

On the Development and Underlying Unity of Sectarian Identity in Second Temple Period Judea

"Why was the First Temple destroyed?
Because of three evils in it: idolatry, sexual immorality, and bloodshed.
But why was the Second Temple destroyed,
seeing that during the time it stood,
people occupied themselves with Torah, observance of precepts,
and the practice of charity?
Because, during the time it stood, hatred without rightful cause prevailed.
This should teach you that hatred without rightful cause
is deemed as grave as all the three sins of idolatry,
sexual immorality and bloodshed together."
Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma 9b

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INTRODUCTION

When the Babylonian Talmud tells of the grave evil of שנאת חנם, or hatred without rightful cause, it should come as a historical lesson to the Jewish people that when they separated themselves from one another, defeat from an outside nation was right around the corner. The choice to separate from the nations is an intrinsic characteristic of the collective Israelite memory whose traditions gave forth a tendency to separate also from one another. The Bible is full of choices being made which eventually led the nation of Israel to return to Canaan, establish a monarchy and build a magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. For brief periods in Israel's early history, there existed a balance of power between the monarchy, the priesthood and the prophets. These institutions provided legitimacy to one another¹ over the centuries during the times of strength and during the separation of the kingdom into two and finally the exile of the ten tribes of Israel by Assyria in c. 722 B.C.E. which left only the kingdom of Judea ruled by King David's descendants.

The Babylonian Exile shook the foundations of leadership amongst the Jewish people effectively putting an end to the monarchy. When this fundamental tier was taken from the Judean people they were forced to develop a new system of national direction when Cyrus, the new Persian overlord, allowed them to return to their land in 539 B.C.E. Regardless of the misplaced messianic hope which was placed in the descendants of the last king Jehoiachin: Sheshbazzar, Shaltiel and Zerubabel, it was obvious that the nation would never be the same. The concentration of the people around the Temple building gave extraordinary power to the priesthood which was also entrusted to fill in the gap which the monarchy had left. Difficulties arose as the well known idiom of, 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely', became true for the Judean priesthood. The priesthood became increasingly aristocratic and separated itself from the people who began to search for other spiritual sources which they found in the Sages of the Great Synagogue.

"The Jerusalem theocracy gradually [developed] and transformed the Priests into an exclusive caste, superior to the people, sometimes oppressing it with a high hand; they constituted the wealthy landed group, and quite naturally drew away from the poor and their troubles. The urban population sought other intellectual leaders who lived and thought in a manner more akin to themselves. Hence rose the class of

¹ cf. I Kings 1:34 as an example of all three institutions coming together to give legitimacy to one another.

scribes, the flesh and blood of the broad city populace, which took upon itself the task of interpreting the Torah neglected by the priests."²

The Sages were remnants of the age of kings and prophets who were cautious of the fact that the Temple had been constructed under the auspices of a foreign power and they had lingering questions about its legitimacy. It was in this environment that the various sects were born, each claiming to represent the authentic Judaism who had inherited the mantle of Israel. This motif would characterize the banners being raised by each of the sects who would turn to foreign enemies rather than to their own people in the spirit of reconciliation.

As influential as the Exodus is to the Israel's formative period of development, so too was the development of sectarian politics in the Land of Israel during the Second Temple Period to Judaism. Methodologically the *longue durée* of the Annales School will provide an exemplary model for addressing this vast subject in its proper context. Just as the definition of *longue durée* is two fold, so too will this seminar attempt to address the development of sectarianism in the Second Temple Period. *Longue durée* holds that there should be a priority given to long term historical structures over actual events and that the approach as a whole must incorporate social scientific methods into its historical model. Translating this model into a history of Judean sectarianism means that a comprehensive historical survey of Second Temple Judea must be undertaken if there is to emerge a pattern of comprehensible development. The Jewish people are a nation whose development has been taking place for thousands of years and to leave out a part of their past is to leave out an understanding of any period being discussed. This seminar will explore six hundred years of history which defined the Second Temple Period (530 B.C.E. – 70 C.E.) with an expressed purpose of coming closer to an overall perspective of the sectarian issues which helped define the overall history of the nation. The methodology of recognizing long term development of prominent sects in Judea is intended to bring about a greater appreciation of their ability to adapt and to understand how groundbreaking events which affected the Judean nation (i.e. Hellenism) did so through sectarian colors. The pattern which will emerge is one that over the entire period of the Second Temple did not change dramatically. Incorporation of social scientific methods into the model of sectarian growth calls for an extensive study into the relationship between the aristocratic caste of priests supported by foreign or

² Tcherikover, V. *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. New York 1970. p. 124.

domestic rulers that were opposed by a wide spectrum of observant masses led by their Sages and, at times, their own priests³. What will transpire will be a familiar social model of the rich versus the poor and the consequential social-political ramifications which impacted the Judean people as a whole.

Far be it from this author to undermine the profound influence of Hellenism during the Second Temple Judaism, but it must be kept in perspective since it was not the defining line which demarcated the major sects under discussion; instead Hellenism was a long term phenomena rising and falling in its influence upon Judeans for hundreds of years from the start of the fourth century onwards. The reaction of the Judean people to Hellenistic influences is a vital part in the identification of sectarian development and will be explored extensively below.

The culmination of the seminar will be to take an example of three sects in the late Second Temple Period whom historiography would have us believe were drastically opposed to one another⁴, that of the Zealots, Essenes and the formative Christian Church, to show how sectarian commonalities give new definitions to the historical truths we take for granted. The class conflict amongst the Jewish priests of the Second Temple will hopefully show that the divide was not between those who followed the "poor priests", which included the Zealots and the Christians; but rather, there existed a continued social polemic between the aristocratic Priests and the leaders of the poor, who just so happened to include the aforementioned impoverished priests. The phenomenon of apocalyptic messianic personalities throughout the Second Temple Period was so common (cf. Essenes) that their crucifixion by the Roman Authorities became a daily occurrence and would not have caused much more of an outrage than was already present in classic Judean society. The foundation church's ideology and activities, once reconstructed, will critique the dogmatism behind the Pella flight legend which supposes that the early Christians peacefully left Jerusalem with prophetic forewarning of their city's immanent destruction. The line between the sectarian divide and the sympathies they held for one another as a single nation fighting for its freedom will become blurred leaving the groundwork for a new methodological approach to understanding the Second Temple period as a whole.

³ This will be seen in the case of the Teacher of Righteousness who would lead an Essene sect to establish a settlement in Qumran.

⁴ This is evident by briefly skimming the ideological differences between the peaceful doctrine of the Christian writings ([sic.] New Testament) and that of the militarist doctrine reported by Josephus Flavius as having belonged to the Zealots. c.f. Matthew 5:39 and Antiquities 20:186-7.

THE IMPLICATION OF TERMINOLOGY ON HISTORICAL DEFINITIONS

The terminology which will be used in this seminar will most likely be controversial and thus will need well developed definitions. It is to this author's firm belief that religious movements in the Second Temple Period went through gradual developments that were marked by definitive historical events which separated the movement from its original ideology and consequently led its weltanschauung into a different direction than originally intended. The best example of this is the Pharisees. Solomon Zeitlin's hypothesis holds that the Pharisee movement originated as a result of the polemic⁵ against the Priestly hierarchy⁶ in the earliest days after the return from Babylon⁷. The proto-Pharisees took on a monarchist character in the spirit of the descendants of Jehoiachin the last king of Judah (i.e. Zerubabel) who had returned to Judea.⁸ The movement, which slowly solidified as a reaction to the hierocracy of the Zadokites, will hereon be labeled the proto-Pharisee movement. They were not the proper political movement known during the time of the Hasmoneans as the Pharisees, but rather a loose coalition of Sages, scribes and scholars who held that the

⁵ According to Zeitlin, this polemic was multifold. Among the disagreements were: who should lead the new community in Judea and the theological concept of whether or not the Deity of Israel was a universal Deity or a national Deity. Zeitlin believes that the word Pharisees originates from how the Zadokites deemed those who did not follow their rule and thus comes from the Hebrew word for 'separatists'. cf. Zeitlin. *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State*. vol. 1. Philadelphia 1968. n. 41. p. 451-2. Zeitlin relies on late additions to the Bible such as the Book of Ezekiel 44:15, "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the Children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister unto Me." Also: "When [the Sadducees] were in power, they sought to present their opponents as a dissenting sect and therefore called them פרושים, that is those who dissociate themselves from the community in its time of trouble." Urbach, E.E. "Sages" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]. This type of methodology becomes problematic and is recognized by numerous scholars, see note 7 below.

⁶ This priestly hierarchy was led by Jeshua, the grandson of the last High Priest Seriah. This group of priests was most likely convinced that Judean nationalism had been the reason behind the Temple's destruction by Babylon in 586 B.C.E. and they were determined to see the creation of a strictly spiritual community under the leadership of the High Priest and subject to the rule of the Persian Empire. cf. Zeitlin, S. *Ibid*. p.8.

⁷ Zeitlin, S. *Ibid*. p. 7-8. It should be noted that most scholars disagree with Zeitlin and believe that the Pharisee sect only formed during the mid second century B.C.E. It is for this reason that I see the necessity to give a new term, that of 'proto-Pharisee' to the early sectarian phenomenon being referred to by Zeitlin. c.f. "While some scholars have tried to find earlier traces of these groups... their conclusions are largely speculative and unconvincing." Levine, L.I.A. "The Age of Hellenism" in: *Ancient Israel*. Washington D.C. 1991. p. 198.

⁸ After the 'defeat' of Zerubabel this group held onto its ideology that the revived nation of Judea should be headed by a secular leader rather than by the High Priest. "This view had many adherents particularly among those (עם הארץ) who were not among the former exiles but had remained in Judea and among whom there may have been nationalist descendants of the royal family." Zeitlin. *Ibid*. p. 10. It is very probable that the ideological, if not the biological, descendants of Ishmael b. Nethaniah, the assassin of Gedaliah (cf. II Kings 25:25; Jeremiah 41:2), continued to sponsor national home in Judea at this period.

Torah should not be confined to the priesthood in the Temple. Their organization and unity would only solidify as the priesthood and their Sadducee movement as a whole took on more of an aristocratic character at the expense of a separation with the people as a whole and as Hellenism infiltrated on a threatening scale. The label of neo-Pharisaism will be left to the movement under the leadership of Hillel which renounced violence as a reaction to the Zealot movement, and originated out of the Pharisee movement proper.⁹

The same terminology applies to the Sadducees and is recognized by various scholars who prefer to use the term 'Zadokite' when referring to the early founders of the Sadducee party.¹⁰

"The most probable explanation of the [name's origin], however, is that it is derived from Zadok, the high priest in the days of David (II Sam. 8:17 and 15:24) and Solomon (cf. I Kings 1:34ff. and I Chr. 12:29). Ezekiel (40:46, 43:19 and 44:10–15) selected this family as worthy of being entrusted with the control of the Temple. Descendants of this family constituted the Temple hierarchy down to the second century B.C.E., though not all priests were Sadducees. Hence the name 'Sadducees' may best be taken to mean anyone who is a sympathizer with the Zadokites, the priestly descendants of Zadok."¹¹

Seeing the historical connection between the priesthood of the first and second temples is vitally important for understanding the milieu of the early Sadducee movement. The higher status accorded to the priesthood in Judean tradition was appreciated by the Persian Empire after their conquest of Judea (c. 540 B.C.E.) who was looking to fill in the vacuum and consolidate their power. These priests had most likely learnt administrative skills in Babylon helping their people settle into the new Empire as evidenced by, "the sons of Hakkoz who ... played an important role in

⁹ One of the best examples of the difference between the proper Pharisees and the neo-Pharisees is contained in the Mishnaic saying, "אל תפרוש מן הצבור" ("Do not separate yourself from the public") which is attributed to Hillel. Through a process of negation, Hillel is specifically attempting to associate and define his movement with the idea that the root פִּרַשׁ means 'to interpret' and not 'to separate'. Hillel was most likely relating this saying to counter the Zealot movement which advocated to separate from (if not eliminate the) Romanized public.

¹⁰ This is the commonly accepted academic opinion. cf. Wellhausen, J. *Pharisäer und Sadduzäer*. 1927; Klausner, J. *History of the Period of the Second Temple*. (Heb.) 1949; Finkelstein, L. *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of their Faith*. 1949. "Namely, priests called after Zaddok, the chief priest in King David's day... This is the accepted opinion (see sources listed above). Another opinion is that the Sadducees were called after Zadok, an unknown scholar who lived in the Hellenistic period and founded a new school opposed to the Pharisee doctrine... None of these theories has convincing proofs to offer, but the first at least has the advantage that it connects the Sadducee sect with the priestly class, and such a close connection did exist from Herodian times on, there being grounds for the assumption of its prior existence." Tcherikover. *Ibid.* n. 40. p. 493.

