

Chapter Eleven

Judaea from 4 BC to the Death of Herodes Agrippa in 44 CE

Unlike the detailed information we have about Judaea from the late 40s BC to the end of Varus' War, the history of Judaea from 4 BC until the early 60s CE is sparse and disconnected. The narrative underlying Josephus' account of Herodes' reign and its immediate aftermath was supplied by Nikolaos of Damascus, but Nikolaos' account seems to have ended with the conclusion of Varus' war and the arrangements that Augustus settled upon for Herodes' successors.¹ For the Judaeo-Roman war of 66-70 our sources are again very full. The rabbinic anecdotes on that war are late, rarely reliable, and often wildly imaginative. They tell us, for example, that on taking over the Jerusalem temple Titus unrolled a scroll of the *torah* in the Holy of Holies, spread it on the floor, and upon it had intercourse with a prostitute.² In contrast, the information from Josephus - although it must be evaluated critically - is detailed and valuable.

Although we are poorly informed about the period intervening between Varus' war and the great rebellion, what Josephus tells us is enough to show how progressively frightful a period it was. During these seventy years Judaea gradually sank into a cauldron of rebellion, factionalism, and hatred of outsiders: Samaritan, Syrian, Greek and Roman. Apocalyptic fanaticism and the establishment of the *ekklesia* of Jesus the Christ were both causes and results of this violent period.

Archelaos' rule (4 BC-6 CE) and the conversion of Judaea to a Roman prefecture

We know very little about Archelaos' nine-year rule of Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea, other than that it was generally a failure. Upon assuming his ethnarchy Archelaos added "Herodes" to his own name, but it did not help him. Possibly he was respected in Idumaea, but both Samaritans and Judaeans resented him and let Augustus know of their dissatisfaction. In 5 or 6 CE Archelaos and the tetrarchs were summoned to Rome to defend their performance.³ Antipas and Philip did so successfully, but Archelaos did not. Augustus therefore ordered him to retire to Vienna (today Vienne) in southern Gaul, where he remained for the rest of his life. Having no other Herodian trustworthy enough to be given the ethnarchy, Augustus decided to annex Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea to the Roman empire.

Because the territory was too small to constitute a province governed by a Roman of senatorial rank, Augustus made Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea a province of lesser status, to be administered by a Roman equestrian. The title of the governor was long supposed to have been *procurator*, since that is how Tacitus described Pontius Pilatus, but an inscription shows that Pilatus' title was not *procurator* but *praefectus* (evidently the title was changed after Pilatus' stint). Augustus' first appointee to the position was an equestrian named Coponius. The emperor designated Caesarea Maritima as the prefect's residence, and to enable Coponius to carry out his duties Augustus assigned him a modest military force of about six or seven cohorts. Most of the cohorts seem to have been auxiliary rather than legionary, and altogether amounted to no more than about 3000 men.⁴ Aside from those centuries assigned to garrison duty at the Antonia in Jerusalem or at the fortress of Masada, the units were normally stationed at Caesarea.

The demotion of Judaea from a nominally sovereign client-state to a third-rate province directly under the emperor's control was a further blow to all those who had taken pride in the substantial kingdom of Herodes the Great, and who looked forward to far greater things. More dangerously, the subjection of the Jerusalem temple to a Gentile government enraged those fanatics who were "zealous" for Adonai and his covenant with Judaea. It was at the beginning of Coponius' governorship (6-9 CE) that a group known as the Zealots came into being.⁵ The founder of the Zealots was Judas of Gamala, sometimes referred to as Judas of Galilee.⁶ Josephus calls this Judas a *sophist* but we must regard him as a leader of religious extremists or as the commander of a guerilla force. Although by the first century CE few men in greater Judaea were professional soldiers, many of them kept weapons and knew how to use them. In the years between the death of Herodes and 70 CE one guerilla leader after another was able to attract a following of armed supporters, and from time to time these groups posed a real military danger to the government. Judas of Gamala's rallying cry was that the people of Judaea should be subject only to Adonai, and not to any mortal rulers, whether Roman or Herodian. That Judas used the term "kingdom of God" is not known, but that term - which was to be used also by John the Baptist and Jesus - would have been appropriate for the polity that Judas urged upon his countrymen. His goal was to raise all of Judaea (and probably Samaria and Idumaea as well) in revolt. Initially his fanaticism was shared by only a small number of Judaeans. The religious establishment, the wealthy, and even many of the lower classes were realistic enough to know what a revolt would mean. Joazar the high priest was able to keep Jerusalem in line, and when Judas was defeated and killed his followers apparently went underground and became clandestine terrorists. Known also as *sicarii* (dagger-men), the Zealots made it a practice to attack those Judaeans who collaborated with the Romans.

Philip's tetrarchy in Gaulanitis (4 BC - 34 CE)

Of his three sons who inherited the kingdom of Herodes the Great, the most trouble-free seems to have been Philip, whose portion was Trachonitis and Gaulanitis (today the Golan Heights). Near the headwaters of the Jordan, north of the Sea of Galilee, Philip built a capital which he named, in honor of Augustus and himself, Caesarea Philippi.⁷ Josephus describes Philip as a modest and quiet man, well regarded by his subjects, and gives us no other information about his rule.⁸

In 34 CE Philip died without a son to succeed him. Having no Herodian whom he wished to install as Philip's successor, the emperor Tiberius decided to attach the tetrarchy to the province of Syria. Three years later, however, when Tiberius himself died, his successor Caligula detached Gaulanitis and Trachonitis from Syria and made them a present to Herodes Agrippa, who was one of the new emperor's closest and most trusted friends. Even better, Caligula permitted Agrippa to style himself as "king," a title far more prestigious than "tetrarch."

Herodes Antipas' tetrarchy (4 BC - 39 CE), and John the Baptist

Antipas, the third in the trio of sons who succeeded Herodes the Great, held the tetrarchy of Galilee and Peraea for 42 years (4 BC to 39 CE). Like his brother Archelaos, Antipas added the name "Herodes" to his own, evidently in the belief that his subjects remembered his father

with some fondness. And like his father, Herodes Antipas took care to display his loyalty to Rome. In Peraea, at a site that had been destroyed in Varus' War, he built a palace for himself and named it Livias, after Augustus' wife. In Galilee he rebuilt the burned-out Sepphoris and made it his capital, renaming it Autokratoris, "City of the Emperor." After Augustus died and Tiberius became emperor, Antipas built another capital city - this one on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee - and named it Tiberias. From the little that is known of his long reign, we must suppose that for most of it Antipas' subjects were satisfied with him, despite his flattering of the Roman emperors. Although the villagers had little to be grateful for, he should have been appreciated by the residents of the two major cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias.

In the mid-20s CE, however, Antipas became concerned about the growing popularity of John the Baptist. John was an eccentric, charismatic and celebrated "Teacher" (or "Rabbi") who denounced the sins of his contemporaries (whom he characterized as a viper's brood), and especially of the urban establishment. In addition to being a scourge of the rich and the powerful, John urged all Judaeans to be baptized in preparation for the Kingdom of God that apocalyptic texts had foretold. All who hoped to enter that Kingdom were required to practice a rigorous social justice:

And the multitudes asked him, "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none, and he who has food, let him do likewise." (Luke 3:10-11, RSV).

According to Josephus, the Baptist exhorted the great crowds who came to him to "deal in justice with each other, and with piety toward God."⁹

Although the Baptist and his disciples may have operated also in Samaria, they were frequently to be found in the "wilderness" just to the east of the Jordan river.¹⁰ All of this wilderness was part of Peraea, and so belonged to the tetrarchy of Herodes Antipas. People from Galilee, Samaria and Judaea who came to hear John were washed in the Jordan river, as a ritual cleansing from their past sins and to prepare them for admission into the imminent Kingdom of God. Against the counsel of the Pharisees, great crowds evidently crossed the Jordan in order to be baptized.¹¹ Because of this popular acclaim, Antipas became fearful of what John and his followers might do (John's "Kingdom of God" may have sounded too much like the ideology of Judas of Gamala). Antipas therefore had John arrested and imprisoned in the almost inaccessible fortress at Machairos, on the fringe of the desert east of the Dead Sea. After a time, Antipas ordered that John be beheaded.¹²

Perhaps this peremptory action helped Antipas to maintain public order during the brief period of Jesus' teaching and preaching (probably 28 and early 29 CE). Although he was not responsible for ordering Jesus' crucifixion he did cooperate with Pontius Pilatus in Jesus' trial (Luke 23:6-11) and must have agreed with the sentence imposed by Pilatus. Several years after Jesus' crucifixion Antipas' situation worsened considerably when - at about the age of sixty - he fell in love with his half-niece Herodias, about twenty years his junior. Herodias was at the time married to another one of her half-uncles and so one of Antipas' half-brothers (yet another Herodes). On a visit to Rome ca. 32 CE Antipas lodged with his half-brother and began his affair with Herodias. The two agreed to marry and prevailed upon Herodias' husband to divorce

her. The most important victim of the scandalous affair was Herodias' predecessor as Antipas' wife. This woman, whose name was lost in the transmission of the story, was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea. When after many years of marriage she was forced out of Antipas' palace she fled to her father, who avenged the insult by marching north and almost destroying Antipas' army.¹³

Evidently Herodias was resented by the inhabitants of Galilee and Peraea, who seem to have believed that she was responsible for Antipas' subsequent misfortunes. As we have seen, in 37 CE - several years after the death of Philip the Tetrarch - Caligula gave Philip's little and vacant domain in Gaulanitis and Trachonitis to the emperor's good friend, Herodes Agrippa. The latter was Herodias' brother, and his sudden elevation - to a rank much higher than that to which Antipas was restricted - did not sit well with Antipas and his wife. In 39 Antipas and Herodias traveled to Italy in an attempt to persuade Caligula that Antipas' credentials for the royal title were much better than Agrippa's. Agrippa countered by sending Caligula a vague (and certainly unfounded) charge that Antipas had once contemplated taking the crown without Roman approval. Caligula chose to believe his good friend and ordered Antipas and Herodias into exile at Lugdunum (Lyons), not far from Vienne, where Archelaus had been exiled thirty-three years earlier. Caligula added Antipas' tetrarchy of Galilee and Peraea to Agrippa's little kingdom, more than doubling it in size. So much is known. What is supposed is that it was Herodias - furious that her brother outranked her husband - who goaded Antipas into making his mission to Rome, and so inadvertently brought about his and her own exile.

Eventually, even the execution of John the Baptist - which had occurred several years before she moved into Antipas' palace - was blamed on Herodias. From the Gospel of Mark (6:17-29) comes the well-known but baseless story of Salome's dance and John's beheading. In this story Antipas is partially exonerated from the charge of having killed the Baptist. The tetrarch regrets having to order John's arrest and execution, but is compelled to do so by the wiles of Herodias and the charms of her daughter.¹⁴

Judaea under Roman prefects

The first three Roman prefects governed Judaea for only eight years (6-14 CE). Their short terms may mean that none of them was very popular or successful in administering the little province, but that is only an inference since Josephus had no information about Judaea during their terms. The fourth prefect, Valerius Gratus, stayed on for eleven years (14-25 CE). We must assume that these were uneventful years, because nothing is known about Gratus' administration other than his appointment of Caiaphas as high priest (Caiaphas was a Sadducee and was also the son-in-law of Annas, who had briefly held the high priesthood during the prefecture of Coponius).

About the fifth prefect, Pontius Pilatus (25-36 CE), we have many traditions, most of them concerning Jesus' crucifixion and the reports of his resurrection. Many of these traditions - the *Acts of Pilate*, the *Letters of Herod and Pilate*, the *Death of Pilate* - are fictions composed in Late Antiquity, but the New Testament Gospels were written toward the end of the first century CE. To Pilatus' trial and execution of Jesus we will return in the next section, and here will look at the other incidents that Josephus reports in his narrative of Judaea under Pilatus. The incidents

show that not only in Judaea but also in Samaria one could readily find people fanatic and credulous enough to constitute a grave problem for a governor. These were evidently a minority, and it may be that many Judaeans were no more opposed to Roman rule than were provincials in other parts of the empire. But as time went by the minority gained adherents and the “peace party” was weakened, because - in a vicious circle - a violent incident was usually followed by Roman retaliation or repression, which led to yet another violent incident.

