaspora were then on an equal footing spiritually with Jews in Judea. The apostles of the Patriarch conveyed all his messages about proposed Jewish conduct in relation to Christian hostility, to each Synagogue.

### **The Second Jewish Revolt and its consequences**

From CE 132-135 the Second Jewish Revolt against the Romans took place. This was also referred to as the Bar Kochba Revolt for the messianic leader of the revolt. To many Jews he was the promised Messiah – the long-awaited saviour anticipated from the Talmudic verse “A star shall come out of Jacob”, Numbers 24:17. Simon Bar Kochbar is the ‘Son of the Star’, the expected Messiah. (Levine, 1992, 143) This was another loss of hope to any Christians still hoping the majority of Jews would accept Jesus as the Christ. “The hostility of the Synagogue and the refusal of the majority of Jews to enter the Church...was regarded more and more as blindness and malice.” (Flannery, 1985, 33)

As with the First Jewish Revolt messianic fervour, one of the precipitating factors, was the expected Jewish Messiah who was prophesied in the Talmud to appear in the mid-first century. Also of great importance in galvanising fury against the Romans was Hadrian’s

proscription of circumcision. This was for all people and not just the Jews, but it was an infringement of Julius Caesar's code of protection of Jewish religious rights. Emperor Hadrian had wished to Hellenize the Roman Empire and wipe out pockets of superstition and ethnic religious beliefs. The next Emperor Antoninus and following emperors allowed the edict against circumcision to lapse.

Two other situations causing anger to the Jews were that Hadrian proposed to build a pagan city, Aelia Capitolinus, on the site of their holy city, Jerusalem; and that the 'didrachm', the money collected from Jews throughout the Diaspora for the Patriarch to use for Jewish causes, was to be diverted to the Roman Temple, Jupiter Capitolinus. (Simon, 1986, 99; Smallwood, 1981, 429)

An influx of Gentiles, both Christian and pagan, into the early Church and Palestine can only have aided the growth of anti-Semitism because of "the literati among them conversant with the classical pagan anti-Semitic authors and the uneducated from Alexandria and seaports where anti-Semitism had materialised." (Flannery, 1985, 34)

From this time onwards Christian writings became progressively more critical and derogatory when discussing Jews and Judaism. There is a notable change of tone in reference to Jewish people between the three Synoptic Gospels (written approximately CE 73–95), and the gospel of John (written about CE 100). In the Synoptic Gospels the Jews are referred to according to their group, such as Sadducees, Scribes, Pharisees, but in John they are referred to as "the Jews" pejoratively as a term of abuse (Simon, 1986, 207), although everyone present in the incidents described was a Jewish national, Christian or otherwise.

Many scholars have thought that the razing of the Temple in CE 70 put the Jews on a withdrawal type of behaviour, and from then on, withdrew into their own communities and ceased proselytising activities. Many

Christians today consider that this was the case, but Simon does not agree. He writes that Hadrian's War settled the problem of any possible political activity against Rome, but also the war broke the attachment of Jews to Jerusalem as their political and religious home. They looked forward to the Diaspora for their future life, where active proselytism continued. (Simon, 1986, 272-3) Jewish proselytism continued to take place in the Diaspora after the Bar Kochba revolt, until the fifth century (Simon in Flannery, 1985, 42) when Christian theological thought put pressure on the Christian Emperors to discontinue the privileges the Jewish people had had since the reign of Julius Caesar. (Flannery, 1985, 20)

One of the consequences of the Second Jewish Revolt was that Jews were banished from Jerusalem on pain of death, and certain Jewish religious rituals were forbidden in Judea, so the bulk of the Jewish people went to the Galilee or to the Diaspora and the Patriarchate settled in Galilee in CE 90. (Levine, 1992, 141-142) Galilee therefore became the centre for the Patriarch's authority. Starting with the demise of Emperor Hadrian (CE 117-138) through the coming to power of Emperor Antoninus, the Severan Emperor's dynasty (CE 193-235) and then Emperor Julian (CE 361-363), a decided change in attitude to the Jews is obvious in spite of the recent Jewish revolt. Julian set out plans to rebuild the Temple but died soon after it had been started. The Christian establishment were elated by Julian's death because it could only further establish that their allegations of God's punishment of the Jews by the destruction of the Temple had been justified.

Long before Jerusalem was destroyed the Jews obtained important privileges from Julius Caesar 100-44 BCE. These privileges were reinforced by the following Emperor Augustus and most other emperors until the Roman Empire became Christian under Constantine in the late fourth century. Gager states that Hadrian's successors had sympathy for Jews, in spite of the recent Bar Kochba Revolt.

*The Jewish race has frequently been persecuted but has prospered nonetheless. They differ from other men in all things concerning daily life. Above all they worship none of the other gods but reserve great honour for one god.* (An excerpt from Dio, *History*, 37-9-11)

Gager considers this extract from Dio significant for its combination of neutrality, accuracy and even a certain admiration for the Jewish cult. (Gager, 1983, 91)

From the time of Solomon there were Israelite soldiers among trading communities on the borders of Palestine. As the population increased the Israelites would approach either the local authorities or the Emperor for permission to establish privileges of worship, then people in the community became interested in Judaism and proselytism would commence. Through the establishment of synagogues throughout the Diaspora, Christianity was able to increase its followers rapidly. Christian missionaries found clusters of Jewish proselytes who were interested in the Jewish and Christian God, in the prophets, and Jewish ethics and history also claimed by Christians, but had not taken the step of being circumcised. Parkes reports that military stations were manned by Israelites in both the Assyrian and Egyptian Empires. One station, Elephantine, was the scene of the first reported anti-Semitic incident when a Jewish temple situated close to an Egyptian temple was discovered to be sacrificing rams, sacred to Egyptians. The Egyptians burned the Jewish temple. This incident took place in 410 BCE – the earliest recorded act of Anti-Semitism. (Flannery, 1985, 9; Parkes, 1981, 6) Flannery, however, does not consider this to be an act of Anti-Semitism, but an act of religious fanaticism combined with a great resentment of Persian domination over Egypt.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Philo early in the first Century CE, followed by Josephus, had interested many sophisticated Hellenists in the 'one' God of the Jews and in ancient Jewish history and philosophy. The

idea of a single God as opposed to a pantheon of gods and goddesses became more and more acceptable to many Romans and Greeks.

Gager quotes excerpts from both Philo and Josephus commenting on how much the Jewish religion is admired: "there is not one city Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstinence from work on the seventh day has not spread." (Josephus, *War*, 2-498, in Gager, 1983, 85-86) Gager writes that in the first Century CE the Jews were involved in a vigorous and successful campaign to spread their beliefs and practices. As a result, some people were converted to Judaism though many continued to admire Judaism but did not take the necessary step of having circumcision performed in order to become a Jew. Smallwood also writes that various Greek writers, including Nicolaus of Damascus, Diodorus of Sicily, Pompeius Trogus, and Strabo, at the beginning of the first century CE wrote about Judaism being an attractive religious and philosophical way of life.

Many Romans and Greeks regarded Judaism not as a philosophy or a path to salvation, but as superstition and atheism, and resented its appeal to others. Tiberius expelled Jews from Rome in CE 19 and Claudius likewise twenty years later. Dio has written that Jews were expelled "because they were converting many in Rome to their customs." (Gager, 1983, 87)

After the Bar Kochba Revolt in which the Jews were no longer a threat, antipathy to Jews seems to disappear. The Roman administration even altered some of their own laws so as to make them more acceptable to Jews. Even the two Jewish Revolts did not appear to affect the way Jews were treated. Even in the Diaspora Romans continued to treat Jews with their usual toleration. (Gager, 1983, 87-88)

Reasons given for God's punishment of Jews by razing the Temple and most of Jerusalem were:

- 1 Because Jews could not accept Jesus as the Messiah (Christian reason)

- 2 Jews considered it was because they had been too concerned with millenarianism instead of following the Law (Jewish reason)
- 3 Because Jesus had 'blasphemed against God ' (Jewish reason)
- 4 Because the Jews had murdered the Apostle James, that is, the High Priest Ananias murdered James in CE 62. (At this time in the mid to late first century Christians were not accusing Jews of murdering Christ – that came later.)

Josephus had completely different ideas – he blamed the fanatical Zealots who were responsible for the war and strewed the streets with corpses, discontinued sacrificial worship, melted down sacred vessels, gave the troops the sanctuary oil and wine, and defiled the Temple with bodies. To avenge these crimes the sanctuary had to be purified by fire. Vespasian was now Emperor under the guidance of God. Vespasian was the rod of the Lord's anger. (Josephus, *De Bello Judaicus*, cited in Simon, 1986, 5)

After the Second Revolt Jewish fortunes appeared to be increasing but the Christians were gaining more and more gentile converts and becoming more and more aggressive. They had developed a more aggressive theology based on the evidence of Jewish guilt obvious from the punishment meted out by God.

Jews were greatly antagonized by this attitude, and reciprocated with "occasional violence and slander and participated to some extent in the imperial persecution of Christians." (Flannery, 1985, 35) Flannery says it is difficult for historians to find out the facts of the allegations against the Jews in the persecution of Christians.

The Church had to prove to Gentiles, and to Jews, that it was the true Israel, that Judaism was a pretender that refused to abdicate a lost kingdom. Jews accused Christians of distorting the Septuagint, and Christians accused the Jews of suppressing certain texts in the Hebrew Bible.

The Christians' defence against Jewish denial of Christian rights to the Jewish texts of the Hebrew Bible was centred on:

*the Messiahship of Christ, the abrogation of the Law, the vocation of the Church. [and]*

*the Church antedates the old Israel, going back to the faith of Abraham, and the promise made to Adam. The Church is a church of the Gentiles, a new people and eternal Israel whose origins coincide with that of humanity itself. The Jews by their unfaithfulness have abrogated their covenant with Yaweh. The Church and Israel are synonymous; the Jews are an apostle nation, truant from its providential role of the chosen people.*

These Christian apologists had forgotten Paul's statements that Jews were "Most dear for the sake of their fathers", and that God did not go back on his promise that the Jews were 'the chosen people'.

