influence, but in this case Josephus's numbers may be quite significant, the more so as Josephus himself in more than one place ascribes great influence to the priesthood. (He was a priest himself and should know.)

Suggestions for Further Reading

The classical study covering the theme of this chapter is Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions During the New Testament Period* (London: SCM Press, 1969, and several reprints). This book is very rich in detailed information concerning all aspects of life in Jerusalem. It is also an important sourcebook on the religious parties of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and should thus be consulted also with regard to the next chapter. It is rather dated, however, in its handling of the rabbinical sources.

A study with more emphasis on the archaeology of Jerusalem is John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It: Archaeology as Evidence* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978).

The most comprehensive recent treatment of this chapter's theme is Lee I. Levine, ed., *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Continuum, 1999). Cf. also Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 45-189.

The significance of the temple and the pilgrimages is excellently brought out in an article by Shmuel Safrai, "The Temple," in *Compendia* 1:2: 865-907.

On the archaeology of Jerusalem one should also consult: Benjamin Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975); Nachman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville/Camden/New York: Thomas Nelson, 1983); Meir Ben-Dov, *Jerusalem: Man and Stone: An Archeologist's Personal View of His City* (Tel Aviv: Modan, 1990); Hillel Geva, ed., *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994).

[15] On these figures, and for a discussion of their significance, see E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), pp. 194-98; and the response in N. T. Wright, *The New Testament*, pp. 195-97.

5

HOW MANY "JUDAISMS"?

Judaism" used to be an unambiguous concept: Judaism was the religion, or way of life, of the Jewish people. Throughout the ages it developed and changed, but throughout this development it kept a basic identity and a historic continuity. This was conceived of as organic growth and development, much like a plant grows. In recent years, this picture has been challenged, and for good reasons. For one thing, speaking of the Jewish way of life in the singular is quite misleading, at least for important eras in Jewish history. Secondly, there were dramatic revolutions and upsetting catastrophes in Jewish history, which had a deep impact and sometimes drastic consequences, more like an earthquake. In this chapter we shall look at one example of both: we shall study a period in which Judaism was by no means uniform, and a period in which a major catastrophe took place, a catastrophe that has left indelible marks on Judaism and Jewish history—and also on Christianity.

Introduction: "Give me Jabne!"

On the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (A.D. 70), the Roman general Vespasian negotiated with the Jewish rebels within the city to bring about their surrender. Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, the leading rabbi in the city, urged his compatriots to accept the general's terms, but they refused.

> Now, after Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai had spoken to them one day, two and three days, and they still would not listen to him, he sent for his disciples, for Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua. "My sons," he said to them, "arise and take me out of here. Make a coffin for me that I might lie in it." Rabbi Eliezer took hold of the head end of it, Rabbi Joshua took hold of the foot; and they began carrying him as the sun set, until they reached the gates of Jerusalem. "Who is this?" the gatekeepers demanded. "It's a dead man," they replied. "Do you not know that a dead man may not be held overnight in Jerusalem?" "If it's a dead man," the gatekeepers said to them, "take him out." So they took him out and continued carrying him until they reached Vespasian. They opened the coffin and Rabban Johanan stood up before him. "Are you Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai?" Vespasian inquired; "tell me, what may I give you?" "I ask nothing of you," Rabban Johanan replied, "save Jabne [English, *Jamnia*], where I might go and teach my disciples and there establish a prayer[house] and perform all the commandments." "Go," Vespasian said to him, "and do as you wish." (*Avot of Rabbi Nathan* 4)[1]

In gratitude towards Vespasian, Johanan prophesied that the general would become Emperor. It took only a couple of days before messengers came saying that the Emperor was dead and Vespasian was his successor.

This famous story has been taken to have great symbolic significance, and indeed it has (regardless of its measure of historical truth). At the same time as Johanan ben Zakkai escaped from the beleaguered city, the priests continued their daily routines in the temple and kept on until they were massacred around the altar doing their duties. They did not escape; they perished, and so did the priesthood and its temple service. The high priest and the Sadducees also disappeared with the temple; they lost everything that gave them power. The Zealots, who had provoked the war with Rome in the first place, prepared a last stand inside the city and were finally massacred almost to the last man. A little earlier—at Qumran by the Dead Sea—the study center of the Essenes was destroyed by the Romans. It devastated them; they never returned or recovered.

Johanan alone, with his disciples, escaped from the disaster unhurt and had a basis upon which to continue with their Jewish way of life. According to rabbinic legend, Johanan emerged as the leader of Judaism after the catastrophe of A.D. 70, and the house of study that he established in Jamnia (Hebrew, *Jabne*), by the coast, became the spiritual lighthouse of a devastated people.

To add to the symbolic significance, we can supplement the story with

[1]Goldin, pp. 35-36.

another story about escape from Jerusalem: the escape from Jerusalem to Pella in the Transjordan by the community of the believers in Jesus. According to Eusebius, they had been warned before the outbreak of the war by a prophecy and had heeded the prophecy by fleeing to Pella. Thus, to remain for a while on this level of history charged with symbols: two faith-systems, two ways of life, two "religions," and two only, escaped from the destruction, intact and with a future—rabbinic Judaism and the Christian community.

This way of reading the two stories of escape corresponds to a traditional point of view which for a long time held sway in New Testament scholarship. With one additional assumption we have the traditional theory complete. What we have to assume is that the Judaism of the rabbis after A.D. 70 is the direct and unbroken continuation of the Judaism of the Pharisees before A.D. 70. For a long time this was the established scholarly opinion. What happened to "normative Judaism" around the year 70 was mainly a change of label—"Pharisaic" became "rabbinic"—but in terms of theological content the two were more or less identical. You could think of water running through a channel: for the distance from the Maccabees to A.D. 70 the channel was called "Pharisaic," from A.D. 70 onwards its name changed to "rabbinic," but it was the same water flowing through the same channel.

In Jewish studies this picture resulted in descriptions of "Judaism" in which statements ascribed to Jewish sages within the period of approximately 200 B.C. to A.D. 200 were synthesized into a coherent system.[2] In New Testament studies the result was that when Jesus debated with the Pharisees in the Gospels, he was thought to debate with the representatives of Judaism as a whole. According to this perspective, Jesus himself began the debate between Christianity and Judaism; it was continued by all his followers and disciples. Right from the beginning, Christianity and Judaism were two clearly distinct entities, the one represented by Jesus and his disciples, the other by the Pharisees.