In the first of these incidents Pilatus, from his headquarters at Caesarea on the sea, ordered several cohorts to Jerusalem, perhaps to control the crowds at one of the festivals. When during daylight the cohorts entered the city they were without their standards, because images of Tiberius were attached to the standards and Pilatus knew that the crowds gathered in Jerusalem would object, perhaps violently, to the presence of graven images in Jerusalem. During the night, however, the standards were surreptitiously brought into the city, and the next day, when news began to circulate that the cohorts’ standards were now in place, a crowd besieged the governor’s headquarters in Caesarea (Josephus does not say what happened in Jerusalem itself), demanding that Pilatus order the standards’ removal. When threatened by the swords of Pilatus’ guards the protesters bared their throats. Astonished at such religious fervor, Pilatus ordered that the standards be withdrawn.¹⁵ In a second incident the threats to Pilatus were more serious: crowds in Jerusalem surged around him, because he had used money drawn from the temple treasury to finance the building of an aqueduct. When the crowd began to riot, Pilatus’ guards struck out at the rioters and started a stampede in which many died.

Still more serious was the violent suppression of a third crowd, this one made up of Samaritans. In 36 CE many Samaritans thronged to Mt. Gerizim (which for them was Adonai’s holy mountain) because a local prophet had proclaimed that he would produce for them the sacred vessels that - so they believed - Moses had placed there. Because many of the faithful brought their weapons with them, Pilatus ordered his soldiers to break up the crowd, which they did with much violence. In addition to those slain at the scene, other Samaritans were executed on Pilatus’ orders. The deaths raised the anger of Samaria to such a pitch that Vitellius, governor of Syria and Pilatus’ immediate superior, relieved Pilatus of his position and sent him to Rome to explain his actions.¹⁶ In his place Vitellius appointed an associate named Marcellus (or possibly Marullus) to serve as prefect of Judaea.¹⁷

Jesus *Nazoraïos*

It was at one of the Passover festivals during Pilatus’ governorship that Jesus *Nazoraïos* was arrested and crucified. So much is agreed upon by all historians. Beyond that, almost everything is controversial. Who Jesus was, what he did, why he was crucified, and what happened after his death, are questions that have generated an enormous volume of scholarship. In the pages that follow I have made no attempt to reflect the wide variety of answers given to these questions, and have presented my own reconstruction of events. I have approached the ancient sources in a critical way, and from them have tried to reconstruct as best I can what seems to have happened.

Christian tradition assigned the crucifixion of Jesus to March of the year 29 CE. According to the Gospel of John, the board affixed to the top of the cross read, in Greek,

ΙΗΣΟΥΣ Ο ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΣ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ, “Jesus *Nazoraïos*, king of the Judaeans.” The Latin version on the same board identified “the king of the Judaeans” as *Iesus Nazarenus*.¹⁸ The adjective *Nazoraïos* will need to be looked at closely. Although it is conventionally translated “of Nazareth,” that does not seem to have been what the term meant.¹⁹ A Greek adjective made from a place-name “Nazareth” (Ναζαρέθ) should have been *Nazarethios* (Ναζαρέθιος): in order to be intelligible such Greek adjectival formations regularly incorporated the entire place-name, and could not omit the place-name’s last syllable. With this in mind, the Gospel writers occasionally rendered the place-name of Jesus’ putative home town not as “Nazareth” but as “Nazara.”²⁰ The existence of such a place in the first century is probable but uncertain, as neither Nazareth nor Nazara appears anywhere in Josephus’ *Bellum Judaicum*. In the fourth century CE *Nazareth* was the name of a small town located some ten miles south of the city of Sepphoris, and the town boasted a Christian church known as the Church of the Annunciation. In the fifth century a monastery was built outside the town.²¹

Apparently the Judaeen establishment regarded the *Nazoraïoi* (οἱ Ναζωραῖοι) as a sect. The suffix of the term *Nazoraïoi* is appropriate for a sect or association, and appears in the labels *Pharisaïoi*, *Saddukaïoi*, and *Essaïoi*.²² At Acts 24:5 Tertullus refers to Paul as a leader of “the sect (*hairesis*) of the *Nazoraïoi*.”²³ The Hebrew original was *nazorim* or *nazirim*, and in rabbinic usage that term was the conventional designation for “Christians.” In the Jerusalem recension of the long prayer called either the *Amidah* (“Standing”) or the *Shemoneh Esreh* (“Eighteen”), the twelfth benediction - which according to Talmudic sources was added ca. 100 CE at the behest of Gamaliel II, the leader of the rabbinic school at Jamnia²⁴ - curses the Christians in the following terms:

May the *Nazorim* and heretics perish in a moment;
May they be blotted out of the book of life.²⁵

That Gamaliel meant to curse “the people of Nazareth” is very unlikely: he intended his curse for those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah. In the Quran, likewise, the word for “Christians” is *nasārā*.²⁶

The most persuasive explanation of *Nazoraïos* is that it was an alternate spelling (Hebrew and Aramaic scripts included no vowels) of the noun Ναζιραῖοι, a Hellenized plural of the Hebrew noun *nazir*. In translations of the Bible that noun is anglicized as *Nazarite* or - more correctly - *Nazirite*.²⁷ A Nazirite was a man who had taken a vow to Adonai, and who thereupon refrained from drinking wine, from touching a corpse, and from cutting his hair.²⁸ Usually the vow was made for a stipulated time, but occasionally it was lifelong. John the Baptist was apparently a Nazirite. Although the New Testament does not specifically refer to John as a Nazirite the description at Luke 1:15 makes it likely that John was one of only three Biblical figures who were “Nazirites from birth” (the other two were Samuel and Samson), and his countrymen must have identified him as a Nazirite. *Nazoraïoi*, then, may have been the label attached to those whom he had baptized and who became his disciples. The Mandaean who until recently lived in southern Iraq identify themselves as *nasorayya* and they claim that their religious tradition was established in Judaea by John the Baptist.²⁹ Jesus, who in many ways was a successor to John the Baptist, was apparently regarded by Pilatus and by Caiaphas the high priest as the leader (or as one of the leaders) of “the *Nazoraïoi*” who had followed John.

Long before the New Testament Gospels were written, Jesus had for many Judaeans become “Jesus the Christ”: Yeshua ha-Mashiach, or ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ χριστός. Those who believed him to be the Messiah did not wish to identify him as merely “the Nazoraean,” and alternative explanations for the terms *Nazoraios* and *Nazarenos* were therefore preferred. One was that Jesus had been called *Nazoraios* because he was the “branch” (*netser*) foretold by the prophets.³⁰ The more common explanation was that Jesus was called *Nazoraios* because he was from Nazareth or Nazara, a small *polis* in Galilee. In Luke’s story Mary and Joseph were natives of Nazareth, and traveled to Bethlehem where Mary gave birth to Jesus. Matthew’s story, contrarily, makes Mary and Joseph natives of Bethlehem, and has them move to Nazareth after Jesus’ birth and their flight to Egypt. Although Joseph’s reason for moving to Nazareth is to escape the designs of King Herodes, God’s reason for the move, according to Matthew, was to give to Jesus the name Ναζωραῖος. When Joseph hears that Herodes has died, he decides to return from Egypt to Bethlehem. But “being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called *Nazoraios*.”³¹

Rabbi Jesus

Jesus *Nazoraios* had attracted attention in Galilee in the year before and the year or two immediately following Antipas’ execution of John the Baptist. Jesus was one of the many who came to hear John and to be baptized by him. When John was imprisoned by Antipas, Jesus in some ways continued John’s role, telling the rich that God required them to share their wealth with the destitute.

Jesus may on occasion have called himself a prophet (as at Mark 6:4 or Luke 4:24), while some of his contemporaries seem to have regarded him as a preacher or “proclaimer.” For the most part, however, Jesus was - like John the Baptist - addressed as *Rabbi*, an Aramaic title meaning “my Master,” or “my Teacher.” In more than a dozen passages in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John persons in conversation with Jesus address him as *Rabbi*.³² In the early first century the *rabbi* was not yet a professional, and certainly had no office in the temple or the synagogue. Instead, *Rabbi* was a term of honor that had begun to be used among Judaeans both in the homeland and in the Aramaic Diaspora for a religious teacher, and the title was often accorded to a Pharisee. Although no Greek word had quite the honorific connotations of *Rabbi*, the word *didaskalos* did mean “teacher” and in the Gospel of Luke Jesus is frequently addressed as *Didaskale*.³³

The title was appropriate because in the Judaeian context of his time Jesus was indeed a teacher. In the fourth Gospel he explains that role:

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus replied, “I have spoken openly for all the world to hear; I have always taught in synagogues or in the temple, where all Jews congregate.” (John 18:19-20 OSB)

The synoptic Gospels tell of Jesus teaching in synagogues at his home town, at Capernaum and elsewhere, and Matthew 9:35 (OSB) summarily says, “So Jesus went round all the towns and

villages teaching in their synagogues.”

In addition to teaching congregations or crowds, Jesus was regularly accompanied by a smaller group of “students.” The word, “disciples,” which English translations of the Gospels conventionally apply to Jesus’ students, does not very well convey the meaning of the Greek word *mathētai*: “disciples” is simply an Anglicizing of the Latin *discipuli*, and because of its narrow association with the New Testament it has lost for us its general meaning of “students.” A *mathētēs* was a student, or a “learner,” and was the recipient of the instruction provided by the *didaskalos*.

Jesus was not the only Judaeen teacher who was surrounded by a circle of students. John the Baptist had many *mathētai* (for a time Jesus was probably one of them), some of whom remained faithful to him during his imprisonment and buried his body after his execution. Presumably a few Sadducean and Essene teachers were celebrated in Jesus’ time, but their names have not come down to us. About Pharisaic teachers we are much better informed. Some twenty years before Jesus was born, Hillel had come from Mesopotamia to Jerusalem, and there had established his school for young men who aspired to become Pharisees. In the winter of 5-4 BC two Pharisaic teachers named Judas and Matthias incited their students in the “eagle” incident that so enraged Herodes the Great. By the late 20s CE Hillel had been dead for some time, and the school he had established was being conducted by his grandson, Gamaliel (Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul, was one of Gamaliel’s students). Another distinguished Pharisaic rabbi through all of Jesus’ adult years was Shammai. Shammai was much stricter than Hillel and Gamaliel in interpreting the oral Torah. He could also enforce his interpretations, because for almost twenty years he held the presidency of the Sanhedrin.

Jesus and divine justice

Although Jesus was in some respects analogous to the rabbis of the Pharisees, what he taught was very different. Far from instructing his students in the oral Torah or the fine points of the written text, Jesus minimized ritual Law and in its stead preached what he considered divine justice but what today would be called social justice. Like John the Baptist, that is, he scolded the rich and instructed them to share their wealth with the very poor. In Judaism this kind of moral obligation had a history almost as long as that of ritual purity. According to the prophets in Israel and Judah, Adonai commanded that those who had much should give from their plenty to those who had little.

In Greco-Roman society, hierarchical and slavery-based as it was, concern for the poor was seldom felt.³⁴ Charity was not one of the Hellenes’ four cardinal virtues, and a recent exploration of its origins stated rather baldly that “Greek law and practice did not envision anything remotely resembling social justice.”³⁵ In Israel and Judah, on the other hand, concern for the poor had been stressed in prophetic oracles already in the eighth century BC.³⁶ Whereas the average Hellene tended to assume that the wealthy were wealthy because they were favored by the gods, the prophets in Israel and Judah had more egalitarian assumptions and suspected that many of the rich had acquired their wealth through dishonesty and greed. In Deutero-Isaiah’s poetry Adonai declares to his people their transgressions and mocks their empty observances:

Is this the kind of fast that I require;
a day of mortification such as this:
that a person should bow his head like a bulrush
and use sackcloth and ashes for a bed?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?
Rather, is not this the fast I require:
to loose the fetters of injustice,
to untie the knots of the yoke?
Is it not sharing your food with the hungry,
taking the homeless poor into your house,
clothing the naked when you meet them,
and never evading a duty to your kinsfolk? (Isaiah 58:5-7 OSB)

As we have seen, John the Baptist - the “voice crying in the wilderness” - had continued this prophetic tradition of emphasizing moral over ritual obligations.

After John’s arrest, the tradition was carried on by Jesus. In the Gospels Jesus repeatedly mentions the *ptōchoi*. These are not people who are merely poor, such as humble craftsmen or families working small farms, but people who are destitute and reduced to begging. In his “Sermon on the Plain,” Jesus says:

Blessed are you *ptōchoi*;
the kingdom of God is yours.
Blessed are you who now go hungry;
you will be satisfied. (Luke 6:20, OSB, adapted)

In his description of Judgement Day, Jesus promises that those who feed the hungry and clothe the naked will go to Heaven, and those who do not will go to Hell (Matthew 25:31-46). Jesus himself lived for some time as an itinerant teacher, depending on the charity of those who responded to his teachings. This was not the radical austerity of John the Baptist, but it was similar to the renunciation of material things that characterized the Cynic philosophers.