In the following two chapters I will look further at the development of anti-Semitism within Christian theological argument and teaching, including that found in the New Testament.

## Chapter Four

### Ecclesiastical Anti-Semitism

In this chapter I discuss more fully the rise of theological anti-Semitism in early Christianity, why it occurred, its development and some of the consequences.

From a theological viewpoint the split between the Jewish religion and the Christian Church was primarily due to the refusal of the majority of Jews to accept the Christian view of Jesus Christ as the expected Messiah. In early Church history this led to such antagonism that prolonged animosity evolved on both sides and so anti-Semitism began to develop in Church circles.

In *Faith and Fratricide* Rosemary Ruether refers to:

*...anti-Judaism as a set of beliefs regarding the inauthenticity of the religious and theological claims of Judaism and anti-Semitism as a combination of hostile beliefs and actions regarding Jews... (cited in Gager, 1983, 20)*

Simon (1983, 17) refers to hostility towards Jews as being fundamental and systematic. He also writes:

*Christian anti-Semitism is in the first instance an expression of resentment aroused by Israel's resistance to the gospel....In addition, it arises from the need to explain the outright rejection with which the Jews greeted the message meant for them. Simon (1983, 207)*

This anti-Semitism became apparent in Christian writings as early as the Gospel of Matthew, written around CE 70 at the end of the first Jewish Revolt, and in the Gospel of St John written about 100, in which very strong opinions are expressed against the Jews. Jews are referred to pejoratively as "the Jews", even though everyone in the story is a Jew. Presumably there is a sharp cut off point even then between Jews who had become Christian and Jews who refused to change their religion.

Ruether points out that anti-Semitic statements in the New Testament became stronger and stronger over the times in which they were written. Gager (1983, 20) writes:

*Ruether traces the development of Christian attitudes from the anti-Pharisaic polemic of the synoptic gospels, into the philosophical or mythological reformulation of anti-Judaism by Paul, Hebrews, and the Gospel of John, and finally to the literary and theological negation of the Jews and Judaism in the Church Fathers.*

Although the Epistles of Paul were the first Christian writings in the New Testament, and were written from approximately CE 50 onwards for approximately ten years, scholars see little sign of anti-Semitism in Paul's writings. Paul frequently criticises the Judaizers or Jewish Christians who do not wish to give up their Jewish prayers and rituals but he does not criticise Judaism itself in a forceful way. However, there is a great deal of unresolved argument over the meaning of many passages in Paul's writings among various scholars. (Anti-Semitism in New Testament writings is considered more fully in Chapter Five.)

### **Conflict of the Church and Synagogue**

Two mistaken beliefs have persisted down the ages and are still believed today. One belief is that pagan antiquity was uniformly anti-Semitic. (Gager, 1983, 6) The other persistent but mistaken belief is that after the destruction of the Temple the Jewish faith went into a serious decline and remained so. In fact, the loss of the Temple stimulated the Jews into constructing a very vigorous new and better way of presenting their faith, centred on their synagogues. They were no longer tied to the central Temple for ritual atonement for their sins.

Judaism was competing with Christians for pagan converts during the first three centuries. Both religions expanded very rapidly. The Roman administration was so concerned at the number of Romans from all

levels of society becoming Jews that they feared for the stability of their own religions. Several emperors, such as Hadrian, imposed restrictions on Jewish religious development by such methods as proscribing circumcision, expelling Jews from Rome, proscribing the circumcision of slaves, and proscribing proselytism by Jews. Christians were concerned that Judaism, apparently punished by God, was thriving so well.

Flannery (1985, 31-2) writes that the Jewish:

*definitive separation [from Christianity] occurred in the year 80 when the Sanhedrin at Jabne introduced a malediction in the Shemoneh Esreh, recited thrice daily by Jews: 'May the minim perish in an instant; may they be effaced from the book of life and not be counted among the just.'*

It is widely accepted that this prayer was introduced in order:

*to weed out [not only Christians but] Judaeo-Christians from the Synagogue services, that minim meant 'heretics' including Jewish Christians, and that in later centuries the term came to include all Christians. (Flannery, 1985, 32)*

In early usage the term applied not only to apostate Jews, but also to Christianity which was considered the greatest apostasy from Judaism.

*...letters were sent by the Sanhedrin at Jabne to the Diaspora concerning the new malediction and the attitude to be adopted vis-à-vis Christianity. Jews should have no dealings with his [Jesus'] followers. The decision at Jabne promulgated by these letters constituted a formal and final excommunication of Christians from the Synagogue. (Flannery, 1985, 32)*

The Christian expulsion of Jews came later.

While the Church was still hopeful the majority of Jews would become Christians there was little animosity against them, but after the Bar Kochba revolt when most Jews had followed the Son of the Star as the Messiah it was clearly obvious the Jews would not change their minds

and accept Christianity. "The first Christian Church full of zeal and fervour was a Jewish church in the leadership, membership, and worship; and it remained within the precincts of the Synagogue." (Flannery, 1985, 29)

### **Theological anti-Judaism arising from competition and polemic**

The realisation that the Jews would not be converting to Christianity was "disconcerting to Christian converts" because their new faith was built on Jewish Scripture and the Jewish Messiah. Christians looked for reasons why the Jews were not becoming Christian and, non-plussed, blamed the Jewish people for being 'stubborn and stiff-necked.' Much worse criticism was to follow.

The Christian St Stephen "charged the people and their leaders with infidelity to Moses as well as to the Messiah (Acts 7: 2-7: 53). Paul preached the inefficacy of the Law for Jew and Gentile, and in the face of opposition, turned to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16, 2:10)." (Flannery, 1985, 29)

Paul taught that the Law, transitory and preparatory in character, terminated in Christ. Paul also taught that the Jews "are most dear for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the call of God are without repentance". (Rom. 11:28-29)

*This Pauline doctrine of separation and benevolence set the primary and authentic attitude of the Church toward Judaism. But...as the Church's severance from the parent body became complete, the negative aspects stressing Judaism's replacement were greatly accentuated, and a less benevolent tradition was destined to overshadow the Pauline doctrine. (Flannery, 1985, 30)*

The Jews resented the Christians' claims and struck the first blow by driving Hellenistic Christians from the Jerusalem Church and from Jerusalem. Stephen was killed and James the Just, supposedly Christ's

brother and leader of the Jerusalem Church was also killed, in this case by the High Priest associated with the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

Ruether alleges that the large number of Jewish proselytes converting from paganism to Judaism seriously alarmed the Roman establishment. This is backed by the fact that large numbers of pagans had a very high opinion of Judaism and were impressed by its antiquity.

After the second Jewish Revolt, 132-135, Jewish fortunes appeared to be increasing but the Christians were gaining more converts and becoming more aggressive against the Jews. The Second Revolt did not stifle Jewish proselytism which continued into the fourth and fifth centuries in spite of Christians becoming more numerous and powerful than they were.

Simon (1986, 232) argues that the most compelling reason for anti-Semitism was the religious vitality of Judaism.

*This vitality showed itself in a negative way in the doggedness in which the Jews opposed the Christian Gospel. It was shown more positively in the lasting power of Jewish beliefs, and especially of Jewish rites, to draw an important minority of Christians from the very bosom of the Church.... The caricature the gospels offer us in place of a portrait of the Pharisees expresses the disappointment and distress of the new-born Christianity.*

John Meagher considers that it was the theological enmity that gave the Christians energy and persistence in their rivalry with Judaism.

*Christians claimed to be the heirs of all that Judaism offered, and more – and claimed that the inheritance could be come by more readily through their way than within Judaism – and further claimed that Judaism was quite obsolete. (Meagher, 1979, 23)*

The serious split between Jews and Christians and the hardening attitude against each other was accelerated by the adamant refusal of Christians to

support the Jews in the Jewish revolts against the Romans. The worsening Jewish-Christian relations during the second half of the first century corresponded with the worsening of the portrayal of the Jews in the New Testament. Paul, writing earlier in the first century, was tolerant of Jewish converts continuing to practise their Jewish Law, but in the Gospel of John, written after the persecution of Christians by Jews and Romans was well established, the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem was seen through Christian eyes as God's retribution against the Jews.

*Historians and exegetes have noted the progressive change in tone that marked the attitude toward Jews in the New Testament as it was committed to writing during the second half of the first century, and many have sought to trace the roots of anti-semitism to the sacred pages themselves. Anti-Jewish texts are singled out from many parts of the New Testament, most particularly in John's Gospel...which includes numerous anti-Jewish episodes and often employs the phrase 'the Jews' in a pejorative manner. John has, in consequence been called 'the father of anti-semitism.'* (Flannery, 1985, 33)

Flannery also writes as follows:

*The nascent Church, having sprung from the Synagogue, proclaimed itself the fulfilment of Israel. Its Founder, of the house of David had proclaimed that he was come 'to the lost sheep of the House of Israel' (Matt. 10:6), 'not to destroy but to fulfill' (Matt. 5:17). But he had also announced Himself as the sole way to the Father, had asserted His priority to Abraham (see John 8:58) and had enjoined His followers to go and 'make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19). The new Faith contained Judaic, trans-Judaic and some anti-Judaic elements. Future developments would determine how these elements would be apportioned and the degree of anti-Judaism that would be incorporated into the teaching of the aborning Church, and finally whether this anti-Judaism would become a source of anti-Semitism.* (Flannery, 1985, 28-29)

The terms anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism are interpreted differently by different scholars. However in each case the term anti-Semitism refers to a more intense animosity, maybe with aggressive violence than the term anti-Judaism. In this case Flannery considers the term 'anti-Judaism' is in reference to an apologetical or theoretical category. Only attitudes, words or actions that embody a hatred or contempt of the Jewish people as such can be considered to be anti-Semitic and for this reason the New Testament cannot be considered to be anti-Semitic even though it has anti-Judaic theology and can be considered to be a seed bed of anti-Semitism. Flannery also points out that as the New Testament was written progressively over fifty years or so, so was the position of the Jews, and attitudes toward them, worsening in Christian opinion.