¹¹ Mansoor, M. "Sadducees" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition].

financial administration in the Persian era."¹² What ever the case, they were relied upon to be administrators of the Judean population in the Persian province and thus their power overflowed into the areas which previously, in the time of the Temple of Solomon, were balanced between the monarchy and the prophets. Without a balance of power the priests were able to exert their influence at unprecedented levels. Their consolidation of power not only included the Temple ritual but also the knowledge of the Torah. The rise of the call to spread the knowledge of Torah throughout the nation of Israel drove these Zadokites to be more and more reclusive in their belief of spiritual superiority. Only when Hellenism took hold during the late fourth and early third century did the Sadducees develop into the acculturated aristocratic group that were latter recognized as 'Sadducees' by most scholars.¹³

HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOSTERING COMMONALITY IN JUDEA

The relationship between history and the 'legitimate leadership' of the Jewish people is inseparable. The ideal biblical leadership of the Judean nation was a balance of the priestly hierarchy¹⁴ in the Temple of Solomon and the royal family, descended from King David, who was kept in check by the Prophets.¹⁵ After the return from Babylon and the rise of the Persian Empire, the priestly establishment based in the Second Temple¹⁶ arose to the sole leadership of the people¹⁷, albeit alongside what was known as the Assembly of the Great Synagogue (אנשי כנסת הגדולה)

¹² Stern, Menachem. "Priests and Priesthood" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]. cf. Ezra 2:61; Nehemiah 7:63 which mentions their participation in the early Priesthood of Persian Judea.

¹³ cf. Levine. *Ibid.* p. 198. Levine believes that the Sadducees only appeared as a result of the Jerusalem priesthood's division into three sects after the usurpation by Jason of the High Priesthood and their subsequent alliance with the ruling Hasmonean ruling power

¹⁴ Tradition held that the 'Sons of Zadok' were the sole legitimate family that could occupy the exalted position of High Priest.

¹⁵ "Each had his sphere of influence and each operated in a totally different setting: the king from his palace and through his bureaucracy, the High Priest in the Temple, and the Prophet in the market place." Levine. *Ibid.* p. 195-6.

¹⁶ The vast importance of the Temple as a common link between the Jewish people will be discussed below. Important to note at this point is how Josephus quotes the ancient Greek historian Polybius describing the Jews as a nation which dwelled around its famed Temple in Jerusalem. cf. Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews* 12:136. (note: hereon abbreviated Josephus *Ant.*).

¹⁷ "From then until the destruction of the Temple, almost six centuries later, the priesthood reigned supreme, the high priest became the religious and political leader of the people, both internally and vis-à-vis other ruling authorities." Levine. *Ibid.* p. 196.

which included another significant part of the nation, the Elders, known from Josephus Flavius as the *gerousia*¹⁸.

The institution of the Assembly of the Great Synagogue¹⁹ is of considerable importance to the overall subject of sectarianism at the start of the Second Temple Period because a select few of its members would provide for the leadership which challenged the sole authority of the priesthood.²⁰ The legitimacy behind the Great Assembly was multifold. First, it was a bridge between the ages of the First Temple and that of the Second since its initial leadership was composed of the Jewish leadership who had returned from Babylonian captivity. Second, Jewish sources²¹ maintain that the Torah²² was transmitted from the prophets to the Great Assembly. The transfer of the prophetic institution to that of the Great Assembly was an attempt to fill part of the leadership void which was caused by the absence of the Prophetic Bands²³ and the prophets themselves who could transmit the word of the Eternal directly to the people. Jewish tradition is so adamant²⁴ about the transfer of the Prophetic office to the Great Assembly that the personality of Ezra the Scribe is

¹⁸ cf. Ant. 4:186, 218, 220, 222, 324; 5:15, 103, 151; 7:294; 12:142 and 13:166. The *Gerusia*, or council of elders, are believed to have evolved in the Hellenistic fashion from the Israelite Elders, prophets and the Assembly of the Great Synagogue (for: זקני העיר cf. Deuteronomy 19:12, 21:2ff; Joshua 20:4; Judges 8:14; I Samuel 9:3; I Kings 21:8, 11; Ruth 4:2 and cf. Gafni, I. "Gerusia" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.) For the connection between the Assembly of the Great Synagogue and the Gerusia: "Perhaps out of this body [Great Synagogue] evolved the Gerousia, which is known to have existed in the time of Simeon II the Just (Jos. Ant. 12:142) and over which he probably presided." Sperber, D. "The Great Synagogue" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]. It should be noted that Gafni disagrees with this opinion strongly noting I Macc. 14:28: "At Saramel in the great congregation of the priests, and people, and rulers of the nation, and elders of the country, were these things notified unto us." Here it is made clear that the elders (Gerousia) are part of the Great Synagogue as were the priests. If, on the other hand, the early Mishnaic saying in Avot 1:1 is to be believed, Simeon the Just who was one of the last members of the Assembly was also the leader of the Gerusia. For our purposes here it is important to note their intrinsic relationship since it was these types of institutions which gave forth the alternative leadership which deserves our attention.

¹⁹ To be addressed here on as the Great Assembly.

²⁰ Even though Martin Hengel presumes that the gerousia was developed during the Ptolemaic rule of the Land of Israel in the third century while recognizing its source in Persian times, he still mentions the importance of how they *limited the authority of the High Priest*. cf. Hengel, M. *Judaism and Hellenism*. vol. 1. Philadelphia 1974. p. 25.

²¹ cf. Sayings of the Fathers (*Avot*) 1:1 and Avot de- R. Nathan 1:1:2.

²² i.e. whose knowledge of was the sign the sign of leadership when the Jewish people returned from a long Babylonian exile deprived of such teachings.

²³ cf. חבל נביאים in I Samuel 10:5,10. These groups were widespread from at least the time of Samuel until Elisha (cf. II Kings 4:1) with no indication that they did not continue until the Babylonian Exile

²⁴ The importance of declaring the cessation of prophecy in Israel (cf. Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 14a) is that the Judean leaders saw a danger in the prophetic guilds being used for political or religious purposes thus undermining their control. No longer would a prophet need to be consulted since this was to be under the control of the סופרים. cf. Zeitlin. *Ibid.* p. 31.

attributed to the prophet Malachi.²⁵ The final pillar of legitimacy which the Great Assembly relied upon was the fact that it embodied the trade of the סופרים²⁶ who, during the Persian period, were responsible for the canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The סופרים have a long history going back to pre-exilic times where scribal schools in the Temple and probably throughout the country served primarily to instruct suitable priests and Levites, who would in turn instruct the people in the law on the pilgrimages to Jerusalem and who had to make legal judgments also on the basis of law and the legal tradition.²⁷ One of the only institutions which did not change significantly was that of the scribal trade. Because of the centrality of the Temple in Judean life as the national cultural center before and after the Exile, the scribes held onto their legitimacy by being a stronghold of the old national language and tradition. The scribes were the impenetrable centers of tradition whose necessity would only begin to blossom during the unstable time after the return from the Babylonian exile.

"The era of the סופרים of the Talmud commenced in the time of Ezra and continued until the time of Simeon the Just, who was the last of the men of the Great Synagogue. These scribes, whose names are not known and who were active during the time of the Persian rule, laid the foundations of the Oral Law: they instituted regulations in the social and religious spheres, explained to the people the Torah and its precepts 'distinctly and gave the sense' (Nehemiah 8:8). They taught the halakhot and the traditions in close connection with the study of the Bible and deduced new halakhot through the interpretation of the written text. They read the Written Law, interpreted its content, and integrated into it the traditional halakhot as well as the laws that had been derived from it. As a result of the activities of the soferim the Torah ceased to be the heritage of the priests and Levites alone. From among the many pupils they educated, scholars arose from all classes... [T]he soferim [are thought] to be the founders and members of the Great Synagogue."²⁸

It is the סופרים whose religion was not constricted to the Temple but instead to the Torah, which defined the core ideology of the Pharisee sect. Combined with the separatist ideology inherent in the Jewish people and the nationalist tendencies which lay dormant during the Persian era after the failed aspirations of Zerubabel, factions of

²⁵ cf. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot 82b which cites from the problematic source, Seder Olam, a work which is ascribed to the second century C.E. Tanna Yose b. Halfta. cf. Leviticus Rabbah 2:11 where "Ezra and his companions" are mentioned, while the parallel text in Song of Songs Rabba to Song 7:14 speaks only of the "Men of the Great Synagogue". cf. Sperber, D. *Ibid.*

²⁶ "Although the word סופרים is identical with the biblical word translated 'scribes' and dealt with under that heading, during the Second Temple period the word came to denote a specific class of scholars. The exact meaning and delineation of the group involved is a matter of controversy." Dov Gilat, Y. "Sofrim" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]. Midrash Tanhuma says: "[T]he men of the Great Synagogue altered these verses. And that is why they were called סופרים, because they counted [סופר] all the letters of the Bible and expounded them."

²⁷ Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 78.

²⁸ Dov Gilat, Y. "Sofrim" *Ibid.*

the Great Assembly were beginning to consolidate their ideology into what would be later known as the Hassideans, who conservative scholars such as Menachem Mansoor would attribute to being the forerunners of the Pharisees.²⁹ In other words, Tcherikover says, "it was natural for this [סופרים] intelligentsia engaged permanently and professionally in questions of law and justice, customs, religion and observance to *acquire a certain ideology*, it is not surprising to find a special sect among the scribes, the sect of the Hasidim, who constituted its external expression."³⁰ What was needed was an external threat which could unify them with the masses at large against the aristocratic priesthood³¹. As long as the priesthood observed the Torah commandments, these scholars could not become the ideological exemplar they sought out to become.

ON THE HELLENIZATION OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

This threat was to present itself during the beginning of the fourth century as the Persian Empire declined and the Aegean forces raised the cultural banner of Hellenism to unify their colonies against their mutual enemy.³² The Hellenization of the Land of Israel was a gradual process whose influence, in terms of trade, had begun

²⁹ Mansoor, M. "Hassideans" in: Encyclopaedia Judaica. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]. Also cf. Finkelstein, L. *The Pharisees*. Philadelphia 1938. The commonly accepted conservative theory of origin of the Pharisees is difficult to accept since there is no explanation, from the texts or otherwise, that the Pharisees would have left the Hassideans. "No group which endured for so long a period as the Pharisees could have come into existence through the mere whim of a person or group of persons. There must have been some profound cause, religious or socioeconomic, which brought about the genesis of such a group." Zeitlin. *Ibid.* p. 11. If we are to criticize Zeitlin's assumption that פרוש does not mean 'separate' but instead 'interpretation', Zeitlin responds by saying, "There is no foundation for this view. The term פרושים in the sense of party, group, or philosophy is not found anywhere in Tannaitic literature. If indeed the name פרושים was adopted by a certain group because they interpreted the words of the Torah, their name would appear in Tannaitic literature, since that literature was produce by them. We frequently find the expression, 'the sages said' or 'the sayings of the סופרים, but we never find the expression, 'the פרושים said' or 'the sayings of the פרושים.'" Zeitlin. *Ibid.* p. 444f. The methodological problems raised by Zeitlin's reliance on later texts are problematic, but his focus on definitions is of untold importance.

³⁰ Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 125.

³¹ "Presumably, the opposition between the priests and the scribes arose initially not from the fact that the priests recognized the written word only, while the scribes interpreted it and made a number of new laws..., but from the readiness of the priests to be satisfied with a brief official interpretation, while the scribes carried out a profounder investigation, extending it to every sphere of public life; the scribal interpretations later became inestimably richer and deeper than those of the priests, till the official interpretations lost all importance. Possibly the new scribal interpretations were delivered in the earliest synagogues which had for the first time risen and spread in Judea, and thus created the important opposition between the Temple and the Synagogue." Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 125. Tcherikover's point further supports Zeitlin's conclusion that the Zadokites created the name of פרושים for the Pharisees. It is very feasible to see how the Zadokites would have come to the conclusion that the "rebel" leadership were setting up the offensive "high places" which had been Josiah's (and the Deuteronomist's) goal to destroy at the end of the seventh century B.C.E.