The impact of this way of looking at first-century Jewish and Christian history has been enormous, and is still felt in New Testament scholarship. There is no doubt, however, that a basic "change of paradigm" is taking place. For

[2]The classic example is George Foot Moore's *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of The Tannaim* (= vol. 1 of the three-volume work *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927-1930, frequently reprinted); a more recent example of this comprehensive approach to "rabbinic" Judaism as one entity is Ephraim E. Urbach's *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975 [and reprints]).

one thing, Jewish scholars have argued with great conviction that Jesus should not be placed *outside* Pharisaism, but within it: when Jesus debates with Pharisees, his own positions can be shown to agree with those of other Pharisaic authorities. In other words, Pharisaism itself was complex; it comprised different opinions; it could comprise those of Jesus. Jesus' debates with Pharisaic opponents is therefore an intra-Pharisaic debate.[3]

Secondly, the simple continuity between Pharisees and post-70 rabbis is being seriously questioned. Few doubt that leading Pharisees were *part* of the reestablished Jewish leadership after 70, and that they contributed to the formation of the Judaism we meet in later rabbinic writings, first and foremost the Mishnah. But more and more scholars have come to realize that the Pharisees were by no means alone in this, that rabbinic leadership after 70 was broader in its composition and partly distanced itself quite emphatically from the Pharisees *as a sect or party*. In rabbinic writings, the pre-70 ancestors of the rabbis are normally not called *perushim* (Hebrew for Pharisees, meaning "sectarians"!), but rather *hakamim*, meaning "sages." Some of those named as sages are also named as Pharisees in Josephus and the New Testament, but not all, and there is no need to identify the pre-70 sages of rabbinic literature—as a group—with the Pharisees of the New Testament and Josephus. It is often overlooked that Johanan ben Zakkai, the recognized father of rabbinic Judaism, in one of his sayings distanced himself from the Sadducees *and* from the Pharisees![4]

As a result of this shift of perspective, one should no longer project the Judaism of the Mishnah and related rabbinic writings into the pre-70 situation and identify it with Pharisaic teaching, the latter being regarded as the normative Judaism of the entire first century. The pre-70 situation must be described on its own terms, and once we turn to the contemporary sources,[5] the picture, in one respect, becomes surprisingly clear.

The common point of reference for all Jews was the temple, and the numerically biggest and probably most widely influential group of religious

[3]In recent years, this point of view has been developed by David Flusser in several studies, e.g., *Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1998). For an overview of Jewish scholarship on Jesus, see Donald A. Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of Modern Jewish Study of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1984).

[4]For this paragraph, see esp. the extensive discussion in John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 1-38. See also Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, pp. 226-27; Schiffman, *Text to Tradition*, pp. 177-185.

[5]That is, first-century sources; some New Testament documents and all of Josephus's are *written* after 70, but build on pre-70 personal experiences, traditions and sources.

leaders were the priests. But within the priesthood, especially among its elite, there were factions. And there was at least one non-priestly elite group that competed with the priestly elite: the Pharisees.

When Josephus said that among the Jews there were three philosophical schools—Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes—he did not mean that all Jews belonged to one of these three "parties." He meant no more than he said: like other cultured peoples, the Jews had their intellectuals (philosophers), and like other philosophers, they belonged to different "schools" of opinion. Josephus was clearly and explicitly speaking about a numerically small elite among the Jewish leadership. And we get the same picture of the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees in the New Testament. So, what we get in the contemporary first-century sources is a picture of competing religious elites, competing for the position as "teachers of Israel," none of them having anything like a monopoly, none of them being able to define other Jews as being outside of "Judaism" in a way everyone would recognize. It seems clear that Jesus and the early community of his believers fit into this very picture; they take part in this contest from within, not from without. It is meaningless and grossly anachronistic to picture Jesus, Peter or Paul as debating with "Judaism" or its representatives, as if they themselves were outside and represented something else, a non-Jewish position.

I believe, therefore, that one should call this pre-70 situation "Judaism in several varieties," instead of "several Judaisms."[6] However diversified Judaism was, it seems that Jews during the last period of the second temple were no more uncertain about who was a Jew and who was not, than in later periods. Most Jews would think, for example, that the Samaritans were not Jews, in spite of the fact that the Samaritans had the Torah, were circumcised and practiced a Jewish lifestyle. Few, on the other hand, would say the Qumran covenanters were not Jews. The basic criterion may be stated like this: a Jew is one who by descent or conversion belongs to the people who worship the God that (normally) dwells in the temple at Jerusalem. This excludes the Samaritans but includes the Qumranites. It also has the advantage of including the first Jewish believers in Jesus, while at the same time explaining why they gradually came to develop an identity so inwardly independent of the

[6]E. P. Sanders, in his *Judaism* and elsewhere, prefers the former approach; whereas Jacob Neusner strongly advocates the abolishment of any talk about "Judaism" in the singular. Cf. his rather temperamental criticism of Sanders in *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor E. P. Sanders*, South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 84 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993).

physical temple (even before A.D. 70), that they were, in time, to burst through the definition of Judaism held by most of their compatriots.[7] So, we stick to Judaism in the singular, while recognizing great pluralism, even factionalism, within pre-70 Jewish religion.[8]

This serves as a kind of preface to the following paragraphs, which deal in turn with what we know about the different factions within the religious elite. For some of them, we know surprisingly little, and scholars today claim to know less than scholars did previously.

The Priestly Elite

The most numerous and possibly most influential group among the ordinary people is also the group we know the least about: the some 20,000 ordinary priests and Levites. These are the ones whom the Bible itself clearly mandates to teach and direct the people of Israel according to the law of God; and we must assume they did. These may be the people who are called "scribes" in the New Testament. In any case, it seems unwise to exclude them from this category.[9]

The problem with this group is that we know next to nothing about their teaching or their opinions—for example, with regard to the questions debated between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It should be emphasized that this large group cannot simply be identified with the Sadducees. Accord-

[7]Shaye Cohen in his *Jewishness*, and Richard Bauckham in the article quoted below in this note, both emphasize that the recognition of the Jerusalem temple as the dwelling place of the one true God was a basic criterion of Jewish identity. We see this in the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4. Against Neusner's way of speaking about several Judaisms, Bauckham also argues the following way: If we define each of the parties within Judaism as "a Judaism," we have no term for the Judaism of the vast majority of Jews who belonged to no party at all. "The mass of the people who did not belong to a party cannot be regarded as another party alongside the others" (Bauckham, "The Parting of the Ways," *Studia Theologica* 47 [1993]: 135-51; quotation p. 137.)

[8]See Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Internal Diversification of Judaism in the Early Second Temple Period," in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. S. Talmon, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 10 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 16-43; Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 55 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997).