In the middle of the first century when Paul began his preaching he stated what he considered the relationship of Judaism and Christianity to be. The Church's theology of Israel, in Paul's eyes:

*The Law, transitory and preparatory in character, and terminated in Christ....The burden of the Law is replaced by the hope and liberty of the Gospel...even if the Jews have failed by their unbelief, God has not cast off His people. If they have stumbled they have not fallen...In the fullness of time, they will return, and their reconciliation will be a golden age for the Church. The task of Christians is not to patronize them but to provoke them to jealousy by the holiness of their own lives....This Pauline doctrine of separation and benevolence set the primary and authentic attitude of the Church toward Judaism. (Flannery, 1985, 30)*

However, this balanced opinion as perceived by Paul at that time changed markedly over time and acrimony between the two religions continued to develop. Jews were accused of helping the Romans in the horrific persecution of the Christians which took place under Nero in the mid-first century and later.

Early Christian historians were prone to exaggerate the scope of Jewish hatred. Christians saw in the destruction of the Temple the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy and a confirmation of their belief the sceptre had passed from Judaism to the Church. (Flannery, 1985, 31)

It is possible that Christianity came to regard Judaism as a serious rival for pagans and committed Christians as well. (Gager, 1983, 6)

In the first three centuries the Church's part in the struggle became a theological offensive:

*The refutation and debasement of Judaism progressively became integral elements of its apologetics beginnings of Judeophobia.*

*The challenge Judaism posed did not become fully apparent until the Synagogue regained its vitality and influence after the disasters of 70 and 135 [the termination of the two Jewish Wars]. The people the Church claimed to have supplanted continued to co-exist and, more importantly, laid claim to the same sources of faith, asserting its anteriority and its title to the Old Testament. (Flannery, 1985, 38)*

The pagans were always impressed by antiquity, and were perplexed as to why, if the Christian arguments were so strong, the Jews were not becoming Christians.

*Theophilus of Antioch and Porphyry railed at its [the Christian] pretence of supplanting the older religion. Its theological task was more difficult still...the Church had to prove to the Gentiles and to the Jews – that it was the true Israel, that Judaism was a pretender that refused to abdicate a lost kingdom. (Flannery, 1985, 38)*

The Christians alleged that the Law had been abrogated and that:

*the Church antedates the old Israel going back to the faith of Abraham...and even the promise made to Adam. Thus the Church is the Church of the Gentiles...at once a 'new people' and 'eternal Israel' whose origins coincide with that of humanity itself. The human*

*soul is 'naturally Christian' and Christ is The Logos who 'enlightens every man who comes into the world.'* (John 1:9).

*The Mosaic Law was only for the Jews, who for their unworthiness and their cult of the golden calf were given the burden of the Law. The mosaic prescriptions hence were a yoke imposed upon the old Israel because of its sins. The Church and Israel are synonymous; the Jews are an apostate nation truant from its providential vote of chosen people.* (Flannery, 1985, 38)

As Flannery explains, this doctrine "struck at the very heart of Judaism." The apologists, considering it part of the Gospel message, did not realise they were becoming further and further away from St Paul's admonition that the Jews were "most dear for the sake of their fathers". (Flannery, 1985, 39)

Flannery asks why was Judaism still a threat when Christianity was growing more quickly? Marcel Simon has contradicted the common conception that in the third century, after two disastrous wars against Rome, Judaism ceased proselytising. Marcel Simon is convinced that:

*the highly missionary and influential character of Judaism lasted well into the fifth century. The Church's debate with Judaism was by no means purely academic but rather the result of 'intense and perilous rivalry.'* (Simon, quoted in Flannery, 1985, 42)

Judaism was a threat in three areas:

1. Its attraction to Christians caused Judaizing among many.
2. Its proselytising continued as before.
3. Jews were associated with several Christian heresies.

This evidence of Jewish vitality was distressing to the Church which considered it had superseded a now 'obsolete' Jewish faith.

*The fall of Jerusalem far from stifling Judaism's missionary zeal, had served only to strengthen its universal aspirations. Hadrian's ban on*

*circumcision was not effective, nor was it strictly enforced....Jewish proselytic efforts were strong late in the fourth century, and despite losing the competition with Christianity – were continued with vigour into the fifth century. (Flannery, 1985, 45-46)*

### **Increasing separation of Synagogue and Church**

Flannery says that opinions differ on the question whether or not anti-Semitism existed in the Church during the first three centuries. He also poses the question as to whether the following actions were anti-Semitic:

1. hostile Christian writings and actions effectively provoked by Jews;
  2. theological and apologetic treatises or teachings which expounded an anti-Judaism as more or less integral to the dogmas of the church;
  3. or the indignation of pastors gravely worried about the dangers Judaism posed for their often superficially Christianised congregations.
- (Flannery, 1985, 46)

Flannery states that what happened in the first three centuries had warned that theological or pastoral anti-Judaism could develop in either of two directions – one direction being benevolent or benign, the other to develop in virulence into established anti-Semitism. (Flannery, 1985, 46).

Meagher feels very strongly that as the Protestants and Catholics co-existed for centuries so also could Christians have co-existed with Jews had different initiatives been taken. He writes that once the Christians dominated the Jewish religion they could have used their primacy to ask the Jews if they could co-exist as two religions instead of insisting on their theological superiority and history as an excuse to vilify and denigrate Judaism. There were many Christians and Jews who wished to belong to both religions at the same time. These people became Judaizers – Christians who practised Jewish rites as well as belonging to the Church. (Meagher, 1979, 23)

Meagher agrees with Ruether that:

*there is something importantly amiss in Christian theology's theory of the Jews and it is closely related to received christology [and] that this theological fault has made a grave difference. (Meagher, 1979, 23)*

Gager writes that the reasons Jews allege they could not become Christian were because:

*[the Jews held] that Jesus was not the Messiah [because the promised advent of dissolution of evil and pain had not materialised], that beliefs about him amounted to a repudiation of monotheism, that Christians had misunderstood and distorted the Scriptures, and that they had forfeited any right to the promises of Israel by their abandonment of ritual observance. (Gager, 1983, 135)*

Gager further points out that Isaac, Simon and Ruether all expressed the idea that the separation of Judaism was so painful and so damaging that the more recent religion, Christianity, developed a distorted image of itself as being defined and its self-affirmation being established in competitive rivalry against Judaism. Ruether (quoted in Gager, 1983, 135) writes: "For Christianity, anti-Judaism was not merely a defense against attack, but an intrinsic need of self-affirmation." This competition and conflict may be seen in Paul's letters and the early Christian Gospels, describing the intense feelings and hostility to Jews in the earliest Christian writings.

The first Christian writing in the New Testament, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians (approximately CE 50), includes a particular view of Jews being punished by God for their wickedness:

*you suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the Prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so*

*that they may be saved. The wrath of God has come upon them at last. 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.*

Christians had to find excuses as to why Jews refused to become Christian. The easiest explanation was that it was because of the Jews' own failings. At first they were referred to as 'stiff-necked', 'stubborn', and 'perverse', but later the adjectives became 'wicked', and 'cursed by God.'

Paul, writing early in the first century was tolerant of Jewish converts continuing to practise their Jewish Law, but in John, written after the persecution of Christians was well established, the destruction of the Temple was seen to Christian eyes, as God's retribution against the Jews.

### **Reinterpretation of the Old Testament by Christian apologists**

Christian preachers and apologists gained acceptance for Christianity by writing 'Testimonies' or scriptural discussions and teaching from the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible texts in order to refute Judaism. These texts 'proving' that Christian interpretations of the Hebrew scripture were correct were circulated among Christian converts, almost all of whom were Gentiles, so that they would have a basic understanding of the principles of Christianity from the psalms, the prophets and other parts of the Hebrew Bible.

The Christians argued that everything "centred on the Messiahship of Christ, the abrogation of the Law [by the Jews], and the vocation of the Church." They alleged that the Church antedated the old Israel, going back to Abraham, so the Church was the Church of the Gentiles. The human soul is 'naturally Christian', and Christ is the Logos for every man. (Flannery, 1985, 38-39)

The Jewish people reacted angrily, alleging Christians had distorted the Septuagint in order to attempt to verify their untrue statements.

In the early fourth century several influential Christian writers denigrated Jews and Judaism. As time went by these writings became more virulent.

*The Fathers obtained the perspective of a distorting mirror and drew faithfully what they saw....There was not one single virtuous action in her [Israel's] history. She had been a perpetual disappointment to God....The Church might claim all the virtuous actions in the Old Testament for a kind of pre-existent Church, but she could not deny that all the people had been led out of Egypt, guided by day and night across the desert, and into the Promised Land. But their record was one of nothing but disobedience, and their ultimate rejection was almost inevitable from the very beginning. (Parkes, 1981, 158-159)*

The Christians considered that the Jews were "blind" so were unable to understand their own scripture. The metaphorical interpretation of the Scripture by the Christians, as opposed to the Jewish literal interpretation, gives great licence to subjective understanding. So the 'substance of the Scriptures' can be available only to the Church or the 'True Israel.'

The dichotomies of salvation between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, grace and damnation, life and death, were assumed to be representative of Church and Synagogue, the Jewish people becoming like the embodiment of all that is unredeemed, perverse, stubborn, evil and demonic. So although the Jews were referring to and reading the Hebrew Bible they were thought to not properly understand their own scriptures.