³² "It has to be remembered that the Hellenistic period was in the making throughout the fourth century, and that the Greek cultural influence was visible in the East, above all in Phoenicia and Egypt, even before Alexander's expeditions." Hengel, M. *Ibid.* p. 25.

well over a thousand years previously. The coastland of the Land of Israel had had trade connections since the second millennium over the sea with Cyprus and the islands of the Aegean. During the seventh century B.C.E., Greek mercenaries fought in the battles of various kings in the Near East and brought their culture with them. Their connections encouraged Greek merchants who brought their famed goods which resulted in the continual presence of Greek coins from the sixth century B.C.E. onwards. Most importantly to mention is that the Phoenicians were the mediators of this Greek culture for the inhabitants of the Land of Israel during the pre-Hellenistic period and they exemplified Hellenism from the start.³³ Supposing that Judea had a tradition of *separating* themselves from the gentiles of the land³⁴, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that Hellenism was not seen positively from the start. But this is too much of a generalization since in the Jewish nation there has always been an element which seeks to break the chains of tradition in order to become one with the world. From the regionalist polytheism supported by Omri³⁵ (882 – 871 B.C.E.) to the modern day, Jews have attempted to acculturate themselves so that the nations would accept them. The Jewish reaction to this tendency is what helped crystallize the sectarian movements of interest to this period in particular.

The difference between previous ages and what was transpiring during the fourth century B.C.E. was that Judean nationalism was virtually non-existent as a political factor and the patron of Hellenism, Greece, was on a rise to become the dominant culture of the Near East. When Alexander the Great arrived in the Land of Israel in 332 B.C.E. conquering it from the Persian Empire it was the source of

³³ For all of the Greek influences during the pre-Hellenistic period mentioned above see: Hengel, M. *Ibid.* pp. 32-35. Also: "Hellenism had been gradually penetrating the Near East for decades before the triumph of Alexander. But the Jews of Jerusalem had probably had little direct contact with the Greeks: such elements of Hellenistic culture as did come their way had usually been mediated through the coastal cities of Phoenicia which could translate it into a more familiar idiom." Armstrong, K. *Jerusalem*. New York 1996, p. 103.

³⁴ The motif of separation from the gentiles continued into this period according to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, cf. Ezra 10:18-44.

³⁵ "...[T]he politico-economic alliance with Phoenicia had far-reaching results in cultural, religious, and social spheres—the cult of the Tyrian Baal took root among the royal courtiers, royal officers, and the urban population. The economic prosperity was not felt equally by all groups of the population, and thus the economic rift in Israelite society was widened. The increasing sway of the foreign cults on the one hand, and the social oppression on the other, caused the formation of a strong opposition movement to Omri and his house, at the head of which stood the prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, and those who had remained faithful to the Lord." Oded, B. "Omri" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]. **It is interesting to note that the traditional masses led by the prophetic movement provide an accurate model for the sectarian movement which would arise to counter the assimilationalist tendencies which transpired as a reaction to Hellenism.**

legends. Josephus Flavius' record of the legend³⁶, which has an unlikely dialogue occur between Alexander and the High Priest Jaddua, illustrates the complexity of the initial Judean response to Hellenism. The traditional Judeans instinctively recoiled from the Greek culture they had interacted with earlier on behalf of the gentiles of the land, while others "found Hellenism congenial and saw it as profoundly sympathetic to their own traditions. It is this struggle between these opposing factions that would dominate the [sectarian] history of Judea for nearly three hundred years."³⁷

During the wars of the Diadochoi (323 – 301 B.C.E.), the relative isolation Judea had enjoyed as a fringe province of the Persian Empire came to an end.³⁸ During the six vicious invasions by Hellenistic armies fighting against one another, the Judeans first experienced Hellenism as militaristic, destructive and most importantly opportunistic. From the start, the various inheritors of Alexander's newly founded kingdom would use the population against one another to gain a stronger foothold into the strategic area the Land of Israel had become. When Ptolemy I finally obtained control of the area at the start of the third century B.C.E., Hellenism became the dominant cultural force, not imposed, but supported by the ruling power. In a way it affirmed and supported those elements in Judean society supporting Hellenistic acculturation and isolated those elements which opposed Greek culture. "The Greeks were interested not only in military victories, political expansion and economic gain; they were also committed to disseminating their way of life, their institutions, norms and ideas, to the world of the barbarians (as they called non-Greeks)."³⁹ The imposition of Hellenism as a social ideology for political ends was something which had never been encountered before by the Judeans and they were not prepared for its subsequent implications upon their own separatist traditions. During the rise of the Ptolemaic Empire, the Polis continued to function as the most effective means by which Hellenism was propagated in new regions. Being a citizen of a Polis became the only way to prosper and succeed in the "new world" which had been suddenly forced on the Land of Israel. Parallel to the cultural change was the introduction of polytheism in the Land of Israel through the Polis which encouraged

³⁶ cf. Antiquities 11:7

³⁷ Armstrong. *Ibid.* p. 103.

³⁸ "Either factor – exposure to Hellenistic culture or geographic centrality – would have been unsettling under any circumstances. But for the Jews of Judea, these factors were wrenching, because in the centuries immediately preceding the conquest, these Jews had lived in a kind of splendid isolation." Levine. *Ibid.* p. 179.

³⁹ Levine. *Ibid.* p. 177.

adherence on behalf of the cities members. By the last quarter of the third century B.C.E. the Polis was found along the Mediterranean Coast, Bet-Shean, Samaria and Transjordan. "These cities served as centers of Greek life and influence and reinforced one another through joint commercial, cultural and athletic enterprises."⁴⁰

ACCESSING THE JEWISH REACTION TO HELLENISM

The סופרים, as exemplars of tradition, were the first to provide the possibility of offering effective opposition to the increasing danger of Hellenistic intrusion.⁴¹ The fertile ground which they provided for reactionary beliefs was the source of anti-Hellenist feelings emerging on behalf of the masses that saw an intrusion of a foreign culture in their homeland. The members of the Great Assembly picked up on this and came to the conclusion that Hellenism as a cultural movement could be offset only by a strong educational effort among the masses.⁴² The motive to educate the masses is what characterized the proto-Pharisee movement which solidified into a movement called the Hassideans. Hengel believes that this new program of education on behalf of the Scribes was exclusive and status conscious, therefore different from that which was passed down by the pre-Maccabean Hassideans.⁴³ As long as the scribes were under the influence of the official priesthood, this was true, but when the aristocracy became more associated with Hellenist culture, the more the masses reacted by accepting Jewish traditions once again upon themselves. The social fabric of Judea began to unravel into the two threads which composed it, the aristocratic official Priesthood (i.e. Zadokites) whose Hellenistic character defined it more and more every day and the masses who were led by a reactionary traditional leadership willing to make sacrifices to see their way of life preserved.

THE SADDUCCEES AND THE JUDEAN ARISTOCRACY

The complete assimilation of Judaism into the Hellenistic environment would be a direct goal of the Jewish aristocracy whose legitimacy and support was obtained from the priesthood in the Temple.⁴⁴ Tcherikover puts it best when he says: "It must

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 178.

⁴¹ Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 78.

⁴² Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 79.

⁴³ cf. Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 79-80.

⁴⁴ "The social basis of this party is fairly obvious. On several occasions Josephus mentions that only the wealthy and aristocratic followed them, while the Book of Enoch also emphasizes their great wealth. Thus, they were great landowners, the priests, the courtiers and men of similar standing. No wonder that they supported foreign conquests, for the development of the state, the expansion of its frontiers, the capture of the seacoast which opened the way to trade, warfare itself, all brought substantial profit to the wealthy aristocratic class." Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 261.

be admitted that the Sadducees were Hellenists, even extreme Hellenists".⁴⁵ The aristocratic political aim of unifying their goals with that of Hellenism was because once the Greek polis was founded in Jerusalem the privileges of the aristocrats would be strengthened and their opponents who challenged their authority from conservative circles would be finally disfranchised.⁴⁶

"Interest in Hellenistic civilization, however, remained predominantly limited to the well-to-do aristocracy in Jerusalem. Intensive economic exploitation and the social unconcernedness of the new masters and their imitators, who were concerned purely with economics, only served to exacerbate the situation of the lower strata of the population. It prepared the ground for apocalyptic speculation and the later revolts, which had increasingly strong social elements... Even the milieu of the parables of Jesus, with its great landowners, tax farmers, administrators, moneylenders, day-laborers and customs officials, with speculation in grain, slavery for debt and the leasing of land, can only be understood on the basis of economic conditions brought about by Hellenism in [the land of Israel]."⁴⁷

The aristocratic and official priesthood's policy of self-preservation would be the core ideology that gave forth the proper Sadducee⁴⁸ movement. Reviewing fifty years of Judean history from 225 – 175 B.C.E. will reveal how the self preservation of the Judean aristocrats brought about the Hellenistic persecutions which came close to destroying the Jewish religion as a whole. The decline of the High Priesthood in Judea can be traced to the personality of Onias II the son of the famed Simeon the Just. Onias II did not have the opportunity to gain the piety of his father since his father died when he was young. Josephus reports that, "Onias was one of a little soul, and a great lover of money; and for that reason, because he did not pay that tax of twenty talents of silver, which his forefathers paid to these kings out of their own estates, he provoked King Ptolemy Euergetes to anger..."⁴⁹ It would appear that the truth of this matter was deeper and Onias II may have had the foresight to see that Ptolemaic rule in Judea was soon coming to a close based on the war between Ptolemy III (Euergetes I) and Queen Laodice, the wife and murderess of Antiochus II Theos. Seeing an opportunity to end the personal tax his house was obligated to pay and to gain the political advantages from allying with the enemies of Ptolemaic Egypt,

⁴⁵ Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 262. Tcherikover notes that this policy fluctuated with various levels of respect on behalf of the Mosaic Law but this was only done for interests of self preservation or as Tcherikover says: "The positive attitude of the Sadducees to the Mosaic Law rose, not from any special religious feeling, but from political opposition to the legislative activity of the Pharisees." Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 264.

⁴⁶ cf. Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 103.

⁴⁷ cf. Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 56.

⁴⁸ Here, I purposefully have used 'Sadducee' instead of 'Zadokite' to indicate that this was the point of formal transition from one movement to the next.

⁴⁹ Antiquities 12:158.

he was ready to sacrifice the Jews and have Ptolemy threaten to drive them from their land if the tax was not paid. This in turn led to the rise of the Tobiads under Joseph son of the Toubias known to us from the Zeno papyri as an aristocratic land-owning priest. Joseph, a loyal to the Ptolemaic court, was not only able to change Ptolemy Euergetes' mind, but also have himself appointed as chief tax collector, one of the most powerful positions in Judea. This power was so great that a few generations later the Tobiads, as extreme Hellenists, were able to support and see to the rise of Menelaus whose policies would pave the way for the Hellenistic persecution.

At the start of the second century B.C.E., Judea was 'liberated' by the Seleucids under Antiochus III who had become disenchanted with Ptolemaic rule. Due to the Judean support for his victory, Antiochus III issued them numerous benefits to them, most importantly 'katF to`j patriouj nomouj', or the members of the nation to have a form of government in accordance with the laws of their country. This benefit was most likely a closely worded compromise between the priests who wished to remain influential in the government and the conservative circles who wished to see the province live according to the 'laws of their country'. But these benefits would be short lived since the victories of Antiochus brought him to the attention of the Romans who were advancing through Greece. In 190 Antiochus suffered his greatest defeat near Magnesia and was forced into a degrading settlement by the victorious Romans called the Treaty of Apamea. A heavy financial burden was placed upon the Seleucids and they now found themselves compelled to raise money from every source throughout their kingdom.

It was in this hostile environment the priestly aristocracy would seek to advance at any cost in Judean society. Simeon, an important official in the administration of the Temple, demanded from Onias III the High Priest, the post of *Agoranomos* or 'Market Commissioner', "which Onias refused because the *Agoranomos*, by virtue of his control over such things as the market, the price of goods, and employment, in effect exercised all real authority in the city. When his demand was rejected, Simeon turned to Apollonis, the commander of the Syrian Army, and told him that vast treasures belonging to the king were preserved in the Temple vaults."⁵⁰ It was only because of such treachery that Seleucus IV sought to plunder the Temple treasuries, an act which, though not directly aimed at the Jewish

⁵⁰ ed. Wigoder, G. "Onias" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition]

religion, must be regarded as the first stage in the conflict between the Jews and the Seleucid kingdom.⁵¹ When Seleucus' chancellor, Heliodorus was miraculously prevented from taking the Temple treasures, Onias III was hated among the kingdom. One of the first actions which Antiochus IV Epiphanes undertook after the assassination of his brother was to summon Onias III to Antioch and appoint his brother Jason in his place who promised to raise the needed funds for the appeasement of Rome. Assimilating Judea into the Hellenistic environment by converting Jerusalem into a polis was a necessary step for convincing the people that their Temple treasures were better in the hands of their foreign occupier than for performing 'outdated rituals'. So in 175 B.C.E. Jason's oversaw the construction of a gymnasium in Jerusalem to start the transformation of Jerusalem into the polis of Antiochia.