[9]This identification is argued extensively by Sanders, *Judaism*, pp. 170-89. Others think that "scribes" in the New Testament is only a synonym for Pharisees, see, e.g., Ellis Rivkin, "Scribes, Pharisees, Lawyers, Hypocrites: A Study in Synonymity," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 49 (1978): 135-42. For yet another interpretation, see Daniel R. Schwartz, "'Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites': Who are the 'Scribes' in the New Testament?" in Schwartz, *Studies*, pp. 89-101.

ing to Josephus, the Sadducees were a small group *within* the priesthood; possibly also—through family connections—comprising a few members *without*. The Sadducees, according to him, was the priestly aristocracy, a few families of leading priests. And we do not even know if all leading priests belonged to this group. In talking about the large group of ordinary priests and Levites, therefore, we are by no means talking about the Sadducees. In fact, there is substantial evidence in Josephus that some priests were Pharisees.

We should probably not think of the priests as a homogeneous group, having the same opinions everywhere and at all times.[10] It remains a possibility that some leading priestly scribes were among the "sages" who, after A.D. 70, took part in the formation of the body of traditions laid down in the *Mishnah*, and that they may be responsible for the large quantity of material concerning the temple, temple rituals and priestly duties that we find there. One could also suggest the possibility that some of the priests, perhaps the majority, occupied some middle ground between the competing "school" positions of the Pharisees and Sadducees—though here we are merely guessing.

As far as we know, no "ordinary" priest has left us a written document stating his theological convictions. I say "as far as we know," for one should not exclude the possibility that some of the Jewish writings from the intertestamental period (Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha) are in fact written by priests, priests who were neither Sadducees nor Pharisees nor anything else in particular. The book of Sirach has often been characterized as "proto-sadducaic"; "proto-" because the Sadducees are documented as a separate party only at a later date. But could it be that Sirach is quite simply "priestly"?

Josephus was a priest, but clearly no average priest. Yet Josephus should be able to give us some significant evidence as to what kind of knowledge and theological opinions a priest in his days had, even if Josephus probably knew more than most.

With these tantalizing glimpses into something we would like to know more about, we must be content. It is now time to turn to the "schools" described by Josephus, and we start with the two priestly ones, Sadducees and Essenes.

Priestly Judaism: The Sadducees

Almost everything about the Sadducees is enigmatic, beginning with Jose-

[10]Cf. Menachem Stern, "Aspects of Jewish Society: The Priesthood and Other Classes," in *Compendia* 1:2: 561-630.

phus's report on them as a "philosophical school":

> The Sadducees hold that the soul perishes along with the body. They own no observance of any sort apart from the laws; in fact, they reckon it a virtue to dispute with the teachers of the path of wisdom that they pursue. There are but few men to whom this doctrine has been made known, but these are men of the highest standing. They accomplish practically nothing, however. For whenever they assume some office, though they submit unwillingly and perforce, yet submit they do to the formulas of the Pharisees, since otherwise the masses would not tolerate them. (*Antiquities* 18.16-17)

> The Sadducees ... do away with Fate [divine providence] altogether, and remove God beyond, not merely the commission, but the very sight, of evil. They maintain that man has free choice of good or evil, and that it rests with each man's will whether he follows the one or the other. As for the persistence of the soul after death, penalties in the underworld, and rewards, they will have none of them. ... Such is what I have to say on the Jewish philosophical schools. (*Jewish War* 2.164-66)

Here Josephus obviously describes the Jewish "schools" according to the conventional patterns in Greek literature of the time. In such descriptions, the school's opinions about divine providence versus free will and about the immortality of the soul were the standard topics. That Josephus singles out these questions and not others may therefore be a courtesy to his readers, and need not imply that these were the crucial questions if the schools were to describe themselves.[11] The Sadducees are clearly portrayed as Epicureans: they hold the same opinions as the Epicurean philosophers. They deny that God interferes in human affairs, and they deny the immortality of the soul. The New Testament gives a description of the Sadducean position that seems less stylized to the Greek pattern: "some Sadducees came to [Jesus], saying there is no resurrection" (Mt 22:23). "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angels, or spirits; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three" (Acts 23:8).

A tentative interpretation says that the Sadducees did not share the Pharisaic belief in an afterlife through resurrection (Josephus Hellenized this for his Greek readers as a denial of the immortality of the soul). Luke's report in Acts 23:8 about not believing in angels and spirits is not easy to interpret; maybe the Sadducees rejected the flourishing apocalyptic literature of this period with all its angels and visions (cf. Acts 23:9). In any case, the Sadducees were clearly not up to Josephus's own standard of sound theology, which agreed with the Pharisaic on these points, and so he deemed them Epicurean, that is, less than pious.

[11] N. T. Wright interestingly proposes that Josephus has translated something very Jewish (about all the three parties) into something very Greek. The real issue, according to Wright, was how the three schools were thinking about the relationship between human and divine action in history, especially with regard to the liberation and restoration of Israel: Was it God's business alone (roughly the Essenes' position), or was it dependent on man's political prudence alone (roughly the Sadducees' position), or was it a bit of both (roughly the Pharisaic position)? Cf. Wright, *The New Testament*, pp. 200-202.

In one more passage, however, Josephus gives us important information on the Sadducees and their relation to the Pharisees. And in this passage Josephus is not bound by the school presentation pattern:

> For the present I wish merely to explain that the Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the Laws of Moses, for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducaean group, who hold that only those regulations should be considered valid which were written down [in Scripture], and that those which had been handed down by former generations need not be observed. And concerning these matters the two parties came to have controversies and serious differences, the Sadducees having the confidence of the wealthy alone but no following among the populace, while the Pharisees have the support of the masses. (*Antiquities* 13.297-98)

This passage is of greater importance because of what it says about the Pharisees than what it says about the Sadducees, so we shall return to it below. Here it is sufficient to point out that the Sadducees seems to have rejected the extra-biblical regulations of the Pharisees because the Pharisees *could not and would not found these regulations upon the biblical text.* The Pharisees seem to have admitted that their extra commandments were not in the Bible. When asked why they should nevertheless be observed, they answered by pointing to the authority of their ancestors who made these regulations. That was something the Sadducees refused to accept; they were rather eager to *argue* in such questions (as Josephus said in the first text above), probably requiring a scriptural basis. The same principle could lie behind the Sadducean rejection of belief in the resurrection of the dead and communication of revelation through spirits and angels: they meant this lacked exegetical basis in the Bible. (There is no reliable evidence that the Sadducees rejected the prophetical books of the Old Testament and the rest of the Old Testament writings. Some late church fathers claim this, but may have confused Sadducees with Samaritans.)