Ziffer writes that Jews were unable to accept that Jesus was the true Messiah. They were outraged that Christians were manipulating the Scriptures so as to make Gentile converts believe the Christian interpretation was the only interpretation. They were rearranging and replacing certain passages to favour Christianity and denigrate Judaism. These interpretations were emphasised in the Testimonia to the

disadvantage of Judaism. They caused enormous damage to opinions about Judaism. (Ziffer, 1990, 78)

Ziffer also points out that in some instances in the interpretations – from Aramaic to Greek, or from Greek to modern language – the meaning of the original passage was either incorrectly understood or transcribed.

The Church argued that Christianity was the true, original, universal religion of humanity that predated and outshone all that the poets, philosophers, and law givers of the ancient world could offer. It could only make this claim on the basis that the Old Testament was Christian and not Hebrew. Christians were the heroes and upright people in the scriptures whereas Jews were the villains and idolaters. There was great misrepresentation of Jewish history in almost all early Christian writings.

### **The Church as the True Israel**

Various terms have been used by Christian theologians to explain that they and not the Jews are the Chosen people or the True Israel of God – terms such as Supersessionism, Prefiguration, Abrogation and Deicide.

God was displeased with the Jews, so he arranged for General Vespasian to destroy the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, the two greatest Jewish icons. So the Jews had no place of worship and no homeland, and were forced to live in the Diaspora.

The Son of God, Jesus, came into the world and in so doing became the Saviour of the human race by his sacrifice and crucifixion. So Christianity became the favoured religion. Christians became the favoured people. Therefore we have the Supersession of Jews by Christians taking place.

Abrogation was the term for the Jews' breaking of God's Law for Judaism – they had abrogated the Law by worshipping idols and not obeying the

Law adequately. The worst sin was that they had not accepted Jesus into their hearts as their Saviour, so they deserved their punishment.

Eusebius in his first book *Preparatio Evangelica* proves the greater antiquity of Christianity: "The Hebrews are the most ancient people in the world, and their religion is the basis of Greek philosophy." But the Hebrews were, from the beginning, 'Christians' and led a Christian way of life. "Abraham lived as a Christian and not as a Jew." (Parkes, 1981, 161-162) This philosophy is an example of what is referred to as Prefiguration. Thus even Abraham and his family were Christians, even though they were unaware of it.

In Christian apologetics it was argued that the Law had been abrogated and the Church antedated Moses, going back to the faith of Abraham, even to the promise made to Adam. "The human soul is 'naturally Christian', and Christ is the Logos who enlightens every man who comes into the world." (John 1:9). In addition, "The Mosaic Law was only for Jews who for their unworthiness, and their cult of the golden calf were given the burden of the Law....The Church and Israel are synonymous, the Jews are an apostate nation truant from the providential role of the chosen people." (Flannery, 1985, 39)

Israel had been 'rejected' and Christianity 'elected' but Judaism was still healthy.

### **Judaizing and the response of the Church**

There were two groups of Christians known as Judaizers.

1. Judaeo Christians – Gentile Christians who observed certain Mosaic commandments as an integral part of their Christianity. This was the larger group.
2. Jewish Christians – Jews who had become Christians but who did not totally abandon certain Mosaic commandments.

Neither group considered that observance of Mosaic rituals was incompatible with loyalty to Jesus. (Gager, 1983, 117-118)

There was a wide range of Judaizing practices, such as attending Jewish festivals like Passover, observing Jewish feasts, undergoing circumcision, observing the Jewish Sabbath, adopting Jewish superstitions such as using Jewish charms, amulets, spells and prayers for miracle cures, honouring the synagogue as a holy site and asking for rabbinical blessings, or sleeping in a synagogue hoping for dream revelation. (Gager, 1983, 117-118; Flannery, 1985, 44-45)

The response of the Church to Judaizers appears to have been growing frustration and fury that this type of Christian was not able to accept Paul's dictum that faith in Jesus alone, without the security of the Law, was enough for salvation.

Gager (1983, 118) and Flannery (1985, 45-46) consider that the practice of Judaizing among early Christians generated hostility to Jews and Judaism in a very powerful way. The presence of Judaizers in Christian congregations over three centuries roused Christian preachers and apologists to furious declamations of Jews and Judaism, thus provoking anti-Jewish behaviour and attitudes among Christians – a potential linking of anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic beliefs and feelings.

The Patristic fathers wrote works of increasing condemnation of Jews and Judaism because many Christians in their parishes were attracted to the Jewish religion and to Judaizing. There was a growing tide of anti-Judaism among Christian leaders and preachers.

Flannery (1985, 45) points out that, first, rabbis were usually much better at explanation of the scriptures and exegesis than Christian preachers, and so Christians were attracted to the discussions held by Rabbis and the

ensuing discussions with Jews and other Christians. This added to the frustrations felt by Christian priests and bishops.

Secondly, Judaism was very attractive to many Christians and the strong appeal was one of the reasons for mounting anti-Judaic feelings among the Church leaders.

Thirdly, almost all the new converts to Christianity had been attracted to Judaism as Gentiles before becoming Christian, and insisted (against pressure) on maintaining their Jewish practice.

Gager considers that it was because Judaism was such a powerful and vigorous tradition that Jews did not wish to cut themselves off from such a source of power. (Gager, 1983, 133) Gentile Christians also did not wish to cut themselves off from Jewish customs because these practices fitted in so well with pagan Hellenistic culture.

Both Judaism and Christianity refused to accept Judaeo-Christianity, which was considered as a merger of the Church and Synagogue. The rejections had been made by the Council of Jerusalem, and by the Synagogue at Jabne in CE 80. The result was the splitting off of many Judaizing groups, and gnostic groups also. John Gager believes that if these Jewish Christians had been permitted to exist side by side with Christians and Jews our whole history, as well as the history of the Church and Synagogue, may have been completely different. (Gager, 1983, 43)

Judaizing in the Church became a very serious problem, and almost certainly had a large share of responsibility for the development of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism which is still in existence.

## **The growing animosity from Patristic writers and preachers**

Because of the mutual animosity between Christians and Jews and the growing Christian conviction that Jews were being punished by God, fierce competition between Christians and Jews for converts, and because many Christians were attracted by Judaism and by Judaizers, Christian bishops and preachers began to write anti-Jewish tracts and books. These Christians were to be known as the "Patristic Fathers", and their literature was known as "Adversus Judaeus" literature because it was devoted entirely to the denigration of Jews and everything Jewish. Sermons, dialogues, diatribes and polemics were written against the Jews. (Wilson, 1989, 92)

At first the Patristic Fathers wrote out of indignation and frustration or fury, with two specific objectives in mind. The first objective was to attract converts to Christianity, and the second was to put an end to Christians associating with Jews and becoming Judaizers. However the criticisms which at first appeared to have a purpose and to be greatly exaggerated became deadly serious and were meant to be taken literally. There was an increasing pitch of malice and venom and everything concerning Jews over all time was declared to be evil and never to be redeemed. They reached a crescendo of venom in St John Chrysostom. Apart from criticisms of Jews in the New Testament, others may be read today by Christians when they read some Greek and Roman classical writers as well as the 'Adversus Judaeus' literary group. Some of these unfair and unfounded criticisms based on personal anger have now become an accepted part of Christian thinking, such as statements that the Jewish Law had been abrogated because of the Jewish rejection of Christ and the Old Testament is in the possession of Christians. Most Christians do not question statements in the New Testament, whether they denigrate the Jews or similar allegations in other Christian writings could be unreliable or exaggerated or completely unjust. They are accepted as fact because they have probably been written by Christian saints.

In the literature of the Patristic Fathers everything centred on the Messiahship of Christ. The Jews abrogated the Law and so lost their entitlements to the Scripture and it was the vocation of the Church to proceed with its use of the Hebrew Scriptures, because according to Christian views:

- (a) the Church antedates the old Israel, back to Abraham and even to Adam
- (b) the Church is a Church of the Gentiles
- (c) the human soul is "naturally Christian"
- (d) Christ is the light to lighten the way for every man
- (e) Mosaic Law is only for unworthy Jews. They were given this burden of the Law because of their cult of the golden calf
- (f) the terms 'Church' and 'Israel' are synonymous.

These are the dominant themes in 'Adversus Judaeus' literature. (Flannery, 1985, 39)

The *Letter of Barnabas* appears to have been written early in the first century. Acts tells that Barnabas was a companion of Paul, who preached with Paul at Antioch and went on a missionary journey with Paul to Cyprus and Asia Minor. His writing was an attempt to prove the Jews had misunderstood their scripture, which was meant to be interpreted metaphorically and not literally:

*...since all therein is but a prefiguring of Christ and the Church.*

*Do not add to your sins and say that the covenant is both theirs and ours. Yes it is ours but they lost it forever.* (Simon, 1986, 216)

According to Barnabas' theory of Prefiguration, the Church is and always was the True Israel. (Simon, 1986, 216)

Justin Martyr (100-165 CE), a native of Shechem in Palestine, was one of the most influential Patristic Fathers whose ideas are still affecting how Christians feel about Jews. Justin is noted for writing a very important book approximately fifty years after the Gospel of St John was written. Some scholars think it may even have been written during the second

Jewish Revolt CE 132-135, in which case the author would have been influenced by the great hardening of Christian attitudes against the Jews at that period. His book was "The most important and complete Christian tract against the Jews of the second if not all early centuries." (Flannery, 1985, 39)

The book was *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew* in which a serious discussion about Judaism and Christianity is held between the author and a learned Jewish Rabbi. It is thought that Justin was the first person to proclaim that the continued misfortune of the Jews is due to divine displeasure and punishment for the responsibility of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This concept has had a tremendous impact on how Christians perceived Jews. Many Christians still believe this today.

Justin says to Trypho "tribulations were justly imposed upon you for you have murdered the Just One." (Flannery, 1985, 40) Justin also adds that "Jews were excluded from Jerusalem which was in flames", "and from their desolated lands" as well because of their wickedness. This was the beginning of the Christian attitude that all Jews were doomed to continue to suffer for the death of Christ and that for this reason they were stateless and had so many ongoing misfortunes.