The story of “the Rich Young Ruler,” included in all of the synoptic Gospels, emphasizes both Jesus’ insistence on divine justice and his reduction of the *torah* to its ethical core of the Ten Commandments:

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you

have and give to the *ptōchoi*, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. (Mk 10:17-22 NIV, adapted)

Jesus and ritual purity

One of the most remarkable characteristics of Jesus’ teaching was that it neglected almost entirely the ritual or “holiness” stipulations of the *torah*. In the story given above, Jesus says nothing to the Rich Young Ruler about observing the Sabbath, avoiding unclean meats, or praying the stipulated prayers at the stipulated times. That the Jerusalem temple was subject to a Gentile government seems not to have disturbed Jesus, while it infuriated many of his contemporaries. As many Judaeans both in Judaea itself and in Mesopotamia became more and more zealous for holiness, and preoccupied with a *torah* amplified by the oral traditions of the Pharisees, Jesus turned in the opposite direction. That the Judaeans were or should be “a holy people” was apparently of little concern to him. Alluding to Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 he told his listeners that the *torah* could be reduced to two things: if you love God and love your neighbor as yourself you are fulfilling the *torah*, for that is all that God requires. Jesus was not the first rabbi to summarize the Torah in that way.³⁷ It is unlikely, however, that anyone else - including John the Baptist - had so called into question the ritual elements of the Torah. Sacrifice at the Jerusalem temple, the keeping of the Sabbath day, circumcision, avoidance of Gentiles: all of this was alright but was ultimately inconsequential.

As for *kashrut*, Jesus evidently tried to erase the distinction between “clean” and “unclean” foods, a distinction that had always been made in traditional Judaism and that for the Pharisees was of the highest importance. According to the Gospel of Mark Jesus berated the disciples for supposing that God cares what we eat:

He said to them, “Are you as dull as the rest? Do you not see that nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him, because it does not go into the heart but into the stomach, and so goes out into the drain?” By saying this he made all foods clean.³⁸

Jesus’ teachings represented a sharp contrast to the steady elaboration of the *torah* in Jerusalem. They may, however, have been much more congenial to the mood of the Galilean countryside, which had recently shown its enthusiasm for John the Baptist. The rural population of Galilee harbored some resentment toward the residents of the tetrarchy’s two large cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias, in neither of which Jesus spent much time. The religion favored in the countryside may have been one of direct access to Adonai, without the mediation of priests and temple sacrifices, of scriptures and synagogues, or of scribes and Pharisees.³⁹

Jesus’ “good news” of the Kingdom of God

As a *rabbi* or a *kēryx* (a herald or proclaimer), Jesus in the Gospels brings to his listeners “the good news” about God and the Kingdom of God.⁴⁰ The Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (transliterated into Latin as *evangelium*) is conventionally translated into English as “gospel,” but literally the word meant “good news,” or “good announcement.” Announcing the good news

seems to have been central to Jesus' agenda as a teacher, and the good news was that the long-awaited Kingdom of God was already here. Unlike John the Baptist, that is, Jesus seems to have proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was not something in the future, an apocalyptic dispensation reserved for the End of Time, but was a way of life in the here-and-now. The Kingdom of God was a society in which people lived as God wished them to live, and Jesus took it upon himself to define that Kingdom.

Largely bypassing Moses and the Prophets as theological guides, Rabbi Jesus described God as a loving and forgiving Heavenly Father, who is mindful of all who love him and pray to him. As for the Kingdom of God, beggars, sinners and the despised were a part of that Kingdom, while the rich who wished to be admitted were admonished first to give away much (or sometimes all) of what they had to the poor. In the Kingdom of God those who were able were obliged to help the helpless. Jesus may have assumed that the Kingdom could include Gentiles as well as Judaeans. Although he made little or no effort to carry his proclamation beyond Judaeans, his definition of the Kingdom of God made it readily accessible for Gentiles.

Perhaps Jesus supposed that the multitudes who had been awaiting a supernatural Kingdom of God would welcome his announcement that the Kingdom was already here and that it would become recognizable as soon as people changed their behavior and their understanding of God. But in the apocalyptic fervor of the times Jesus' good news about the Kingdom of God was for many Judaeans not very good news at all, and in one of the supreme ironies of history Jesus himself became the central figure first in Judaeans and then in Gentile constructions of the End of Time.

Miracles and the Passover festival of 29 CE

However impressive and self-confident a man Jesus was, and however powerful a proclaimer, he could not have caught the popular imagination as he did without "signs." Much of the rural populace regarded him, that is, not merely as a rabbi but also as a miracle-worker, a man who had extraordinary and supernatural powers.⁴¹ In greater Judaea at this time belief in the miraculous was so widespread, especially among the *hasidim* and the rural population, that a man who was *not* distinguished by "signs" was unlikely to attract any following at all. John the Baptist's birth was supposed to have been attended by several signs, including the appearance of an angel to the Baptist's father. In Samaria Simon the Magos was celebrated for his magical powers and was for a long time worshiped - so Justin Martyr reports - "as a god."⁴² We have already noticed Pontius Pilatus' troubles with another Samaritan leader, who gathered a dangerously large crowd with his promise to produce the sacred vessels that Moses had concealed on Mt. Gerizim. At about the same time a prophet named Theudas attracted another large crowd with his promise to part the Jordan river, just as Moses had parted the Red Sea (the Roman prefect broke up the crowd with a cavalry unit, killing Theudas himself and some four hundred of his followers).⁴³ By the end of the first century BC the Septuagint and the sensational apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature that appeared in its wake had accustomed Judaeans everywhere to expect and believe reports of angels, demons, prophetic dreams, miracles, and the awesome intervention of Adonai. For the Roman poet Horace it was axiomatic that a Judaeans was likely to believe almost anything.⁴⁴

Many of the miracles of healing with which Jesus *Nazoraio*s was credited would have

been reported by the beneficiaries themselves. Once he was hailed as a healer, sick and handicapped people were brought to him and evidently some of the afflicted felt themselves healed when he touched or spoke to them. In his preface to the Sermon in the Plain, for example, Luke writes that Jesus

stopped on level ground where a large crowd of his disciples had gathered, and with them great numbers of people from Jerusalem and all Judaea and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to listen to him, and to be cured of their diseases. Those who were troubled with unclean spirits were healed; and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him, because power went out from him and cured them all. (Luke 6:17-19, OSB)

As this passage indicates, Jesus was especially renowned as an exorcist of demons or “unclean spirits.”⁴⁵ That term was applied, not just in Judaea and Galilee but in most Near Eastern lands, to *grand mal* epileptic seizures. People with epilepsy sought out Jesus and evidently on more than one occasion an individual suffered a seizure that ended soon after Jesus had “rebuked the unclean spirit.” Jesus was said (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2) to have driven out seven such demons from Mary of Magdala. According to Luke, Mary of Magdala, Joanna and Susanna were among the many women whom Jesus had freed from their evil spirits and other infirmities, and who in gratitude thereafter supported him and his followers “out of their own resources.”⁴⁶

Finally, some of the miracles for which Jesus was celebrated must have been staged.⁴⁷ Preparations, that is, were made in advance so that Jesus would appear to perform a miracle. After his reputation was established, the pressure upon him to perform a miracle was intense. Miracles of supply - feeding a crowd with bread and fish that were “miraculously” multiplied - would have been quite possible to arrange.

Although Jesus’ reputation as a miracle-worker attracted followers in the villages of Galilee, it seems to have had less appeal in the district’s cities and towns. When the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were being written, the towns along the shore of the Sea of Galilee - Bethsaida, Chorazin and even Capernaum, the town in which Jesus had lived for a time – were known for their “unbelief.” In the Gospels we find Jesus warning these towns that on Judgement Day they will fare not only worse than Tyre and Sidon, large cities of the Gentile Phoenicians, but even worse than the infamous Sodom:

Then he spoke of the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, and denounced them for their impenitence. “Alas for you, Chorazin!” he said. “Alas for you, Bethsaida! If the miracles performed in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable, I tell you, for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgement than for you. As for you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades! For if the miracles performed in you had taken place in Sodom, Sodom would be standing to this day. But it will be more bearable, I tell you, for the land of Sodom on the day of judgement than for you.” (Matthew 11: 20-24, OSB; cf. Luke 10:13-15)

It was apparently an arranged “miracle” that led to Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion. Having already become known as a miracle-worker in Antipas’ tetrarchy of Galilee, in March of 29 CE Jesus was accompanied by a large crowd as he made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. At Bethany, a village less than two miles east of Jerusalem (just beyond the Mount of Olives), lived two women and their brother, a family that Jesus knew well from earlier visits to Jerusalem. The brother, Lazarus, was supposed to have died shortly before Jesus’ arrival, and when the Galilean crowd reached Bethany Jesus proceeded directly to the tomb and with a loud voice summoned Lazarus back to life. As Lazarus emerged from the tomb the crowd was astonished, as were the villagers of Bethany and the many friends whom the two sisters had summoned from Jerusalem. To celebrate the evident miracle, the people of Bethany hosted a dinner in honor of Jesus and Lazarus, and at the dinner a woman (in one account it is Mary, the sister of Lazarus) anointed Jesus with costly oil of nard.

Jerusalem was at the time thronged with pilgrims who had come to celebrate the Passover. In the Second Temple period it was obligatory for every Judaeon male between 20 and 50 to journey to Jerusalem three times yearly to celebrate the three great pilgrim-feasts: Passover, Weeks (Pentecost), and Tabernacles.⁴⁸ For Judaeans in the Diaspora the requirement was waived in return for a “temple-tax” of a half-shekel (two drachmas), but even a Diaspora Judaeon was expected to make the journey to Jerusalem at least once in a lifetime. For a typical Passover, therefore, Judaeon men (and also some women) traveled to the city from lands as far away as Mesopotamia and North Africa, and from Judaea itself the pilgrims came by the hundreds of thousands.⁴⁹ The Roman governor was necessarily on hand for the festivals, accompanied by four or five legionary cohorts to keep the sea of worshipers under control. Even under normal conditions the great Jerusalem festivals were tense days for both the governor and the high priest.

The days before Passover in 29 CE, however, were made more anxious by the report that Jesus *Nazoraios*, the miracle-worker from Galilee, had at Bethany raised a young man from the dead. Knowing that the authorities were now looking for him, Jesus withdrew across the Jordan (John 11:34) and stayed there for several days. On the first day of Passover week Jesus, now at the center of much attention, made his way from Jericho to Jerusalem, being hailed along the way as “king of Israel” by some of the spectators who lined his route. When Jesus and the large crowd that followed him reached Bethphage, half way up the Mount of Olives,⁵⁰ he made what may have been a spur-of-the-moment decision and sent two of his followers to find an ass, upon which he could ride the last several hundred yards into the city. His entry into the city on the ass was sure to recall for the crowd the prophecy of Zechariah (9:9-10, OSB):

Daughter of Zion, rejoice with all your heart; shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your king is coming to you, his cause won, his victory gained, humble and mounted
on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will banish the chariot from Ephraim,
the war-horse from Jerusalem; the warrior’s bow will be banished, and he will proclaim
peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of
the earth.

The Gospels of Matthew (21:4-5) and John (12:14-15) in fact say that Jesus commandeered the ass in order to fulfill the old prophecy. Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem was obviously

provocative. How many pilgrims and native Jerusalemites greeted him as a king and as a “son of David” we cannot know. The crowds being what they were, however, if even one person in a hundred did so Jesus’ following would have swelled to several thousand. And there is no doubt that many of those who welcomed him hoped that Jesus the miracle-worker would end the Roman rule over Judaea. He had come, they believed, to be their messiah and king.

Jesus’ rash decision to enter Jerusalem as the king promised by Zechariah, a decision made in the afterglow that followed the drama at Bethany, required a response from the authorities. Pilatus expected the Judaeian establishment to take the initiative in handling the disturbance, and Caiaphas the high priest called together the temple officials as well as the leaders of the Pharisees to decide what should be done about Jesus *Nazoraiois*. Although Jesus may have been gratified at the warmth of his reception in Jerusalem, and at the number of people who wanted him to be their king, that he had a serious and well-considered plan to become king of Judaea is unlikely for various reasons. Knowing that Pilatus and his troops were in Jerusalem, that more battle-ready cohorts were available at Caesarea Maritima, that the legions commanded by the Roman governor of Syria were within striking distance, and that beyond Syria lay the entire force of the Roman empire, a rational man could not have expected to make himself king of Judaea. At this point Jesus had a sizeable following but commanded no armed force (although a few men who accompanied him evidently carried swords to protect his person), and unlike Judas of Gamala and other Zealot leaders he seems to have had no anti-Gentile or anti-Roman agenda.