The only additional information on the Sadducees of any significance is the Mishnah's reports on discussions between Sadducees and Pharisees concerning details of the law. We will return to these when treating the Essenes; here we quote Schiffman's summary on the matter: "In general, the Sadducees saw the purity laws as referring to the Temple and its priests, and saw no reason for extending them into the daily life of all Israel, a basic pillar of the Pharisaic approach."[12]

In all other respects, we are poorly informed about the Sadducees: their name, their origin, their history and their politics remain shrouded in mystery. The most reasonable explanation of their name is that they supported the Zadokite high priests. As we know already (cf. chapter one), the Zadokite line had been interrupted by the Hasmonean high priests. From this we would expect that the Sadducees/Zadokites would be fierce opponents of the Hasmoneans, but that seems not to have been the case. They seem rather to have cooperated with and even supported the Hasmoneans. Many hypotheses have been put forward to solve this apparent contradiction between name and policy. It is interesting, however, that some new light may be shed on the issue from the history of the other priestly elite: the Essenes. This light does not come from Josephus, but from the most recently edited portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Priestly Judaism: The Community at Qumran and the Essenes

The Community at Qumran

The Dead Sea Scrolls may be divided roughly into three categories: (1) biblical manuscripts, (2) sectarian writings and (3) non- or pre-sectarian writings. The latter category comprises (a) nonbiblical writings used but not produced by the Qumran sect, and (b) nonbiblical writings probably produced by members or predecessors of the sect, but not yet expressing the characteristic points of view that later became typical for the Qumran community. Categories 1 and 2 were published first, and many books on the Qumran sect were based mainly on these texts. Category 3 texts have been published quite recently and have changed the way scholars now perceive the origin, history, character and significance of the sect.[13]

[12]Schiffman, *Text to Tradition*, p. 108.

[13]The best comprehensive introduction to the entire Qumran literature, taking the recently published texts into account, is Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia/Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994).

One of the most important of the recently published texts is the so-called *Halakic Letter*, or "Some Deeds of the Law" (*Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah* = 4QMMT = 4Q394-399) as the full title runs. In this letter the earliest leaders of the group that fled to Qumran argue with opponents in Jerusalem who apparently belong to the priestly establishment there. The leaders of the Qumran group advocate points of law that agree with opinions ascribed to the Sadducees in later rabbinic literature, while their opponents in Jerusalem advocate opinions later ascribed to the Pharisees. In other words, the Qumran group appears to be "oppositional Sadducees," while the Jerusalem temple establishment appears to conform to Pharisaic positions. We should then combine this with the observation that the Qumran leaders engaged in bitter polemics against a "wicked priest" who persecuted "the teacher of righteousness," one of their own leaders. Scholars almost unanimously conclude that the "wicked priest" must be one of the first Hasmonean high priests, possibly Jonathan (152-143) or maybe Simon (142-134). The easiest way to explain this anti-Hasmonean attitude and the "Sadducaic" position of the Qumranites is to assume that they identified with the deposed Zadokite line of high priests, at least some branch of it, and perhaps had some of the Zadokite descendants in their midst. If so, *these* "Sadducees" exhibit precisely that anti-Hasmonean attitude we missed among the "regular" Sadducees Josephus writes about. But the Qumranites may also help explain why not all of the Zadokite party followed their course: the price they had to pay for their open opposition against the Hasmoneans was high—persecution and exile in the desert. So maybe another branch of the Zadokite opposition chose to remain in Jerusalem, near the center of power, in order to gain influence through cooperation and accommodation rather than open conflict: if you can't beat them, join them. And maybe after some time this strategy brought them such influence that they forgot everything about opposition and instead became masters of the art of compromise and remaining in power—and emerged as Josephus's Sadducees.

In any case it seems very likely that the Qumran community and the Sadducees had some common roots and a tradition of interpreting the law that derived from the same sources. The very priestly character of the Qumran community has long been noticed by scholars. One of the sectarian writings (now commonly called *The Damascus Document*), which somehow made its way to the Cairo Geniza (and from there to the Geniza collection of manuscripts in Cambridge University), was published as early as 1910 by Solomon Schechter. He did not know the provenance of the document, but from the

contents he called it a *Zadokite Work*.[14] The latest published texts have indeed proved him right.

But this means that the "pre-sectarian" doctrine of the earliest Qumran documents should be a doctrine not very unlike the Sadducean one at the same early period. The anti-Pharisaic polemic of the *Halakic Letter* also documents the early date of important Pharisaic teachings. In this way the Qumran documents not only throw light on a hitherto little known sect of Judaism. They also illuminate the early history of Sadducees and Pharisees, and allow the Qumran sect itself to appear a lot less marginal and "outside" than it did in the beginning (when only the most sectarian writings were fully edited).

The Qumran community stayed at Qumran from the 140s B.C. until the Roman destruction of the site in A.D. 68, although they probably had to vacate the community center temporarily in the years after 31 B.C., when an earthquake partly destroyed the community buildings and installations. The faultline in the ground can still be seen. Some one hundred people may have been living in Qumran. The physical isolation of the place in a desert area may have boosted the process of a more and more sectarian self-understanding. Increasingly, the Qumranites understood themselves as the only true Israelites. They were "the sons of light" who, in an apocalyptic end-time battle, were to conquer "the sons of darkness." But throughout the history of the sect, they remained true to their priestly origin (although laypeople soon became the majority). The Qumran community was organized according to the model of the tabernacle community during the forty years in the desert. There was a strictly defined order by rank: first came the priests, then the Levites, then the "many" or the people. They placed a heavy emphasis on ritual immersions and Levitical purity.

The priestly character of the sect also shows up in their attitude toward the Jerusalem temple. Since the days of the "wicked priest," the Essenes regarded the temple as polluted and the sacrifices as invalid. Nevertheless they continued to send votive offerings to the temple, and their rejection of the present temple service was by no means meant as a disparagement of the temple or a declaration that its service was insignificant. To the contrary, they rejected the present polluted service precisely because they valued the temple so much. In fact, they expected to take control of the temple and either cleanse it from

[14]Solomon Schechter, *Fragments of a Zadokite Work*, Documents of Jewish Sectaries 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910 [reprint, New York: Ktav, 1970]).

pollution or rebuild it in the near future, when the great eschatological war had begun. The spiritual worship and the community meal at Qumran were only temporary substitutes for the temple service, which was to be resumed as soon as possible. In the meantime the Qumran community itself could be called the temple of God: He was present in their midst.