St Justin was a trained philosopher and admirer of Plato and he used his knowledge of Greek concepts and attitudes to influence Gentile Christians and attract them to Christianity. These Greek attitudes to marriage and sexual morality, and virtues of celibacy as well as attitudes to salvation and spirituality are still found among Christians who were thus influenced by the idea that all flesh and matter were evil. It may also explain why the Jews were frequently accused of having gross carnal attitudes and why there was such animosity between Jews and celibate Christian monks.

Justin was a brilliant apologist for Christianity, and died a martyr's death in Rome in 165. Justin Martyr was the first Christian to write of the Hebrew scriptures they are "not yours [of the Jews] but ours [of the Christians.] What formerly belonged to Israel is now rightfully the property of Christians." (Wilson, 1989, 89) But when he wrote that all that belonged to Israel is now ours (Christians'), the people taking up this idea had forgotten that Paul had written "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable" (Rom. 11: 29).

This was the beginning of the anti-Semitic concept of the Jews being responsible for Deicide and also the first instance of the ominous theme that Jewish misfortunes are the consequence of divine punishment for the death of Christ. The term Deicide was, and remains, an expression used by Christians to ascribe to Jews the most heinous of all crimes – the Death of God by betraying Jesus to the Roman executioners.

Tertullian, an African and a lawyer, c. 160-225, was also a writer of great importance in condemning the Jews. Tertullian wrote *Adversus Judaeus* which was the first systematic attempt to refute Judaism. "His anti-Judaism is purely theological and without acrimony," says Flannery. However, in *Adversus Judaeus* the Jews are blamed for their sins and invited to repentance: "The general attitude toward Judaism is moderate with a note of sadness and hope for reunion." (Flannery, 1985, 40)

After Tertullian, however, Christians became more acrimonious and vindictive when referring to Jews and Judaism. Meanwhile, however, Tertullian tells of Jews offering Christians shelter from persecutions in their Synagogues, and archaeologists have discovered evidence of Christian martyrs buried in Jewish cemeteries. (Flannery, 1985, 31)

Hippolytus, Cyprian and Origen were also a great influence through their writings which contained condemnation of the Jews – a characteristic of Patristic literature. Hippolytus writes:

*...though the Jews boast of having killed Christ they should not forget that their misfortunes were the result. They will always be slaves. They have found pardon for their past sins but will be left desolate 'because they killed the 'son of their benefactor'. (Flannery, 1985, 11)*

He warns of ills that will befall them in the future age on account of the contumacy and audacity which they exhibited toward the Prince of Peace.

Origen (c.185-c.254) wrote *Against Celsus* in which he writes "we say with confidence that they will never be restored to their former condition. For they committed a crime of the most un-hallowed kind, in conspiring against the Saviour of the human race." (Flannery, 1985, 41)

Origen also writes, "And these calamities they [the Jews] have suffered, because they were a most wicked nation, which although guilty of many other sins, yet has been punished so severely for none, as those that were committed against our Jesus."

Cyprian, a teacher of rhetoric, collected over seven hundred texts for use in Christian arguments proving Jesus to be the expected Jewish Messiah. (Parkes, 1981, 99)

*Eusebius in his first book Preparatio Evangelica, and his second book Demonstratio Evangelica, (both completed before 311): proves the superiority and greater antiquity of Christianity in comparison with all other religions. "The Hebrews are the most ancient people in the world, and their religion is the basis of Greek philosophy. But they themselves though not 'Jews' were not 'Gentiles' either. Rather they were from the beginning Christians and led a Christian way of life. The Patriarchs pleased God by their lives and Abraham in that he lived by virtue, lived as a Christian and not as a Jew. (Parkes, 1981, 161-162)*

As Baum explains, the Christian view of the Old Testament was different from the understanding which the Jews had of their own scriptures. Therefore it must be obvious to everyone as the Christians understand it, that only Christians can be the True Israel, because Christians are the only ones who can understand the Hebrew scriptures. So the difference between the "blind" Synagogue and the believing Church continued. The dichotomies of evil and goodness, damnation and salvation, were compared so that in the end "the Jewish people became the embodiment of all that is unredeemed, perverse, stubborn, evil, and demonic in this world." (Baum, 1974, 12-13)

After Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire Jews were excluded from society and became legally oppressed. The Church's spiritual negation of Jewish existence thus found expression in social and political terms. Thus Christendom claimed the story of Israel in the Old Testament as exclusively part of its own history. The Church claimed all the heroes and virtuous characters of the scriptures. To the Jews they allotted only the villains and idolaters, only all the threats and denunciations, as Baum puts it, the result was a terrible misrepresentation of Jewish history from almost every page of Christian literature. (Baum, 1974, 12-13)

### **Attitudes harden further in Augustine and Chrysostom**

During the first three centuries Christian attitudes to Judaism were disapproving but not vicious or motivated by hatred. Christians regarded Jews as disobedient and foolish in pursuing their religion, but were not in one voice threatening that dire consequences would be wrought against them in retribution by God. Rather, they seemed to be praying for forgiveness for Jews, hoping they would soon change their ways.

By the fourth and fifth centuries anti-Jewish writings display growing levels of virulence. What began in theology and rhetoric has turned to hatred and stereotype, the life blood of anti-Semitism.

The initial polemic that Judaism, being no longer God's vessel of salvation because of infidelity and replaced by the Church, was transferred to the view that Jews, wicked and despicable, were unworthy and rejected by God from the beginning. Jews were viewed as not only wrong but evil. Ethnic criticism was added to anti-Judaism. The most ominous development of all was elaboration of the theme of a divine curse and punishment upon Jews for their role in the crucifixion of Christ.

St Augustine is regarded as one of the most brilliant theologians in Christian history. He is noted for his autobiography *Confessions* in which he was very courageous and frank about his own sinfulness, and also for the books *City of God* and *Treatise Against the Jews*.

Augustine like other Patristic Fathers denigrated Jews and Judaism but, unlike others, thought Christians should extend kind actions to them and encourage them to repent and be saved by Jesus Christ. He thought the Jews were a 'Witness people'. God meant them to continue living so they could be a witness to the goodness and spiritual behaviour of Christians who would be saved by the Grace of Jesus Christ. As a Witness people they would save the nation but not save themselves. (Flannery, 1985, 53)

Augustine used the analogy of Cain and Abel to refer to Christians and Jews. The murderous older brother Cain, seen as the Jew, was now in a subservient position to the younger, Abel. (Ruether, 1974, 134) Augustine uses allegory to appeal to Jews to recognise that "Christians are the true Spiritual Israel, the fruit of the scriptural promise". (Ruether, 1974, 148) Only by becoming Christians can they be saved.

*Jewish misery is testimony to the Victory of Christ's Church and the wrath of God will fall on those who fail to believe in Christ. Augustine also includes the idea that Jewish dispersion functions as a witness to the Church, preparing pagans for Christianity through the Law and witnessing to that Christ whom their scriptures predict.* (Ruether, 1974, 148)

To Augustine, the attitude of Jews still hoping for their Jewish Messiah and rejecting Jesus Christ, was madness and perversity. Even though the Jewish dispersion commenced five hundred years before the birth of Christ, Augustine suggested this punishment must have been pre-ordained for the death of Christ, and many Christians today still believe that this was indeed the case. St Augustine is one of the most influential Patristic Fathers and has had a tremendous impact on the Church.

St John Chrysostom, CE 347-407, known as 'The Golden Mouth', was Bishop of Antioch. Ruether remarks that the eight sermons of John Chrysostom are the most "violent and tasteless" of the 'Adversus Judaeus' writings. They are notable for the "frenzied quality of the rhetorical tone". (Ruether, 1974, 173) It is said Chrysostom gathered up all the negative derogatory statements against the Jews which he could find, and clamped them all together and used them himself. (Simon, 1986, 217) Ruether writes that Chrysostom's basic theme is the "complete illegitimacy of the Synagogue as an ongoing vehicle of relationship to God," (Ruether, 1974, 174) owing to the abrogation of the Law and the fall of the Temple.

The thrust of Chrysostom's energy and desire to fulminate against the Jews was because he was continually annoyed by many Christians in his See refusing to give up their Judaizing habits. These involved visiting and worshipping in Synagogues and practising Jewish religious rites even though they are officially members of the Christian Church. His series of eight Homilies or Sermons against the Jews seeks to ensure that Christians will be revolted and return to Christian observances only. Ruether writes that Chrysostom tells Christians they should "do everything in their power to hunt down the misguided Judaizers, just like hunters tracking wild animals, and persuade them by any method to abandon their evil fraternizing with Christ's murderers." (Ruether, 1974, 177) Christian Judaizers must be rescued from the Jewish devils who are

subhuman and fit only for slaughter. Thus Chrysostom sought to convert not the Jews, but only the Judaizers.

Chrysostom seems to regard Jewish responsibility for the crucifixion as a kind of inherited trait and all the crimes and vices ascribed to the Jews of old were present in the Jews of his day. The Jews had broken every commandment which God would have them keep. Thus he fostered the view that Jews have always been the personification of evil and the execution of Christ by them was inevitable.