HELLENISTIC PERSECUTION AND ITS REACTION AMONGST THE JEWS

The Hellenization of the Judean people had reached its climax with the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BCE. It must be remembered that Antiochus⁵² did not begin the process which led to this event but "had merely come to Judea when he found the way was prepared for him by the Jews themselves."⁵³ This event revived the zealotry of the Jewish people which was once exemplified in Pinchas the Priest⁵⁴ and Elijah the Prophet⁵⁵. The biblical zealotry, defined as 'zeal for the Law of Moses' and 'keeping of the covenant of Sinai', became the rallying cry of Mattathias, the patriarch of the Hasmoneans, who executed the Seleucid royal commissioner and, with him, the collaborating Jew, willing to follow instructions forbidding the practice of Judaism on an altar in Modein. The first Book of Maccabees⁵⁶ describes the Jewish apostate's offence in terms of 'forsaking the law and customs of the Forefathers' and no longer 'keeping the Covenant of the First' – a language pervasive at Qumran and echoed, sometimes polemically, in the Christian Testament. The Hasmonean revolt would also set a precedent, and even an ideal, for the latter Zealots to try and attain.

⁵¹ Stern, M. "History: Second Temple Period (The Hellenistic-Roman Period)" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition].

⁵² A case can even be built for Antiochus IV Epiphanes that he would not have called for the Hellenistic persecutions had it not been for the political and regional circumstances which forced him to do so as a result of the Treaty of Apamea.

⁵³ Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 117-8.

⁵⁴ cf. Numbers 25:6ff.

⁵⁵ cf. I Kings 19:10, 14 – "I have been moved by zeal for the Lord, the Almighty of Hosts."

⁵⁶ cf. I Maccabees 2:19-28.

The revived zealotry was not born into a vacuum; instead it was being studied and preserved by a group of the faithful who were waiting for a leader to emerge. Matthias' call to battle preserved in the first Book of the Maccabees 2:41 was enough to rally them to battle: "Then came unto [Matthias] a συναγωγή Ἀσιδαίων who were mighty men of Israel even all such as were voluntarily devoted unto the law."⁵⁷ The identification of the origins of the συναγωγή Ἀσιδαίων or 'assembly of the pious', is difficult since their first mention is in this passage. This does not prevent scholars like Tcherikover from speculating that they were first organized under Simon the Just at the beginning of the second century B.C.E.⁵⁸ It has been convincingly demonstrated by other scholars like L. Finkelstein that the Hassideans have a much longer history going back to the start of the post exilic period.⁵⁹ The intrinsic connection that Finkelstein and Plöger see between the Hassideans and groups in the earlier period is what I termed above as the Proto-Pharisees.⁶⁰ The common value attached by this early group to eschatological and prophetic traditions defined their religious beliefs, but they lacked a solid leadership which was only to be provided later by the Hasmoneans.⁶¹ What ever the case, it was they who passed on the law, preserved by the סופרים and the Great Assembly, to the Pharisees and Essenes⁶². "The Hassideans are looked to as the common root of the two most significant religious groups of post-biblical Judaism, the Essenes ... and the Pharisees."⁶³ It is not proper to assume that the Hellenistic persecutions which unified the Hassideans in battle are what kept them together after the victory. They were most likely composed of various traditional factions whose leadership was varied. One of the important connection between the Hassideans and the Essenes is philological in its core both

⁵⁷ I Maccabees 2:42.

⁵⁸ cf. Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 125.

⁵⁹ Finkelstein, L. *The Pharisees*. vol. 2. 1962. p. 980.

⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that Hengel does the same with the Hassideans when he says that, "the term 'Hassidean' calls for a differentiation, as is shown by the distinction between 'early Hassideans' and 'New Hasidim', which is not explained further. There is hardly a difference between the 'pious of the early period' and the later Pharisaic party." Hengel. *Ibid.* vol. 2. n. 462. p. 118.

⁶¹ "Whereas from the middle of the third century B.C.E. a large part of the priestly upper class and the lay nobility fell victim more and more to Hellenistic assimilation... these groups, hitherto only loosely associated, developed ideas which then suddenly came to light in the period of persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes." Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 176.

⁶² "The scribal class, chiefly represented by the Hasidic sect, was elevated to a position of authority in every manner of law and justice, and thus became part of the ruling group in the Jewish theocracy" Tcherikover. *Ibid.* p. 126. "If the Essene sect and the Dead Sea Sect constituted late stages of the development of the same Hasidic group, there are grounds for assuming that some of the customs known to us from these late sects already existed among the Hassideans." Tcherikover. *Ibid.* n. 21. p. 457.

⁶³ Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 176.

relating to the word 'pious'.⁶⁴ The Damascus Document makes reference to a distinct charismatic leader called the 'Teacher of Righteousness' who is chronologically linked to the period of the Hassideans.⁶⁵ It is most likely that the Teacher of Righteousness was a traditional member of the High Priest's family and was therefore able to gather around himself a significant following.⁶⁶

When the revolt led by the Hasmonean "low" priestly family succeeded, the leaders initially bore the title of 'Judge'⁶⁷; but in 152 B.C.E. this changed when Alexander Balas allowed him to take up the title of High Priest among many other honors⁶⁸. This brought about a clear division⁶⁹ of the Judean religious (i.e. religious) population⁷⁰ into three sects, the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Essenes.⁷¹ The increased Hellenization of the Hasmonean court, the continued threat from the Seleucid Empire⁷² and the wealth of the Priesthood led to further legitimization of the way of the Teacher of Righteousness⁷³ and the resurgence of the anti-Hellenistic extremism in the Pharisee and Essene sects. There was a long term two fold reaction to these historical events. First was the anti-Hellenistic ideology being translated into

⁶⁴ "The name of the Essenes and the history of their origins could give us a hint here. Their designation probably comes from the Aramaic equivalent to the Hebrew חסיד, pious which is חסא, absolute plural חסין, which in Greek is Ἐσσηνοί or determinative plural חסייא, which in Greek is Ἐσσηαίοι, a hypothesis which is strengthened by Philo's translation of Ἐσσηαίοι as οἱ ἱεροὶ and the fragment of a letter from the time of Bar Kochva, which probably calls the camp at Qumran מצד חסידין or 'fortress of the faithful'." Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 175.

⁶⁵ "...For twenty years they were like blind men groping for the war. And Yah observed their deeds, that they sought Him with a whole heart, and He raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart." CD 1:5-11. The Damascus Document speaks of 390 years after Nebuchadnezzar exiled the Judeans (i.e. 196 B.C.E.) as being the start of the twenty years under discussion. That means that the Teacher of Righteousness arose in 176 B.C.E.

⁶⁶ "The strong stress which appears a number of times on the בני צדוק as the leading group of the Essene movement with its strictly arranged hierarchy also suggests that the leader himself belonged to the Zadokite priestly nobility." Hengel. *Ibid.* p. 224.

⁶⁷ cf. I Maccabees 9:73 and note 150 in: Hengel, M. *Judaism and Hellenism*. vol. 2. Philadelphia 1974. p. 150.

⁶⁸ cf. I Maccabees 10:20, 59-65, 88.

⁶⁹ It is somewhat clear that this division was in the process beforehand and that the crisis only hit a boiling point with the rise of Jonathan to the High Priesthood. The scribal scholars who represented only part of the Hassidean sect held strictly to their traditions (i.e. Oral Torah) which the priestly sect did not take as seriously as the aristocratic priesthood whose beliefs centered on the cultic service in the Second Temple. The Hellenization of the priesthood also led to such priests like the Teacher of Righteousness towards sectarian beliefs, but did not lead him to leave the Temple until after Jonathan rose to power. cf. Hengel, M. *Ibid.* p.251.

⁷⁰ It should be noted that some scholars group the Judean religious population of the early second century B.C.E. under the title of the Hassideans cf. Hengel, M. *Ibid.* p.251. "Because of their meticulous observances the Hassideans have been linked with the Essenes, but scholarly consensus places them as the spiritual forerunners of the Pharisees." Mansoor, M. "Hassideans". *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. *Ibid.*

⁷¹ cf. Josephus Flavius. *Ant.* 13:171.

⁷² Culminating in Antiochus VII Sidetes' successful siege of Jerusalem in 135/4 B.C.E.

⁷³ "The Teacher of Righteousness essentially was able to forecast the course of the Hasmonean dynasty. Its power politics removed it from rigorous obedience to the law and exposed it and the leading strata once again to the seductions of their Hellenistic environment." Hengel, M. *Ibid.* p. 226.

an extreme xenophobic hatred of assimilated Jews and their Gentile sponsors (i.e. especially the Greco-Romans). The second was the beginnings of the polemic between the rich aristocratic priests and the poor priests supported by the increasingly discontent masses. Both of these reactions would define the commonality among the traditional population whose grouping into sects was as a result of different approaches to finding a solution for the problem of the Hellenist threat to the Judean nation which was forever scared by the communal memory of Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the Jews who had betrayed them.

ON THE FORMATION OF THE *zhlwthj* a.k.a. *lhstai* a.k.a. *sikarioi*

The Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. brought about the effective end to Jewish independence, save for the few years of the Jewish War over a hundred years later. A possible early fusion of Zealot beliefs can be seen in the "non-canonical Psalms of Solomon which are generally attributed to the period of Pompey's capture of the city where this event is described. Pompey is regarded as the 'alien to our race' and rod of the Lord's wrath against Hasmonean usurpation of the Davidic Throne."⁷⁴ Religiously zealous priests occupied themselves with the daily sacrifices as the Roman soldiers slaughtered them like the sheep being offered in the Temple. Further support for the cause came from the Hasmonean Army who were loyal to Judah Aristobulus II⁷⁵ and had to watch their supreme leader be carried off in chains to the Roman Empire. The Jews became tributaries to the Roman Empire and Hyrcanus II's sole political power lay in his responsibility for levying the tribute. It can be supposed that the concept of levying tribute for the Roman Empire and the subsequent population censuses required to make it happen, were bones of contention for the Jewish people who helped to support the formative Zealot movement. As Hyrcanus II lost political power to others another 'infamous tax collector' came to power by the name of Antipater II. Antipater II had a history of supporting the victor, Hasmonean or otherwise. He threw his weight behind the Roman governor Gabinus and as a reward was given the position of 'agent' or 'overseer' of the taxes in Judea. A major turning point, which would cause the downfall of the Hasmonean dynasty and the rise of Antipater II's was in 47 B.C.E. when Caesar went to Syria and appointed Antipater regent of Judea and formally rejected Matthatias Antigonus' claims to the throne of his fathers.

⁷⁴ Solomon, D. "Pompey" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ibid.

⁷⁵ Rappaport, U. "Hyrcanus II" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ibid.

The instability caused by the Roman invasion of Judea allowed rebellious personalities to gain prominence such as Hezekiah, the father of the Zealot Movement. It is believed that Hezekiah came from a distinguished family which was comprised of scholars⁷⁶, as can be inferred from how his son Judah was called *sophistes* ("a scholar")⁷⁷. Hezekiah was most likely a military officer of Judah Aristobolus' army who was discontent with the subjugation of Judea to the Roman Empire⁷⁸. Believing that there was no legitimacy to the rule of Hyrcanus II, Hezekiah took it upon himself to conduct a stubborn war against supporters of the Roman government and see to the indoctrination of his supporters that they would carry on the struggle until it was won. He led teams of guerilla fighters in their expropriation of gentile towns on the Syrian border using violence as a tactical way to instill fear in his enemies. This earned him the honor of being called *archilistes* by Josephus Flavius.⁷⁹ It very well could be that Hezekiah was a 'Robin Hood' of sorts ensuring the honor of the Judean people in the Galilee. Whatever the case, when he was executed in 46 B.C.E. by the young Herod, who was appointed military governor of the Galilee, he created not only a martyr for the movement but also a pretext for rebellion. The Galilee and even the nobility in Jerusalem were rife with anger because of the execution and demanded that Herod be put to trial. When this failed and Herod continued on his rise to power on behalf of the Roman Empire, it became evident that the formative Zealot movement had found its arch-enemy.

