

GLIMPSES OF JEWISH CHRISTIANITY FROM THE END OF ACTS TO JUSTIN MARTYR (A.D. 62-150)¹

by James Julius Scott, Jr.

TWO PERENNIAL INTRODUCTORY PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE study of early Jewish Christianity involve: (1) its definition, and (2) whether or not the original Jerusalem Church survived the fall of its city and the overthrow of the Jewish state in AD 70.

As to the first problem, definitions of Jewish Christianity have been addressed elsewhere,² and therefore, are not relevant to the discussion we will pursue here. Our focus will be concentrated to answering the lingering questions related to the above stated second problem.³

First of all we should note that the German scholar S. G. F. Brandon⁴ (following the lead of F. C. Baur and the Tübingen school) tried to prove that the original Jerusalem Church did not survive the first century Jewish defeat in the Roman War that ended in AD 70.⁵ H.-J. Schoeps, on the other hand, argued that Jewish Christianity only began in the second century, and that it was essentially the Ebionite phenomenon.⁶ Then in 1934 Walter Bauer, in his highly influential work entitled *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*,⁷ argued for a number of diverse “Christianities” in the second century. Astonishingly, however, he completely ignored any discussion of “Jewish Christianity.”⁸

¹Revised edition of a paper presented at the National Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Santa Clara, Calif., November 20, 1997. Edited by Paul R. Finch, February, 2004.

²Current definitions are discussed in Stanley K. Riegel, “Jewish Christianity: Definitions and Terminology,” *New Testament Studies* 24 (1978): 410-415; A.F.J. Klijn, “The Story of Jewish Christianity” *New Testament Studies* 20 (1973-74): 419-431; R. Murray, “Defining Judaeo-Christianity,” *Heythrop Journal* 15 (1974): 303-310; G. Quispel, “The Discussion of Judaic Christianity,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 22 (1968): 81-93.

³The overwhelming preponderance of our information comes from Eusebius in his monumental work *Historia ecclesiastica* and the sources that he cites therein. The primary objective here is to examine this evidence for the continued existence and character of the Jerusalem-Jewish Palestinian Church after AD 70. It is from this fragmentary information available that we will seek “glimpses of Jewish Christianity” from the end of the *Book of Acts* to the second century church father, Justin Martyr (AD 62-150).

⁴S. G. F. Brandon, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, trans. by Allan Menzies (London: 1878), 1:44-183; cf. *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*. 2 vols. trans. by Eduard Zeller (London: 1876).

⁵Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church. A Study of the Effects of the Jewish Overthrow of A.D. 70 on Christianity*, 2d ed. (London: SPCK, 1957).

⁶Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949); *Das Judenchristentum* (Bern: Francke, 1964); English trans. by Douglas R. A. Hare, *Jewish Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

⁷Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, 2d ed., Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), (translated from the German edition, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum [Beiträge zur historischen Theologie]*, 1934; 2d ed. Edited by Georg Strecker. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964). Bauer’s research covers: (1) Edessa, (2) Egypt, (3) Ignatius of Antioch, (4) Polycarp of Smyrna, (5) Macedonia, (6) Crete, (7) Asia Minor prior to Ignatius, (8) and Rome.

That the first Church of Jerusalem was composed of ethnic and cultural Jews is essentially accepted by all scholars today. Evidence of its survival after A.D. 70 is an important factor in discussion of both the previously mentioned issues and a number of other areas, such as the interdisciplinary subjects of Christology, church government, Jewish-Christian relations, the nature of the Jewish element within the Church, as well as a continuity of Christianity.⁹

From the picture painted in the *book of Acts*, initially the Jerusalem Church was composed only of Jews and proselytes. Their unified conviction was that the crucified/risen Jesus was “Lord and Messiah” (*Acts* 2:36). With him, so they believed, the “Final Age” had dawned. This was demonstrated and proven by the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Their initial unity was shaken by the awareness of cultural differences between the Hebraic Jewish Christians and Jewish Christian Hellenists.¹⁰ This activity brought the followers of Jesus into contact with persons of different geographical, cultural, ethnic, as well as religious backgrounds. This resulted in the emergence of a number of secondary issues which eventually led to the recognition that the basic question was the nature of Christian salvation (*Acts* 15:1).

From the Council of Jerusalem recorded in *Acts* 15, we can see at least three developments that emerged: (1) It became evident that within the Hebraic Jewish Christian movement there were at least two groups, the Pharisaic Hebrew Christians and the Moderate Hebrew Christians. (2) The Council recognized that Christian salvation is available by God's grace through faith; there are no ethnic, legal, nor ceremonial requirements. Finally, (3) there are religious and moral guidelines for Christian conduct and believers need to be sensitive to the specific cultural preferences within the group. Information about the Church of Jerusalem from *Acts* comes to an end about AD 57 with the account of Paul's last visit to the city.

In the following sections, we shall look at the evidence relating to Jerusalem Christianity in three parts: (1) A summary of events from the end of *Acts* through the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70; (2) Post-AD 70 developments that focus primarily on such internal matters as leadership and the growth of divisions and sects (This period was also marked by conflicts with both Romans and Jews); (3) we will conclude with a glimpse at the picture of Jewish Christianity about the middle of the second century as depicted by the second century Church Father, Justin Martyr.

I. JEWISH CHRISTIANITY FROM AD 62-70

From the close of the *book of Acts* until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, Jewish Christians were shaken by the violent death's of three of their most important leaders, James, the brother of Jesus, Peter, and Paul.¹¹ Although those in the Land of Israel may not have been immediately and directly affected, this new stance by the Emperor had ominous implications — the Beast was on the prowl!

⁸An essay on the subject in the volume's reissue was added by Georg Strecker (*ibid.*, 241-85), entitled: “On the Problem of Jewish Christianity.”

⁹The Jerusalem Church has been previously described by the author as depicted in *Acts* and we will here summarize those conclusion here.

¹⁰The distinctions of the later are set forward in Stephen's defence in *Acts* 7 and their leadership in the missionary enterprise.

¹¹The latter two appear to have been martyred during a significant change in Roman policy by which the government became an official persecutor of Christians.

A. The Martyrdom's of Peter and Paul in Rome

The martyrdom's of Peter and Paul is related in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, where it is there stated that

in his [Nero's] time Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified... the title of 'Peter and Paul,' which is still given to the cemeteries there, confirms the story, no less than does the writer of the church named Caius... [he] speaks as follows of the places where the sacred relics of the Apostles in question are deposited: 'But I can point out the trophies of the Apostles, for if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way [or "Road"] you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church.' And that they both were martyred at the same time Dionysius bishop of Corinth, affirms... 'By so great an admonition you bound together the foundations of the Romans and Corinthians by Peter and Paul, for both of them taught together in our Corinth and were our founders, and together also taught in Italy in the same place were martyred at the same time' (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 2:25).

Eusebius further notes that

Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. And at last, having come to Rome, he was crucified head-downwards; for he had requested that he might suffer in this way. What do we need to say concerning Paul, who preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero?" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3:1).

Likewise, Clement of Rome further informs us in his epistle to the Corinthians:

Let us set before our eyes the good apostles: Peter, who because of unrighteous jealousy suffered not one or two but many trials, and having thus given his testimony went to the glorious place which was his due. Through jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize of endurance; seven times he was in bonds, he was exiled, he was stoned, he was a herald both in the East and in the West, he gained the noble fame of his life, he taught righteousness to all the world, and when he had reached the limits [literally, "pillars"] of the West he gave his testimony before the rulers, and thus passed from the world and was taken up into the Holy Place, — the greatest example of endurance (*The Epistle of Clement*, 5).

Of the Palestinian Church's reaction to these martyrdoms, we have no evidence. Of the circumstance of surrounding the death of James, the relative of Jesus, called "The Just," and his death, we are better informed. We will look at this evidence next.

B. The Death of James the Just

In the year of AD 62, James, the relative of Jesus, was killed in Jerusalem by the Jewish authorities. References to James in the New Testament indicate he held an influential position but details are few.¹² Early Christian writings depict James as playing a much more important and

¹²James is listed with the other "brothers" of Jesus in *Mark* 6:3 (= *Matt* 13:55). References to Jesus' "family", "friends" or "brothers" may include James by implication: *Mark* 3:21; 6:4; *John* 7:5; *Acts* 1:14; *1 Cor* 9:5. Also significant are the following details: (a) Peter gave instructions to report his release from prison "to James and the brethren" (*Acts* 12:18); (b) James played a leading part in the council of Jerusalem of *Acts* 15; and (c) during his final visit to Jerusalem Paul met with "James and the elders" who suggested that Paul join certain Jews who had taken a vow in the temple (*Acts* 21:17 ff). In Paul's writings he (a) says he saw "Peter and James, the Lord's brother" during his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem (*Gal* 1:18 ff.); (b) includes James among those reputed to be "pillars" whom he contacted during a subsequent visit (*Gal* 2:1 ff.); (c) indicates that Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentiles in Antioch was occasioned by the coming of "certain from James," (*Gal* 2:12); and (d) mentions James as a witness of the risen Lord (*1 Cor* 15:7). James the relative of Jesus is traditionally identified as the author of the canonical *Epistle of James*.

visible role, especially among Jewish Christians or those influenced by them. The reliability of some of these later references to James is questionable; some are to be rejected as having no basis in historical fact.