Chrysostom was a born reformer and fiery preacher who endeavoured not only to refute but also to develop disgust against the Jews. In Homily 4:1 he refers to their "rapine", their "cupidity" and their "deception of the poor", calling them "lustful, rapacious, greedy perfidious bandits", "inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil, debauchery and drunkenness" (Homily 1:4). (Flannery, 1985, 50) Included in these diatribes are scriptural and theological arguments. For their sins no expiation, indulgence or pardon is possible – the rejection and dispersion of the Jews was the work of God not the Emperors (Vespasian and Titus). God hates the Jews and has always hated the Jews (Homily 6:8, 1:7). He who can never love Christ enough, will never have done fighting against those who hate Him (7:1). (Flannery, 1985, 51) At best, Chrysostom gives grudging credit to Jews for loyalty and determination by sticking to their principles about their religion through great adversity. Though he was a great churchman and orator, his lack of charity and justice regarding Jews detracts from his reputation. He has exerted a very negative influence over Christians for centuries. (Flannery, 1984, 52)

### **The Church capitalizes on pagan Anti-Semitism**

As seen in Chapter Two, the basic cause of Greco-Roman anti-Semitism before Christianity was because of Jewish social separation from the surrounding community.

Anti-Semitism in the ancient world was not particularly racist nor was it based on economic differences between citizens, as Jews were spread throughout society in all manner of occupations. Jews who became apostate from their religion could be offered very prestigious community positions. There was nothing different about Jews in Roman society except that they kept to themselves and did not associate or dine with other people. It was their religious behaviour which made them different and it is this self-imposed separation that pagan anti-Semitism was based on. Jews also claimed specific privileges in Roman society granted to them by Julius Caesar and ratified and endorsed by Augustus Caesar. In this situation with the state their religion was regarded as 'religio licita' in which the state, that is, the Roman Empire, guaranteed certain religious rights to the Jews. (See Chapter Two.)

The pagans considered the Jews to be atheistic because they refused to pour libations of wine and throw grains of corn on the altars to pagan Gods. In fact, it was not this refusal to acknowledge pagan Gods, so much as their refusal to mix openly with other people, which caused the pagan resentment against the Jews. Small groups of Jews became closely knit groups in pagan society having only superficial relations with other surrounding people who were unable to understand the meaning of the Jewish religious rites and festivals. This was similar to how Freemasons have been regarded. Exclusive societies are subject to rumours about the mysteries of their activities.

Simon points out that the fundamental difference between pagan anti-Semitism and Christian anti-Semitism is that the pagan anti-Semitism was spontaneous and not considered or thought about, whereas Christian anti-Semitism was organised and thought out having developed because of theological frustration because the Jews would not accept Christianity. The anti-Semitism of the pagans was purely socially based and contained angry thoughts at certain Jewish society's privileges. (Simon, 1986, 223)

As mentioned in Chapter Two, scholars disagree about the level of pre-Christian pagan anti-Semitism and its continuing influence.

Simon alleges that “the old accusations, which sprang from Christian malevolence, gain a new lease of life under the pens of the Christian Fathers [and] also gain a new virulence.” He adds “Christian anti-Semitism existed, at least in rudimentary form, at the very beginning of Christianity, it only unfolds fully in the fourth century.” Simon also considers that the pagan world continued to have hostility toward Jews and Christians expressed the attitude that Jews were “obdurate dissidents”; and that the “true Christian anti-Semitism was theological” and was nourished by the Bible itself, from which it “drew the material to support its assertions and its condemnations”. (Simon, 1986, 208)

The Christians capitalized on the pagan dislike for Jews and anti-Semitism slowly increased in virulence until the fourth century when the Emperor Constantine became a Christian, followed by the Christianisation of the Roman Empire.

Some scholars consider that Gentiles converted to Christianity introduced a strong feeling of anti-Semitism because the intelligentsia among them had been greatly influenced by the classical writers who had condemned Jews and Judaism after only a very superficial knowledge of Jews. Other Gentiles had become anti-Semitic after living in Alexandria and sea-ports nearby which had a very strong anti-Semitic presence. However this idea that the Gentiles were a very strong influence for anti-Semitism in the Christian Church does not seem very plausible as we are told by other sources that most of the Gentiles who become Christians had previously been proselytes to Judaism and had later changed to Christianity. Therefore most of these people would have been pro-Jewish rather than anti-Jewish so they are an unlikely cause of pagan or Christian anti-Semitism.

## **Pressure exerted on Christian emperors**

Rosemary Radford Ruether describes how the “negative myth of the Jews” as developed by the Christian Patristic Fathers gradually became accepted as normal and acceptable in later Christian documents. It even entered the Roman legal system with its critical and defamatory language and attitude toward Jews, and this in turn affected the social conditions of Jewish people as Christianity continued to develop power in late fourth century Rome. Ruether refers to how “this inferiorized legal status” of the Jew in Christendom, “legislated as a direct interpretation of the Church’s doctrine about the Jews, gradually resulted in the loss of all civil rights, as well as an economic role that made the Jew hated.” (Ruether, 1974, 183) Ruether continues that this eventually led to the state of “total vilification, rightlessness, and ghettoization” that became typical of Jewish life in Western Europe from the later Middle Ages.

The Roman Empire’s concept of ‘*religio licita*’ was adhered to until the end of the fourth century when certain laws (see Chapter Two) began to be slightly changed to favour Christianity. (Flannery, 1985, 56-71; Smallwood, 1979, 9-10) As time went by Christians put more and more pressure on the Emperor and state administration to change laws which they saw as giving advantage to the Jews, but “the common acknowledgement of both Church and State that Judaism possessed the right to exist and thus should enjoy a basic liberty of cult.” (Flannery, 1985, 56)

The problem was how to protect the interests of Judaism and also promote the interest of the Church – now the State religion. Smallwood writes, “Rome gave toleration and protection to Judaism because the only alternative in dealing with a group that rejected assimilation or compromise would have been suppression.” (Smallwood, 1979, 7)

However, some rulers and church men had over-zealous ideas about combating the “Jewish evil”, and in succumbing to these ideas overlooked traditional law. As time went by, conditions for Judaism

slowly deteriorated, until from being a religion protected by the state as it had been since the days of Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar, it could be classified as a religion which was having laws deliberately enacted against it. This was an era of triumph for Christianity.

Some of the laws which were enacted by Constantine and succeeding emperors are as follows.

As early as CE 200 proselytism by Jews was made illegal and people were explicitly forbidden to become Jews. However, this law was largely disregarded. At Elvira in Spain, in 306, marriage between Jew and Christian was banned unless the Jew was converting to Christianity. Close relations between Jewish and Christian communities were also banned. (Flannery, 1985, 55; Smallwood, 1979, 14-15) Also, at the Council of Elvira's statement, no Christian was to accept Jewish hospitality or to have fields blessed by Jews, thus trying to prevent socialising between Christians and Jews and resulting proselytising by Jews. The penalty for breaking these rules was excommunication from the Church. Any Christian who became a Jew after 337 lost their right to inherit or to make a will. (Smallwood, 1979, 14-15)

*In 323 the Church was accorded a unique position of favor and privilege; and when on his death bed in 329 Constantine was converted to the Church, the Imperial Government initiated restrictive measures against Jewish privileges and proselytism. By the end of the fourth century, the Jews' civil status was precarious and his/her image had greatly deteriorated. (Flannery, 1985, 48)*

Constantine issued a law forbidding Jews to have Christian slaves. No Jew, pagan, or heretic was to own a Christian slave. Constantine's successor Constantius II brought in a law that anyone who circumcised a Gentile slave was liable to execution. (Smallwood, 1979, 16) Constantius II also issued laws about Christians owing slaves. The point of the laws was not to restrict Jews but to close down opportunities for Jewish proselytism. However, it also closed opportunities for Jews in business and farming, as

their operations could not proceed without slaves. Laws issued by Constantine greatly affected the municipal duties Jews were expected to shoulder, having to pay personally for any deficit in the accounts of the town or city, whereas once these positions had been a great honour, now they had become a great financial burden to Jews and others of their financial status. Most Jews were in the hereditary class of 'curiales' – lower middle class. (Parkes, 1981, 178)

The Edict of Milan, in 313 under Constantine, conceded toleration for all cults including Judaism. (Flannery, 1985, 48) Two years later, in a law issued by Constantine, Judaism was referred to as a 'deadly sect' and as a 'criminal sect'. (Smallwood, 1979, 8)

Among many edicts from the Council of Nicaea, in 325, Jews were prohibited from celebrating the Passover with Christians, or from celebrating Passover before Easter. (Flannery, 1985, 55) The Christian Church formulated its policy toward Jews. The Jews must continue to exist for the sake of Christianity, in seclusion and humiliation.

The Council of Antioch, in 341, reinforced the Council of Nicaea that Jews were not to celebrate the Passover with Christians, (Flannery, 1985, 55) and also threatened to excommunicate any cleric who celebrated Easter with a Jew. (Parkes, 1981, 175) Parkes writes that the regulations of the fourth century give the impression that Christians might have been involved in Jewish practices such as the adoption of the same date for Easter as for Passover and of actually participating in the Passover.

*It is laid down that the gospels are to be read on the Sabbath as well as the rest of the Scriptures. Christians are not to Judaize, but work on the Sabbath, and rest upon the Lord's day. They are not to receive gifts from the festivals of Jews and heretics. And finally they are not to accept unleavened bread from them nor take part in their 'impieties'. (Parkes, 1981, 175)*

*They deal in still further detail with religious fellowship between the clergy and the Jews. 'No bishop, presbyter or deacon, or any other*

*member of the clergy is to share the Jewish feast or to receive from them unleavened bread or other material for a feast. [from Apostolic Canon, 69]. No cleric or layman is to go into the Synagogue of Jews or heretics to pray [from Apostolic Canon, 63]. No Christian is to tend the lamps of Heathen temples or Jewish synagogues on feast days [from Apostolic Canon, 70]. (Parkes, 1981, 176)*

These are rules from The Apostolic Canons, which are a Syrian compilation of the fourth century, and they strengthen this interpretation. There are canons from Elvira, Canon 49, Antioch, Canon 1, and Laodicea, Canon 16, 29, 37, 38. The councils dealt mainly with religious and social contact between Jews and Christians, but there is also evidence of ecclesiastical pressure in the Imperial Legislation which dealt with the actual rights and privileges of the Jewish community. (Parkes, 1981, 177) These rules give the impression that there were very definite Judaizing tendencies, "and actual religious fellowship with the Jewish inhabitants."