In 40 B.C.E., hope returned to the Zealot cause with the invasion of the Parthian Army under the seemingly⁸⁰ messianic leadership of Mattathias Antigonus who, just a decade previously, was denied his 'rightful' claim to the throne. Many Jews from within Israel and in the Diaspora rallied to his army. Herod, on the other hand, was

⁷⁶ As will be seen throughout this paper, "intellectuals such as teachers and priests, either as individuals or as leaders of larger groups of people, have often been in the forefront of resistance against oppression and the exercise of violence by illegitimate authority. This has been true especially when domestic oppression and or foreign domination have threatened the traditional way of life of which intellectuals see themselves as the representatives or guardians. This is certainly true of Jewish history in the late second Temple period: much of the sustained opposition to Herodian and Roman rule came from groups of intellectuals." Horsley, R.A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*. San Francisco 1987. p. 62. It is important to pay attention to the fact that scholarly knowledge was a unifying characteristic of leadership for the Essenes (i.e. the Teacher of Righteousness), the Zealots, the Pharisees (i.e. their Rabbinic leadership) and later the Christians with Jesus's scholarly aptitude in the face of his opponents.

⁷⁷ cf. Josephus Flavius. *Wars of the Jews* 2:447. (Hereon abbreviated Josephus *Wars*)

⁷⁸ cf. Schalit, A. "Hezekiah the Zealot" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ibid.

⁷⁹ Josephus. *Wars* 1:204.

⁸⁰ It is clear that Mattathias Antigonus was not the leader of the Parthian Army, but to the Jews it encouraged their messianic fervor, or in other words, their search for a nationalist leader.

up to his own political machinations in Rome gaining the support of Antony and Octavian. In a desire to raise Herod's prestige to that of Antigonus, he was given the title of king. With the help of the Roman legions he recaptured the Land of Israel and ushered in his rule, which, in the eyes of the majority of observant Jews was considered illegitimate.⁸¹ Herod's conquest of Judea caused the end of the old Hasmonean institutions of power including the Sanhedrin⁸² (which was divested of all political power) and the High Priesthood (who was appointed by Herod himself). As far away as the upper echelon of the Priesthood was from the people during the Hasmonean dynasty, now under Herod, it was to be torn from the roots. In 36 B.C.E. his wife Mariamme's younger brother, Jonathan, the last surviving Hasmonean, donned the High Priestly vestments on his thirteenth birthday and the Jewish crowd wept in awe. Herod saw Jonathan as such a threat that he personally ordered his execution. Herod "incurred the wrath of those loyal to the Torah and pledged to national independence; during his time the foundations were already laid for the spiritual climate which was to give rise to the sect of Zealots who opposed all foreign rule and any authority except that of the kingdom of heaven."⁸³ According to many of the disenchanted Judeans, by this time, the rule of Herod was synonymous with that of Rome. In 4 B.C.E. as Herod I was dying, two Pharisaic scholars⁸⁴, Judah b. Zippori and Mattathias b. Margalit, incited their followers to remove the Roman Imperial golden eagle from the façade of the Holy Temple. Just as Herod had made a martyr of Hezekiah at the beginning of his reign, so to did he end his reign by burning these two martyrs. These three figures would be held as legendary banners of the Zealot movement.

Herod's heir was Archelaus, who attempted to rule as ethnarch of Judea from 4 B.C.E. until 6 C.E. Since Herod's last will and testament required the confirmation of Emperor Augustus, Archelaus prepared to set out for Rome immediately after the period of mourning for his father had ended. He was delayed by representatives of the

⁸¹ It should be note that according to Jewish law Herod was a full Jew (being the grandson of an Edomite proselyte), although he was not qualified to rule since he was not of the seed of King David, the traditional house from which the Judean kings were supposed to have descended. cf. Applebaum, "Herod I". *Ibid.* 1997.

⁸² The Sanhedrin is believed by most scholars to be the final development of the gerousia described above.

⁸³ Applebaum, S. "Herod I" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ "During his reign his opponents did not dare oppose him openly, but when he was dying two Pharisaic scholars, Judah b. Zippori and Mattathias b. Margalit, incited their followers to remove the golden eagle from the facade of the Temple; Herod's last act was to order that the perpetrators of this deed be seized and burned to death." Applebaum. *Ibid.* also: cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 17:149

people who demanded relief from the heavy burden of taxation imposed by Herod. As Archelaus attempted to postpone the issue, the imperial procurator Sabinus arrived to secure Herod's very considerable property, presumably for the emperor.⁸⁵ In reaction to what was perceived as an immediate threat to the independence of the nation, the Zealots appeared and decreed mourning for the martyrs who had been executed by Herod and brusquely told Sabinus, "not to stand in the way of men who after such a lapse of time were on the road to recovering their national independence".⁸⁶ They presented three demands to Archelaus which was in effect a declaration of principles for the Zealot movement. First, they demanded the punishment of Herod's advisors (i.e. collaborators) who had caused the death of these scholars. Their second demand was for the replacement of the illegitimate high priest Joezer b. Boethus. And finally they demanded the expulsion of the Greek officials from the royal court. Illustrated here are the foundational concepts of the Zealot movement. First is the punishment of collaborators, second is the legitimacy of the office of the High Priest and finally is the final elimination of Hellenistic influences upon the Judean government. These three concerns were not only at the forefront of the extremists' minds but also the desire of most of the masses.⁸⁷ It was at this time that Judah, the son of the aforementioned Hezekiah rose to power. Judah broke into the Herodian palace at Sepphoris in the Galilee and expropriated the weapons stored there. This action caused him to be greatly feared and admired even leading Judah to aspire to royalty.⁸⁸ It was only when Quintilius Varus, the governor of Syria, arrived with two legions that the uprising was suppressed. The punishment for this uprising would scar the Galilean population for years to come. According to Josephus⁸⁹, two thousand rebels and their sympathizers were crucified. It should be mentioned that

⁸⁵ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 17:219-227.

⁸⁶ cf. Josephus. *War.* 2:53. "The implication of this statement is that the Jews were now seeking national independence, having lost it during the reign of Herod. This interpretation of Herod's rule very probably represented the Jewish mind at this juncture; but it is likely that 'national independence' denotes an ideal, stemming from a cherished tradition of the heroic days of King David and the Maccabees." Brandon, S. *Jesus and the Zealots*. New York 1967. p. 27.

⁸⁷ "The conflict... was not limited to certain places or classes of society; clashes occurred everywhere, and, since politics and religion were essentially one for a people who deemed themselves a holy nation, the issue concerned every Jew, and none who was loyal to his ancestral faith could insulate himself from it. Moreover, since Josephus records the name of no leader of the Jewish insurgents on this occasion at Jerusalem, it would seem that the revolt was inspired by a commonly shared ideal, which must have derived from the national belief that Israel must be autonomous in order to serve [Jah], its divine sovereign Lord." Brandon, S. *Ibid.* pp. 26-27.

⁸⁸ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 17:272.

⁸⁹ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 17:295; *War* 2:75.

the Gospel of Matthew relates that Jesus was a young child when all of this happened, and was perhaps in Egypt.

"However, the memory of those two thousand crucifixions must often have been recalled with deep emotion by those among whom his boyhood was spent; doubtless also, when taken to Jerusalem, he saw the burnt out porticoes of the Temple and heard of the Roman fury that had destroyed them. If Jesus had been born before the death of Herod in 4 B.C.E., he would certainly have been old enough to be aware of the events which convulsed Jewish life in 6 C.E.".

Between 4 B.C.E. and 6 C.E., Judah the Galilean and Zadok the Pharisee used the eerie peace after the conflict with Varus to consolidate their movement which Josephus calls the Fourth Philosophy.⁹⁰ Archelaus, now only an ethnarch, suppressed rebellious elements in the country with the utmost cruelty and brutality. As if he could not cause any more discontent, he desecrated the holy office of the High Priest by appointing his brother Eliezer in place of Joezer.⁹¹ He also illegally married Glaphyra, the widow of his stepbrother Alexander, by whom she had had children. Finally in 6 C.E., a delegation of Jews made complained to Augustus and Archelaus was exiled to Vienne in Gaul. The consequence of Archelaus' dismissal was that the administrative control of Judea would fall completely under Roman control. For the purposes of establishing effective control over the population, the emperor Augustus sent P. Sulpicius Quirinius, the governor of Syria, to take a census.⁹² Judah and Zadok sprung into action and urged the people to resist; maintaining that submission to the census was a religious sin as the Jewish people were forbidden to acknowledge any other master but the Lord.⁹³ "Judah's doctrine struck root among the embittered people, especially among the youth, and its consequences were visible in the period of the procurators, particularly in the last years before the Roman War and during the war itself."⁹⁴ This was the first time since the Hasmonean revolt that the Judean people would have to accept so foreign a ruler over them. In concluding this historical review of the weltanschauung pervading Judea into the early childhood of Jesus, we can understand fully the sentiments of the environment in which he grew up. The atmosphere was tense with concern that the threat of foreign domination was just beginning to show itself and that the worst was yet to come.

⁹⁰ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 18:23.

⁹¹ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 17:341

⁹² cf. Josephus. *War* 2:117.

⁹³ cf. Josephus. *Wars* 2:118, 433. This was the rallying call of the Zealot Movement: "אין מלך אלא ה'".

⁹⁴ Schalit, A. "Judah the Galilean" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ibid.

SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS OF SECTARIAN COMMONALITY IN LATE SECOND TEMPLE JUDEA

For the great majority of the Jews, the Roman rule was wholly abhorrent. S. Brandon takes an extreme example of the aristocratic Sadducee Jews in whose interest it was to support the Roman Empire.

"Even the sacerdotal aristocracy, whose interests caused them to cooperate with the Roman government, and calculating individuals such as Josephus, who regarded Roman rule as inevitable, must have secretly hated the arrogant and corrupt officials and the brutal soldiery whose presence and actions constantly reminded them of Israel's servitude."⁹⁵

To the Zealots, these Jews were none other than collaborators, yet despite their temporizing attitude, even to the collaborators, *the Romans were heathens*. While their reason counseled submission and cooperation, their religious feelings must often have been uneasy about assisting a regime of which the very presence in their native land outraged their ancestral faith. Direct sympathy with the Zealot cause was a lesser commonality among the people, since the Zealot solution was not yet believed to be the only solution to the Roman pollution of their land. There were those Jews who advocated acquiesce to Roman rule with the sagely patience that their empire would fall just as the Hellenistic rulers before hand. But this acquiescence was sullen; day in and out the Judeans longed to be free of the heathen foreigners who oppressed them with heavy taxation and enforced the living contradiction to the ingrained belief that the Judeans were the chosen people of the Lord. It is not far from the truth to claim that such Jews must have either passively or secretly sympathized with those of their countrymen whose faith and patriotism led them to risk their lives in active resistance to their oppressors. It was the Zealots who triggered the collective memory of the Jewish people to remember the prophets of old. The Zealot ideal was one with that of the ancient prophets who claimed that Israel was the Elect Nation of the Lord. Like Pinchas, zeal to aspire to this ideal called for them to be cruelly uncompromising and fanatical. What the Zealot movement did and could not take into account was that unlike the Hasmoneans before them in their struggle with the weakening Seleucids, the Zealots had to contend with Rome, who was the greatest power of the ancient world at its peak, and for all their courage and zeal, that power was unconquerable. The only vantage point held by the Zealots was that they knew how to suffer for their faith. So when Jesus called upon his disciples to take up their cross,

⁹⁵ Brandon, S. *Ibid.* p. 146.

he was uttering a grim challenge that every Zealot had to face in the war against the Roman oppressor.⁹⁶ The cross was the symbol of the Zealot sacrifice long before it was transformed into the sign of Christian salvation.

It must be remembered, that the formative Christian movement was born into an atmosphere of tension, begotten of hatred, fear and apocalyptic expectation. These conditions defined the environment for the formative Church throughout its existence until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. The question that needs to be posed when analyzing the early Christian sect is how its founder reacted to this situation, which constituted an unavoidable challenge to every Jew residing in the Judean province.⁹⁷ The rebuilt Temple was not only the national pride of the Judean people, but also its cultic center. As mentioned above the ancient Greek historian Polybius described, from an outside perspective, that the Jews were a nation which dwelled around its famed Temple in Jerusalem. Zeal was a byproduct of the Temple in Jerusalem throughout the Second Temple Period. It is thus not surprising that Jesus would zealously try to purify the Temple in the spirit of Psalm 69:9, "the zeal for Your House consumes me".⁹⁸ What is surprising is the Christian attempt to separate Jesus' zeal for the Temple from his zeal for the Jewish people which were ideologically indivisible.