It is therefore a much more likely possibility that Jesus’ original intention - complicated by his reckless entry into Jerusalem - was that the Jerusalemites and Passover pilgrims should recognize him as a great rabbi and as the prophet of the Kingdom of God that he had already proclaimed in Galilee. He would pose a challenge, in other words, to Rabbi Gamaliel, Rabbi Shammai and the Sanhedrin, and more broadly to the Pharisees’ and Sadducees’ religious authority in Jerusalem. But he did not intend to challenge the Romans’ political and military control of Judaea.

It was perhaps to make clear his claim to religious but not political authority that two days after his entry into the city Jesus and his followers “cleansed the temple.” One of the temple courtyards - perhaps the second - provided an exchange of currency for the convenience of pilgrims arriving from lands inside and outside the Roman empire. Jesus and his followers overturned the tables of the money-changers and for a short time forbade anyone to carry anything through the area. This action, at the height of the Passover crush, was obviously undertaken and carried out by a group many times larger than “the Twelve Disciples.” Crowds clustered around Jesus as he preached at the temple, but by the end of the day he and his followers had left the temple precinct.

Because many Jerusalemites and pilgrims admired Jesus and even regarded him as a potential messiah, to arrest him in broad daylight would have incited a riot. Caiaphas and his advisors, in close contact with Pilatus, therefore made a plan to arrest Jesus at night, try him immediately, and within hours to execute him. Toward that end they entered into conversation with Judas Iscariot,⁵¹ who until the drama at Bethany had been one of Jesus’ followers. Caiaphas sent a temple security force (guided by Judas, and perhaps accompanied - as John 18:3 indicates

- by a detachment of Roman soldiers) to arrest Jesus in the middle of the night. In the pre-dawn hours of Friday, the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath, Jesus was brought first before the high priest Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas, who was formerly the high priest and was still the most influential man in Jerusalem. After dawn the trial moved to the hall of the Sanhedrin. That council quickly found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and of claiming to be king of Judaea. From the Sanhedrin Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilatus, either at the Antonia fortress adjacent to the temple or at Herodes' Palace near the city's western wall. Pilatus received the charges made by the Sanhedrin, heard Jesus' response to the charges, and then sentenced him to be scourged and crucified. "Jesus *Nazoraios*, King of the Judaeans" expressed the capital charge on which Pilatus' sentence was based.

The place of crucifixion was a hillock called Golgotha, in the Bezetha suburb just north of the city. By the time, in mid-morning, that a Roman centurion and his troops led Jesus away from Pilatus' headquarters to Golgotha the route was lined with people, many denouncing the Romans and weeping while others derided Jesus for pretending to be a messiah. Jesus was nailed to the cross and hung suspended above the eye-level of the crowd. Crucifixion was an especially painful method of execution, designed to provide a long spectacle and an object-lesson for those who watched. The inscription, written in Greek, Latin and Aramaic on the wooden board affixed to the top of Jesus' cross, warned all who saw it that any man claiming to be king of the Judaeans should expect a similar fate. After writhing on the cross for several hours Jesus died, shortly before sunset (so Mark 15:42) and the beginning of the Sabbath.⁵²

Jesus the *Christos*

The hasty arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus relieved Pontius Pilatus, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin of the fear that with his proclaiming or with one more "sign" he might incite a tumult in Jerusalem. But the authorities must also have been fearful of a riot that could break out at the funeral for Jesus. In ancient Judaea, as elsewhere, funerals were loud and highly emotional events, those assembled showing their grief by cries and gestures. A funeral procession - with flute players, professional wailing women, and mourners following the bier - was a public expression of esteem and affection for the deceased: the more highly regarded a person was, the greater would be the procession and the louder the lament at his or her burial. The funeral of a slain public figure could therefore be the occasion for irrational and violent actions by the mourners. The funeral for Julius Caesar had ended with a mob of Roman *populares* demanding the heads of Brutus and Cassius and burning down the senate house. Older members of the Sanhedrin will have remembered how in 6 BC Herodes the Great, after executing the last two Hasmonaean princes, had ordered that their bodies be removed and buried during the night in order to prevent the public from displaying its anger. Among those Judaeans who had hoped that Jesus would be their king, some fanatics were likely to take vengeance through violence when - after the Sabbath - his body would be carried on a bier to its final resting place. Because Jerusalem was packed with several hundred thousand pilgrims, even a small riot could ignite a more widespread disorder that Pilatus' fifteen hundred or two thousand troops would have difficulty containing.

A solution to the problem seems to have offered itself when Joseph of Harimathaia, a member of the Sanhedrin, met with Pilatus and requested that the governor give him custody of

Jesus' body. Pilatus granted the request, probably on the assurance that whatever funeral was performed would be private: there would be no public procession and no occasion for a crowd to display its grief.⁵³ An explanation for the omission of a public funeral was also at hand. The many who regarded Jesus as a messiah and a miracle-worker were convinced that just a week earlier he had at Bethany brought back to life a young man who had been dead for several days. These people might therefore believe, if they were shown an empty tomb with the tokens of a resurrection displayed, that Jesus himself had arisen from the dead: like Lazarus in Bethany, Jesus was once more among the living and would promptly resume his teaching and his signs. The religious and political authorities would have been confident that the diversion would last at least long enough that by the time it was discredited the Passover festival would be over and Jerusalem would have returned to normal.

According to John 19:38 (an account that seems to rest on the report of an eyewitness) Jesus' body was "taken away" from Golgotha, evidently into the city and perhaps to Joseph's city house or some other private quarters.⁵⁴ It was supposed to have been prepared and wrapped for burial by Joseph of Harimathaia and Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin and a Pharisee, and then - necessarily well after nightfall on the Sabbath - to have been brought back to a tomb not far from Golgotha. A stone was rolled to block the entrance, and a detail of soldiers was placed around the tomb to keep it secure.⁵⁵ Before dawn on the day after the Sabbath the soldiers were gone, the stone was rolled away from the tomb's entrance, and the tomb was found to be empty. On the bench inside the tomb were the *othonia* in which the body was supposed to have been wrapped, and the *sudarium* that was supposed to have covered its face.⁵⁶ Mark 16:5-7 adds that a young man dressed in white and sitting in the tomb announced to those who approached that Jesus had arisen, and the young man urged Jesus' followers to go up to Galilee where they would find him.

The report of Jesus' resurrection must have circulated through the Passover crowds, and although the majority dismissed it as a hoax there were thousands who were electrified with expectations of his reappearance: "the king of the Judaeans," whom the Romans had crucified, had arisen from the dead! In the next few days rumors began to circulate that Jesus had indeed been seen in or near Jerusalem. Various individuals, and at one point a considerable crowd, claimed to have seen him, lending credibility to the belief that he had arisen and was somewhere walking the roads of Judaea or Galilee.

After the Passover pilgrims had returned home, and as days lengthened into weeks, opinions diverged. Many of those who earlier had been hopeful were now disappointed that Jesus had not - like Lazarus in Bethany - returned to his former life, and they conceded that he was indeed dead. New reports, however, brought not only hope but exhilaration. Jesus had been seen, according to the reports, ascending into Heaven, either (Luke 24:50) from Bethany, in the environs of Jerusalem, or (Matthew 28:16) from a mountain in Galilee, far to the north, or simply from the dining room in which his disciples had gathered (Mark 16:14-19). In other words, the reason that he was not seen in public, whether in Jerusalem or Galilee, was that - like Elijah - he had left the earth to be with God. This was an interpretation that the authorities in Jerusalem had not foreseen, and it changed the mood profoundly. By the feast of Shavuot (Pentecost), seven weeks after Passover, when Jerusalem was again filled with pilgrims from Judaea and distant lands, enthusiasm about Jesus' Ascension was rampant. Thousands of

Judaeans believed that Jesus was now at the right hand of Adonai in Heaven: while Lazarus was merely a mortal who had been temporarily raised from the dead, Jesus was none other than the Son of Man whom Daniel had prophesied, and soon he would return through the clouds to establish an everlasting kingdom over all the earth. For these believers, Jesus was not merely a messiah, but *the* Messiah, in Greek the *Christos*.

The *ekklesia* of Jesus the Messiah, and the Hellenists

The majority of believers established at Jerusalem what they called the *ekklesia* - the assembly - of Jesus the *Christos*. A Judaeans entered the *ekklesia* after baptism in the name of Jesus the Christ. A group of twelve men who had been students of Jesus were selected as leaders of the *ekklesia*. Paramount among the Twelve were Simon Peter and two cousins of Jesus named James and John, sons of Zebedee. The *ekklesia* waited expectantly for the imminent reappearance, or *parousia*, of Jesus the Christ. For those in the *ekklesia* Jesus was - on the authority of Psalm 2 - no less than "the son of Adonai." In Psalm 2 the *mashiach*, the anointed, speaks as follows:

the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts
of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's
vessel (Psalm 2:7-9, AV).

The *parousia* of Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God, would mark the commencement of the worldwide kingdom that Daniel and other apocalyptic prophets had promised. When the Messiah returned through the clouds with his Heavenly Host, the Roman empire would be destroyed in an instant, the dead would rise from their graves, and Judaeans would finally reap the rewards of a millennium of piety.

A minority of Judaeans who believed that Jesus had arisen from the dead, and would soon return through the heavens, were uncomfortable in the *ekklesia* and formed a rival organization. These were the so-called Hellenists, who chose for themselves seven leaders (Acts 6:5-6), among whom Stephen was apparently chief. Although the story in Acts presents the differences between the Hellenists and the *ekklesia* as nothing more than a dispute over the distribution of alms, a far more basic controversy seems to have been whether those awaiting Jesus' *parousia* were or were not obligated to keep the *torah*.⁵⁷ While "the law of Moses" was strictly followed in the *ekklesia*, the Hellenists seem to have regarded Jesus' resurrection as proof that the *torah* was no longer binding. On this matter the Hellenists seem to have better reflected than did the *ekklesia* how Jesus viewed the *torah*. In Luke's story some Judaeans charge Stephen with threatening both the Torah and the temple: Stephen has been warning, they report to the Sanhedrin, that when Jesus *Nazoraios* returns in glory he "shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (Acts 6:14 AV; cf. 7:46-48).

In their understanding of who Jesus was the Hellenists seem to have gone far beyond the members of the *ekklesia*. For the Hellenists Jesus the Christ was not only the Son of Man prophesied by Daniel, but was nothing less than an incarnation of deity, virtually an equal of

Adonai himself. Deity had taken human form, that is, in order to introduce a new relationship with humankind. This is the incarnation doctrine that was transmitted to Paul, and that is reflected in the hymn that Paul quoted at Philippians 2:6-11 (NEB):

For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God (or, yet he did not prize his equality with God), but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave. Bearing the human likeness, revealed in human shape, he humbled himself, and in obedience accepted even death - death on a cross. Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow - in heaven, on earth, and in the depths - and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father.⁵⁸

Radical as the Hellenist community in Jerusalem seems to have been, it was short-lived. The high priest and the Sanhedrin put Stephen on trial and found his declarations blasphemous. According to Luke's story, Stephen was permitted to preach a long sermon to the Sanhedrin, culminating with a declaration that Daniel's "Son of Man" prophecy was now fulfilled:

Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, and gazing intently up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand. "Look," he said, "I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they stopped their ears; they made a concerted rush at him, threw him out of the city, and set about stoning him. (Acts 7:55-58, OSB)

The stoning of Stephen and the expulsion of the other Hellenists from Jerusalem seems to have taken place in the early 30s. Thereafter the *ekklesia* was the city's only organization centered on Jesus the Christ.

The Christmas stories and the Lukan canticles

As belief spread that Jesus had arisen from the tomb, had ascended into Heaven, and was indeed the Messiah who would soon return to earth to establish an everlasting kingdom, stories arose to confirm Judaeans in their belief. Some recalled that when he was baptized by John a dove had descended from heaven. And when the dove had descended, some claimed, God himself had called out from Heaven: "You are my beloved son!" (Mark 1:11 OSB). A second story told of forty days and forty nights that Jesus had fasted in the wilderness: thrice Satan had appeared, carrying him to the parapet of the Jerusalem temple and to the top of a mountain, and tempting him with promises of endless wealth and power. But Jesus ordered Satan out of his sight, and angels then came and ministered to his needs. Another widely circulated story was that shortly before his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus had climbed a high mountain: there he had been transfigured, so that his clothes became bright as light itself and his face shone like the sun. While in that transfigured state he had been joined on the mountaintop by Moses and Elijah, the other permanent companions of Adonai.