Parkes also notes that in the fourth century there was a "gradual breakdown of the machine of imperial central government. The rich became richer, or at least more powerful, and the poor became poorer." The middle class had a huge burden of imperial taxation which was avoided by the very rich. Some middle class Jews found it very difficult to avoid the onerous task of municipal duties for which they had to make up any deficiencies. (Parkes, 1981, 177-178)

In 361-363 Julian the Apostate permitted Jews to commence rebuilding the Temple, but he died too soon for it to be completed. (Haim, 1972, 766-767) His death and the failure to rebuild the Temple was explained by Christians as God not wanting the Temple to be rebuilt – so God continues to punish the Jews.

Kung (1991, 153) writes that there was a real shift in Roman policy one hundred years after Constantine's death, after Theodosius the Great (379-395) had ended freedom of religion, in 380 declaring Christianity to be the state religion, and paganism and heresy to be crimes against the state under Emperor Theodosius II (401-450).

From CE 383 any Christian who lapsed into either Judaism or Paganism lost their right to inherit or make a will. (Smallwood, 1979, 15)

Under Theodosius I, Emperor of the East, also known as Theodosius the Great, a law reinforcing Julius Caesar's 'religio licita' was issued in 393, stating "It is well established that the sect of the Jews is not forbidden by any law", (Smallwood, 1979, 10) and goes on to express grave disquiet at reports that "in some places Jews have been forbidden to attend the Synagogue." The instructions proceed to say that Roman authorities in the West must punish any people who "'in the name of the Christian religion' try to deprive the Jews of their right of assembly or maliciously damage Synagogues." (Smallwood, 1979, 10) Smallwood continues, "The threat to Judaism is no longer that of the antipathy of Pagans, but the theologically-based hostility of Christians who might attempt to stir up a 'holy war' against their rival". (Smallwood, 1979, 10) "The law was evidently disregarded" because anti-Semitic disturbances continued early in the fifth century. (Parkes, 1979, 11)

Theodosius I, in 388, had ordered Bishop Ambrose to replace a burned synagogue, one of several which had been destroyed. The Bishop angrily threatened the Emperor with refusal of the sacraments, if he didn't rescind this order. The Emperor gave in. (Smallwood, 1979, 10) A 404 law "summarily sacked Jews serving in the lucrative post of Imperial courier", (Smallwood, 1979, 21) and in 408 a law was issued "forbidding the Jews to burn the effigy of Haman on a gibbet at the feast of Purim because that looked like a contemptuous parody of the Crucifixion. (Smallwood, 1979, 12)

A Law of 409 states "Jews responsible for conversions – those who compel certain Christians to assume the detestable and offensive name of Jews. For it is more grievous than death and more cruel than murder if any person of the Christian faith is polluted by Jewish disbelief; any infringement of this law is rated as treason, for which the penalty was death." Many further such laws were to follow, restricting Jews' rights and freedoms.

An important series of laws was recorded as the Theodosian code published in 438. Theodosius was Roman Emperor in the East in 393, and the code contained all the laws of legitimate emperors between 312 and 438. These included banning Jews from possessing Christian slaves, thus depriving many of them of income. The Empire was now split in two administratively and the Western half was ruled from Rome and the Eastern half from Constantinople.

Theodosius II also came into conflict with the Christian Church when he demanded the restoration of a confiscated synagogue but was strongly reprimanded by St Simon Stylites. (Flannery, 1985, 61) Flannery considers there are four main categories of law in the Theodosian Code:

1. statutes which establish Judaism's basic rights and freedoms;
2. "those which prohibit injustices or violence against Jews or their cult";
3. "those prohibiting anti-Christian practices by Jews";
4. "and those which restrict Jewish cult and activities". (Flannery, 1985, 56)

Flannery notes several points included in this Code. "That Judaism remained a *religio licita* under the Christian Empire is clearly set forth in several statutes," and "Judaism is not a prohibited sect." Judaism has the right of excommunication of its members and Judaism's "clergy are entitled to the same privileges as Christian clergy, and its patriarch is to be granted his accustomed privileges." Several of these statutes such as prevention of attacks on Synagogues are reiterated under Theodosius II

early in the fifth century. However the situation for the Jews is definitely deteriorating as can be seen in progressive legislation under Theodosius II. (Flannery, 1985, 56)

The Justinian Code was published in the East in 534. Smallwood writes that over these two centuries the situation for the Jews slowly changed for the worse. Under the Justinian code conditions became worse, as its laws "seriously affected the worsening situation for Jews, and inspired considerable future anti-Jewish legislation. In almost all areas of Jewish life the code imposed further disabilities." (Smallwood, 1979, 10) Jews were barred from public functions, Jewish property rights were narrowed and the Bible was to be read in Greek or Latin at synagogue services as well as in Hebrew. The laws in this code prepared the way for even harsher laws against Jews.

### **Conclusion**

Of the many factors causing the deterioration of the status of the Jews in the later years of the Christian Roman Empire, the decision of the Council of Jerusalem permitting Gentiles to become Christians without becoming a Jew first and the two Jewish Revolts against Rome in 66-70 and 132-135 are among the most important.

The rejection of the necessity for circumcision before conversion to Christianity greatly eased the path for Gentiles to become Christian and the resounding defeat of the Jews in the two revolts against the Romans produced a decisive break between the Church and the Synagogue when the Christians refused to support the Jews, and also the fact that many Jews followed Bar Kochba as the supposed Jewish Messiah.

Added to this, the tremendous destruction to the Temple and to Jerusalem, and then the destruction of the Jewish country-side, and consequent dispersion of almost all the Jews into other parts of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, gave the Christian Church a

powerful psychological weapon for proving God had rejected the Jews and that the Christians were now the favoured people of God. The Church had superseded the Synagogue. The Jews were to be denigrated and disrespected from that time onwards.

After the Roman Empire became Christian under Constantine, the situation for Jews was protected by laws which had been in force for over three centuries. However, the vociferous denigration and derogatory comments made quite unjustly against Jews were constantly repeated by the Church Fathers – comments such as “the Jews committed Deicide, they have rejected Christ, God is punishing them for their irrevocable sins, they are a wicked and irredeemable people” – began to creep into the Roman laws, so that by the fifth century and under the Theodosian code, the ‘religio licita’ law protecting Jews had been abandoned, and they continued their slow slide into the future, with conditions becoming more and more appalling for their continued existence.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions - Including the New Testament

The presence of anti-Semitism in the New Testament writings themselves is too controversial and too large an issue for a thesis of this length to cover. In summing up I will simply mention some of the questions that need to be faced by scholars in coming to terms with this subject.

Jules Isaac stated that the Bible is undoubtedly the word of God, but it was humans who wrote it, implying that humans are not infallible. He also claimed that the only Jewish history Christians are ever taught is the history of early Christian-Jewish relations as presented in the Gospels and Acts of the New Testament. This particular history gives a distorted, unbalanced and inadequate view of that time, and it is only a caricature of Jewish history. We are not given a glimpse of the other side of Christian/Jewish confrontations. Christian clergy are ignorant of the true facts of Jewish-Christian history in the first century, nor are they even aware of the possibility that there is an anti-Jewish bias in the Gospels of Matthew and John. For Christians who accept all the words of the New Testament as absolute truth it is very difficult for them to accept that the New Testament was not written to be read literally as if it was actual linear history, because of the idiosyncrasies of writing in the period in which it was composed.

As discussed in previous chapters, there are several causes for Christian anti-Semitism but the underlying cause and perhaps the most important cause of all is the fact that Jews on the whole were unable to accept the Christian view of Jesus as the promised Messiah. This is because they had been promised that when the Messiah arrived, peace and calm would come upon the world, and evil, pain and sorrow would disappear. Another important factor is that they believe in the One true God, so to accept Jesus as fully divine would be blasphemy.

Christians throughout history have been unable to understand this refusal to accept Christ in Christian terms and have tried to blame it on the Jews' being 'stubborn and stiff-necked'. Thus, as we have seen, church leaders such as John Chrysostom denounced the Jews "for their 'deep rooted impiety and their irremediable blindness', and he despaired of their salvation." (Simon, 1986, 144). Also influential, still today, is the belief that the Jews are responsible for the crucifixion of Christ – Deicide.

Other important causes of anti-Semitism in the New Testament and later Christian writings, are the practice of Judaizing among converts to Christianity, the need for the Church to define and differentiate itself against its rival for the identical scriptures, ethical philosophy and Hebrew prophets, and the intense and unexpectedly strong rivalry between the Church and a vigorous restructured Judaism. This last situation was underlying all the other causes of denigration of Jews and Judaism.

Judaizing increased in prevalence until the fourth century and, as we have seen, in its wake came the ever-present venomous and bitter anti-Jewish outbursts from the leading clergymen such as bishops Chrysostom and Ambrose. These clergy also negated Judaism theologically by denouncing as inauthentic the religious and theological claims of Judaism.

In reference to the need for self-definition of Christianity against Judaism, Ruether writes:

*For Christianity, anti-Judaism was not merely a defense against attack, but an intrinsic need of Christian self-affirmation. Anti-Judaism is part of Christian exegesis.* (Quoted in Gager, 1983, 20)

This continual denigration of Jews in Christian scripture and in the writings of the Patristic Fathers brings about a situation whereby Christians are unaware that their Christian Scriptures and writings often

vilify Jews. The result of this over generations of Christians is that they are not aware that they have absorbed a subconscious attitude to Jews as evil hypocrites.

### **Factors causing anti-Semitism in the New Testament.**

The earliest of the writings in the New Testament is thought to be the collection of the seven Epistles written by Paul to newly converted groups following the 'way' of Jesus Christ, probably written between CE 50 and 60, shortly before Paul's death c. 62-64.