Most of the non-canonical accounts mention James' unique position of leadership in the Church of Jerusalem. Yet both the source and the exact nature of his authority is uncertain.¹³ The term most often used to describe the position occupied by James is "bishop/overseer" (ἐπισκοπος) or one similar to it. It is frequently employed by Eusebius, his sources, and many other writings. By the time of the composition of the spurious additions to the Ignatian correspondence,¹⁴ it was assumed that James held this rank from the beginning of the corporate life of the Jerusalem community.¹⁵

In various Ps Clementine writings James is called by such terms as "the chief of the bishops" and "archbishop"¹⁶ and given even more grandiose titles.¹⁷ In the first book of the Ps Clementine Recognitions,¹⁸ James is described as carrying on activities characteristic of an administrative head.¹⁹

The best known account about James is that of his death. Reports or illusions to the trial and martyrdom are found in a number of writers. The two major ones are by the Jewish historian Josephus,²⁰ the second century, Jewish Christian Hegesippus, who is quoted by two centuries later by Eusebius.²¹

Other statements are by Origen,²² Epiphanius,²³ and possibly the Ps. Clementines, Recognitions.²⁴ There are differences between details of these accounts; some contain data which could not possibly be accurate. Essentially what emerges from them are that James, portrayed as a per-

¹³Note the leadership position held by others from Jesus' family (*desponsynoi*, as Julius Africanus calls them). The *Ps Clementine Recognitions* (1:43) and Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, 8.19) state that James received his position from Jesus himself. Clement of Alexandria, as reported by Eusebius, says, "Peter and James and John, after the Savior's ascension, though preeminently honored by the Lord, did not contend for glory, but made James the Just bishop of Jerusalem." In introducing Hegesippus' account of James' death, Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 8.19) and the Ethiopic Didascalia (*Hist. eccl.* 43) say James received his office from "the Apostles."

¹⁴I.e., fourth century, according to Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950), 1:74.

¹⁵*Hero*, 3 and the longer *Epistle to the Trallians* 7, enjoin deacons to be faithful to their ministering bishop "as the holy Stephen did at Jerusalem to James."

¹⁶Latin is *archiepiscopus*, *Recognitions*, 1.73.

¹⁷In the epistles (epitomes) attached to the Homilies, Peter calls James "the Lord and bishop of the Holy Church" (... *το κυριο και επισκοπο της αγιας εκκλησιας*) and Clement addresses him as "the lord, and bishop of bishops (*domino et episcopo episcoporum*), who rules Jerusalem, the holy Church of the Hebrews and Churches everywhere excellently founded by the provinces of God, with elders and deacons, and the rest of the brethren."

¹⁸This section of the Recognitions may contain fragments from the "Ascent of James," described by Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30, where James is said to have spoken "against the Temple and the sacrifices, and the fire on the altar; and many other things full of empty sound" (quoted from James, *Apocryphal NT*, 20).

¹⁹Including receiving reports (I:66; cf. II:73), engaging in disputations (I:66-69), sending testimonial letters of authorization with official representatives (IV:35), and detailing even Peter to specific tasks (I:72). The wording of a dispute scene in I:68 may betray something of the way James was viewed by the Ps Clementine groups. James, as "chief of the bishops" is portrayed as the Christian counterpart to "Caiaphas... the chief of the priests."

²⁰*A. J.*, 22:9, 1 [=199-201]: "The younger Aranus, who, as we have said, had been appointed to the high priesthood, was rash in his temper and unusually daring ... He thought he had a favorable opportunity because Festus was dead and Albinus was still on the way. And so he convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the Law and delivered them up to be stoned. Those of the inhabitants of the city who were considered to be most fair-minded and who were strict in observance of the law were offended at this."

son of extreme acetic Jewish, temple-centered piety, was the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. He was well respected by many of the common people. The Jewish leaders took advantage of the temporary absence of Roman governor to accuse him. He refused to dissuade the people from believing Jesus to be the Messiah and referred to him as “the Son of man” and made reference to the ascended Jesus’ position at “the right hand of the Great Power” and to his coming “on clouds of heaven” (*Hist. eccl.* 2:23:13). Eusebius says he declared “that our Savior and Lord, Jesus, was the Son of God” (*Hist. eccl.* 2:23, 2). James was thrown down from a high place, stoned, and finally clubbed to death. Hegesippus ads, “And immediately Vespasian began to besiege them.”²⁵

Although the portraits of James are certainly over blown they attest to the conviction that observance of Jewish customs were important for some Jerusalem Christians. Secondly, the account of James’ death depicts a situation in which, although continuing Jewish Christian existence in the city was possible, the level of toleration was tenuous. Persecution at the hands of their countrymen could break out at almost any time. These conditions are also reflected in the account of Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem in Acts 21:17-22:23. Thirdly, these accounts demonstrate that although Jewish Christians, either from preference or necessity, observed Jewish religious and cultural life-styles, that there was no compromise in their faith in and allegiance to Jesus. In their Christology they were at one with their fellow Christians. Fourthly, the Hegesippian account of the death of James ends with the words, “Immediately after this Vespasian began to besiege them.” Furthermore, Eusebius says James “was called the Righteous and Oblias — in our own

²¹*Hist. eccl.* 2:23: “Control of the Church passed to the apostles, together with the Lord’s brother, James, whom everyone from the Lord’s time till our own has called the Righteous [or “the Just”], for there were many Jameses, but this one was holy from birth; he drank no wine or intoxicating liquor and ate no animal food; no razor came near his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and did not go to the baths. He alone was permitted to enter the Holy Place, for his garments were not of wool but of linen. He used to enter the Sanctuary alone, and was often found on his knees, beseeching forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel’s from his continually bending them in worship of God and beseeching forgiveness for the people. Because of his unsurpassed righteousness he was called the Righteous and Oblias -- in our own language ‘bulwark of the People, and Righteousness’ -- fulfilling the declarations of the prophets regarding him. Representatives of the seven popular sects already described by me asked him what was meant by ‘the door of Jesus’, and he replied that Jesus was the Saviour. Some of them came to believe that Jesus was the Christ [Messiah]; the sects mentioned above did not believe either in a resurrection or in One who is coming to give every man what his deeds deserve, but those who did come to believe did so because of James. Since therefore many even of the ruling class believed, there was an uproar among the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees, who said there was a danger that the entire people would expect Jesus as the Christ. So they collected and said to James: ‘Be good enough to restrain the people, for they have gone astray after Jesus in belief that he is the Christ. Be good enough to make the facts about Jesus clear to all who come for the Passover Day. We all accept what you say: we can vouch for it, and so can all the people, that you are a righteous man and take no one at his face value. So make it clear to the crowd that they must not go astray as regards Jesus: the whole people and all of us accept what you say. So take your stand on the Temple parapet, so that from that height you may be easily seen, and your words audible to the whole people. For because of the Passover all the tribes have forgathered, and the Gentiles too.’ So the Scribes and Pharisees made James stand on the Sanctuary parapet and shouted to him: ‘Righteous one, whose word we are all obliged to accept, the people are going astray after Jesus who was crucified; so tell us what is meant by “the door of Jesus”.’ He replied as loudly as he could: ‘why do you question me about the Son of Man? I tell you, He is sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Great Power, and He will come on the clouds of heaven.’ Many were convinced, and gloried in James’s testimony crying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’” Then the Scribes and Pharisees said to each other: ‘We made a bad mistake in affording such testimony to Jesus. We had better go up and throw him down, so that they will be frightened and not believe in him.’ ‘Ho, ho! they called out, ‘even the Righteous one has gone astray! -- fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: Let us remove the Righteous one, for he is unprofitable to us. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their works (Is 3:10, LXX).

²²C Cel I:47; II:13; Com Matt 17.

²³Haereses 29:4; ch 79.

²⁴1:66-70.

²⁵Eusebius then follows with the comment that Josephus connected the destruction of Jerusalem with the death of James. This statement is not found in the extant texts of the historian but Eusebius says that Clement knew of it. Origen (C Cel I:47; II:13; Com Matt 17) also mentions that Josephus’ said something to this effect.

language “bulwark of the People, and Righteousness.” This may associate James with the special nationalistic importance ascribed to such persons as the family of Lot (Gen 18:22 ff.), Moses (Exod 17:10 ff; 32:10-14, 31-34), David (2 Kings 19:34; 20:6). Noah, Daniel and Job, (Ezek 14:14), Ezekiel (Ezek 22:30), and “the Just Ones” of every age.²⁶ In this form of nationalism the welfare of the nation was dependent upon the presence and religious fidelity of individuals or groups whose personal piety and prayers provided its only genuine defense.

II. The Jewish Revolt (AD 66-70) and the Flight of the Jerusalem Christians

Eusebius, quoting Hegesippus, records that as the Romans approached the city, “The people belonging to the church at Jerusalem had been ordered by an oracle revealed to approved men on the spot before the war broke out, to leave the city and dwell in a town of Peraea called Pella. Then after those who believed in Christ had withdrawn thither, ...” (*Hist. eccl.* 3:5).²⁷ Epiphanius (who may be at least partially dependent on Eusebius or his sources) says essentially the same thing.²⁸

Each writer specifically mentions Pella as the final destination of the refugees. Epiphanius traces the origin of later Christian groups in Decapolis and Coele-Syria, including the sects of the Nazarenes and of the Ebionites, to this flight from the Romans just before AD 70. Consequently, on the basis of these statements it is usually assumed that sometime before the final overthrow,

²⁶A Jewish tradition affirms that there are in every generation thirty-six (frequently unrecognized) men with whom the Shekinah rests and because of whose presence the community or nation is preserved. They are sometimes called “The Lamed-vavs” (the Hebrew letters lamed and vav stand for the number thirty-six) or “the Just Ones;” see “Lamed-vav,” Jew Ency VII, 596 and Gershom Scholem, “The Tradition of the Thirty-six Hidden Just Men,” *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: 1971), 251 ff.