The eschatological phenomenon of the apocalyptic, which took hold with the rise of the συναγωγή Ἀσιδαίων ('Assembly of the Pious' or Hasidim) in the early second century B.C.E. was a literary commonality which characterized and defined the various sectarian movements until the end of the Second Temple Period. The Hasidim are looked to as the common root of the two most significant religious groups of post-biblical Judaism, the Essenes and the Pharisees.⁹⁹ The apocalyptic took up the biblical themes provided by prophecy: the Lord as the master of history, His judgment over the peoples, the liberation of Israel and the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. The theme of heavenly salvation with legions of angels, who would defeat the heathen armies that had allied themselves with the sympathetic Jews that had fallen from the 'true covenant', became a defining characteristic of not only the early Christian texts, but also of the Dead Sea Sect. Due to these similarities,

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 145.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 147.

⁹⁸ cf. Gospel of John 2:13-17.

⁹⁹ Hengel, M. *Ibid.* p. 176.

Levine claims that the Dead Sea Sect can be identified with the Essenes¹⁰⁰. Such methodology of sectarian unification also incorporates the Christians to such an extent that they effectively melded into the background of Essenism. The Church Father Epiphanius says that, "all Christians were once called Nazoraeans. For a short time they were also given the name Jassaeans [that is, 'Essenes'] before the disciples in Antioch began to be called Christians."¹⁰¹ Whether or not John the Baptist spent any time at Qumran with the Dead Sea Sect, it is clear that the ascetic community shows the setting where John functioned. The chart below shows how similar the two sects truly were:

	Shared the same desert	Same concern for ritual immersion and ritual purity in an ascetic manner	Concern for priestly background	Call for sharing property	Special sensitivity to incest
John the Baptist	Luke 1:80	Baptism	Luke 1:5	Luke 3:11	Mark 6:17-18
Dead Sea Sect	Qumran Excavations	Manual of Discipline 3:4-5	Manual of Discipline 5:1-3	Manual of Discipline 3:2	Damascus Document 4:17-18

David Flusser claims that, "John's baptismal theology was identical with that of the Essenes."¹⁰² Furthermore, regarding Jesus himself, Flusser relates that,

"Jesus' major polemical sayings against the Pharisees describe them as hypocrites, an accusation occurring ... in the Essene Dead Sea Scrolls... In general, Jesus' polemical sayings against the Pharisees were far meeker than the Essene attacks... [Jesus] accepted ... a part of the Essene social outlook. Like the Essenes, Jesus also regarded all possessions as a threat to true piety and held poverty, humility, purity of heart, and simplicity to be the essential religious virtues. Jesus, as did the Essenes, had an awareness of and affection for the social outcast and the oppressed. The Essene author of the Thanksgiving Scroll 18:14-15 promises salvation to the humble, to the oppressed in spirit, and to those who mourn, while Jesus in the first three beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount promises the Kingdom of Heaven to 'the poor in spirit' to 'those who mourn,' and to 'the meek'¹⁰³ Moreover, Jesus' rule 'do not resist one who is evil'¹⁰⁴ has clear parallels in the Essene Dead Sea Scrolls."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ cf. Levine, L.I.A. "The Age of Hellenism". *Ibid.* p. 189. Also: "The only apocalyptic book included in the Bible is Daniel. Its apocalyptic portions date from the early days of the Hasmonean revolt, and its visions and symbols became the prototype for all later Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings. Enoch, Jubilees, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls) were apparently written from the time of John Hyrcanus onward. These works reflect the beliefs of a religious apocalyptic movement, which later found expression in the Qumran sect, which was identified by scholars with the Essenes. Possessing a completely apocalyptic view of life, the movement gave a prominent place in its scheme of history to the war between good and evil (the demonic forces), and also seems to have formulated the myth of the fallen evil angels, and to have developed a psychology and moral code of its own. The works of this movement (particularly the Book of Enoch and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs), contain the earliest references to Jewish mysticism." Flusser, D. "Apocalypse" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem 1997. [Electronic Edition].

¹⁰¹ Epiphanius. *Against Heresies* 29:1:3-5:3.

¹⁰² Flusser, D. "Jesus" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Matthew 5:3-5.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 5:39

It is significant to note that Paul was accused by a Roman official in Acts 21:38 of being the Egyptian who, "before these days caused a riot and led four thousand Sicarii out into the desert." It is obvious that his charismatic character identified him as one of the deceivers and imposters, feigning divine inspiration and fomenting revolutionary change as Flavius Josephus so often relates about such individuals. It was not only the Roman official who saw no separation among the sectarian groups. Hippolytus¹⁰⁶ relates the different sects of the Essenes which parallel that of Josephus¹⁰⁷ until he tells of an extreme sect who "have acquired the name of 'Zealots'; some call them Sicarii."¹⁰⁸ Josephus forces himself to glorify the Essenes for their endurance of Roman torture.¹⁰⁹ It is obvious that the Romans would not have tortured the Essenes in this way had they not played so active a role against them. The same applies to the Dead Sea Sect whose community was destroyed by the Romans in 68 C.E. The last Zealot stronghold of Masada is the only place apart from Qumran where fragments have been found of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It seems that its source was the Qumran sect who fled the destruction and joined the Masada warriors at some stage of the war. It must be stressed that this does not in any way prove that the evidence entitles the identification of the Dead Sea Sect with the Zealots, but it does show the sectarian unity which overcame its differences in the face of a common enemy. According to Josephus¹¹⁰, John the Essene was one of the leaders of the Revolt in its early stages. He was the commander of Thamna, Lydda, Emmaus and Joppa. Even though that Philo¹¹¹ records that the Essenes are avowed pacifists who refused to make weapons, it seems that their pacifism was conditional and expired with the possibility of realizing the nation's eschatological hopes. If the Christians can be grouped together with the Essenes¹¹², and it is clear that the Essenes participated in the revolt against the Romans, it can be logically deduced that at some level, socially¹¹³ or politically, the Christians did as well.

¹⁰⁵ Flusser, D. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ cf. Hippolytus. *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 9:26.

¹⁰⁷ cf. Josephus. *War* 2:119-161; *Ant.* 18:18-22.

¹⁰⁸ cf. Levine. *Ibid.* p. 189.

¹⁰⁹ cf. Josephus. *War* 1:152-3.

¹¹⁰ cf. Josephus. *War* 2:567; 3:11-19.

¹¹¹ Philo. *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit*, 78.

¹¹² Which is most logical according to the 'argumentum e silentio', since Jesus is recorded as condemning Herodians, Sadducees and Pharisees but nowhere the Essenes and as will later be shown the Zealots either.

¹¹³ It is argued by M. Weber that the Essene belief system gave social justification for rising against Rome. Much of the revolt was centered around the social problems which had developed in Judea.

THE PRIESTLY ESTABLISHMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CRISIS

After the discontinuation of the Hasmonean high priests under Herod, this vitally important office was used for political purposes to influence the internal affairs of Judea. Beginning with Sulpicius Quirinius¹¹⁴, who set the precedent of a Roman procurator deposing (Joazar) and appointing (Ananus) High Priests, the Roman government set its heathen foot in the most sacred institution of the Jewish people. This was a humiliating reminder to the people that, in the fashion of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Romans controlled the appointment of the high priest, who represented them, the chosen people, on the most sacred occasions before their national Deity. The total disregard by the Romans of this holy office was displayed by Valerius Gratus, the Procurator of Judea from 15-26 B.C.E., who deposed and appointed no less than four high priests, ending with the appointment of Caiaphas who was to achieve undying infamy for his role in the trial of Jesus.¹¹⁵ Respect for the institution and its Roman nominees among the Judeans sank to an all time low. The alienation between the sacerdotal aristocratic priesthood and the people, which had intensified under Herod, now hit a new level of estrangement. The people and the lower orders of the priesthood (i.e. 'the Jerusalem mob') were well aware of the fact that their so called superiors were illegally holding office through the favor of the Roman overlord. The 'poor priests', being very closely involved with the cultic practice of Judaism by virtue of their vocation, were likely to be *zealous for their faith and resentful of the superior clergy*, who not only exploited the economic advantages of their office, but were exemplars of pro-Roman policy. "Most of the rank and file priests were Pharisees and were thus opponents, both politically and religiously, of the High Priest."¹¹⁶ When Acts 6:7 relates that, "the word of the Almighty increased, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased exceedingly – even a *great crowd of the priests were obeying the faith*", it is most logical to assume that these priests were from the lower orders. According to this passage, the formative Christian community of Jerusalem included many priests as well as many who were noted for their zealous observance of the Torah. This being so, it would surely have been inevitable that the Church of Jerusalem would become involved in the strife between the Sadducean sacerdotal

Therefore a person who questioned the status quo and disrupted the social order was seen as just as much of a revolutionary as the Zealots.

¹¹⁴ Josephus. *Ant.* 18:26.

¹¹⁵ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 18:34-35.

¹¹⁶ Maccoby, H. *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*. San Francisco 1987. p. 26.

aristocracy and the poor priests. If the Christian community had strongly championed the cause of the priests, its leader, James the brother of Jesus, would have been regarded as dangerous by Ananus, especially since he was evidently a powerful personality.¹¹⁷

It is not surprising that the Sicarii, who saw themselves as being responsible for the elimination of collaborators, chose to assassinate the high priest Jonathan and see to it that the first action undertaken when the Zealots took control of the Temple in 66 C.E., was to appoint a new sympathetic high priest. Josephus relates that the war broke out when this sympathetic High Priest, Elazar b. Ananias, discontinued sacrifices for the welfare of the Roman emperor. When civil war broke out on the streets of Jerusalem, the two opposing sides were the Zealots and the friends of Rome aided by Agripas II's Hellenized soldiers. The outcome of this battle was determined when many of the Sicarii joined forces with the Zealots. This new rebel alliance routed the Roman sympathizers and one of their first moves was to burn down the archives recording the debts of the poor. This extremist social ideology of the rebels under the leadership of Menachem¹¹⁸ raised the banner of the poor very much like the early Christian church had been doing for decades. What unified the masses even more was the official Roman reaction to the events which transpired in Jerusalem. Cestus Gallus, the legate of Syria, was miraculously defeated in a biblical fashion when he came close to breaching the Temple walls. After this happened, it is not logical that any concentrated element of the Jewish people would not have rallied around the national cause and the Deity of Israel, as evidenced by the former High Priest Ananus' switching of sides. This event in particular added fuel to the fire of Messianic expectation which was a characteristic of the first century after the Common Era.

THE FOUNDATIONAL MESSIANIC MOVEMENT WHICH CRYSTALIZED INTO THE FORMATIVE CHURCH OF JERUSALEM (33 C.E. TO 66 C.E.)

It is significant to mention how Samuel Brandon, the foremost scholar on the connection between the Zealots and early Christianity opens and ends his famed book, *Jesus and the Zealots*:

"Ironical though it be, the most certain thing known about Jesus of Nazareth is that he was crucified by the Romans as a rebel against their government in Judaea. The fact is recorded in

¹¹⁷ cf. Josephus. *Ant.* 20:200-201.