There are other 'Pauline' Epistles written after Paul's death by his followers, but written in his name. The last of the New Testament books to be written were Jude and II Peter, which were written in approximately 150. So the contents of this series of books took approximately one hundred years to complete. Several other epistles and books were not selected to be included in the Scripture.

During this period many tremendous events occurred. Crucial were the two Jewish Revolts against Rome in 66-70 and 132-135, and the siege at Masada in 73-74; and internal Christian events such as the Council of Jerusalem in 49; as well as on-going Jewish-Christian altercations and verbal disagreements. All these events had a significant effect on the direction of the thoughts expressed in the New Testament. These influences can often be seen more clearly by arranging the books in chronological order of writing and distribution. By following this method, as suggested by James Veitch in his series of volumes of translations of the New Testament (Veitch, vol. 1, 1993; vol. 2, 1994; vol. 3 A and B, 1995; vol. 4, 1994), we can observe the impact of social condition, such as the effects of Messianism between Jesus' death and the First Jewish Revolt, probably precipitating that revolt; the effects of the two Jewish Revolts and Masada; the burning and torturing of Christians by the Emperor Nero in CE 64 resulting in the frenzied confused visions and metaphoric

warnings of the Book of Revelation, and probably also affecting the writing in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.

With the ongoing chronicle of events affecting the people as they live through these periods, we also find that the relationship between Jews and Christians is affected, often for the worse. For instance, the Treaty of Jerusalem was the cause of concern for Jews because the outcome had been the refusal of Paul and his associates to accept that Jewish circumcision or ritual practices should be imposed on Gentile converts to Christianity. This inevitably resulted in polarization between the Jewish church at Jerusalem and the Gentile Church at Antioch, as it was no longer necessary for them to compromise over differences or co-operate in mutual decisions for the future of the Church.

Richard N. Longenecker writes:

*The decision reached by the council must be considered one of the boldest and magnanimous [sic] in the annals of church history. ...While still attempting to minister to Jews themselves, Jewish Christians in Jerusalem refused to impede the progress of that other branch of the christian mission whose every success inevitably meant only further difficulty and oppression for them. (Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics for Today*, 1984, 39, quoted in Wilson, 1989, 49)*

In CE 70, during the destruction of the Temple and most of Jerusalem, Jewish leaders and scholars were able to find refuge in Jamnia, not far from Jerusalem, to try to regenerate Judaism which they brilliantly achieved; but at the same time scholars and leaders of the church also found a place for the generation of Christian theology, at Pella, also outside Jerusalem. This division of communities, while most successful for the individual religions, meant that Jews and Christians no longer met amicably in a normal community, nor met as before at their respective places of worship – the Synagogue and the Church.

In brief summary, then, there are three major precipitating factors causing an anti-Jewish bias in the New Testament.

The first factor is that the new Christian religion and the new reconstructed, post-Temple, Rabbinical Judaism were developing alongside each other from the middle of the first century onwards, and were in intense rivalry for Gentile converts. Christianity was in opposition to a long-established and highly-respected religion for which the Roman Empire had provided many protective laws.

The second major factor was that many new Christians, from Jewish as well as Gentile background, were refusing to abandon what is known as Judaizing, and were continuing Jewish practices against all threats from senior Christian clerics to observe Christian practices alone. This caused such fury among the clerics that even as late as the fourth century we read the epithets and exaggerated outrage of the Christian Bishops such as Chrysostom in Antioch who cannot contain himself as he vents his spleen on his parishioners for multiple Judaizing in his parish. This took place two and three centuries after the New Testament was written, but the strong vituperative anti-Jewish writing influenced contemporary and future Christians. Anti-Jewish invective became the accepted norm for Christian writing.

The third factor in the developing anti-Judaism in the Christian Church from the end of the first century onwards was the need for Christian theologians to define their Church and their culture against a strong and widely recognized Jewish Synagogue religion which had used the same scriptures (the Hebrew Bible) and Prophets as the basis for their culture for a far longer time than the Christians had. The Christian Church was coming from a new and unknown situation up against a vital religion of great social superiority and establishment which was recognised throughout the Roman Empire. The strong Synagogue had little to gain by fighting the weak Church, which had to prove its importance and

superiority to the whole Roman Empire. To accomplish this the Church had to negate everything Jewish, persistently and continuously, and in a loud voice.

A fuller treatment of New Testament anti-Semitism would need to deal with the following major disputes in recent scholarship:

1. The modern-day re-thinking of the political and social factors leading to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus which, unlike the Gospel writers, shows little grounds for blaming his death on rejection by the Jewish people or on a concerted attempt by the priests to destroy him. (see, e.g., Gager, 1983)
2. The strongly anti-Pharisee criticisms made by Jesus in the Gospels and the view that these are quite characteristic of rabbinic debate and have none of the theological anti-Jewish significance which Christians have attributed to them. (see, e.g., Sanders, 1993)
3. The debate over whether Paul and the Pauline writings express anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic views, or only reflect anti-Judaizing concern, and the theology and exhortation used to back it up. (see, e.g., Gager, 1983; Wilson, 1997)
4. The question whether various New Testament images of the relation between the faith of Israel and the Christian Church necessarily support supercession, rather than a form of parallel development and mutual recognition. (See, e.g., Wilson 1989; Swidler and others, 1990)
5. The significance of John's Gospel's polemic against "the Jews" with its portrayal of them as "children of the devil" - and whether this rhetoric has directly fed the fires of anti-Semitism. (See, e.g., Ruether 1974, Bondi 1997)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Bibliography

- Walter M. Abbott (gen.ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1966
- Yehoshua Amir, "Philo Judaeus", in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 13, Macmillan, New York, 1972
- Gregory Baum "Introduction", to Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: the Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, Seabury Press, New York, 1974
- Gregory Baum, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? A Re-examination of the New Testament* (rev. ed.), Paulist Press, Glen Rock, NJ, 1965
- The Holy Bible*
- Claire Huchet Bishop, "Foreword", to Jules Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, Holt Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1971
- Bondi, R.A. 1997. "John 8: 39-47: Children of Abraham or of the Devil", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 34:4, Fall 1997, 473-498.
- Irvin J. Borowsky, "Foreword", to James H. Charlesworth (ed), *Jews and Christians Exploring the Past, Present and Future*, Crossroad, New York, 1990
- James H. Charlesworth (ed), *Jews and Christians Exploring the Past, Present and Future*, Crossroad, New York, 1990
- Alan T. Davies, "Anti-Semitism", in *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Macmillan, New York, 1987
- Alan T. Davies (ed.), *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity: twelve Christian theologians explore the development and dynamics of anti-semitism within the Christian tradition*, Paulist Press, New York, 1979
- Mircea Eliade (ed-in-chief), *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Macmillan, New York, 1987
- Louis Feldman, "Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism in the First Century", in Hershel Shanks (ed.), *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development*, Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, 1992

- Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism* (rev. ed.), Paulist Press, New York, 1985
- David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1988
- John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1983
- Abraham Haim, "History Chart", in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1972
- Jules Isaac, *Jesus and Israel*, Holt Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1971
- Jules Isaac, *The Genesis of Anti-Semitism*, Colman-Levy, Paris, 1956
- William Klassen, "Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity: The State of the Question", in Peter Richardson and David Granskou (eds), *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, Vol. I, Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, Wilfred Laurier University Press, Waterloo, Ontario, 1986
- Hans Kung, *Judaism*, (transl. J. Bowden), SCMP, 1992
- R. Le Deaut, M. Gilles and M. Kelly (eds) *Journal of the Sisters of Zion*, Vol. XXIV No. 2-3, Service International de Documentation Judeo-Christienne, Rome, 1991
- Lee I.A. Levine, "Judaism From the Destruction of Jerusalem to the End of the Second Jewish Revolt: 70-135CE", in Hershel Shanks (ed.), *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development*, Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, 1992
- John C. Meagher, 'As the Twig Was Bent', in Alan T. Davies (ed.), *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity: twelve Christian theologians explore the development and dynamics of anti-semitism within the Christian tradition*, Paulist Press, New York, 1979
- James Parkes, *Antisemitism*, Quadrangle, Chicago, 1964
- James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism*, Atheneum, New York, 1969
- David A. Rausch, *A Legacy of Hatred: Why Christians Must Not Forget the Holocaust*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1984
- Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: the Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, Seabury Press, New York, 1974

- Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979
- Abraham Chaim Schalit, "Josephus Flavius", in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 10, 1972
- Hershel Shanks (ed.), *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development*, Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, 1992
- Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135-425)*, transl. H. McKeating, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986
- Marcel Simon, in Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism*, Paulist Press, New York, 1985
- E. Mary Smallwood, *From Pagan Protection to Christian Oppression*, E.J. Queen's University, Belfast, 1979
- E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian, a study in political relations*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1981
- Leonard Swidler, Lewis John Eron, Gerard Slogan, Lester Dean, *Bursting the Bonds: A Jewish Christian Dialogue on Jesus and Paul*, Maryknoll, New York, 1990.
- James Veitch, *The New Testament in Modern Translation arranged in chronological order*,  
 Vol.1 *The Origins of Christianity and the Letters of St Paul*;  
 Vol.2 *Search for Identity and Founding the Church*;  
 Vol.3 Part 1 *Christianity at the Crossroads*;  
 Vol.3 Part 2 *The Radical and the Revolutionary*;  
 Vol.4 *Faith for a New Age*; Colcom Press, Red Beach, c.1994, c.1995
- Geoffrey Wigoder (ed-in-chief), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Macmillan, New York, 1972
- A.N. Wilson, *Paul: The Mind of the Apostle*, Sinclair Stevenson, London, 1997.
- Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich, 1989
- David Winston, "Philo Judaeus", in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 11, 1987
- Walter Ziffer, *The Teaching of Disdain: An Examination of Christology and New Testament Attitudes Toward Jews*, New Light, Orrington, ME, 1990