²⁷In the NT Luke 20:21 ff seems to recast Mk 13:14 ff (cf., Matt 24:15 ff) so as to make certain reference to the overthrow of Jerusalem. However, difficulty in assigning an exact date to the writing of the Third Gospel makes it impossible to know just where the saying fits into the history of the Jerusalem Christian community. If Luke was written before AD 70, the passage could reflect remembrance of words of Jesus which certainly affected the attitudes and actions of Jerusalem Christians during the battle for the city. If, on the other the other hand, the present form of the statement post-dates the destruction of Jerusalem, then it may or may not reflect a genuine saying of Jesus. For an example, C. H. Dodd (“The Fall of Jerusalem and the ‘Abomination of Desolation,’” [1947]; reprinted, *More New Testament Studies* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 69-83) who dates Luke after AD 70, suggests that 21:20 is independent of Mark, displays affinities with “siege passages” in the LXX, and may not be colored by the events of AD 70. In either case the statement may well record a remembrance of what the Christians actually did during the revolt. If the woman of Rev 12 represents the Jerusalem Church, her flight into the wilderness (vs 6) may also reflect the experiences of this Christian group around AD 70.

²⁸“For when the city was about to be captured and sacked by the Romans, all the disciples were warned beforehand by an angel to remove from the city, doomed as it was to utter destruction. On migrating from it they settled at Pella, the town already indicated, across the Jordan. It is said to belong to Decapolis (de Mens. et Pond., 15). “Now this sect of Nazarenes exists in Beroea in Coele-Syria, and in Decapolis in the district of Pella, and in Kochaba of Basanitis — called Kohoraba in Hebrew. For thence it originated after the migration from Jerusalem of all the disciples who resided at Pella, Christ having instructed them to leave Jerusalem and retire from it on account of the impending siege. It was owing to this counsel that they went away, as I have said, to reside for a while at Pella” (*Haer* 29:7)... “For when all who believed in Christ had settled down about that time in Peraea, the majority of the emigrants taking up their abode at Pella, a town belonging to the Decapolis mentioned in the Gospel, near Batanea and the district to Basanitis, Ebion got his excuse and opportunity. At first their abode was Kochaba, a village in the district of Carnaim, Arnem, and Astaroth, in the region of Basanitis, according to the information we have received. But I have spoken, in other connections and with regard to other heresies, of the locality of Kochaba and Arabia (*Haer* 30:2) ... “[The Ebionites] spring for the most part from Batanea ... and Paneas, as well as from Moabitid and Cochaba in Basanitis on the other side of Adraa” (*Haer* 30:18). All quotations taken from A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, 2:100-102.

some Jerusalem Christians, either in mass, small groups or as individuals, withdrew from the city to places of refuge, primarily in Transjordan.²⁹

The validity of the traditional account is vigorously debated, primarily as a result of S.G.F. Brandon's highly controversial work, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*.³⁰ Brandon argues that, in spite of the claims of ancient writers, there is ample reason to believe that the Church of Jerusalem "identified itself too closely with the nation from which it had originally emerged and in Israel's virtual annihilation it subsequently shared."³¹ Consequently, Christianity, in its primitive form, ceased to exist and the Jesus-movement as a whole was subsequently "virtually reborn."

Brandon's reconstruction has gained some support.³² There is not space here to restate the details of my investigations done earlier.³³ Suffice to say that Brandon has misread and mishandled his sources so that his conclusions are fatally flawed. There is substantial value in more recent investigations which tend to support at least some version of the traditional account.³⁴

What is significant for this study is the fact that if the Jerusalem Christians left the city before its overthrow, then there is grounds for expecting evidence of the activities of its survivors. It is for this we will look in the rest of this study.

III. The Nature of the Post-AD 70 Jerusalem Church

Evidences of the continuing existence of Jewish/Jerusalem Christianity after AD 70 could come in a number of forms — accounts of events, references to its leaders, information about its internal affairs, evidence of its relationship with outsiders, its lasting legacy, and others.³⁵ Two writers make conflicting statements about its size and significance. Eusebius says that following the AD 66-70 war, "there was a very important Church, composed of Jews, which existed until the siege of the city under Hadrian."³⁶ On the other hand, Epiphanius implies that between AD 70 and 132 there was little more than a struggling, insignificant church on the site of old Jerusalem.³⁷

²⁹The exact time of this exodus has been variously placed just after the death of James, the Relative of Jesus (ca. 62 C.E. -- Lietzmann and Jocz), following the Jewish victory over Cestius Gallus (66/67 C.E. -- Weizsaecker, Elliott-Binns, and F.F. Bruce), or even later in the period following the temporary withdrawal of Vespasian to await developments in Rome (68/69 C.E. -- Harnack and Ehrhardt).

³⁰(1951); 2d ed. (1957). Brandon has enlarged upon and sought to add support to his general thesis in two later books, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1967) and *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Stein & Day, 1968).

³¹*Ibid.*, 184.

³²E.B. Bratcher, "The Effects of the Fall of Jerusalem on the Early Church" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1953) and Gerd Lüdermann, "The Successors of Pre-70 Jerusalem Christianity: A Critical Evaluation of the Pella-Tradition," *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, I (1980), 161 ff.

³³"The Church of Jerusalem, A.D. 30-100," 293-294 and "The Effects of the Fall of Jerusalem," *Proceedings* 3 (1983), 149-160.

³⁴Sidney Sowers, "The Circumstances and Recollection of the Pella Flight," *TZ* 26 (1970), 305 ff; John J. Gunther, "The Fate of the Jerusalem Church, The Flight to Pella," *TZ* 29 (1973), 81 ff; Barbara C. Gray, "The Movements of the Jerusalem Church During the Jewish War," *JEH* 24 (1973), 1 ff.

³⁵Adolf Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalems von Jahre 70-130* (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1896), has expanded sources and proposed another form for reconstructing the history of the Jerusalem Church during this period than that offered here. (1) The Rabbinic Statements Concerning the Jewish Church; (2) Symeon, the Son of Clopas; (3) Judas Justus, (4) Matthew of Jerusalem; (5) John of Jerusalem, (6) Juda Cyriakus; (7) Ariston of Pella; (8) The Canon of the Jewish Church; (9) Summary.

³⁶*Demonstratio Evangelica* [=The Proof of the Gospel] 3:5,124[d].

Eusebius also gives a list of bishops who he says occupied the episcopal office in Jerusalem during that period (*Hist. eccl.* 4:5). However, the meaning and accuracy of the bishop lists from antiquity is shrouded in confusion and uncertainty.³⁸

IV. Leadership of the Church of Jerusalem after AD 70

Virtually all information about the leadership of the post-AD 70 Jewish Church comes from Eusebius and Hegesippus. Both are late and may read back into the record more of an episcopal form of leadership and succession than was actually present in the first century.³⁹ Nevertheless, titles and rank aside, they probably provide reliable information about people and events.

James, of course, is recognized as the leader after the apostles withdrew from the City and he (not Peter!) is placed first in the apostolic succession.⁴⁰

The death of James the Just left the Church of Jerusalem without a strong leader. There is no evidence that anyone of significant stature was able to gather the reins of leadership between James' death and the reorganization of the Church after AD 70. A persecution of the church by Jewish leaders,⁴¹ and the political turmoil in Jerusalem in the mid-60's, probably prevented the immediate election of a successor. Furthermore, if the Christians were beginning to leave the city about this time, the situation in which the Church was dismantling herself was hardly one in which a new leader could establish himself.

When, after the Jerusalem catastrophe, efforts were made to re-establish some form of organization for the remnant of Jerusalem Christians. There was controversy about not only who should lead but also the basis on which the selection should be made.

Symeon (also called Simon and Simeon) "the brother [or cousin of the Lord]" and or "the son of Cleopas" was appointed "bishop."⁴² However, this selection was contested by Thebouthis who appears to have been a viable candidate. Apparently, there being no other grounds for choosing between the two, Symeon was selected, "because he was another cousin of the Lord."⁴³

³⁷De Mensuris et Ponderibus, 15.

³⁸For a discussion of these problems see Arnold A. T. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), 35 ff. and C. H. Turner, "The Early Episcopal Lists," *JTS* I (1900), 181 ff and 529 ff.

³⁹In Acts 20 Paul uses the terms "elders" (vs 17) and "overseers" or "bishops" (vs 28) interchangeably of the leaders of the Ephesian Church. The same phenomena appears in Titus 1:5-7. Outside the NT, about AD 95, 1 Clement 44, while calling for respect and acknowledgement of the authority of church leaders, uses "overseer/bishop" and "elder" as either alternate titles or those of equals rank. Shortly before AD 117 Ignatius, who argues persistently and forcefully for the authority of the bishop, likely does so because he knows there are those who do not accept the form of Church government he espouses.

⁴⁰Eusebius records (*Hist. eccl.* 7.19): "Now the throne of James, who was the first to receive from the Saviour and the apostles the episcopate of the church at Jerusalem, who also, as the divine books show, was called the brother of Christ, has been preserved to this day; and by the honour that the brethren in succession there pay to it, they show clearly to all the reverence in which the holy men were and still are held by the men of old time and those of our day, because of the love shown them."

⁴¹Probably implied in Eusebius' quotation from Josephus in which James "and some others" were said to have been brought before the council by Ananus (*Hist. eccl.* 2:23, 22).