Still other stories arose about Jesus' birth. Because he was surely the Son of God, as his ascension into Heaven showed, he had been miraculously conceived and born of a virgin. And he was born, the stories said, in Bethlehem of Judaea. Bethlehem was the town from which King

David had come and from which - so the prophet Micah had promised - would come another king of Israel "whose greatness will reach to the ends of the earth."⁵⁹ In various ways Judaeans explained how it happened that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which lay far to the south of Galilee where Jesus was known to have grown up and lived. In the story at Matthew 2 Joseph and Mary, his virgin wife, are natives of Bethlehem and it is there that the virgin gives birth to Jesus. Astrologers from the east, following a new star, bring their gifts to the family's house in Bethlehem. It is only after the family's temporary flight to Egypt that an angel appears to Joseph and instructs him that he must move the family to Nazareth in Galilee. The story at Luke 2, conversely, makes Joseph and his betrothed, Mary, natives of Nazareth. This story brings the couple briefly to Bethlehem in order to be registered there - because Joseph was a descendant of David - for the census ordered by Caesar Augustus. At Bethlehem the pregnant virgin gives birth to Jesus, and after the baby's birth the family returns to Galilee. However different, both stories place Jesus' birth in the little town from which the great king of Israel was to come.

It was in the militant and expectant atmosphere of the Jerusalem *ekklesia* that the poetry known as the Lukan canticles, embedded in the Infancy Narrative of Luke 1-2, was composed. Neither the Infancy Narrative itself nor the canticles fit well - doctrinally or linguistically⁶⁰ - with the rest of Luke's writings. Although they are likely to have been added to Luke's Gospel toward the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, the narrative and its canticles are apparently much older, composed and sung in Judaea during the middle decades of the first century CE.⁶¹ The songs say nothing about Jesus as the Redeemer who saves humankind from eternal death and Hell, or about other themes central to New Covenant Christianity. Instead, the songs look forward to Jesus' salvation of "Israel" (Greater Judaea, the Judaea once ruled by the Hasmonaeans and Herodes the Great) from the Romans and to his victory over all Israel's enemies.⁶² The language of the canticles as we have them is of course Greek, but they conform to the conventions of Semitic poetry and must have been composed in Hebrew or Aramaic.

The story in which the canticles are set tell how Jesus is born to the virgin Mary. In the Annunciation scene at Luke 1:31-33 the angel Gabriel comes to Nazareth and announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Messiah of Judaea, the Son of God, and the universal and eternal king foretold by the prophet Daniel. Gabriel informs Mary that although she is a virgin she will conceive and bear a son,

and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (RSV).

Gabriel's phrasing echoes an Aramaic fragment, found at Qumran, that looks forward to a deliverer who will establish an everlasting kingdom and "will be called the son of God, and they shall name him son of the Most High."⁶³ The Aramaic narrative from which the Qumran fragment comes was written well before the composition of any of the synoptic Gospels.

Mary's *Magnificat* echoes the theme of Jesus' delivering Israel from its oppressors. The Lord, says Mary,

has shown the might of his arm, he has routed the proud and all their schemes; he has

brought down monarchs from their thrones, and raised on high the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, as he promised to our forefathers; he has not forgotten to show mercy to Abraham and his children's children forever (Luke 1:51-55 OSB).

At Luke 1:68-79 old Zacharias, his tongue finally loosed, praises "the Lord, the god of Israel," for sending from the house of David a savior who will deliver the nation of Israel from its enemies:

Praise to the Lord, the God of Israel! For he has turned to his people and set them free. He has raised for us a strong deliverer from the house of his servant David. So he promised: age after age he proclaimed by the lips of his holy prophets, that he would deliver us from our enemies, out of the hands of all who hate us; that, calling to mind his solemn covenant, he would deal mercifully with our fathers. This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, to rescue us from enemy hands and set us free from fear, so that we might worship in his presence in holiness and righteousness our whole life long. (OSB)

At the moment of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem an angel of the Lord appears to shepherds in the fields, and tells them not to fear:

Do not be afraid; I bring you good news, news of great joy for the whole nation. Today there has been born to you in the city of David a deliverer - the Messiah, the Lord. (2:10-11 OSB)

Great joy was not coming to "all people," as the King James Bible has it, but instead was in store for "the whole people," (παντὶ τῷ λαῷ). The *laos* to which the canticle refers is of course the people of Israel. And the *soter* who has just been born is not a savior from sin and eternal damnation, but a national deliverer (the epithet *soter* was familiar from royal titles among the Ptolemies and Seleukids). At 2:13 the shepherds catch a glimpse of the supernatural military force that this *soter* will have at his disposal:

And all of a sudden there was with the angel a vast heavenly army,⁶⁴ praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heights, and on earth peace for people with whom he is well pleased.'⁶⁵

In the *Nunc dimittis* old Simeon, a devout man "who watched and waited for the restoration of Israel" (Luke 2:25), continues - although not quite so explicitly - the theme of Jesus' birth as a great day for "the people of Israel." In the story Simeon takes the baby in his arms and praises God, saying:

Now, Lord, you are releasing your servant in peace,
according to your promise.
For I have seen with my own eyes the deliverance you have made ready in full view of all
nations:
a light that will bring revelation to the Gentiles

and glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32, OSB)

The Greek phrase *phos eis apokalypsin ethnon* is literally translated into English as “a light for the uncovering of the nations,” and it echoes passages in the “servant songs” of Deutero-Isaiah.⁶⁶ The phrase seems to mean that in miraculously delivering Israel, Jesus will finally show to the Gentiles that Adonai is God. As Simeon is holding and blessing the child, he is approached by Anna, an 84-year old widow who virtually lives in the temple. Anna thanks God for the great gift and she talks about the child “to all who were looking for the liberation of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38 OSB).

Like the canticles themselves, the Infancy Narratives - which Paul either did not know or disregarded - seem to have arisen in Judaea during the decades before the Judaeo-Roman War of 66-70. They presented Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, and the Son of Man who would break the Gentiles as an iron rod shatters a clay pot and who would establish a worldwide and everlasting kingdom. In Matthew’s narrative Herodes the Great tries but fails to find and slay the infant Jesus, whom the Magi from the east describe as “the child who is born to be the king of the Judaeans” (Matt 2:2). The Infancy Narratives were parallel to the “Signs Narratives,” accounts of the miracles and “signs” performed by Jesus. Both the Signs Narratives and the Infancy Narratives confirmed for those baptized into the Jerusalem *ekklesia* that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah and the Son of God. The *ekklesia* was confident that he would soon reappear, this time accompanied by an army of angels and wielding all the power of his father, Adonai.

The Christiani

Until the destruction of the temple in 70 CE many Judaeans - a minority, but one numbered at least in the tens of thousands - believed that Jesus the Christ would overturn the Roman world and establish an infinite kingdom. This “Judaeo-Christianity,” however, has been neglected by most Christian and Jewish scholars. The Christian version of Christian history begins with Acts and the letters of Paul, and focuses on the Gentiles whom Paul converted in Asia Minor. Although Luke’s second work was called “Acts of the Apostles,” it said very little about any of the Twelve Apostles or about the Jerusalem *ekklesia* and told instead of Paul and his missionary work among the Gentiles. New Covenant (the term New Testament is a mistranslation) Christianity did not regard Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, who would save Israel from the Romans, but as the savior of the entire world from sin and damnation. In this view, from the beginning the people of Jerusalem and Judaea were hostile to Jesus and to the handful of disciples who believed that he had arisen from the tomb on Easter morning, and not until Paul carried the gospel of Jesus the Christ to the Gentiles did it fall on fertile ground.

It was important for Luke to present such a picture because in the 80s CE, when he wrote his Gospel and Acts, most Roman officials regarded “the *Christiani*” as a dangerous and extremist faction of Judaeans who looked forward to the destruction of the Roman empire. Luke hoped to persuade “Theophilus” and other Romans in authority that Jesus’ followers were by and large peaceful Gentiles rather than Judaeans, that Jesus had been crucified mostly because of Judaeo hostility toward him, and that ever since his resurrection his followers had been persecuted by the Judaeans. Jesus had come into the world, according to Paul and Luke, not to

establish a Judaeen kingdom over all the world but to die on the cross and by that sacrifice to atone for the sins of all humankind. When writing Acts, Luke was embarrassed by memories of the *ekklesia* of Jesus the Christ at Jerusalem, with its throngs of fervent believers in Jesus as the deliverer (*soter*) of Israel. Luke therefore marginalized the Jerusalem *ekklesia*, mentioning only its formation and the trouble that it periodically gave to Paul. According to Christian doctrine as developed by the Church Fathers from the second through the fourth century, God first offered the New Covenant to the Judaeans and because they rejected it he commissioned Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In this picture the large number of Judaeans who looked forward to the triumphant return of Jesus the Messiah had to be ignored.

Nor has either the character or the importance of “Judaeen Christianity” been much recognized by Jewish scholars. Historians of rabbinic Judaism have often assumed that such first-century Judaeans as may have looked upon Jesus as the Messiah were Christians indeed, which is to say apostates from Judaism and the Old Covenant. As such, these “Jewish Christians” were by definition not truly Jewish and could have had little importance for the history of Judaism.

The original *Christiani* were in fact hyper-Judaeans of the Old Covenant, who in their Messianic fervor believed that Jesus would soon return to earth, break the Roman empire, and establish an eternal and world-wide Judaeen kingdom, based in Jerusalem. The name *Christiani* is a Latin term and must have been coined by Roman officials. The suffix *-ani* is paralleled in such Latin names as *Pompeiani*, *Caesariani*, and *Herodiani*. The meaning of the term *Christiani* was something like “partisans of the *Christus*” or “members of the faction of the *Christus*.” It is rarely used in the New Testament. According to Acts 11:26 it was first applied to “the brethren” in Antioch.

This datum is an illustration that the “good news” of Jesus’ death and resurrection circulated not only in Judaea but was carried far and wide. Judaeans who were convinced that Jesus would shortly return to establish a Kingdom of God over all the earth brought that dramatic news to Judaeans in the Diaspora. Listeners who believed the message were baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah. If they were already Judaeans they continued to be Judaeans, and if Gentiles were moved by the message they became Judaeans (the men undergoing circumcision) before receiving baptism, and henceforth lived according to the ritual law of Moses. Thus already by the late 30s at Antioch and other major cities of the Roman empire - Alexandria and Rome especially - there were many Judaeans who eagerly looked forward to Jesus’ *parousia* and at the same time were zealous keepers of the *torah*. By the 50s Old Covenant evangelists of Jesus the Messiah had appeared in the cities of Galatia, as Paul’s Letter to the Galatians makes clear.⁶⁷

Although many of the Diaspora Judaeans baptized into the *ekklesia* of Jesus the Christ may have been peaceful and law-abiding, some of them were violent enough to catch the eye of municipal and imperial officials. It was for these trouble-makers that the term *Christiani* was coined. If Acts 11:26 is correct that the term was first used in Antioch, the occasion for the coinage may have been a bloody conflict between the Judaeans and Hellenes of Antioch in the third year of Gaius (Caligula), or 39-40 CE.⁶⁸ Trouble at Antioch in that year would almost certainly have been related to the “statue” crisis in Jerusalem, which we must therefore look at in

some detail.

Caligula's statue

In late 39 or early 40 the Roman emperor Caligula ordered that a huge statue of himself be placed in the Jerusalem temple.⁶⁹ Earlier emperors had been very sensitive to the Judaeans' belief that any "graven image" in or near the temple would violate the Judaeans' covenant with Adonai. Caligula's order, to be carried out by Petronius, the governor of Syria, was seen by many Romans (including Petronius) as reckless, but it was not entirely out of character for Caligula. The statue was to be in the style of Jupiter statues, but its face was to be recognizably that of Caligula. Roman emperors were apotheosized at death, and so could expect that future generations would respect them as gods (because Roman gods were neither an impressive nor a very believable lot, to be counted as one of them was not an impossible ambition for an emperor). To be worshiped while still alive, however, was eccentric and invidious, and Caligula's order for the Jerusalem temple was therefore doubly dangerous. Knowing that Jerusalem and the rest of Judaea would explode in violence when the directive was carried through, and that he would be responsible for containing the violence, Petronius dragged his feet in manufacturing the statue (the work was done at Sidon). As a precaution he stationed two legions at the southern border of his province, in a position quickly to occupy Judaea if required.