¹¹⁸ The son of the Zealot movement's founder Judah the Galilean and grandson of Hezekiah the patriarch of the Zealots.

the four Christian Gospels, and the execution, on the order of Pontius Pilate, is mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus, writing early in the second century."¹¹⁹

"Suffice it to note that, as a connection existed between the Zealots and the sectaries of Qumran, so a bond of common sympathy surely united Jesus and his followers with those who sought to maintain the ideals of Judas of Galilee. But sympathy, stemming from similar values and sufferings, finding expression sometimes in active cooperation, *did not mean identity*. Perhaps the reply which Jesus is recorded to have made to his disciples about one who casts out demons in his name, but did not belong to their company, could have applied to the Zealots: 'He who is not against us is for us.' However that may be, Jesus met at the hands of the Romans the same fate suffered by Judas of Galilee and his two sons, and on either side of the cross... was crucified a ληστης, as the Romans contemptuously called Israel's resistance fighters, the Zealots."¹²⁰

The significance of these passages to understanding the sympathies underlying the motivations of the foundational messianic movement which crystallized into the formative Christian Church of Jerusalem is endless. The sectarian unity which was addressed above confuses the definitions of 'ληστης', a pejorative word used for the Zealot movement throughout late Second Temple sources. When Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13 speak of Simeon the Zealot (Ζηλωτής), a close disciple of Jesus, it is obvious that the sectarian unity flowed into the early messianic movement. The fact that Mark and Matthew refer to the same disciple Simeon as the 'Cananaean' is an attempt in Greek to transliterate a Hebrew word, which then ends up either purposefully or out of ignorance as 'the Cananite'. The word is actually based on the Hebrew word for 'Zeal', that is קִנְיַאת הַחֹק or קִנְיַאת אֱלֹהִים so that, even as Matthew and Mark understand this cognomen as applied to Simon or rather misunderstand it – it is based on the Hebrew phraseology 'Zeal for the Law' cf. Num. 25:12-13.¹²¹ The presence of a Zealot among his disciples has significance: "it means that Jesus deliberately chose a professed Zealot for an Apostle, which, in turn, indicates that the profession of Zealot principles and aims was not incompatible with intimate participation in the mission of Jesus."¹²² But as S. Brandon says, we are not able to confuse a Zealot's participation with full fledged *identity with the Zealot cause*. Methodologically, it is clear to state that the fact that one of the twelve apostles was known as Simeon the Zealot *distinguishes him from the rest of the apostles*. "The indication would, in turn, suggest that Jesus himself was not a recognized Zealot leader, and that his selection of a professed Zealot as one of his inner band of disciples was thus distinctively notable. Therefore, the inclusion of Simon the Zealot in the apostolic band actually points to

¹¹⁹ Brandon, S. *Ibid.* p. 1.

¹²⁰ Brandon, S. *Ibid.* p. 358.

¹²¹ cf. *Ibid.* p. 355.

¹²² *Ibid.*

the probability that Jesus was not a Zealot, and that his movement was not an integral part of the Zealot resistance against Rome."¹²³ The fact that Simon the Zealot was a disciple of Jesus proves nothing as to Jesus' own attitude and aims. If we translate it into today's terms, there are many violent men that turn to religion as a way 'to turn over a new leaf'. It does not mean that those religious leaders whom they turn to are in any way associated with the violence that they are there to 'cure'. To sum up, the participation of a Zealot in the formative Christian church can only provide for an insight into the blurry separation between the different sectarian groups.

R. Eisenman, who is determined to prove that the formative Christian church was Zealot in its nature, is well equipped with other disciples who he claims were active revolutionaries. He claims that Judas Iscariot is a direct offshoot of the singular term in Greek, 'sikarioi'. The Greek iota and sigma are simply inverted and is its closes linguistic anagram.¹²⁴ Further evidence of Judas' association with the Zealots comes from the Apocryphal Gospel called the *Epistula Apostolorum* which uses the term, 'Judas *zhlwthj*', the Greek word for Zealot. After Judas turned Jesus to the authorities it is very likely that the early Christians joined Josephus Flavius in his pejorative description ('sikarioi') of the earlier embodiment of the Zealot movement. Over time the original Greek was distorted until it formed the unknown 'Iscariot'. Eisenman comprehensive lexicographical investigation into the Early Christian Church of Jerusalem under James forms historical conclusions based on a methodology of detailed scrutiny of sources from the period. Eisenman sees strong parallels between the Community (Ecclesia) led by James and the one reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This is particularly true when one considers the relationship between James and the tradition of the person known in the scrolls as, 'the Teacher of Righteousness.' Comparing the 'War Scrolls' of the Dead Sea Sect¹²⁵ and that of the Christians reveals just how close these two sects truly are in their militancy. The climatic section of the Qumran War Scroll discusses the 'star prophecy' which expounds that the final apocalyptic war will be led by the heavenly Holy Ones and the Messianic king. The Apocalypse of John¹²⁶ which claims that the sword is the sign of the triumphant Messiah and the Book of Revelations which sees Jesus as carrying a

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Eisenman, R. *Ibid.* p. 813.

¹²⁵ cf. IQM 12:3.

¹²⁶ Considered by scholars like Eisler and Brandon to be the War Scroll of the early Christians.

sharp, two edged sword which proceeds out of his mouth and serves for judgment of the heathens, clearly holds Zealot overtones. M. Black develops on this idea to claim that the sword of his mouth is a spiritual sword, a sword of his word.¹²⁷ Regardless, a sword, however it is expressed, was a symbol of militancy in the classical world and represented a danger to the social order held in check by the Roman Empire.

According to the fifth book of Hegesippus' lost *Commentaries*, Saint Jerome quotes in *De Viris Illustribus* that James had the unique privilege of entering the sanctuary of the Temple and wore the vestments of the High Priest¹²⁸, which R. Eisler, uses to support his theory that the nationalist party maintained a rival priesthood against that of the pro-Roman Sadducees.¹²⁹ Brandon suggests that James was the leader of the poor priests:

"Hegesippus' representation of the death of James as resulting from his proclamation of the imminent parousia of Jesus as the Messiah, at the time of intense Messianic expectation, could well describe another aspect of Ananus' action – that James was not only the 'Champion of Poor priests', and thereby closely associated with the Zealots; but he was also encouraging dangerous Messianic hopes centered on the immanent return of Jesus with full Messianic authority and power in order to release Judea from its servitude to Rome."¹³⁰

J.P.M. Sweet questions why it is that, according to Josephus, every end of a rebel movement is met with the massacre of its followers, whereas there is no hint of Roman movement against any of the followers of Jesus.¹³¹ Acts records only attempted Jewish coercion on religious grounds, until the action of Agrippa I against James, son of Zebedee, and Peter recorded in Acts 12. Unlike the spontaneous messianic movements which characterized this period, the formative Christian church developed theological doctrines which not only outlived their executed founder but glorified him in a spirit of martyrdom not yet attained by any predecessor. They held to a doctrine of patient waiting for the return of their messiah, rather than immediate action which defined the Zealot movement proper. However, just as it is not

¹²⁷ Black, M. "Not Peace but a Sword" in: *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*. ed. E. Bammel and CF.D. Moule. 1984. p. 293.

¹²⁸ "[James] alone had the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies, since indeed he did not use woolen vestments but linen and went alone into the temple and prayed in behalf of the people, inasmuch that his knees were reputed to have acquired the hardness of camels' knees." Saint Jerome. *De Viris Illustribus*. It is wise to remain cautious of the lost Hegesippus tradition which very well may serve to try and connect the Jewish priesthood with that of the Christian priesthood. There is no basis for James to have been a High Priest in the Temple since he was not a descendant of Aaron. The point which is trying to be made here is that James did have some connection to the 'poor priesthood' which may be the historical kernel at the source of Hegesippus' tradition.

¹²⁹ Eisler, R. *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*. tr. A.H. Krappe. London 1931. pp. 538-541.

¹³⁰ Brandon, S. *Ibid.* p.125. cf. Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*. 2:23:13-14.

¹³¹ Sweet, J.P.M. in: *Jesus and the Politics of his Day*. ed. E. Bammel and CF.D. Moule. 1984.

historically sound to take a maximalist stance with regards to the early Christian identity with the Zealots, so too must we be weary of the minimalist stance.

ON THE 'PACIFIC CHRIST' AND THE FUTILE ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FROM THE JEWISH WAR AGAINST ROME

In historical writing it is an oft-state truism that the victors write the history. There is in this period one central immovable fact: the omnipotence of Roman power. This was as elemental as the state of nature, and all movements and individual behavior must be seen in relation to it. The gospels give a picture of a peaceful Hellenized countryside. Those writings were written for a Roman-Hellenistic audience. The Jewish messiah is presented as a politically disinterested, other worldly, harmless and even sometimes pro-Roman itinerant at odds with the Jewish Establishment. Herein is what S. Brandon terms the 'pacific Christ', a relatively unhistorical figure whose identity was formed around a set of ideals which Jesus most likely never professed. Brandon claims that the great number of anti-violence sayings and actions should be written off as created later, especially by Matthew, in order to project this image of a *pacified Christ*, who would be suitable for a founder of a religion in the Roman world. Brandon also sees apologia as the nature of the Gospel of Mark, whose purpose was to exculpate Jesus and the Christians in Rome from their *prima facie* involvement with the Jewish national cause. It is here that the technique used in historical research called *Tendenzkritik* can help reveal how distorted the representation of the non-political Jesus truly is. *Tendenzkritik* states that if it can be established that a document was written with a clear propagandist purpose, then it becomes probable that its writers bent the facts, or made a tendentious selection from among them to fit his purpose; and it is therefore necessary to make allowance for such distortion, in any attempt to get back to the truth about what actually happened. If we take Simon the Zealot as an example, Mark renders the disciple's name which, in Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13, appears undisguised as Ζηλωτής by the less easily recognizable Aramaic form Σίμων ὁ Καναναῖος (Mark 3:18). "This masking of the fact that one of the Twelve had been a Zealot indicates that the author of Mark was not concerned to present an accurate historical record of the career of Jesus, but that he was moved by a definite apologetical motive."¹³² D. Schwartz also claims that

¹³² Brandon, S. *Ibid.* p. 245.

“the picture of a pacific Christ was a result of apologetics.”¹³³ This meant that future Christian writings had to do its best to avoid anything that smacked of Jesus and the apostles having been involved in, or having supported, rebellion against Rome.

It is obvious that the conflict described in the Gospels between Jesus and the Pharisees was actually between Jesus and the Sadducees.¹³⁴

"It was of the highest importance to the Gospel editors to represent Jesus as having been a rebel against the Jewish religion, not against the Roman occupation. Since it was known that the Sadducees were collaborators with Rome, any substantial picture of opposition by Jesus to the Sadducees, even on purely religious grounds, would have given an impression of Jesus as an opponent of Rome – just the impression that the [apologetic] Gospel editors wished to avoid."¹³⁵

The lack of separation between the formative Jerusalem Church and the Zealot cause during the last days of the Second Temple is the historical truth which the Gospels failed in their attempt to hide.

If the most important and seemingly influential historical event in late Second Temple Judean society were to be missing from the Christian scriptures which detail the events of these days, it is obvious that *Tendenzkritik* would apply once again. This event was in 39-40 C.E. when Gaius Caligula, in the spirit of Antiochus Epiphanes, attempted to erect a golden idol in the Holy Temple of Jerusalem. There exists what is commonly known as the Markan Apocalypse which comes close in the apocalyptic and eschatological spirit of the Book of Daniel to describing this incident. “When you see the abomination of desolation, the one spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing where it ought not¹³⁶ – he reading, let him understand – then let those in Judea flee into the mountains.”¹³⁷ It should be remembered that the mountains (τὰ ὄρη) would be in the desert country where the Zealots had their strongholds, and to which they sought to withdraw in 70 CE. The urgency of such a flight, involving the abandonment of personal property would be characteristic of Zealot faith in the providence of the Almighty for those who wholeheartedly

¹³³ Schwartz, D.R. "On Christian Study of the Zealots" in: *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity*. Tübingen 1992. p. 137.

¹³⁴ H. Maccoby (cf. *The Mythmaker*. p. 35) and R. Eisenman (cf. *James, the Brother of Jesus*. p. 216) go into extensive detail showing the glaring illogic of the Pharisee objections to Jesus' arguments. It is clear from Pharisee and later Rabbinic polemics against the Sadducees, that these arguments were actually conducted against the Sadducee authorities.

¹³⁵ Maccoby, H. *Ibid.* p. 35.

¹³⁶ cf. II Macc. 6:2 – these words equate an impending act of sacrilege with the notorious desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BCE when he set up an altar to Zeus. In the year 70 CE, the ‘abomination of desolation’ was set up in the sacred courts, and the adherence to the Israelite Wilderness Tradition on behalf of the Judeo-Christians is not surprising.

¹³⁷ Gospel of Mark 13:14-20.

committed themselves to his service. B.H. Streeter¹³⁸ and J. Moffat¹³⁹ claim that the Markan Apocalypse incorporates an earlier Jewish Christian apocalypse which was composed to meet the situation created by Gaius' attempt to desecrate the Temple in 39-40 CE. The passage concerned reflects in a remarkable manner the Zealot outlook.