⁴²"After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem which immediately followed, the story goes that those of the Apostles and of the disciples of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with those who were, humanly speaking, of the family of the Lord, for many of them were still alive, and they all took counsel together as to whom they ought to adjudge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that Symeon the son of Clopas, whom the scripture of the Gospel also mentions, was worthy of the throne of the diocese there. He was, so it is said, a cousin of the Saviour" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.11-12, 32). Note also "Simeon was second after the brother of our Saviour to hold the ministry of the church in Jerusalem" (*Hist. eccl.* 3:22).

From these accounts several points emerge. (1) Hegesippus thought that in the last quarter of the first century “those who were, humanly speaking of the family of the Lord” (Despoyni = desposunoi, as Julius Africanus calls them),⁴⁴ together with the apostles and disciples, formed an authoritative counsel within the Church.⁴⁵ (2) Nevertheless, it is conceivable that any of the apostles, disciples, or despoyni were eligible for election to the first office in the Jerusalem-Palestinian Church. (3) The basis of selection to head the Church seems to have been who “was worthy.”⁴⁶

Adolf Harnack and others have contended that the Jerusalem Church was governed by hereditary leaders, by a Christian Caliphate similar to that which later developed in Islam.⁴⁷ However, if the evidence found in Eusebius can be taken seriously, this does not appear to have been the case. The principle of hereditary succession was not established before Symeon was chosen, otherwise Thebouthis could not even have hoped to obtain the office. Even if it was formally enunciated at the time of Symeon’s election it died with him.

As a member of the family of Jesus, Symeon was of the royal Davidic line. Eusebius assumes that since his mother, “the wife of Clopas,” was a follower of Jesus and Symeon himself lived to a great age, it can be assumed that he was an “eyewitness and actual hearer of the Lord” (*Hist. eccl.* 3.32). Otherwise, very little is known about the character of Symeon himself and of his tenure as head of the Jerusalem Church. It must have been a time of great suffering and disillusionment throughout Palestine as a whole and of persecution for Christians (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.20, 5). To these problems were added the internal disorders caused by the advent of heresy into the Church. The fact that Thebouthis, who had been considered for the bishopric, seems to have been identified with this corrupting influence (*Hist. eccl.* 4.22), suggests that the Church was severely plagued by strife and dissension.

Symeon is said to have met his death as a result of being accused by some of the “heretics” as being of Davidic descent and a Christian. Hegesippus-Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.32, 3 ff.) also indicate that Symeon, in a persecution under Trajan (ca. 106/7),⁴⁸ although he was a hundred and twenty years old, endured torture for many days and finally was crucified.⁴⁹

⁴³“After James the Just had suffered martyrdom for the same reason as the Lord, Symeon, his cousin, the son of Clopas was appointed bishop, whom they all proposed because he was another cousin of the Lord. For this cause they called the Church virgin, for it had not yet been corrupted by vain messengers, but Thebouthis, because he had not been made bishop, begins its corruption by the seven heresies, to which he belonged, among the people” (*Hist. eccl.* 4.22, 4 ff).

⁴⁴“Letter to Aristides,” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.7, 14).

⁴⁵That this was Hegesippus’ view is confirmed by another statement; he tells of grandsons of Judas who, after giving their testimony in the days of Domitian, “Came therefore and presided over every church as witnesses belonging to the Lord’s family, and when there was complete peace in every church they survived until the reign of the Emperor Trajan,” *Hist. eccl.* 3:32.

⁴⁶(*Hist. eccl.* 4:22). In *Hist. eccl.* 3:11 Symeon’s relation to the Lord is mentioned only incidentally. However, in *Hist. eccl.* 4:22 Hegesippus seems to say that Symeon’s relation to the Lord was the determining factor of his selection over another, seemingly equally acceptable candidate. Hegesippus-Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3:32, 3 ff.) also indicate that Symeon lost his life (ca. 106/7) in a persecution under Trajan (begun by Vespasian [*Hist. eccl.* 3:12] and Domitian [*Hist. eccl.* 3:19 f.; 32]) which was aimed at liquidating all of the Davidic line (including the relatives of Jesus).

⁴⁷Kirchenverfassung (1910), 26 as cited by Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession* (London: Lutterworth, 1953), 28; cf. E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge* (Stuttgart: 1923) 3, 224; Weiss, *Earliest Christianity* (1937; reprint; New York: Harper, 1959), 716; B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 40; E. Stauffer, “Zum Kalifat des Jacobus,” *ZRG V* (1952), 193 ff. Ehrhardt (Succession, 28) concludes that, although the idea of such a succession is not found in our canonical Acts, it was clearly in the mind of the writer of Codex D.

⁴⁸Begun by Vespasian [*Hist. eccl.* 3:12] and Domitian [*Hist. eccl.* 3:19 f.; 32]), as persecution aimed at liquidating all of the Davidic line (including the relatives of Jesus).

Symeon was succeeded by “a certain Jew named Justus” who does not appear to have been a member of the Desposyni.⁵⁰ The phrase applied to Justus, “one of many thousands of the circumcision who by that time had believed on Christ,” is reminiscent of the language of Acts 21:20. It probably indicates the continued presence in the Jewish Church of those Jewish Christians who desired to remain close to Jewish customs.

Eusebius claimed that the grandsons of Judas were also leaders in the Palestinian Church at the end of the first century. Eusebius’ comments about the grandsons of Judas are woven into his description of the persecutions under Domitian.⁵¹ The account indicates to low social status, and poverty of these Jewish Christian leaders. It also testifies to their spiritual, other-worldly understanding of the Messiah’s reign.

The nature of their responsibility in the Jewish Church is unclear. They seem, to some extent, to have shared authority with Symeon in Palestine. They may have been the heads of small Christian communities outside Jerusalem. Although they may be described as “bishops” in their own right, Symeon may have had at least nominal control over them. This plurality of bishops within Palestine may help to account for the large number of names contained in the Jerusalem succession lists between the two destructions of the city.⁵²

V. Divisions within Judaism and in the Jerusalem Church

Hegesippus-Eusebius says Thebouthis’ desire for the bishopric was the beginning of divisions in the Church.⁵³ Within the lists such Jewish sects as the Essenes, Galileans, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees are recognizable from Second Temple Jewish writings.⁵⁴ The Simonians (from Simon Magus), Marcianists, Valentinians, Basilidians, and the Menandrians are the

⁴⁹“After Nero and Domitian tradition says that under the Emperor whose times we are now describing [Trajan] persecution was raised against us sporadically, in some cities, from popular risings. We have learnt that in it Symeon, the son of Clopas, whom we showed to have been the second bishop of the church at Jerusalem, ended his life in martyrdom... [He was] for many days was tortured in various manners...until he suffered an end like that of the Lord” [i.e., crucifixion], (*Hist. eccl.* 3:32).

⁵⁰“When Symeon suffered martyrdom in the manner already described a certain Jew name Justus, who was one of the many thousands of the circumcision who by that time had believed on Christ [= “the Messiah”], succeeded to the throne of the bishopric of Jerusalem” (*Hist. eccl.* 3:35).

⁵¹Domitian gave orders for the execution of those of the family of David and an ancient story goes that some heretics accused the grandsons of Judas (who is said to have been the brother, according to the flesh, of the Savior) saying that they were of the family of David and related to the Christ [= “Messiah”] himself. Hegesippus relates this exactly as follows. “Now there still survived of the family of the Lord grandsons of Judas, who was said to have been his brother according to the flesh, and they were related as being of the family of David. These the officers brought to Domitian Caesar, for like Herod, he was afraid of the coming of the Christ [= “Messiah”]. He asked them if they were of the house of David and they admitted it. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they controlled, and they said that all they possessed was nine thousand denarii between them, the half belonging to each, and they said that they did not possess this in money but that it was the valuation of only thirty-nine plethra [= about a quarter of an acre] of ground on which they paid taxes and lived on it by their own work.” They then showed him the hardness of their bodies, and the tough skin which had been embossed on their hands from their incessant work. They were asked concerning the Christ [“Messiah”] and his kingdom, its nature, origin, and time of appearance, and explained that it was neither of the world nor earthly, but heavenly and angelic, and it would be at the end of the world, when he would come in glory to judge the living and the dead and to reward every man according to his deeds. At this Domitian did not condemn them at all, but despised them as simple folk, released them, and decreed an end to the persecution. But when they were released they were the leaders of the churches, both for their testimony and for their relation to the Lord, and remained alive in the peace which ensued until Trajan. Hegesippus tells this; moreover Tertullian also has made similar mention of Domitian. “Domitian also once tried to do the same as he, for he was a Nero in cruelty, but I believe, inasmuch as he had some sense, he stopped at once and recalled those whom he had banished.” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3:19-20: 32).

⁵²Cf. *Hist. eccl.* 4:5.

same or similar names with those found among groups of Gnostics mentioned in later lists.⁵⁵ However, with the possible exception of the Simonians, ascribing these to the earliest period of the Church is suspect.⁵⁶ The identity of other parties listed by the historians is problematic.

We have but little ideas, save for Thebouthis' personal ambition, for the reason of the growth of these sects. As they enumerate the various "Christian" sects the historians say, "Each of these put forward in its own peculiar way its own opinion, and from them come the false Christs and false prophets and false apostles who destroy the unity of the church by their poisonous doctrine against God and against his Christ" (*Hist. eccl.* 4.22). The distinctives of these groups thus seems to have been individuals who claimed unique positions as well as unacceptable teachings. The latter is a significant point. If indeed it accurately portrays the late first century situation, it indicates a more highly developed sense of doctrine, especially of Christology, than some modern students are willing to acknowledge.