Late in the year 40 Caligula seems to have countermanded his order, having been prevailed upon by some of his advisors and by his long-time friend, Herodes Agrippa, who was then king of Galilee and Peraea as well as Philip's old tetrarchy. It is reported that when Caligula changed his mind he said that if the Judaeans failed to recognize him as a god they were not to be condemned because of their disrespect but pitied because of their stupidity. But the cancellation was not publicized, and Jerusalem was preparing for an armed rebellion when, on January 24 of 41, Caligula was stabbed to death by Cassius Chaerea, an officer in the emperor's Praetorian Guard.⁷⁰ When word of the assassination came to Jerusalem, the city erupted with praise and thanks to Adonai for this latest miracle of deliverance, and rabbinic sources indicate that for generations thereafter Judaeans celebrated the anniversary of Caligula's death as a day of thanksgiving.⁷¹

Why had Caligula ordered that a cult-statue of himself be set up in the Jerusalem temple? The easiest answer is that Caligula was mad, and that no decision he made was rational, let alone prudent. Gratuitously to offend and enrage not just Judaea but several million Judaeans in the Diaspora, however, would have gone far beyond the private pranks and crimes for which Caligula was notorious. Josephus recounts the statue episode in both his *Judaean War* and his *Judaean Antiquities*, but in neither place does he explain Caligula's motivation.⁷² Philo, who was a contemporary of the episode, gives us an explanation of sorts. At the Palestinian city of Jamnia, a few miles from the coast north of Ashdod, the Greek citizens erected an altar of Caligula, as was done in many Levantine cities. The Judaeans of Jamnia promptly demolished the altar, seeing it as idolatrous. When informed about what the Judaeans of Jamnia had done, says Philo, Caligula issued his infamous order.⁷³

Philo's account fails completely to explain why Caligula was prepared to risk a Judaeen war, drawing off two legions from the Parthian frontier. Nor does Philo make any connection

between Caligula's policy and the course of events in Judaea at large and in the Jerusalem temple in particular. Messianic expectations, some but by no means all focused on Jesus the Christ, were then flourishing in Judaea and especially in the heady atmosphere surrounding the temple. Within a generation of Caligula's action the temple was destroyed by the Romans lest it serve again as a center for rebellion. It is likely that Caligula's order for the statue was to some extent a response to the apocalyptic fervor that was building in Judaea.

Philo would not have been inclined to admit - and may even not have recognized - that the temple was becoming a hotbed of Judaeian Messianism. Philo's great project at Alexandria was to create a synthesis of Hellenistic Judaism and Greek philosophy, and he therefore had little use for Messianism or for the eagerness with which many people in Judaea looked forward to the world's destruction.⁷⁴ In all of his voluminous writing there is no mention of Jesus the Christ. That he had not heard of Jesus is a remote possibility. It is much more likely, however, that because of his overall agenda Philo chose not to mention the enthusiasm for the Messiah in Jerusalem during the 30s, and so omitted the main reason for Caligula's order. We know from Acts that the *ekklesia* of Jesus the Christ met at the temple, and that in the late 30s and early 40s it was a significant assembly (when Herodes Agrippa became king of Judaea in 41, one of his first acts was to decapitate the *ekklesia* by executing James the son of Zebedee and imprisoning Peter). The Roman prefect of Judaea, who when visiting Jerusalem often took up quarters in the Antonia fortress, must have been aware that at the temple next door several thousand people of the *ekklesia* congregated regularly, looking forward to the return of Jesus and his establishment of a worldwide kingdom. Caligula's decision to have his own statue installed in the temple was probably not unrelated to the *ekklesia* and to other Messianic groups that frequented the temple, all of them representing a challenge to his own rule over Judaea.

In the event, the project and the dramatic death of its perpetrator served only to strengthen fanaticism and apocalyptic hopes in Judaea, among not only those who looked forward to Jesus' *parousia* but also those who expected some other messiah or eschatological event. Caligula's assassination must have seemed to almost every Judaeian - even to those of the "peace party" - a divine intervention, Adonai (and not Cassius Chaerea) rescuing the Jerusalem temple from the sacrilege that the Roman emperor had designed.

Herodes Agrippa, King of Judaea (41-44)⁷⁵

When Caligula was murdered, it happened that Herodes Agrippa was in Rome, having been invited some months earlier by Caligula. The emperor's Praetorian Guard, to which the assassins belonged, assumed it was their responsibility to find a new emperor. Their choice fell on Claudius, Caligula's uncle. Although Claudius was physically handicapped, socially awkward, and had held no major appointments under his predecessors, the Guard's choice was not difficult: in the Julio-Claudian family, which had ruled Rome for almost ninety years, nobody other than Claudius was left. The Roman senate, however, had other ideas. The senators, most of whom had hated Caligula, desired a return to the Republic, in which the senate itself governed the empire. As the Praetorian Guard and the senate began to joust with each other, Claudius - from the camp of the Guard - chose as his emissary to the senate Herodes Agrippa. For several days Agrippa shuttled back and forth between the camp and the senate, until finally the senate conceded and voted to Claudius all the imperial powers that his nephew

had wielded.⁷⁶

One of the new emperor's first acts was to reward Agrippa handsomely, not only confirming him as king of what he had already received from Caligula (Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Galilee and Peraea), but now adding to it Samaria and Judaea itself. The entire realm was to be called "Judaea," and of this realm Agrippa was - at least de jure - the king, an independent sovereign. Claudius' decision achieved two goals at once. Not only did it pay off his obligation to Agrippa, but - more importantly - it also solved the thorny problem of Judaea, the most restive of the emperor's provinces. Instead of imposing on the fanatic Judaeans a gigantic statue of himself, as Caligula had intended, the new emperor allowed them to have their own king, following a hiatus of almost fifty years. This solution was possible because the new Judaeans king was completely trustworthy, being a close personal friend and confidant of the emperor.

Herodes Agrippa, it will be recalled, was a son of Aristoboulos and so a grandson of Herodes the Great. Like his sister Herodias, he was talented, witty and a friend of the powerful. Descended from the Hasmonaeans as well as from Herodes the Great, he was well known to Judaeans everywhere. Sent to Rome at the age of five, he grew up in the company of Drusus, son of Tiberius, and after Drusus' death he became a close friend of the future emperor Caligula. As a young man Agrippa lived beyond his means, and was often in financial trouble. His public career began when Caligula appointed him, already a middle aged man, king of the little tetrarchy that had been vacant since the death of Philip. Although his state was tiny, the mere fact that a Judaeans was king of anything was for many Judaeans a source of pride. On his journey from Rome to Gaulanitis in 37 he passed through Alexandria, and was there given a triumphal parade by the city's Judaeans (the Hellenes then retaliated, parading a well-known local character through their own streets and saluting him as king, an affront that ignited four years of violence between Alexandria's Judaeans and Hellenes).

In his modest palace at Caesarea Philippi, Agrippa was careful to show his gratitude to Caligula. Agrippa's coins portrayed his own face on the obverse, but the reverse showed him clasping the hand of Caligula. We have already seen that when in 39 Antipas and Herodias went to Italy to request a kingly title for Antipas (and evidently to complain about their brother and brother-in-law) Caligula exiled the couple to Lyons and added Galilee and Peraea to Agrippa's little kingdom. Thus even before the elevation of Claudius as emperor in 41 Herodes Agrippa was a man of great distinction, and certainly the most powerful Judaeans since the death of Herodes the Great.

The years from 41 to 44, however, were far more glorious. By awarding to him Judaea and Samaria, the emperor tripled the number of Agrippa's subjects. The Judaeans kingdom was now almost as large as it had been in the days of Herodes the Great. For most Judaeans - those in the Diaspora as well as the inhabitants of Judaea - the kingship of Herodes Agrippa was a brief but festive interruption of Judaea's subjection to Rome. The king's residence was now the Herodian palace at Jerusalem, and when the pilgrims came to celebrate the holy days at the temple he made ceremonial appearances before huge crowds. Agrippa seems to have had good relations with the religious establishment, both Sadducean and Pharisaic. In rabbinic tradition his reign was recalled with nostalgia, the best years for Judaea since the death of Alexandra Salome in 67 BC.⁷⁷ Even in Gentile Phoenicia the people of Beirut (Berytos) celebrated King

Herodes Agrippa, who gave their city a theater and an amphitheater. As a formally autonomous ruler, Agrippa was given permission by Claudius to enclose Jerusalem's northern suburb, called Bezetha, with a fortification wall (at Agrippa's death in 44 the wall was far from finished and work was stopped).

Agrippa's principal problem was the religious zeal that by the 40s was widespread among Judaeans, and that manifested itself most vividly in the *ekklesia* of Jesus the Christ at Jerusalem. Those expecting an imminent *parousia* of the Christ - whether Jesus or Moses or Elijah - had no need or use for a thoroughly human and Herodian king. Agrippa dealt decisively with the problem of the *ekklesia*, upon his arrival in Jerusalem striking out not against the ordinary Judaeans who had been baptized into it but against its leaders. According to Acts 12:1-4 he executed James the son of Zebedee and imprisoned Peter under a guard of sixteen soldiers (Peter was allowed to escape, however). An obscure remark by Josephus may be related to Agrippa's repression of the Jerusalem *ekklesia*. Josephus reports that as soon as Agrippa reached Jerusalem he made elaborate thank-offerings at the temple, and was careful to do everything "according to the (Judaeans') law. He therefore also saw to it that a great many of the *Naziraioi* were shorn."⁷⁸ It is possible that the *Naziraioi* affected by his order were the sectarians who had followed John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ and who were called *Nazirim* by the Judaeans. Perhaps Agrippa saw to it that these *Nazirim* - or *Nazoraioi* in Greek - were shorn of their dreadlocks in order to be a less conspicuous presence at the temple.

Finally, it is likely that in Rome itself the beginning of trouble caused by the *Nazirim* - or by the *Christiani* as the Romans called them - was somehow related either to Agrippa's elevation or to his harsh measures against the Jerusalem *ekklesia*. At some point in Claudius' principate (41-54) the Roman *Christiani* engaged in prolonged riots, possibly against Gentiles but more likely against Judaeans who denied that Jesus was the Messiah. Claudius responded by issuing an order - not very effectual - that the rioters be expelled from the city. Although usually dated to 49, the more likely date for the riots and the expulsion was 41, Claudius' first year.⁷⁹

Unlike the *Christiani* and other apocalypticists, those Judaeans who neither expected nor desired the world to end soon must have appreciated Agrippa, and especially his ability to balance respect for Judaeans traditions with involvement in the Gentile world. He hosted a conference of Rome's seven Near Eastern client kings, and wisely held the conference in Tiberias, a small city but one much more congenial to Gentile visitors than was Jerusalem. Likewise, in 44 Agrippa put on victory games in honor of Claudius' conquest of Britain (Britain became a Roman province in that year). In Jerusalem such games would have provoked a riot, and so Agrippa produced them in Caesarea Maritima, which had always had a predominantly Hellenic character.

On the second day of the games, as Agrippa - clad in a silvered robe - was trying to give a speech to the assembled crowd, he collapsed with severe abdominal pains. Five days later he died.⁸⁰ The cause of his death was perhaps appendicitis and a ruptured appendix, but in antiquity such medical emergencies were mysterious and inexplicable events, which were often ascribed to an angry god or evil spirit. Many Judaeans therefore interpreted Agrippa's fate as a punishment by Adonai. In the version transmitted by Luke - at Acts 12:21-23 - Agrippa was struck by the angel of the Lord because of the king's pretensions and his failure to give God the

glory. In retrospect, most people in Judaea would regret the king's untimely death (he was only 54). As events were to unfold, Herodes Agrippa was the last king of Judaea. His death allowed the believers in apocalyptic prophecies once again to get the multitude's attention, and eventually to drag the province into the disastrous rebellion of 66-70.

1. In the *Judaeen Antiquities* (hereafter *AJ*) Josephus' detailed account of the history of Judaea ends (at 17.338) with Archelaos' return to Jerusalem as ethnarch in 4 BC. The nine years of Archelaos' ethnarchy are summarily described in 17.339-355, with details only about two dreams. Books 18-20 ostensibly carry the history of Judaea and of events in the Judaeen Diaspora forward to the eve of the war of 66-70 CE, but about a fourth of this text is about Roman rather than Judaeen history, being devoted to the assassination of the Roman emperor Gaius (Caligula) and the elevation of Claudius.

2. BT Tractate *Gittin*, Folio 56b.

3. *AJ* 17.342 dates Archelaos' dismissal to the tenth year of his ethnarchy; *Judaeen War* (hereafter *BJ*) 2.111 dates it to his ninth year.