Finally, the messianism of the community had a priestly slant. Like other Jewish groups at the time, the Qumran people awaited *two* messiahs, one anointed priest and one anointed king (cf. Zech 4:11-14 as a biblical foundation for this model). In Qumran the priestly Messiah—presumably the eschatological Zadokite high priest—would rank above the Davidic royal Messiah.[15]

John J. Collins summarizes the role and function of the Davidic Messiah:

> He is the scepter who will smite the nations, slay the wicked with the breath of his lips, and restore the Davidic dynasty. Hence his role in the eschatological war. He is also the Messiah of righteousness, who will usher in an era of peace and justice. He is presumably a human figure, although he is endowed with the Spirit of the Lord. He is expected to restore a dynasty rather than rule forever himself.[16]

The priestly Messiah, on the other hand, is expected to restore the temple worship. It is possible that in speaking of two messiahs, not one, and in extolling the priestly Messiah as a separate figure, different from the royal, the Qumran sect was indirectly criticizing the Hasmonean combination of the two offices.

Such, in rough outline, was the Judaism of the Qumran community. The main point about the Dead Sea Scrolls in our context is that they have opened a completely new window on aspects of Judaism toward the end of the Second Temple period. They have given us firsthand source material from a variety of Judaism we didn't know existed. Or did we?

The Essenes

Two pagan Roman authors, Dio Chrysostom and Pliny, say that a Jewish sect by the Latin name *Esseni*[17] had fled to the shores of the Dead Sea and established itself there; Pliny even located them between Jericho and En Gedi,

[15]On the messianism of the scrolls, see esp. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1995).

[16]Collins, *Scepter*, p. 67.

[17]Cf. in general *New Schürer* 2:555-97, with extensive bibliography (until 1979) pp. 555-58.

which must mean at Qumran.[18] Philo and Josephus have more information on the same sect, which they identify in Greek as *Essaioi* (Philo and Josephus) or *Essenoi* (Josephus). Josephus and Philo do not mention the settlement at Qumran, but say that the Essenes live scattered around in the whole country. Josephus also speaks about two branches of the sect, one that avoids marriage and one that accepts it (*Jewish War* 2.160-61). He gives a quite detailed description of the Essenes' way of life, which makes it evident that they were very scrupulous about ritual purity and that they dressed in white linen, probably a priestly vestment. Josephus as well as Philo numbered them at over four thousand.

Are these "Essenes" and the Qumran community the same sect? Some scholars answer with a simple *yes;* some with a simple *no.* The majority, however, think we are safer to say that there must be some connection between the Qumran community and the four thousand Essenes, but hardly a complete identity.[19] For one thing, there is the question of numbers and locale. The Qumran community center could probably house some one hundred people, and Josephus and Philo explicitly state that the Essenes lived all over the land of Israel. Josephus said there was no town without them. The better question, therefore, probably asks, what was the relationship between the Qumran community center and the larger Essene movement? Were the people at Qumran a splinter group, an extreme wing? Or was the center at Qumran a kind of spiritual headquarters for the whole movement, the home of its scribal elite and leadership? Perhaps it functioned, at the same time, as a "retreat center" where ordinary Essenes could live for a while to study and practice the purity rules more stringently than possible in their hometowns. While uncertain about the exact answers to these or similar proposals, most scholars agree that there must be some such connection between the Essenes and the Qumran community. There are, in fact, indications in the Scrolls themselves that two different sets of rules were valid: one for people living in Qumran itself, one for sect members living elsewhere, among non-members.

Josephus treats the Essenes within his "three schools" passages, and in what he says about their philosophical ideas, the Pythagoreans seem to be his

[18]For a brief and concise discussion of Pliny's and Dio's statements, see *New Schürer* 2:562-63. For more extensive treatment, see Geza Vermes and Martin D. Goodman, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources*, Oxford Centre Textbooks 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

[19]The most recent and extensive discussion of Josephus's description compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls is Todd S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 58 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

model: "The doctrine of the Essenes is wont to leave everything in the hands of God. They regard the soul as immortal and believe that they ought to strive especially to draw near to righteousness. . . . Otherwise they are of the highest character, devoting themselves solely to agricultural labor" (*Antiquities* 18.18-19). Roughly speaking, the Scrolls confirm this somewhat stylized picture of Essene doctrine; the Qumran community did emphasize the sovereign and irresistible will of God more than other varieties of Judaism known to us.

Even before the 1947 discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars had used Josephus's and Philo's material on the Essenes to illuminate certain aspects of Jesus' teaching and that of the early Christian community. The availability of the new and rich material from Qumran led, during the first decades, to considerable enthusiasm and sometimes exaggerated claims about the Scrolls being the real clue to everything about Jesus and the early community. In recent years more sober and balanced assessments have been made, and there is already a large body of literature on Qumran and the New Testament. We shall not pursue this theme here, however, but return to it in chapters six and seven. It is now time to call on stage those teachers of Israel who used to be considered its only teachers: the Pharisees.

Priestly Judaism for Laypeople: The Pharisees

Scholars used to know a lot about the Pharisees, which did not surprise readers of the New Testament because to them the Pharisees seemed very familiar. It therefore comes as somewhat of a surprise that scholars in recent years have come to question much of established "knowledge" about the Pharisees. But if one looks into the matter a little more closely, one can hardly escape the conclusion that the now widespread caution is well founded. One scholar summarized our main problem with regard to the Pharisees thus: "first that there is far too little evidence; and . . . second, that there is far too much."[20]

1. Outside the enormous bulk of rabbinic writings, we have mainly the New Testament and Josephus as roughly contemporary sources for the last period of Pharisaism. These books contain something on the Pharisees, but not as much, and not as clear and unambiguous, as we could wish. This is the problem of too little evidence.

2. The rabbinic writings contain a lot of information, or apparent information, on the early sages and their teaching and rulings, and some of these sages belong to the pre-70 period. It is commonly assumed that these early

[20]John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 1.

sages were Pharisees, and also that the body of tradition fostered by the second- and third-century rabbis to a large extent had already been held by the first-century Pharisees. We spoke about this model of continuity above. In addition, the rabbinic writings often refer to people called *perushim*, probably the Hebrew word rendered *Pharisaioi* by Josephus and in the New Testament. Here we are in for a surprise, however, for the *perushim* are often denounced as schismatics or hypocrites by the rabbis, and often seem not to be a specific group at all. In other texts they are obviously the opponents of the Sadducees, and then they resemble the New Testament's and Josephus's Pharisees a lot more. In short, the rabbinic material represents the problem of too much evidence.