The hostility and enmity between what, for want of a better term, we may call the main-line Jewish Church and the sectarians appears to have been strong. Eusebius also reports that "the heretics" were particularly zealous to expose Christians to persecution.

VI. Conflicts

A. Persecution of Christians under

Roman Emperors Domitian and Trajan.

A number of texts referenced above speak of persecutions in which Jewish Christians were caught. Particularly severe was that under Domitian (AD 81-96). His concern does not seem to have been primarily against Christians, but, in order to prevent other Jewish uprisings, to eliminate (or weaken) those from the family of David, from whom the Messiah was expected to come. Eusebius' account of the persecution of the grandsons of Judas begins with the statement, "Domitian gave orders for the execution of those of the family of David" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.19). They were released when he determined they were not politically dangerous. Later, under Trajan (AD 98-117), Symeon suffered for being both "descended from David and a Christian" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.32).

⁵³Thebouthis, because he had not been made bishop, begins its corruption by the seven heresies to which he belonged, among the people [usually means the Jews, but here probably means Jewish or Palestinian Christians]. Of these were Simon, whence the Simonians, and Cleobius, whence the Cleobians, and Dositheus, whence the Dosithians, and Gortheans, whence the Goratheni and the Masbothei. From these come the Menandrians and the Marcianists and the Carocratians and the Valentinians and the Basilidians and Saturnilians... Hegesippus also names the sects that once existed among the Jews: There were various groups in the Circumcision, among the Children of Israel, all hostile to the tribe of Judah and the Christ. They were these -- Essenes, Galileans, Hermobaptists, Masbnothei, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees (*Hist. eccl.* 4:22). On Jewish sects see Leah Bronner, *Sects and Separatism During the Second Jewish Commonwealth* (New York: Bloch, 1967); Marcel Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus*. James H. Farley, trans (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967); William W. Buehler, *The Pre-Herodian Civil War and Social Debate. Jewish Society in the Period 76-40 B.C. and the Social Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Pharisees and Sadducees* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Kommissionsverlag, 1974). A.F.J. Klijn, and G.J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973.

⁵⁴See my discussion in *Customs and Controversies: Intertestamental Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 195-232.

⁵⁵E.g., Irenaeus, *Against All Heresies*, Book 1.

⁵⁶For an example, Valentinus did not arrive in Rome until about AD 140.

The fact of persecution of Christians, in addition to Jews, by Domitian for their belief alone is not well established.⁵⁷ During the reign of Trajan it seems that both common people (Jews and Gentiles) and local authorities rose against Christians. Trajan himself did not wish to search out Christians, but considered persistence in that faith a capital crime.⁵⁸

Roman persecution of Jewish Christians is an important building block in this study. It confirms both their existence and visibility and, in the case of the account of the trial of the grandsons of Judas, provides a glimpse into the content of their theology.

B. Conflict with Rabbinic Judaism⁵⁹

The immediate impression created by the Rabbinic statements regarding the *minim* is of a bitter struggle between the two. The Rabbinic writings contain strong condemnation of the *minim* and *natzorim*.⁶⁰ However, since most of those called *minim* were Jewish Christians, the two words frequently are synonymous in meaning. The sharpness of the Rabbinic hatred for Jewish Christianity is first seen in their violent attack upon Jesus. He was pictured as a magician, described as “Balaam,” and denounced as a “godless one.” Jesus was called *mamzer* (of spurious birth); his father was said to be a soldier named “Panther” (*Pandera*) who seduced Mary.⁶¹ This and other derogatory traditions were common in the Jewish world and used in the Jewish hostile lives of Jesus (*Toldoth Jesu*).⁶²

Examples of Rabbinic contempt for Jewish Christians are numerous.⁶³ The sentiments behind these statements are illustrated by a number of incidents which are reported throughout the Talmud and Midrash. Perhaps the best known is the case of R. Eleazar ben Dama, R. Ishmael

⁵⁷See “The Alleged Persecution by Domitian,” *Essays in Early Christian History* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 148-173; W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1965), 156-162. Christopher J. Haas, “The Domitianic Persecution of the Church” (Unpublished student term paper, Wheaton College Graduate School, 1978) subjects the primary sources to reexamination and, not unlike Frend, concludes that there does not seem to have been much persecution outside Asia Minor. However, Frend points to the relevance of the Book of Revelation on the subject; it seems to me that this document may well reflect the situation in a broader spectrum of Christendom and may thus support the claims by Hegesippus-Eusebius that Dominating’s persecution was more widespread.

⁵⁸Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3:33 and Pliny, *Epistles* X, 96-97.

⁵⁹The antagonism of the Rabbis against Jewish Christians and conflict with them is seen in the Talmud and Midrash; see R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (1903; reprint, Clifton, NJ: Reference Books, 1965); Claudia J. Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians. History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); see also Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity*. trans by M. Eugene Boring; (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

⁶⁰*Minim* (singular, *min*) probably stands for heretics and similar groups in general and *natzorim*, more specifically for Jewish Christians; it retains that meaning in modern Hebrew. Five suggestions have been offered to explain the etymology of *minim*. (1) a contraction from the word “believers,” (2) an acrostic from the Hebrew for “believers [in] Jesus the Nazarene,” (3) from the name “Manes,” founder of the Manichaeen system; (4) from the root meaning “to deny,” and (5) from the common and original meaning of *min*, “sort” or “kind,” designating an unfaithful Jew. The latter seems the most likely. See R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 362 ff; cf., 161; and Moore, *Judaism III*, 68 f. Particularly helpful are Herford’s (p 366) distinctions between “Masoreth” (delator, political betrayer), “Epiqurosin” (free thinker, Jew or Gentile), “Meshummadim” (those who willingly transgress some part of the ceremonial law and thereby proclaim their apostasy from the Jewish religion) and “Minim” (those who are false at heart, but do not necessarily proclaim their apostasy) in *Tosephta*, *Sanhedrin XII:4,5*. He sees these as four in a series which are on the same footing.

⁶¹There is controversy as to whether some names and allusions in Rabbinic sources actually refer to Jesus; see Morris Goldstein, *Jewish in Jewish Tradition* (New York: Macmillan, 1950).

⁶²On the Rabbinic attitude toward Jesus see Herford, *Christianity in the Talmud and Midrash*, 35 ff.; 344 ff.; cf. 7 ff. and Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalems*, 7 ff. The Jewish lives of Jesus have been collected and translated by Hugh J. Schonfield, *According to the Hebrews* (London: Duckworth, 1937).

(first half of second century), and Jacob the Min of Chephar (or Kefar) Sama (or Sechanja).⁶⁴ Ben Dama had been bitten by a snake, Jacob came to heal him “in the name, of Jeshu ben Pandira.” Ben Dama was confident that Jacob could perform the miracle, but R. Ishmael would not allow the healing. When ben Dama died from the snake bite R. Ishmael pronounced a blessing upon him because he had not broken through the “fence of the wise.” Similarly, when Hananiah, the nephew of R. Joshua came under the influence of the minim at Capernaum his uncle dealt with him as if he were crazy or possessed and banished him from the land (*Midrash Rabbah*, Eccles. I:8).

Apparently the minim refused to withdraw voluntarily from the synagogue. From the viewpoint of the Christian who regarded faith in Jesus as the extension or fulfillment of Judaism, withdrawal from the synagogue was unnecessary. This posed a number of concerns for the Rabbis. The Jewish Christians posed both a disrupting influence and a threat from within. For an example, some Jews refused to pray for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.⁶⁵ Both the ancient and modern versions of this petition, the fourteenth, make reference to the reestablishment of the Davidic reign.⁶⁶ In his commentary on the Jerusalem Talmudic passage involved, Travers Herford notes the association of the restoration of Jerusalem and of the Davidic dynasty in the benediction. He then comments, “But it is not clear to me why the omission of that prayer should be characteristic of a min. So far as I know, the point is never raised in the polemical discussions of Jews with minim.”⁶⁷

Another illustration of the problem posed by the presence of this group is the Rabbinic discussions of how to handle the books of the Jewish Christians. This presented the Rabbis with a special problem since these writings contained the name of God. Nevertheless, it was generally agreed that in spite of the divine name these books were to be destroyed, even on the Sabbath when necessary.⁶⁸ This decision against the books of the minim not only shows the hatred of the

⁶³Two statements may serve as an initial illustration: Slaughtering by a Min is idolatry; their bread is Samaritan bread, their wine is wine offered to idols, their fruits are not tithed, their books are books of witchcraft, and their sons are bastards. One does not sell to them. One does not teach their sons trades, and does not obtain healing from them, either healing of property or healing of lives” (Tosephta, Hullin II, 20-21). “WHOSO PLEASETH: i.e. R. Eleazar, BUT THE SINNER: i.e. Jacob of Kefar-Nibbuyara. Another illustration of WHOSO PLEASETH: i.e. Eleazar ben Dama, BUT THE SINNER: i.e. Jacob of Kefar-Sama. Another illustration of WHOSO PLEASETH: i.e. Hananiah the nephew of R. Joshua, BUT THE SINNER: i.e. the inhabitants of Capernaum. Another illustration of WHOSO PLEASETH: i.e. Judah ben Nakosa, BUT THE SINNER: i.e. the minim. Another illustration of WHOSO PLEASETH: i.e. R. Nathan, BUT THE SINNER: i.e. His disciple. Another illustration of WHOSO PLEASETH: i.e. R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, BUT THE SINNER: i.e. Elisha” (*Midrash Rabbah*, Eccles. VII:27).