4. On the garrison available to the prefects of Judaea see Smallwood 1981, pp. 144-47. The "Italian cohort" mentioned at Acts 10:1 enrolled Roman citizens, but most of the other cohorts were made up of recruits from the Levant.

5. On the Zealots see Hengel 1989.

6. For references to "Judas of Galilee" see Josephus, *BJ* 2.117-18 and Acts 5:37. At *AJ* 18.4, however, Josephus describes Judas as a man from Gamala in Gaulanitis, which lay to the east, across the sea from Galilee. The confusion among the several rebels named Judas is sorted out at Smallwood 1981, p. 143, note 40.

7. *BJ* 2.168.

8. *AJ* 18.106-08.

9. Josephus *AJ* 18.117. For analysis of Josephus' description (*AJ* 18.116-119) of John the Baptist see J. P. Meier, "John the Baptist in Josephus: Philology and Exegesis," *JBL* 111 (1992), pp. 225-37. At p. 236 Meier summarises Josephus' description of the Baptist as "a moral preacher concerned with virtue."

10. John 1:28 locates the Baptist at "Bethany beyond Jordan," but where this Bethany lay is not known. At 3:23 the same Gospel puts the Baptist "at Aenon, near Salim, because water was plentiful in that region, and all the time people were coming for baptism" (OSB). The OSB notes

on this passage: “*Aenon* (Aram. for ‘springs’), like Salim, probably a Samaritan village.” Because many people came from Jerusalem to be baptized, it is likely that the site of John’s preaching was far to the south of the Sea of Galilee. The wilderness east of the Jordan had an association with Elijah (at I Kings 17:3: Yahweh commands Elijah to go to the Wadi Kerith, east of Jordan, and promises that there the prophet would be fed by food brought to him by ravens).

11. Matt 3:7 says many Pharisees and Sadducees came to John for baptism, but Luke 7:30 says that the Pharisees refused John’s baptism.

12. *AJ* 18.116-19.

13. *AJ* 18.109-15.

14. Mark 6 tells the story in greatest detail (for a shorter version see Matt 14:1-12). In addition to transposing John’s beheading to a date after Antipas’ marriage to Herodias the story was also wrong about Herodias’ first husband, identifying him as Philip the Tetrarch. Late in life Philip married Salome, daughter of Herodias, and that may have led to the confusion in the Gospels. See Smallwood 1981, p. 185, note 20. The story at Mark 6 combines several motifs from ancient romances: the dazzled king who promises to a favored beauty anything she wishes, up to half his kingdom (cf. Esther 5-7), and the fatal vow, that costs the life of someone dear to the man who makes the vow (cf. the Jephthah story in Judges 11).

15. *AJ* 18.55; *BJ* 2.169-74.

16. *AJ* 18.85-89.

17. At *AJ* 18.88-89 Josephus reports that immediately after the Samaritan bloodshed Vitellius sent a Marcellus to the prefecture and ordered Pilatus to go to Rome to explain his actions to the emperor (Pilatus arrived in Rome just after Tiberius’ death in 37 CE). At *AJ* 18.237 Josephus identifies the governor of Judaea during Caligula’s reign as Marullus. Either “Marullus” is a manuscript error for “Marcellus,” or Marcellus was a very temporary appointment made by Vitellius, and Marcellus was soon replaced by Marullus.

18. For the Greek titulus see John 19:19. In his Vulgate, Jerome consistently used the Latin *Nazarenus* as equivalent of the Greek Ναζωραῖος, and the Latin version of the titulus on Jesus’ cross is reconstructed as *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*.

19. Peters 1970, p. 491, note 13, observes that “throughout the Gospels Jesus is called a *Nazoraïos*, traditionally interpreted as ‘man of Nazareth,’ a town mentioned frequently in the Gospels and, curiously, nowhere else.” On the entire question see Brown 1977, pp. 209-213. Brown makes a strong case that Jesus was called *Nazoraïos* because of his association with, and then his leading position in, a group known to the Judaeans public as *Nazoraïoi*.

20. “Simon of Cyrene,” for example, was Simon Κυρηναῖος (see Matt 27:32, Mark 15:21, and Luke 23:26). For Ναζαρά as the name of the town in which Jesus grew up see Matt 4:13 and Luke 4:16-29. In the latter story the inhabitants of Nazara, infuriated by Jesus’ comments about himself, try to throw him down from the ledge of the mountain on which their *polis* was built. A shorter version of the same story appears at Mark 6:1-6 and at Matthew 13:53-58, but in neither

is the home-town identified.

21. The absence of Nazareth in the *Bellum Judaicum* is surprising. In the Judaeo-Roman war Josephus commanded the rebel forces in Galilee and his history of the war therefore mentions scores of Galilean cities, towns and villages. For the archaeological evidence on the town conventionally called Nazareth see Joseph Strange, s.v. "Nazareth," in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, pp. 113-14.

22. For *Essaios* see, for example, the reference at Josephus *BJ* 2.113 to Σίμων τις Ἐσσαῖος.

23. In the Acts passage Tertullus complains to the procurator Felix about Paul, saying that Paul is a plague among the Judaeans and is a leader τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως. Antonius Felix was procurator of Judaea from 52 until 59 or 60.

24. Epstein 1959, p. 179, note 1, gives the following explanation for the expansion of the original 18 benedictions to 19: "The additional prayer inserted is for the frustration of the designs and machinations of the maligners of the Jewish people, and was composed according to Talmudic sources (T. Berachoth, 28a) by Samuel the younger, about 100 C.E., at the request of the *Nasi* Rabban Gamaliel of Jabneh."

25. The sentence appears in the copy of the Yerushalmi Talmud found by Schechter in the Cairo Genizah. The curse is directed against the נַזִּירִים (*nazirim*, or *nazorim*).

26. Shahīd 2006, pp. 22-23, notes that the name *nasārā*, which appears 14 times in the Quran, is simply an Arabization of the *Nazoraioi* of Acts 24:5.

27. For clear references to Ναζιραῖοι = Nazirites see the Septuagint of Judges 13:5 (manuscript tradition A) and Josephus *AJ* 19.293-4.

28. In the Talmud the tractate *Nazir* details all of the Nazirite's obligations. Because the Nazirite had to dispense his or her vow with a sacrifice at the temple, the destruction of the temple in 70 CE effectively ended the Nazirite tradition. For rabbinic disapproval of Nazirite asceticism see R. Eleazar ha-Kappar's words at BT Tractate *Nazir*, Folio 19b.

29. See Peters 1970, pp. 668-9, on "the shadowy tribe of the Mandaeans," with their Aramaic scriptures and liturgy. Noting that "the latter-day Mandaeans/Nazoraean of Iraq possessed a rich Jordanian tradition centering on the figure of John the Baptist," Peters suggests that the ancestors of the tradition were pressed by more traditional Judaeans to leave the vicinity of the Jordan, and that they found a more hospitable reception in Parthian Mesopotamia. "It was in Mesopotamia, perhaps in contact with the traditions of Iran, that the Nazoraean became Mandaeans." See also Brown 1977, p. 209.

30. For the *netser* see Isaiah 11:1. In messianic prophecy at Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12 a synonymous term (*tsemach*) for "branch" is used. For a New Testament echo see Luke 1:78.

31. Matthew 2:22-23, based on the AV; the Greek for the last clause is Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται. No Septuagint passage corresponds to Matthew's quotation. Speculation about the prophecy he had in mind ranges from the Hebrew *netser* in Isaiah 11:1 to a Greek quotation from a lost apocryphal or pseudepigraphical book.

32. Matt 26:25; 26:49; Mark 9:5; 10:51; 11:21; 11:45; John 1:38; 3:2; 4:31; 6:15; 9:2; 11:8; 20:16. See also Matt 23:7-8 for Jesus' criticism of the scribes and Pharisees for seeking to be called "Rabbi." For John the Baptist's disciples addressing the Baptist as "Rabbi" see John 3:26.

33. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus is addressed as διδάσκαλε by his disciples and also by scribes, lawyers, Pharisees and Sadducees. See Luke 7:40; 12:13; 19:39; 20:27-28. The Greek title also appears at Matt 19:16 and Matt 22:36.

34. In 1995 two very helpful books were published on the topic of social justice in antiquity. On the wider picture see K. D. Irani and Morris Silver, eds., *Social Justice in the Ancient World* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995). More focused on Israel and the earlier period of antiquity is Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem and Minneapolis: Hebrew University Magnes Press, and Fortress Press, 1995).

35. See Howard L. Adelson, "The Origins of a Concept of Social Justice," in Irani and Silver 1995, pp. 25-40. The summary sentence on Greece appears at p. 30.

36. See, for example, Amos 2:6-7 and 5:7-13; Micah 6: 7-15. Crossan 1998, pp. 182-208, nicely juxtaposes Greek assumptions of the natural inequality of people and Judahite assumptions of the (supernatural) equality of all people before God.

37. At Luke 10:25-27 it is a *nomikos* (a man learned in the Law) who quotes Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 6:5 as a summary of the Torah, and Jesus commends him for it. At Matthew 22:37-40 and Mark 12:29-31 Jesus delivers the same summary to the lawyer. At Rom 13:9 (AV) Paul refers to "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" as a "saying" that he assumes the Judaeans in Rome will have heard. See also Gal 5:14 and James 2:8. The *Didache* (*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) begins with the instruction: "The way of life is this. First of all, Love God who made you. Secondly, Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Lightfoot tr.). A section of the Talmud contrasting the gentle Hillel with the brusque Shammai reports that when a heathen asked Shammai to recite the Torah to him while standing on one foot, Shammai chased him away with a measuring stick. When the same heathen asked the question of Hillel, Hillel responded with the Golden Rule: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour: that is the whole of the Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it." See Tractate Shabbat, Folio 31a.

38. Mark 7:18-19 (OSB). While making explicit ("by saying this") what is only implicit in the Greek, the OSB translation clarifies the meaning of the participial clause καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα, "making all the foods clean." The clause is Mark's summation of Jesus' discourse on clean and unclean foods. Jerome misunderstood the syntax and included the clause in Jesus' question to the disciples. As a result, the meaning of Mark 7:19 was obscured throughout the Middle Ages, and from the Vulgate the error was passed on to the English AV.

39. Crossan 1998, p. 235. Crossan's pp. 209-35, a chapter titled "Galilean Archaeology," offers a good analysis of the Galilean peasantry and its suspicions of the cities. It is remarkable that in the synoptic Gospels Jesus is based in the town of Capernaum, from which he crisscrosses the Galilean countryside, but no visit to either Sepphoris or Tiberias is mentioned. Archaeological surveys indicate that each of the two cities occupied some 80 hectares, suggesting a population of at least 10,000 (four or five times the size of Capernaum).

40. For John "proclaiming in the desert" see Matt 3:1. For Jesus "proclaiming" the kingdom of God see, for example, Matt 4:17 or Mark 1:14. In the latter passage, after John's arrest Jesus comes into Galilee, κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

41. For a study of the Judaeian context of Jesus' reputation for miracles see Eve 2002.

42. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 26 and 56.

43. *AJ* 20.97-98 dates the affair to the 40s CE, when Cuspius Fadus was prefect of Judaea. According to Acts 5:36 the Theudas affair took place years before Jesus' crucifixion.

44. For Horace's *credat Iudaeus Apella, non ego* see his *Sermones* 1.5.100-01.

45. On Jesus as exorcist see Twelftree 1993.

46. Luke 8:3 (OSB).

47. On this neglected topic see Morton Smith 1978. At pp. 3-18 Eve 2002 reviews the extensive scholarly literature on the subject of Jesus' miracles. With the glaring exception of Smith (from whom Eve distances himself at the outset), New Testament scholarship has avoided considering whether some of the miracles were arranged.

48. Passover, also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was in Hebrew *pesach*; Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, was *shavuoth*, and Tabernacles was *sukkoth*. Initially these were celebrated in the home (Passover) or at local shrines (Weeks and Tabernacles), but in the seventh century BC the temple was able to push through the requirement that all three be celebrated only at the temple. The requirement appeared at Deuteronomy 16:16, and although it was neglected between 587 and 516 BC (when there was no temple) it was reinstated after the Second Temple's dedication in 516 BC. See Ezra 6:19-21.

49. Josephus *BJ* 6.423-26 claims that the priests estimated - for the benefit of Nero - that 2,700,000 people had assembled in Jerusalem for the most recent Passover.