In recent years, scholars have tried to tackle these problems one by one, treating Josephus's evidence (and that of the New Testament) on its own terms,[21] and that of the rabbinic sources on their own terms.[22] Only after completing this work may one venture some tentative synthesis into one coherent picture, always keeping in mind the hypothetical nature of some of the conclusions. Leaning heavily on the experts in the field, we make the following attempt along these lines.

According to Josephus, the Pharisees emerge as a distinct group around the middle of the second century B.C. (together with the Sadducees), and he depicts them as scheming politicians who use rather tough methods with their opponents, including murder. After the end of Hasmonean rule, single Pharisees seem to have had some influence on some of Herod's family; then they disappear from the political scene altogether, only to emerge once more during the dramatic year of A.D. 67 when the internal Jewish debate about the great insurrection against Rome reached its peak. Many scholars have had difficulty squaring this picture of the Pharisees as primarily politicians with the pictures in other sources (also in Josephus) that portray them primarily as a theological party concerned with the purity regulations in the Torah.[23] It could be, however, that this contrast between "politics" and "piety" is a modern one that should not be applied to the period we are concerned with here. During both of the two periods in which we meet the Pharisees in a mainly

[21]The leading representative of this approach is now Steve Mason, *Josephus on the Pharisees* (see full reference in Suggestions).

[22]The pioneer in this field is Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinical Traditions about the Pharisees*, 3 vols., and the one-volume selection *The Pharisees* (see Suggestions).

[23]Jacob Neusner observed the two different portraits and tried to understand them as depicting a historic development of the Pharisaic movement: *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1979).

political role, the Jewish people took their political fate into their own hands and established some degree of self-rule. In such circumstances *all* groups wanting to lead and influence the people of Israel had to become politicians—except the ones who quit the political power play altogether and went into exile, as the Qumranites. In the Hasmonean temple-state the question of how to interpret and practice the laws regulating the people's relation to the temple—purity, tithes and so on—would be both religious and political questions at the same time.[24] The Pharisees and the Sadducees disagreed in such matters; the Pharisees advocated some nonbiblical rulings that they did not justify with biblical exegesis, but by appeal to the authority of "the (fore)fathers" who had given these rulings. Josephus and the New Testament writings agree completely on one point: the Pharisees were known to be extremely scrupulous in their observance of these regulations. But in what did this scrupulosity consist?

Here a rabbinic source may help us. *Mishnah Avot* 1:1 as well as many parallel texts state that "the men of the Great Synagogue" said three things: Be deliberate in judgement, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the law. It is this latter command that concerns us here. Making a fence around the law means giving supplementary rulings that hinder a man or woman from even coming close to breaking a scriptural command. These supplementary rulings have no direct biblical foundation, but are meant to prevent one from getting into a situation in which one might break a biblical command. For example, when Adam heard God say "of the tree of the knowledge . . . you shall not eat" (Gen 2:17) in rendering this command for Eve he "made a fence" by adding "you shall not eat of [it], nor shall you touch it" (Gen 3:3).[25] The attribution of the command to "make a fence" to the rather shadowy "Great Synagogue" may be legend, but there is hardly any doubt that this principle expresses well the idea behind much of the Pharisaic tradition of extrabiblical regulations: they are meant to prevent even the opportunity for breaking scriptural commands.

A considerable bulk of the Pharisaic halakah is concerned with purity regulations (food, drink and vessels) and the laws of tithing. In the Bible most of these laws concern the priests or visitors to the temple: those "within the camp." Most Jews and most priests seem to have taken this quite literally and did not worry much about these regulations in everyday life outside "the

[24]Cf. Daniel R. Schwartz, "On Pharisaic Opposition to the Hasmonean Monarchy," in *Studies*, pp. 44-56.

[25]*Avot of Rabbi Nathan* 1; trans. Goldin, *Fathers*, p. 8.

Box 5.1. Pharisaic "Tradition" and Rabbinic "Oral Law"

In *TB Shabbat* 31a there is a story about Hillel the Elder referring to two Torahs, one written and one oral, both originating with Moses at Sinai. This has often been taken as proof that already the early Pharisees knew the concept of an oral Torah transmitted all the way from Sinai to their own time through an unbroken chain of tradents. This idea is later clearly stated in the opening passages of the *Mishnah* tractate *Avot*. It is doubtful, however, that the pre-70 Pharisees knew this idea. It is clearly not known to the New Testament writers in their reports on the Pharisees, and it is unknown to Josephus. What they say about the "tradition" obeyed by the Pharisees seems rather to speak against their knowing an oral law from Sinai: the Pharisees cited "their forefathers" as the originators of and the authorities behind their "tradition," not God or Moses at Sinai. Likewise, the rabbinic writings only very rarely ascribe the concept of oral law to early sages, and the way these early sages treat scribal tradition seems to indicate that they did not accord it the same authority as the written Torah from Sinai. It therefore seems that the concept of oral Torah developed later, possibly to be launched for the first time in the tractate *Avot*, and that it was an alternative attempt to come to terms with the *question of authority*, which had accompanied the Pharisaic extra-biblical tradition from the beginning. The other attempt to bolster the authority of this tradition was to try and give it an exegetical underpinning, to show it could be derived from biblical commands. Possibly these two strategies developed more or less as parallels—in the long run, both were incorporated in the Talmuds.[26]

camp," when not visiting the temple. The Pharisees, however, seem to have applied these regulations in their everyday life, at least within Jerusalem, which they may have defined as being "the camp" spoken of in the Torah.

Jacob Neusner has interpreted this Pharisaic program as aimed at making every Israelite a "priest." They should all live a life not only in accordance with the Torah, but specifically in accordance with the requirements of Levitical purity which the Torah enjoined only on the priests.[27] They sought to realize God's calling for Israel as *Mamlehet Kohanim*, a nation of priests (Ex 19:6). "Their emphasis on the importance of dietary laws and other purity regulations was based on their desire to raise the status of every Jew to equal that of the priests and to consider their table as similar to the table of God in the Jerusalem temple."[28]

In order to help each other achieve this ideal, the Pharisees organized societies, *havurot*, with the main purpose of enabling all members to maintain their purity and share their meals at a completely *kosher* table. It is possible

[26]For bibliography and a very instructive discussion of this issue, see E. P. Sanders, "Did the Pharisees Have Oral Law?" in *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM Press/Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), pp. 97-130.