⁶⁴Tosephta, Hullin II:22; Jer. Talmud, Shabbath 14 b and Abhodah Zarah 40 b, 41 a; Baby. Talmud, Abhodah Zarah 27 b; *Midrash Rabbah*, Eccles. I:8; Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 103 ff.; cf. Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalems*, ff.

⁶⁵Jerusalem Talmud, Berachoth 9 c (as quoted by Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 204), “R. Aha and R. Judah ben Pazi were sitting in a certain synagogue. There came one and went before the Ark, and left out one benediction. They came and asked R. Simon. He said to him, in the name of R. Jehoshua ben Levi, ‘When a servant of the congregation omits two or three benedictions, they do not make him turn back, except him who has omitted “that maketh the dead to live,” “that bringest down the proud,” “that buildest Jerusalem.” I say that is a Min!’” Tzvee Zahavy, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, Jacob Neusner, ed [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989], 212) translates this passage (which he numbers IV.C), “They do not make anyone [who skips a blessing] repeat, except for one who did not say [the second blessing], ‘Who resurrects the dead,’ [the twelfth blessing], ‘Who humbles the arrogant,’ and [the fourteenth blessing], ‘Who builds Jerusalem.’ I say [one who omits these blessings] is a heretic.”

⁶⁶The ancient (Palestinian) version says, “Be merciful, O Lord our God...towards Jerusalem... and towards the kingdom of the house of David, Thy blessed and anointed one.” The modern version reads, “And to Jerusalem Thy city return...and build her soon in our days...and speedily establish there the throne of David.”

⁶⁷*Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 205-206.

⁶⁸Tosephta, Shabbath XIII:5; Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 155 ff.; Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalems*, 15 ff.

Rabbis for the Jewish Christians, but also their fear of them. Fear of the *minim* is obviously rooted in a conviction that contact with them would defile and corrupt the pure sons of Israel. This fear included the possibility of subtle, sub-conscience influence contact with the *minim* might exert. The first century rabbi, Eliezer, could not understand why he had been arrested “for *Minuth*.” After his release he came to realize that the probably cause was that he had once been pleased by a word from a *min*.⁶⁹ Even more the fear of the *minim* probably testifies to the effectiveness of some Jewish Christian missionaries in converting members of the synagogue.⁷⁰

It was fear of these dangers that must have prompted Rabbi Gamaliel and his associates, sometime before the end of the first century, to alter the Jewish synagogue liturgy. It was fear of these dangers that must have prompted Rabbi Gamaliel and his associates, sometime before the end of the first century, to alter the Jewish synagogue liturgy. This involved a change in the twelfth benediction of the *Shemoneh 'Esreh* (The Eighteen Benedictions [*berakhoth*] of The Daily Prayer) to contain a condemnation of Jewish Christians.⁷¹ This effectively excluded them from synagogue worship and continuing participation in Jewish life⁷² — their enthusiasm for corporate prayer would be understandably dampened if in doing so they prayed for their own damnation. From that time onward the break between Judaism and Christianity was final; as far as the synagogue was concerned, the Church was banned.

⁶⁹Rabbi Aqiba said to him, “Perhaps one of the *Minim* has said to thee a word of *Minuth* and it has pleased thee. He said, by Heaven, thou hast reminded me! Once I was walking along the street of Sepphoris, and I met Jacob of Chepar Sichnin, and he said to me a word of *Minuth* in the name of Jeshu ben Pandira and it pleased me. And I was arrested for words of *Minuth* because I transgressed the words of Torah (Prov. V:8), “Keep thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house (VII:26), for she hath cut down many wounded” (Tosephta, Shabbath XIII, 5). Note that the story of Eliezer's arrest is followed by a long Haggadah against the heretic (*Min*). In this the faithful are warned to avoid contact with the *Minim* as they would shun associations with a harlot (cf. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash, 182 ff).

⁷⁰Cf. Jocz, *Jewish People*, 166 ff.

⁷¹Evidently the Daily Prayer has ancient roots and went through many forms. Early reflections of the Eighteen Benedictions are in Ben Sirach 51:21-35. The version found in the Cairo Geniza, sometimes called the “Palestinian” version, is substantially different from the Babylonian and may be closer to the first century version. The version now used in synagogues, the Babylonian version, post-dates AD 70 and is in a set form. The Talmud says, “Simeon Pekoli (or the cotton dealer) arranged the benedictions in their order in the presence of Rabban Gamaliel at Jabneh,” T.B. Berakoth 28b; T.B. Megillah 17b. Nevertheless, the date and significance of the wording of the various editions of the *Shemoneh Esreh* other alterations to the synagogue liturgy are the focus of on-going controversies. For full texts and discussion see Emil Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, G. Vermes, Fergus Miller, and Matthew Black, eds (New edition; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1979), II, 454-453. See also discussion by Jakob Jocz, *The Jewish People*, 45-57; C. W. Dougmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* (London: Faith Press, 1964), 16-25, 114-125; *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*. Section One, Vol 2: *The Jewish People in the First Century. Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*. Edited by S. Safrai and M. Stern in co-operation with D. Flusser and W. C. van Unnik (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 916-917, 922-926. Of particular interest is the different wording of the twelfth petition between the common version and that of the Palestinian Version (found in the Cairo Geniza). Babylonian Version: And for informers let there be no hope; and let all who do wickedness quickly perish; and let them all be speedily destroyed; and root and crush and hurl down and humble the insolent, speedily in our days. Blessed art thou, Lord, who crushest enemies and humblest the insolent. Palestinian Version (usually assumed to come from the end of the first century): And for apostates let there be no hope; and may the insolent kingdom be quickly uprooted, in our days. And may the Nazarenes and heretics perish quickly; and may they be erased from the Book of Life; and may they not be inscribed with the righteous. Blessed art thou, Lord, who humblest the insolent. The modern version does not contain specific reference to the *Natzorim* and *Minim*. The version printed by Singer says, “And for slanderers let there be no home, and let all wickedness perish as in a moment; may all Thine enemies be soon cut off, and the dominion of arrogance do Thou speedily root out and shatter, cast down, and humble speedily in our days. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who shatterest enemies and humblest the arrogant.”

⁷²The wording from the Cairo version calls for noting John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2 (cf., Luke 6:2) which speak of exclusion of Jesus' followers from the synagogue (in contrast to persecution in the synagogues; e.g., Mk 13:9; Luke 12:11).

Thus increasingly the Jewish Christians were forced into isolation within their own country. Jewish slanderous reports of immoral practices within the private meetings of Christians⁷³ suggest the air of secrecy and suspicion which often surrounds a group that more or less has withdrawn from the mainstream of society. Several times the Rabbinic writers mention contact with Christians in Chephar Sama (or Sechanja), Sepphoris, and Capernaum, thus hinting at the existence of Christian communities in these areas.⁷⁴ If the Palestinian Christians were forced into separate communities, it was probably a gradual development, only the beginning of which occurred before A.D. 100.

Rabbinic writings also indicate that at least some Jewish Christians disregarded the strict observance of the Sabbath.⁷⁵ Another characteristic of the Jewish Christians revealed in the Talmud and Midrash is their performing of healing and other miracles.⁷⁶ The genuineness of these healings and miracles was usually accepted by the Rabbis.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the feeling against the *minim* was so strong that, as already observed, they refused to accept benefit from these wonders.

The Rabbinic discussions and writings reveal very little about the theology of the *minim*. Of course, the salient feature stated or implied about the belief of the *minim* was their convictions about Jesus as the Messiah. The *minim* were charged with believing in several Powers in Heaven and asserting that there was a created being who assisted in the work of creation.⁷⁸

In general the results of a survey of Rabbinic evidence about the Jewish Christians is vague, uncertain, and disappointing. Nevertheless, certain general conclusions may be drawn from them. They are represented as a kind of spurious Jews, vainly claiming fellowship with true Judaism and rejected because of their connection with Christianity. They were in Judaism, but not of it. They frequented the synagogues, where suspicion of them found expression in liturgical devices for their detection, and in the noting of various phrases and gestures which were thought to betray their heresy. In their theology... they departed from the strict monotheism of Judaism, and held the doctrine of the relation between God and Christ which [according to Herford] is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁷⁹

⁷³Midrash Rabbah Eccles. I:8; Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 215 ff.; cf. Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalems*, 14 f.

⁷⁴Herford thinks the strange story of the employment of R. Saphra as a teacher by the *Minim* implies a separate organization by them (Baby Talmud, *Abhodah Zarah* 4 a; Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 266 ff, 37). However, this passage probably comes well after the close of the first century. Schlatter (*Die Kirche Jerusalems*, 9 ff.) thinks that there was a separate Jewish Christian community existing alongside the Roman and Jewish settlements on the ruined site of Jerusalem.

⁷⁵Note the incidents concerning Hananiah and his uncle. R. Joshua, says that when Hananiah was under the influence of the *Minim* they "sent him riding on an ass on the Sabbath." In Baby. Talmud, *Taanith* 27 b (Herford, 171 f.) R. Johanna says that certain individuals do not fast on the day after the Sabbath, "because of the Nazarenes." Baby. Talmud, *Abhodah Zarah* 6 a (Herford, 171) is also relevant at this point, "for R. Tahlipa bar Abdimi said that Shemuel said: 'The Nazarene day, according to the words of R. Ishmael, is forbidden forever!' R. Joshua lived at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. However, the reference to the distinct "Nazarene Day" probably comes from a later period and cannot be used as conclusive evidence for the practice in the first century.