50. According to Mark 11:1 (OSB) the ass was commandeered "when they reached Bethphage and Bethany, close by the mount of Olives." See Matthew 21:1 and Luke 19:28. The location of Bethphage ("House of Figs") is debated, but according to the Talmud the village was *on* (and not "close by") the Mount of Olives. At BT *Menahoth* (in Seder *Kodashim*) xi 2.78b, Rabbi Simeon, in discussing where meal-offerings could be correctly made for use in the temple, implies that Bethphage was at the outer limit of a Sabbath walk (and therefore ca. 2000 cubits) from the walls of Jerusalem.

51. The name *Iscaariot* may be a distortion of the Latin word *sicarius*, “dagger-man.” Men whom the Romans called *sicarii* were Judaeen terrorists who struck at countrymen seen as collaborators with the Romans.

52. The Gospel narratives of the crucifixion refer at several points to Psalm 22. At Matthew 27:46 Jesus cries out the first verse of that psalm, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” Both the synoptics and the Gospel of John (19:23-25) have the soldiers dividing Jesus’ clothing among themselves and casting lots for his tunic, thus fulfilling literally the metaphor of Psalm 22:18 (OSB): “They share out my clothes among them and cast lots for my garments.”

53. In the Roman upper class *funera* culminated with the cremation of the corpse, a public event. In ancient Israel and Judah cremations were rare but may have been performed for kings (I Sam 31:12; II Chron 16:14; II Chron 21:19). Was Jesus’ body cremated? The recollection of the Beloved Disciple was that Nicodemus brought to Joseph an enormous quantity (“about an hundred weight” John 19:39 AV) of myrrh and aloes. The Beloved Disciple supposed that the mixture was meant to prepare Jesus’ body for burial, but the quantity raises questions (both myrrh and aloes are highly flammable). One of Joseph’s reasons for requesting custody of Jesus’ body may have been to make the imprints - *ektypomata* - of Jesus’ body that in the second century were prized possessions of the Carpocratian Gnostics (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.25.6).

54. The verb ἀρπεν used by the author of the Gospel of John at 19:38 can mean “to pick up” or “to lift up” but more often means “to take away” or “to remove.” So at 1:29 (AV): “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’.” The AV translation also preserves the meaning of the verb at 19:38: “And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus.” Although from Harimathaia, as a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph presumably had a large house in Jerusalem.

55. Matthew 28:11-15 reports that it was often said in Judaea that the soldiers who were guarding the tomb witnessed no resurrection, and surmised that the body was stolen while they slept. For another report of soldiers at the tomb see the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*, Chapters 8-11.

56. On the wrappings see John 20:3-8, along with Luke 24:12 (omitted in OSB, largely because of its absence from Codex Bezae).

57. Koester 1982, vol. 2, pp. 89-91.

58. In this Philippians passage Jesus is *kyrios*, the usual Septuagint translation of YHWH, and Jesus takes the place of YHWH. See Bruce 1977, p. 116: “The wording of Philippians 2:10f. is based on Isaiah 45:23, where Yahweh swears by himself: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.’ Here, however, it is in Jesus’ name that every knee shall bow, and it is Jesus’ lordship that every tongue shall confess. Nor is this by any means the only instance in the New Testament where an Old Testament passage containing *kyrios* as the equivalent of Yahweh is applied to Jesus.” Bruce (p. 131) inclines toward the view, shared by most scholars of Paul,

“that the hymn in honour of Christ which Paul incorporates in Philippians 2:5-11, widely believed to be pre-Pauline, was current as early as the Hellenistic mission in Syrian Antioch.”

59. See Micah 5.2 (OSB): “But from you, Bethlehem in Ephrathah, small as you are among Judah’s clans, from you will come a king for me over Israel, one whose origins are far back in the past, in ancient times.” At verse 4 Micah prophesies what this king will do for all Israelites: “He will rise up to lead them in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. They will enjoy security, for then his greatness will reach to the end of the earth.”

60. See Brown 1977, p. 246: “The Greek of the infancy narrative is more Semitized than the Greek of most of the Gospel, and so it has been argued that we have here translation from oral or written sources in Aramaic.”

61. The text of Luke used by Marcion in the 140s CE did not include Chapters 1-2. These chapters are only formally and not very well attached to the rest of Luke’s gospel. The original beginning of Luke was probably 3:1, which follows the conventions of an introduction: “In the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, when Herod was prince of Galilee, his brother Philip governor of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias prince of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness”(NEB).

62. For an excellent discussion of the Lukan canticles see Brown 1977, pp. 346-392. Like many other scholars, Brown sees the canticles as more “Jewish” than “Christian.” The composition of several of the songs has occasionally been placed earlier than the lifetime of Jesus, because there are parallels with 2nd- and 1st- cent BC texts, and with texts at Qumran. But Brown stresses that these texts range between gloomy and desperate, with national deliverance promised for the future, whereas the canticles have a triumphant tone: deliverance, or salvation, *has already begun*. The only other time at which salvation was already accomplished was at the Seleukid debacle, and at p. 350 Brown notes the theory - but does not find it convincing - that the *Benedictus* and the *Magnificat* began as “Maccabean battle-hymns.” Brown favors the view that the canticles originated among the *anawim*, the “Poor Ones” among the Judaeans, and specifically among a group of *anawim* that had embraced Jesus as Messiah, and attributed to him Davidic ancestry. “There is no profound christology in these hymns, only a very Jewish concept of soteriology” (p. 353). Specifically, they seem to have much to do with Judaea and Jerusalem, and Brown finds it likely that the canticles came (p. 354) “from the tradition of the Jewish Christian community of Jerusalem.”

63. See Brock and Taylor 2001, p. 192: “Another Aramaic fragment from Qumran has attracted considerable attention since it mentions someone who ‘will be called the son of God, and they shall name him son of the Most High,’ using phraseology that is remarkably similar to that found in the Annunciation narrative in the Gospel of Luke (1:32 and 35). The context is apocalyptic in character, and evidently some saviour figure is envisaged, for after a period when ‘they shall rule the earth for some years and trample over everything, one people trampling another and one city over another - until the people of God shall arise and everyone will rest from the sword: (then) his kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all his ways shall be truth; he will judge the land in truth, and everyone shall make peace...”

64. πλήθος στρατιᾶς οὐρανόυ.

65. The ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας of 2:14 is a Hebraism, or a rendering into Greek of an idiomatic Hebrew expression. On the meaning of εὐδοκία compare the synoptics' baptismal scene (Matt 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:23), where God's voice addresses Jesus as he emerges from the baptismal waters: "You are my beloved son; in you I am well pleased" (ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα).

66. The Greek phrase echoes the Hebrew in the "servant songs" of Deutero-Isaiah, who declared Israel to be the servant whom Adonai chose to be "a light for peoples, a lamp for nations, to open eyes that are blind, to bring captives out of prison, out of the dungeon where they lie in darkness" (Isaiah 42:6-7, OSB). See also Adonai's servant as a "light to the nations" (Isaiah 49:6).

67. Koester 1982, vol. 2, pp. 118-19.

68. J. Taylor, "Why Were the Disciples First Called 'Christians' at Antioch?" *Rev. Bib.* 101 (1994), pp. 75-94, suggests that the name was given during the bloodshed at Antioch that the Byzantine chronicler Malalas records for "the third year of Gaius" (39-40 CE). In this incident the Hellenes and Judaeans of Antioch fought in the city, the local Judaeans being supported by an impromptu "army" of several thousand men from Galilee and Judaea. Malalas says the insurgents were led by the high priest Phineas (a storied name among Jerusalem high priests, but this particular Phineas is not otherwise attested). According to Malalas, many people were killed, and Judaeans synagogues in Antioch were burned. In 39 and 40 Petronius, the governor of Syria, was supervising the construction of the Caligula statue, to be placed in the Jerusalem temple. Among the thousands of Judaeans rioters at Antioch there may have been several hundred whom the Roman authorities labeled *Christiani*.

69. On the episode see Smallwood 1981, pp. 174-80.

70. Although Caligula may have cancelled his order for the statue in late 40, Tacitus implies that the situation was not resolved until the emperor's assassination. See *Historiae* 5.9: dein iussi a C. Caesare effigiem eius in templo locare arma potius sumpsere, quem motum Caesaris mors diremit.

71. The *Megillat ta'anit*, a list of feasts composed toward the end of the first or beginning of the second century CE, includes the assassination of Caligula as one of the 35 days on which the rabbis required celebration and forbade fasting.

72. *BJ* 2.184-87 and 192-203; *AJ* 18.261-309.

73. Philo, *Leg.* 188 and 198-348. Evidently in winter of 39-40, as Smallwood concludes, the Hellenes of Jamnia had set up an altar for the imperial cult, and the Judaeans of Jamnia had torn it down. Smallwood followed Philo in accepting this as an explanation for Caligula's decision.

74. On Philo's concept of the Messiah see Grant 1984, p. 127: "Messianism did not fail to touch him, but not very forcibly: he sees the awaited Messiah as prophet-priest and saintly pacific leader, but by no means as a conquering hero."

75. For an excellent portrait of Herodes Agrippa see Chapters 8 and 9 in Grant 1984.

76. Josephus recounts these events succinctly at *BJ* 2.204-217; and in almost infinite detail at *AJ* 19.1-277. His source was very likely Agrippa's son, Agrippa II, who was Josephus' contemporary and friend.

77. Grant 1984, p. 137.

78. *AJ* 19.293-94.

79. In his *Life of Claudius* (25.4) Suetonius says that Claudius *Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*. This should be translated "He expelled from Rome those Judaeans who, with Chrestus egging them on, were continually raising a disturbance." Although Suetonius probably had no idea who "Chrestus" was, and evidently imagined that "Chrestus" was in Rome at the time of the expulsion, most historians are agreed that Suetonius' source was talking about Judaeans *Christiani*. Needless to say, Claudius' expulsion was ineffective, and Paul's letter to the Romans shows that by the 50s there were in Rome many Judaeans who regarded Jesus as the Messiah. At Acts 18:2 Luke mentions the expulsion under Claudius, presenting it as the reason why Priscilla and Aquila were in Corinth rather than in Rome, but gives no indication that the expulsion was specifically aimed at "the brethren." Nor does Luke indicate that *Christiani* were in any way responsible for the expulsion. He claims instead that Claudius expelled "all the Judaeans" (*pantas tous ioudaiious*) from Rome. This is an amazing statement, since the number of Judaeans in Rome must have run into five figures, and Luke offers no explanation why Claudius would have issued such a drastic order. It is much more likely that the expulsion was directed especially at the Judaeans *Christiani* - numbered in the hundreds rather than the thousands - and that Luke deliberately obscured the cause and the purpose of the expulsion. Had Luke described the expulsion as a measure against the *Christiani* he would have undermined one of the main theses of his book: that the followers of Jesus the Christ had all along been friends of Rome. To acknowledge a group of *Christiani* among the Judaeans of Rome in Claudius' time would also have spoiled Luke's effort to persuade "Theophilus" that - apart from the *ekklesia* in Jerusalem - the great majority of the followers of Jesus were Gentiles, and had consistently been under attack by "the Judaeans."

The date of Claudius' expulsion decree is in doubt. It is conventionally dated to 49 CE, but the evidence for 49 is very weak. That date comes from Orosius 7.6.15-16, and seems to have been calculated on the basis of the Acts chronology of Paul's ministry. We have Tacitus' account of the year 49 (*Annales* 12.5 ff) and Tacitus makes no mention of an expulsion in that year. Nor does he mention *tumultus* in the years 47 and 48. If there was an expulsion in 49, there must have been a reason why *Christiani* were stirring things up at that time, and our sources do not indicate a reason.

For 41 or 42, on the other hand, we have both a very plausible reason for disturbances, and an authority more credible than Orosius. Although we do not have Tacitus' account of 41, or of any part of Caligula's reign, we do have all of Dio Cassius' account of Claudius' reign. It is structured annalistically, and the actions described in sections 3-8 of Bk 60 seem to have all been taken in Claudius' first year (41 CE). One of these actions (60.6.6) was the banning of Judaeans assemblies in Rome. Although Dio does not mention *Christianoi* in connection with this ban, the action is likely to have been related to the measure against the *Iudaeos tumultuantes* that Suetonius mentions. It is therefore most reasonable to conclude that in 41 or possibly 42

Claudius issued an order banning Judaeen assemblies in Rome and ordering that those Judaeans who were identified as *Christiani* should be expelled from the city. I suggest that the Judaeans who were *tumultuantes* were protesting either the elevation of Agrippa as king of Judaea, or Agrippa's actions against the leaders of the *ekklesia* in Jerusalem.

80. Josephus at *BJ* 2.219 says nothing about the cause of Agrippa's death. At *AJ* 19.343-352 he describes it as a sudden and excruciating pain in the abdomen (*koilia*).