[27]For discussions of Neusner's thesis, see E. P. Sanders, "Did the Pharisees Eat Ordinary Food in Purity?" in *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*, pp. 131-254; Daniel R. Schwartz, "'Kingdom of Priests': A Pharisaic Slogan?" in Schwartz, *Studies*, 57-80.

[28]*New Schürer* 2:388 n. 16.

that the name Pharisee originated with the emergence of this phenomenon. It means "one who separates himself," namely from unclean things and persons, which included the majority of the people. A great deal of Pharisaic halakah is concerned with how members of the *havurot* should deal with those outside so as not to lose their own purity. Those outside, the non-Pharisaic Jews, were called the *am haaretz*, "the people of the land," a rather scornful name in the mouth of a Pharisee.[29]

With this, we have tried to make the scrupulosity of the Pharisees a little more concrete; the nature of the sources hardly allows us to be much more specific.

Like Sadduceeism, Pharisaism was probably a Jerusalem-centered movement. In order to become a Pharisee, Paul went to Jerusalem to study at the feet of Gamaliel. But there are more than one indication in the extant sources that the Pharisees wanted to extend their sphere of influence not only to all the land of Israel but also into the Diaspora, and that therefore some of them traveled. Thus, it is not surprising that we find Pharisees debating with Jesus in the Galilean synagogues (a couple of times they are said to come from Jerusalem, together with "the scribes").

Having previously stressed that all the Jewish groups treated in this chapter held the temple and the temple service at the very center of their concerns, how should we describe the Pharisees in this regard? As we have seen, the Pharisees sought to make every Israelite a priest and every meal a temple meal. Their aim was to extend the sanctity of the temple, not to replace it or make it unnecessary. And yet, once you say that the temple is wherever you are, it is easy to draw the conclusion that the actual temple is insignificant, perhaps even dispensable. The very heart of the temple service was the sacrifices. The prophets of the Bible taught Israel that sacrifices would not suffice if unaccompanied by real heartfelt contrition and a sincere desire to mend one's ways and practice righteousness. One could easily conclude that the sacrifices themselves were nonessential: the change of heart was the real thing.

The sacrifices were expressly commanded by the highest authority, the Torah, and because of this we can expect a certain ambivalence among the Pharisees about them. Because of the Torah the sacrifices were held in high esteem as God's will, but at the same time repentance can be seen as the main

[29]Cf. John 7:48-49, in which "the authorities" (the chief priests) and the Pharisees are contrasted to "this crowd, which does not know the law."

factor in atonement. It is interesting to study the approach of Johanan ben Zakkai on this matter. Some sayings of his clearly indicate that he did not regard the cultic rites as necessary or effective in themselves. Thus, he was able to interpret the fall of the temple and the cessation of the sacrifices as God's hint that other means should now replace the temple service.

> Once as Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai was coming forth from Jerusalem, Rabbi Joshua followed after him and beheld the temple in ruins. "Woe unto us!" Rabbi Joshua cried, "that this, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste!" "My son," Rabban Johanan said to him, "be not grieved; we have another atonement as effective as this. And what is it? It is acts of loving-kindness, as it is said, 'For I desire mercy and not sacrifice' [Hos 6:6]. (*Avot of Rabbi Nathan* 4)[30]

Thus the very program of Pharisaism—to make every Israelite a priest and every table a temple meal—had prepared Israel for the post-70 situation. It was perhaps quite unintentional, but we cannot know for sure. There are indications in the rabbinic sources that some rabbis in Jesus' days had forebodings that the temple service would come to an end, and some even prophesied to that effect.[31] The Pharisees were therefore probably not among those who were most concerned about what Jesus had to say about the temple. With or without knowing it, they were themselves preparing the people for the post-70 situation.

Still, the people mourned the loss of the temple deeply. Many of the traditions in the Mishnah are preserved with a view to the eventual rebuilding of the temple. For this rebuilding the rabbis, among them Rabbi Akiba, continued to long and pray, because the temple service was part of the Torah to which they were dedicated.

[30]Goldin, *Fathers*, p. 34.

[31]"Our rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot ('For the Lord') did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-colored strap become white; nor did the western-most light shine; and the doors of the *Hekal* [sanctuary] would open by themselves, until R. Johanan ben Zakkai rebuked them, saying: *Hekal, Hekal*, why will you be the alarmer yourself? I know about you that you will be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied concerning you: Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars" (*TB Yoma* 39b). "R. Zadok observed fasts for forty years in order that Jerusalem might not be destroyed, [and he became so thin that] when he ate anything the food could be seen [as it passed through his throat]. When he wanted to restore himself, they used to bring him a fig, and he used to suck the juice and throw the rest away" (*TB Gittin* 56a).

Judaism Apart from the Temple: The Synagogue

The most concrete expression of this unconscious preparation for the post-70 situation was the establishment of the synagogue.[32] The historical origins of the synagogue are thickly shrouded in uncertainty. The traditional theory is that the first synagogues were established during the Babylonian exile, but there is insufficient evidence to prove this. The earliest archaeological evidence comes from Egypt and suggests that synagogues existed there ca. 250 B.C. From the first century A.D. we have written evidence of their existence in the New Testament, Philo and Josephus. First-century synagogues have been archaeologically documented at Herodium, Masada, Gamla and (one) in Jerusalem. The literary evidence points to several synagogues in Galilee. If we stick to the first-century A.D. picture, the following pattern seems to emerge: the synagogue was by then a well-established institution in the Diaspora, and some Diaspora Jews took this institution with them to Jerusalem when they settled there. Otherwise, there were no ordinary synagogues in Jerusalem or Judea:[33] the temple itself was close and available and made synagogues superfluous. In Galilee the synagogue seems to have become the order of the day in the first century, but was possibly quite young as an institution. We also do not know if there existed special buildings for the synagogue assembly or if the assembly met in the city square or in large private houses. Luke 7:5 indicates that there was a synagogue building in Capernaum at least; possibly it was completely demolished when the big "white" synagogue in Capernaum (the ruins are still standing) was built in the early Byzantine period. There is still a conspicuous lack

[32]Selective bibliography: A. Th. Kraabel, "The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence Since Sukenik," in Haase, *Aufstieg* 2 19.1:477-510; S. B. Hoenig, "The Ancient City-Square: The Forerunner of the Synagogue," ibid.: 448-76; Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987); Frowald G. Hüttenmeister, "'Synagoge' und 'Proseuche' bei Josephus und in anderen antiken Quellen," in *Begegnungen zwischen Christentum und Judentum in Antike und Mittelalter: Festschrift für Heinz Schreckenberg*, ed. Dietrich-Alex Koch and Hermann Lichtenberger, Schriften des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), pp. 163-81; Dan Urman and Paul V. M. Flesher, eds., *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, vol. 1, Studia Post-Biblica 47, 1 (Leiden/New York/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1995); Steven Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, Baltimore Studies in the History of Judaism (London/New York: Routledge, 1999); Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[33]The synagogues at Herodium and Masada are exceptions: they were probably established by Zealots of Galilean origin during the Jewish war of A.D. 66-70.

of hard archaeological data on first-century Galilean synagogue buildings (apart from the extraordinary one in Gamla).