"But if it is to be interpreted as originating from the Jewish Christians, during the same period of crisis, a significant agreement of attitude between the Zealots and the Jewish Christians is accordingly applied. It means that like the Zealots, the Jewish Christians were so profoundly shocked by the prospect of the desecration of the Temple that they contemplated immediate flight into the mountains. It makes sense that the Zealots would withdraw into the mountains, but why should the Jewish Christians also have thought of going there? The obvious answer is that their motive was the same as the Zealots, namely, to withdraw from a center where Roman authority was too strong and menacing to their religion and maintain their freedom and resistance on a terrain providing places of refuge and security... If the oracle was of Jewish Christian origin, the Jewish Christians must, therefore, have regarded the murder of Gaius as an act of divine intervention, performed specifically on their behalf as the Elect of the Lord." ¹⁴⁰

If the oracle was, accordingly of Jewish Christian origin, then in sentiment and policy the Jewish Christians must have been virtually at one with the Zealots during the crisis. If on the other hand the oracle was adopted by the Jewish Christians it would surely mean that there was so much sympathy in outlook between the Jewish Christians and the Zealots that the former thus valued an oracle that expressed the views of the latter.

THE MYTH OF THE PELLA FLIGHT LEGEND

It is of the utmost importance to determine what happened to the early foundation Church of Jerusalem after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. by the Romans. There are three partially conflicting traditions about the destiny of the Christian community of Jerusalem: according to Eusebius¹⁴¹ there were bishops of Jewish origin (*ex circumcissione* or 'one who had been circumcised') in the city until the time of Hadrian. Eusebius¹⁴² also tells of the flight of this community to Pella in Transjordan, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. This tradition could indicate that high tension already existed between the Jews who were fighting for their independence and the deserting Christians; but it should also be remembered that the Jewish parties were deeply divided among themselves. S. Pines¹⁴³ relates the inner Christian conflict which resulted due to the Roman persecution of the radical

¹³⁸ Streeter, B.H. *The Four Gospels*. London 1924. p. 491.

¹³⁹ Moffat, J. *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*. Edinburgh 1933. pp. 207-209.

¹⁴⁰ Brandon, S. *Ibid.* pp. 90-91.

¹⁴¹ Eusebius. *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4:5.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 3:5.

¹⁴³ cf. Pines, S. *The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source*. 1966.

wing of the Christian community and caused them to flee the country. Later descriptions and indications show Transjordan and Syria as centers of Judeo-Christian activity. The question must be asked if the Jerusalem Church perished because its members chose to make common cause with their countrymen, in their last desperate stand against the avenging might of heathen Rome? S. Brandon, in his imperative 1951 work, *The Fall of Jerusalem*, wrote a critical examination of the Pella Flight tradition, and concluded that it was in origin a second century foundation legend, probably designed to justify the claim of the church later established in Aelia Capitolina, to be a lineal descent of the original Church of Jerusalem.¹⁴⁴ Supporters of this theory included W.R. Farmer¹⁴⁵, G. Streker¹⁴⁶ and J. Munck¹⁴⁷, who were three of the top scholars at the time. Furthermore, this could have been a way of the Aelia Capitolina Church to prove to the Roman Authorities at the time that they had no part in the Great Revolt in 70 CE. Elliot-Binns¹⁴⁸ offered support of the Pella Flight Legend by stating that the Jewish Christians would have fled from the persecution of the Zealots as did R. Yohanan b. Zakkai. Brandon notes¹⁴⁹ that the comparison is an unfortunate one for his case because of the vigilance of the defenders of Jerusalem and that R. Yohanan only could escape by hiding in a coffin. How then could a whole community, including women, children and the aged have succeeded in escaping not only the Zealot defenders, but also the Roman army? According to Josephus Flavius, the military situation of Pella during the years 66-70 CE, when the community was assumed to have fled, was not in any way compatible for such a reality to have occurred.¹⁵⁰ In 66CE, the Judean Rebels sacked and expelled all of the Gentile inhabitants of the city. When Vespasian's penalizing expedition took place in 68 CE, they would not have spared Jews (regardless of their beliefs) who had taken possession of the sacked Gentile city.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the arguments of H.J. Schops and M. Simon don't hold ground because they do not take the military situation into consideration. The Pella Flight Legend, which was the major factor in encouraging the belief that the Jerusalem Christians refused to be involved in Israel's struggle for

¹⁴⁴ Brandon, S.G.F. *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*. London 1951. p. 168-173.

¹⁴⁵ Farmer, W.R. *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus*. New York 1957. p. 125, n. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Streker, G. *Das Judentum in den Pseudokelentinen*. Berlin 1958. pp. 229-231.

¹⁴⁷ Munck, J. "Jewish Christianity in Post Apostolic Times" in: *New Testament Studies* 6. 1959-60. p. 103-104.

¹⁴⁸ Elliott-Binns, L.E. *Galilean Christianity*. London 1938. pp. 67-69.

¹⁴⁹ Brandon, S. *Jesus and the Zealots*. Ibid. p. 208.

¹⁵⁰ Josephus Flavius. *War of the Jews*. 2:458.

¹⁵¹ Josephus Flavius. *War of the Jews*. 4:413-139.

freedom, does not hold up to historical criticism. The entire formative Christian Church of Jerusalem perished alongside its countrymen during the destruction of 70 C.E. What was to be known as Christianity was a Hellenized movement created through the ingenious efforts of Paul of Tarsus.

THE ROMAN-HELLENIZATION OF THE JEWISH MESSIANIC MOVEMENT KNOWN AS CHRISTIANITY

According to Hyam Maccoby in his brilliant analysis of the beginnings of Christianity entitled *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*, the founding of Christianity as a religion separate from the Jewish struggle was entirely the work of Paul of Tarsus.¹⁵² Maccoby claimed that Paul was a Hellenized Jewish convert or perhaps even a Gentile, coming from a background exposed to the influence of Gnosticism and the pagan mystery religions such as the Attis cult and especially the cult of Mithras which, according to ancient sources, originated in Paul's homeland of Tarsus¹⁵³. The religion spread like wildfire throughout Rome and became the main competitor of Christianity a hundred years later. Paul of Tarsus was most likely fully acquainted with Mithraism as the religion of the establishment. Paul had the complicated task of legitimizing Christianity in the eyes of the Roman. Paul's emphasis of the inclusive aspect of the 'new' religion brought him into great conflict with the formative Christian church. It is this reason which the classical Jewish Christian historians claim split the early Church between those who would follow Peter who disapproved of the Christianization of the Gentiles and Paul who approved. The unique characteristic of the 'loyalist' Jewish-Christian sects was their stringent adherence to Jewish practices.¹⁵⁴ According to the *Kerygmata Petri*, the Jewish-Christians began to feel their right to change the texts of the Pentateuch to reflect their own ideals.

"Furthermore, [the *Kerygmata Petri*] claims that Jesus replaced sacrifice with baptism, canceling the precepts on sacrifice in the Pentateuch. Similarly discarded were all the passages providing for kingship—an institution which they abhorred—all

¹⁵² Maccoby, H. *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*. San Francisco 1987.

¹⁵³ Tarsus was the capital of a land called Cilicia which is located in modern day Turkey. The ancient Roman sources which record that Cilicia was the source of Mithraism in the Roman Empire also relate that the cult was brought to Rome around the year 68BCE by Cilician pirates who were captured by the Roman general Pompey the Great.

¹⁵⁴ cf. Guggenheim, J.Y. "Jewish Christians". *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ibid. Guggenheim makes a point of showing how "the heresiologists time and again polemicized against the Ebionites' stubborn adherence to the Torah, particularly their performance of circumcision, their observance of Jewish festivals, and of the Shabbat- a practice for which the Jews had been previously attacked in pre-Christian Hellenistic literature." They also faced Jerusalem while praying showing their everlasting dedication to the city just as the Jews did and unlike the Romanized Christians.

anthropomorphic expressions of the Lord, and unpraiseworthy stories about the representatives of true prophecy, e.g., Adam's sin, Noah's drunkenness, Abraham and Jacob's polygamy, etc. Jewish-Christian sects not only saw the events of biblical history in a new light but also formulated the stories about the beginnings of Christianity in a way other than in Acts and in Paul's letters, and gave them a different interpretation from that of the Church."¹⁵⁵

It is logical to assume at this point that if the Jewish Christians with their strict adherence to the Jewish religion were willing to change their sacred texts, how much more so would the Romanized Gentile Church being inspired by Paul of Tarsus. The pacification of Jesus was a clear objective on behalf of this new Church if it was to be accepted in any fashion among the enemies of the Jewish people. Critics point out that the book of Revelation and several of Paul's letters contain criticisms of Roman culture and Roman government; moments that seem counterproductive if there was an attempt by the early Christian community to placate the Roman authority by casting the blame of the crucifixion on the Jews. But these critics do not point out the difference between criticizing Roman culture and fighting against it. Paul urged strict obedience to the Roman government unlike the formative Church of Jerusalem during the last days of the Second Temple.

Social aspects of Jesus' revolutionary teachings were much more profound and evident than their political ones. While not a political Zealot, Jesus could perhaps be claimed as an apocalyptic Zealot, proclaiming a final impending war against [all the followers of evil] in heaven and on earth, even in the same family. The sword which Jesus brings in Matthew 10:34 is a prelude to the last judgment, the manifestation of the wrath of the Almighty by the Armies of Heaven. Commonality prevailed amongst the sectarian sects defined by the hostility to the Roman Empire which pervaded the whole of Jewish society. Sympathetic tendencies with the Zealots were simply integral to the Jewish identity of the Late Second Temple period.

To conclude, just as the Christian depiction of the early messianic community as being apolitical does not stand up to the historical evidence, so too it is not to be declared that the early Christians were full fledged Zealots. The accurate medium which may never be found, will take far longer than the past century of scholarship which has been dedicated to its study. The historical circumstances which fostered commonality among different sectarian sects in the Judea of the late Second Temple Period are a clear starting point to under covering much of the accuracy which has

¹⁵⁵ Guggenheim, J.Y. "Jewish Christian Sects" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ibid.

long been buried. The sacerdotal aristocracy that became increasingly concerned with the maintenance of the Roman occupation in turn caused their overall alienation from the masses. This meant, in turn, that resistance to Rome became a lower class movement and all those who held the banner of the poor were to one extent or another sympathetic with the Zealot cause who defined itself as not only fighting against the Romans but also against the Jewish aristocracy. Such social resentment easily combined with religious patriotism whose only outward expression was the immediate freedom of Judea. Hence, like the formative Christian church, the Zealot movement was a popular movement which embodies both the religious and social aspirations and resentments of the עַם הָאָרֶץ ('People of the Land'). Both Jesus and his disciples were of the people of the land and the recorded teaching of Jesus vividly reflects the attitude of the poor towards those, "who wore soft clothing, ate good food, and dwelt in king's houses."¹⁵⁶ The poor priests championed the class conflict for the poor and were a fertile ground for apocalyptic messianic personalities which appeared throughout the Second Temple Period. James, the brother of Jesus, who led the foundation church of Jerusalem was an exemplar of Jewish observance¹⁵⁷, whose mere thought of associating with Gentiles was as repulsive as it was to the Dead Sea Sect. It would be left to Paul and the apologetic Gospels to take this Jewish messianic belief to the Roman Empire where over time it would become Romanized and written over until its true source disappeared into the vaults of history. All Jews not directly allied with the Roman enemy who lived around Jerusalem before the destruction of the Second Temple, shared a common historical reality which united them in their fight for freedom. Just as it was the victor who influenced what we know of late Second Temple Judea, it is the eternal responsibility of the historian to uncover grains of truth and put together a comprehensive picture of how to accurately relate to the sects described above in their proper historical context.

¹⁵⁶ Luke 7:25.

¹⁵⁷ His righteousness, which was displayed by his lifelong Nazirite vows and his eventual martyrdom was also recognized by the Pharisees who mourned his death. Because of this and many other similarities, scholars such as H. Maccoby and R. Eisenman question whether or not there was any separation between the formative church and the Pharisee movement.

CONCLUSION

The definition of the sectarian identities in the Second Temple Period needs to be reconsidered when the methodological model of long term development is applied to it. Jewish history during the Second Temple Period can be characterized by sectarianism but the interlocking common thread which held many of the sects together in their struggle for national religious freedom has not been recognized by modern scholars. Much of the struggle was between the traditional masses and the aristocratic priests and leadership, supported by their foreign patrons. The groups with common goals which 'crystallized' themselves into the various sects we recognize today as dominating the Second Temple Period were not created in a vacuum and their origins are solid, though historically difficult to ascertain. What has hopefully transpired due to this broad overview of sectarian development is an attempt to show what unified the majority of the Second Temple Period's Judean people was greater than what separated them, and that they only have the baseless hatred (שנאת חנם) between themselves to blame for the long exile which plagued them for two thousand years. May their children not repeat history.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

George Santayana
Life of Reason. volume I, chapter. XII (1905)