⁷⁶As shown above, Ben Dama felt that Jacob could heal him. Jacob the *Min* is also mentioned in a healing context in Baby. Talmud *Abhodah Zarah* 28. The grandson of R. Joshua ben Levi was cured by "a certain word... in the name of Jesus Pandira." Jer. Talmud *Sanhedrin* 25 b reports miracles by the *Minim* but the Rabbis mentioned in these accounts are from the last second and third centuries.

⁷⁷But see the incident recorded in *Sanhedrin* 25 d; Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 115 f.

⁷⁸A number of Rabbinic passages assert the unity of God in opposition to these ideas; cf. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 245 ff., 291 ff., 193.

⁷⁹Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, 395.

In addition the practice of Christians living in separate communities may have begun by the end of the first century and these locations seem to have been the site for healings and miracles. The Rabbis were aware of a body of literature which the minim used, recorded that at least some Palestinian Christians did not observe the Sabbath, and that they had separated nationalistic goals from their religious outlook.

Of major significance for our study is that the severity of the struggle between Rabbis and Jewish Christianity confirms both their post-AD 70 existence and that they were numerically strong enough to be a threat to the Jewish leaders. Furthermore it seems that their missionary activities may have enjoyed some success.

C. Persecution of Christians During the Second Jewish Revolt

Against Rome During the Emperors of Hadrian, AD 130-135. In AD 132, during the emperorship of Hadrian (AD 117-138), a second Jewish revolt broke out under the leadership of Simon Bar-Kosiba⁸⁰ who captured Jerusalem and briefly reestablished the Jewish state. A religious element in this war is confirmed by Bar-Kosiba's being hailed as Messiah by some influential Rabbis, including Akiba.

For three years there raged a savage and cruel war, the available details of which are few but have been augmented by recent discoveries in the Judaean desert (including some of his own letters from Nahal Hever).⁸¹ Now it is possible to sketch out at least a general account of the events of that time.⁸²

The end came at Bethar, not far from Bethlehem, with the defeat of the Jewish forces and the death of him who had been their leader. Jerusalem was rebuilt as Gentile city, Aelia Capitolina (with temple dedicated to Jupiter). Jews were forbidden to enter the city on pain of death.

Of particular concern here is the fact of Bar-Kosiba's persecution of Jewish Christians, evidently because they refused to acknowledge him as Messiah. Justin and Eusebius make direct reference to this persecution and its cause.⁸³ The pseudo-Messiah's own letters contain harsh words toward Jewish he fail to support him, Jewish Christians may be his intended reference.⁸⁴
[89]

⁸⁰Discoveries from the Judaean desert made in the latter half of the twentieth century have clarified the exact name of the leader of the rebellion. Rabbi Akiba, a supporter of the revolt, referred to him as "Bar Kochba," "Son of the Star" (an allusion to the messianic prophecy of Num 24:17); later Jewish writers refer to him as "Bar Koziba," "Son of the Lie." Among Christian writers Justin Martyr refers to him as "Barchochebas" and Eusebius as "Chochebas." The names "Kokheba" and "Bar Kokheba" also occur. Coins and documents from his reign, including letters by him, clarify his name was "Simon (Shimon), Bar (Ben) Kosiba(h)" = "Simon the son of Kosiba."

⁸¹Cf. Yigael Yadin. *Bar-Kokhbah: The Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Last Jewish Revolt Against Imperial Rome* (London: Weidfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 124 ff.

⁸²See Neil S. Fujita. *A Crack in the Jar: What Ancient Jewish Documents Tell Us About the New Testament* (1986); Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC-AD 135): Revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar, et al., eds.* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1973), I.; Yadin. *Bar-Kokhbah*

⁸³Justin, *Apology I*: 31,6, "For in the Jewish war which lately raged, Barchochebas, leader of the revolt of the Jews, gave orders that Christians alone should be led to cruel punishments, unless they would deny Jesus Christ and utter blasphemy;" cf. also Eusebius, *Chronicle* "ad ann. Abrah. 2149.

⁸⁴Cf. Yadin. *Bar-Kokhbah*, 124 ff.

Once again we have evidence of Jewish Christians in Palestine after AD 70. They are visible and cling tenaciously to their conviction that Jesus is Messiah and resist any compromise with that commitment.

VII. Archaeology and Post 70 AD Jewish Christianity

The Bar-Kosiba letters are part of a broader, although relatively small body of evidence pointing toward the continuing existence of Jewish/Palestinian Christianity, archaeology. Before going further with this topic, it is well to let the words of Raymond Brown raise a warning and remind us of the type data we might expect. He says, "Most New Testament archaeology illustrates only the ambiance in which Jesus and his followers would have lived and preached."⁸⁵ What is true of New Testament archaeology is also the case in the study of Jewish Christians. Belarmino Bagatti has amassed and analyzed a considerable data on this subject.⁸⁶ His, and other studies⁸⁷ demonstrate that the majority of what archaeology has to teach us about the post-A.D. 70 Jewish Christians consists mainly of descriptions of the ruins of buildings and towns and bits of mosaics and epigraphy. But even this, when properly interpreted, can provide valuable information.

Much of the archaeological data comes from Galilee. Some town, such as Nazareth, Tiberias, Sepphoris, and Capernaum, seem to have been centers for Jewish Christianity. It is interesting to note that in some locations, Capernaum being one example, the remains show Jewish synagogues and Christian churches existing in close proximity. This may indicate a less belligerent relation between Jews and their Christian kinsmen than would be indicated if we had only the Rabbinic sources.

A few archaeological discoveries are more dramatic in their direct relation to Jewish Christianity. The Bar-Kosiba letters and the probability of the discovery of Peter's house and that it was used as a Jewish Christian church at an early date⁸⁸ are prime examples. The review of past evidence⁸⁹ combined with recent excavations in the former Essene quarter of the old city of Jerusalem⁹⁰ tend to confirm what may be the remains from a Jewish Christian synagogue incorporated into the building now containing the so-called "Tomb of David" and "The Upper Room." This structure stands beside the location of the old Hadrianic wall. It may be that Jewish Christians received permission to build there, just outside the city proper, because the Romans realized that they had refused to join the Bar-Kosiba revolt.

The archaeological data is certainly not as extensive as we might wish. Yet, even what is available contributes to establishing the fact of the survival of this group after the Jewish overthrow of A.D. 70.

⁸⁵Recent Discoveries and the Biblical World. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983, 77.

⁸⁶The Church from the Circumcision. History and Archaeology of the Judaeo-Christians (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1971).

⁸⁷E.g., Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange. Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity. The Social and Historical Setting of Palestinian Judaism and Christianity (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981).

⁸⁸Stanislao Loffreda, Rediscovering Capernaum (Gerusalemme: Edizioni Custodia Terra Stanta, 1985), 50-67.

⁸⁹Summarized by Bagatti, Church from the Circumcision, 116-122,

⁹⁰Bargil Pixner, "Jerusalem's Essene Gateway," Biblical Archaeology Review (=BAR) 23/4 (May/June), 23 ff; cf also his "Church of the Apostles Found on Mt. Zion," BAR 16/3 (May/June), 16-35.

VIII. A POSSIBLE POST-A.D. 70 JEWISH CHRISTIAN RESURGENCE?

In spite of lack of sufficient information certain facts may lead the investigator to conclude that it is likely that there was a resurgence of Jewish Christianity after the end of the account of the Book of Acts. At least four factors point to such a possibility.

First, the survival and influence of the Post-A.D. 70 Jerusalem-Palestinian Church made continuing mission work among Jews not only possible but almost certain. Second, since a majority group is not likely to take the trouble to oppose an insignificant minority which poses no threat, the fact that Jewish Christians experienced persecution after the war indicates they were making some impact upon the society as a whole. Third, the alteration of the synagogue liturgy to include the Birkath ha Minim probably suggests a rather drastic action against what the Rabbis regarded as a serious problem. Finally, something such as a successful missionary effort must be postulated to explain why, thirty years after the close of the first century, the Hebrew Christians in Palestine had significant strength to attract the attention and ire of Ben Kosebah when they refused to support his cause.⁹¹

Jakob Jocz has also called attention to the possibility of a resurgence of Hebrew Christianity because of the psychological effects one might expect AD 70 to have on Jewry. Also, he notes, the Church was provided with a new propaganda weapon. It was able to interpret the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple as (1) an act of God's judgment for the rejection of the Messiah, (2) proof that the Temple sacrifices had become obsolete in the death of Christ which they prefigured, and (3) fulfillment of the predictions of Jesus.⁹²

If there was such a resurgence we have important evidence for our study. It would indicate not only the continuing existence of the Jewish Church but also that it flourished, at least in its homeland.

IX. JUSTIN MARTYR AND TRYPHO

The description of the divisions among Hebrew Christianity given in the second century Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew by Justin Martyr (d. ca. AD 165)⁹³ brings us to the close of our survey. It deserves separate, extended treatment by itself. It confirms the continuing existence of Jewish Christianity and provides valuable information about the status and beliefs of Jewish Christians. We will also focus on what Justin reveals about divisions among Hebrew Christians.

The Dialogue reveals a number of divisions among Jewish Christians caused by differences of opinion about Christology and Torah (Law). (1) Justin refers to those "of our race [i.e., Christians], who admit that He [Jesus] is Messiah, while holding him to be man of men" (chap. 47). Trypho clarifies that they believe Jesus "to have been a man, and to have been appointed by election, and then to have become Messiah" (chap. 45). Evidently these Jewish Christians who

⁹¹Cf. Davies, *The Setting of Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964), 272 ff.

⁹² Jewish People, 166 ff.

⁹³On Hebrew Christianity in Justin's Dialogue see Adolf Harnack, *Judentum und Judenchristentum in Justin's Dialog mit Trypho* (= Judaism and Jewish Christianity in Justin's Dialogue with Trypho. TuU XXXIX; Leipzig: 1913) who omits notice of the Jewish Christians who were members of the Larger Church and, to our minds, confuses the discussion of Jewish born Christians by introducing material about Gentile Christians who kept the Law. Also see Jacob Jocz, *Jewish People and Jesus Christ* (London: SPCK, 1954) 170 ff., who, in addition to the types of Hebrew Christians mentioned in our discussion, includes a reference (from Mishnah, "Berakoth" 5:3 and Talmud, "Berakoth" 29a) to semi-secret or secret believing Jews who remained in the synagogue.

were a part of the Larger Church. They accepted the view, frequently affirmed by Justin, that Jesus is the Messiah, the pre-existent, virgin born, Son of God (cf. chaps. 43, 48). Also presumably they with Justin, rejecting the Law as having present relevance, did not observe its provisions. They (a) believe Jesus is the Messiah, the pre-existent, virgin born, Son of God; (b) reject the Law as having present relevance, and do not observe its provisions;⁹⁴ (c) for there sake the nation was not completely destroyed.”Jesus (chaps. 43, 48).

(3) A third group of second century Jewish Christians affirmed that: (a) Jesus is the Messiah of God who was crucified, the absolute Judge of all to whom belongs the everlasting kingdom; (b) recognize that the Law contributes nothing to righteousness but at the same time wish to observe the institutions of Torah (cf. chaps. 46, 47). Justin does “not approved”⁹⁵ of this group try to persuade others, particularly Gentile Christians, to observe the Law.⁹⁶

Justin also speaks of (4) Hebrew Christians who “through weak-mindedness,”⁹⁷ keep the Law but do not seek to persuade others to do so. Justin believes that these will be saved and that other Christians “ought to join ourselves to such, and associate with them in all things as kinsmen and brethren” (chap. 47). However, he acknowledges that there were some Christians who believed that these Hebrew Christians who observed the Law without attempting to compel others to do so would not be saved and refused to have Christian fellowship with them.

Thus Justin confirms that Jewish Christianity existed into the second century. His description of some of the same sort of divisions which are evident in the Book of Acts supports a continuity with the pre-AD 70 church. He shows that in addition to Jewish Christians whose Christology was not acceptable to Church as a whole, there were also those whose belief about Jesus was in harmony with Christianity as a whole. Furthermore, he confirms that the place and role of the Jewish law in Christianity was, for several (but not all) Jewish groups, was a matter of continuing concern.

X. JEWISH CHRISTIANITY IN THE SECOND AND FOLLOWING CENTURIES

In discussing developments related to the leadership of the Jewish Church we have already noted the possible persecution of Jewish Christians and/or Jews under the second century Emperor Trajan. We should also mention, in passing, that some of the Jewish Christian Gospels and Acts at least partly in found in the “Apocryphal New Testament” may be products of the early second century. Uncertainty about their authorship, date, and provenance prohibit considering them as a potential area of exploration is such a survey as this.

⁹⁴With Justin they seem to have believed that before the coming of Jesus, “Some injunctions [of Torah] were laid on in reference to the worship of God and practice of righteousness; but some injunctions and acts were likewise mentioned in reference to the mystery of Christ, on account of the hardness of your [Trypho's] people's hearts... in order that, by the large number of them [the commandments], you might keep God continually, and in every action, before your eyes, and never begin to act unjustly or impiously (Dial 44, 46).

⁹⁵Thus he implies that these will not be saved.

⁹⁶Justin mentions particularly circumcision, Sabbath keeping, and “other such ceremonies.” Trypho had earlier [chap. 46] mentioned also observing months, washing after touching anything prohibited by Moses or after sexual intercourse) and who refuse to “associate intimately with Christians who do not keep the Law.

⁹⁷dia to asthenes t s gn m s.

A further question might address evidence of the survival of the two divisions of the Hebraic Hebrew Christians, the Pharisaic and Moderate Hebrew Christians, mentioned earlier. It seems evident that these are represented in the divisions described in Justin' Dialog. Those who believed Jesus to be the divine Messiah and kept the Law and Jewish customs from preference but did not seek to impose them on Gentile Christians are probably the successors of the Moderates of the Jerusalem Church. Other groups who rejected the full deity of Jesus, kept the Law, and tried to impose Jewish rites and observances on Gentiles may well be the descendants of the Pharisaic Hebrew Christians. There is good reason to associate them with the Ebionites and with the sect of the third century Pseudo Clementine writings.⁹⁸

A more perplexing question enquires about the Moderate Hebrew Christians. A number of Patristic writers make reference to a Jewish Christian group called "The Nazarene."⁹⁹ These may well be descendants of the Moderates of Jerusalem. Additional evidence for the post-Justin survival of this group has been scant. However, research by Ernest W. Sanders¹⁰⁰ the Syriac Didascalia Apostolorum offers hope of further light on this important, probably normative, group in the first century Church of Jerusalem. But that must await further study.

CONCLUSION

Our survey has demonstrated that from Eusebius, but also from a variety of other source, there is support for the assumption that Jewish Christianity, at least in part, survived the destruction of the Jewish state by the Romans in AD 70. Furthermore, we have presented evidence that Christology and matters related to Second Temple Jewish religion and culture continued to be important to these second century Christians. On the former matter, there were Jewish Christians whose views, although they may have expressed it a bit differently, about Jesus were in harmony with the rest of the Church. Matters of ceremony, law, the Jewish race and state, and the place of their place and heritage in God's plan and work were, as to be expected, of much more concern that to Gentile Christians.

We have noted that, as the rest of Christendom, the Jewish-Palestinian Church struggled with leadership. This included the form of the organization for the group, the principle on which leaders were to be identified, and of the particular individuals to be placed in such positions. Its struggles may well have had contributed to the patterns which emerged in the Larger Church.

It is the contention this investigation indicates that as the first Jewish Church was the mother of the Larger Church, she continued to play the parent role well beyond the disruption within her own homeland. She was of a different generation and culture of most of her far-flung children and often isolated from and ignored by them. Yet her influence remained; she had started them on the way of the Jesus Messiah. 'Tis to that central focus that they have and must always return.

3/18/98; corrected 1/11/99

⁹⁸This is, I believe, the group described by Hans Joachim Schoeps in *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* and *Jewish Christianity*.

⁹⁹See R. A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity from the End of the New Testament Period Until its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

¹⁰⁰"The So-Called Second Legislation and the Canon of Scripture in the Didascalia Apostolorum." A Work Paper for the Seminar on Jewish Christianity, Society of Biblical Literature, 1983.

“So they went up and threw down the Righteous one. Then they said to each other, 'Let us stone James the Righteous', and began to stone him, as in spite of his fall he was still alive. But he turned and knelt, uttering the words: 'I beseech Thee, Lord God and Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.' While they pelted him with stones, one of the descendants of Recap the son of Rachabim -- the priestly family to which Jeremiah the Prophet bore witness, called out: 'Stop! what are you doing? the Righteous one is praying for you.' Then one of them, a fuller [laundryman], took the club which he used to beat out the clothes, and brought it down on the head of the Righteous one. Such was his martyrdom. He was buried on the spot, by the Sanctuary, and his headstone is still there by the Sanctuary. He has proved a true witness to Jews and Gentiles alike that Jesus is the Christ.

“Immediately after this Vespasian began to besiege them.”

Bibliography

- Brandon, S. G. F. *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, trans. Allan Menzies (London: 1878), 1:44-183; cf. *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*. 2 vols. trans. Eduard Zeller (London: 1876).
- . *Jesus and the Zealots*. New York: Scribner, 1967.
- Klijn, A. F. J. "The Story of Jewish Christianity." *New Testament Studies* 20 (1973-74): 419-431.
- Murray, Robert, "Defining Judaeo-Christianity." *Heythrop Journal* 15 (1974): 303-310.
- Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology*. Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950.
- Quispel, G. "The Discussion of Judaic Christianity." *Vigiliae Christianae* 22 (1968): 81-93.
- Riegel, Stanley K., "Jewish Christianity: Definitions and Terminology." *New Testament Studies* 24 (1978): 410-415.
- Schoeps, Hans-Joachim, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church. A Study of the Effects of the Jewish Overthrow of A.D. 70 on Christianity*. 2d ed., London: SPCK, 1957
- . *Jewish Christianity*. Philadelphia, Fortress, 1969.
- Scott, James Julius, Jr. "The Church of Jerusalem, A.D. 30-100: An Investigation of the Growth of Internal Factions and the Extension of its Influence in the Larger Church" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation; Manchester, England: The University of Manchester, 1969; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International).
- . "Parties in the Church of Jerusalem as Seen in the Book of Acts." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 18 (1975): 217-227.
- . "The Effects of the Fall of Jerusalem on Christianity." *Proceedings, The Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society* 3 (1983), 149-160.
- . "Stephen's Defense and the World Mission of the People of God." *JETS* 21/2 (June 1978): 131-141.
- . "The Cornelius Incident in the Light of its Jewish Setting." *JETS* 34/4 (December 1991): 475-484.
- . "The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)." Paper read at the National Meeting of Evangelical Theological Society, San Francisco, CA 1992.
- . "The Church of Jerusalem in Acts: The Final Scene." Paper read at National Meeting of Evangelical Theological Society, Philadelphia, PA, November 16, 1995.
- . "The Church's Progress to the Council of Jerusalem." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7 (1997), 205-224.