The oldest sources speak of the reading and expounding of the Scriptures—some also of prayer—as the central feature of the synagogue service. It must be stressed that the synagogue was a laymen's institution. Whereas in the temple everything was done by the priests, in the synagogue everything depended on the lay congregation itself. The central part of the service, the reading of the Scriptures, was carried out by the members of the congregation in turn. If a scribe was present, he would be asked to expound the text. But if none were available, everyone was free to speak, and guests would be asked to step forward and greet the congregation with a "word of exhortation" (Acts 13:15). If a priest happened to be there, his status was equal to that of the other members of the congregation. All these features clearly betray the synagogue's Diaspora origins.

Apart from the reading and expounding of the Scriptures, the other main component of the synagogue service was prayer. Here again it was the congregation who prayed, not a priest or someone appointed to this task.[34] Before the time of Jesus, fixed patterns had already developed for both these components of the synagogue service. The Scripture reading consisted of the Torah, read each Sabbath according to a three-year or one-year cycle, and the Prophets, read selectively so as to match the Torah passage.[35] This reading of the Prophets was called the *haftarah* ("ending" or "completion") of the Torah reading. Typical of the availability of sources about the first century, it is the New Testament that gives us the first reliable accounts of the *haftarah* reading in Israel and the Diaspora: Luke 4:17 and Acts 13:15. Some of the main prayers still used in the synagogue service today already existed in the first century A.D.—and some may even be traced back to the last two centuries B.C. This holds true for the principal prayer in each synagogue service, which is often called quite simply the *Tefflah* (the prayer) or the *Amidah* (because it is prayed *standing*), or, more fully, the *Shmoneh Esre* ("the eighteen" [benedictions]). The individual blessings contained in this prayer are probably older than the compilation of all eighteen benedictions, which apparently took place toward the end of the first century A.D.

[34]The custom of having a priest say the Aaronic blessing in the synagogue service probably developed after the fall of the temple, cf. below.

[35]On the reading from the Bible and the cycles of reading in the ancient synagogue, see C. Perrot, "The Reading of the Bible in the Ancient Synagogue," in *Compendia* 2:1: 137-59; Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Early History of Public Reading of the Torah," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine, Baltimore Studies in the History of Judaism (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 44-56; Lee E. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven, Conn./London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 506-10.

In this early phase, the wording of the benedictions seems to have varied, but their main purpose and contents were fixed. In the days of Jesus the wording and sequence of the elements of the synagogue service had attained such stability that we are fully justified in speaking of a synagogal liturgy. The echoes of the synagogal prayers in the Lord's Prayer and other early Christian prayers demonstrate that this liturgy was well known to Jesus and the early disciples. We should not think that the early Christians were antiliturgical in their worship gatherings. It is no accident that in Acts 2:42 Luke does not say that the early community "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching . . . and *prayer*," but to "*the prayers*," which suggests fixed patterns. All the evidence points to the synagogal liturgy as a source for those prayers. We shall return to this topic in chapters eighteen and nineteen.

The synagogue and its service were from the outset considered supplements, not substitutes, for the temple service. The latter revolved around the sacrifices, while the former revolved around the reading of the Scriptures. Thus, while the synagogue was by no means opposed to the temple, it did not necessarily side with the priesthood. The lay scribes were closer to its heart than the priests. No doubt the Pharisaic scribes were quite influential in the synagogues of the land of Israel during the 100-150 years prior to the fall of the temple, though they never had a complete monopoly.

After the destruction of the temple, the synagogue service became a real substitute for the temple service, but only after important additions had been made. When the Psalms were no longer sung by the Levites in the temple, the synagogue's congregation took up this Levitical task. The blessing of Aaron (the priestly blessing) no longer sounded from the lips of the officiating temple priest; it was solemnly recited in the framework of the synagogue prayers—but still by a priest.

At a somewhat later date, specific prayers were thought to replace the temple sacrifices (according to a rabbinic exegesis of Hosea 14:2: Words of the lips are more valuable than animal sacrifices). It also became customary to recite the biblical and mishnaic passages concerning sacrifices as a substitute for the actual sacrifices. It should be emphasized that none of the sages responsible for these modifications of the synagogal liturgy thought of the synagogue service as a permanent substitute for the temple service. They created prayers for the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the sacrifices, and the

synagogue equivalents to the temple service were only meant to be temporary substitutes, until the time of restoration. In theory, this has been the attitude of rabbinic Judaism ever since. But as centuries passed, the whole temple service became something more and more strange and foreign—until Maimonides in the twelfth century declared the sacrificial cult to be only a temporary necessity (there are rabbinic intimations of the idea much earlier).

Nationalistic Judaism: The Zealots

To describe the Zealot movement very briefly, we could say that according to Josephus it was the nationalistic right wing of the Pharisees. Josephus writes that the Zealots agreed with the Pharisees in all things, except that "they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master" (*Antiquities* 18.23).[36]

The Zealot movement was founded, according to Josephus, by Judas of Gamla and Zadok the Pharisee in response to the census carried out by Quirinius (cf. Lk 2:2 and Acts 5:37). "They said that the assessment carried with it a status amounting to downright slavery, no less, and appealed to the nation to make a bid for independence" (*Antiquities* 18.4). Judas may have had an ambition to copy the Maccabees, and in one respect he was successful: many of his descendants became leading Jewish freedom fighters. His sons Simon and Jacob were engaged in anti-Roman activities and were crucified as rebels ca. A.D. 47. His descendant Menahem captured Masada at the beginning of the Great War against Rome in A.D. 66 and later was a leader of the revolt in Jerusalem. Menahem's nephew was Eleazar ben Yair, the famous leader of those freedom fighters who held out at Masada and finally determined to take their own lives rather than become Roman slaves. There is therefore some justification for speaking of a whole dynasty of Zealot leaders. The sources also contain evidence that indicates that at least some of these leaders made messianic claims for themselves or were regarded as messiahs by their followers.

Until the outbreak of the large-scale revolt in A.D. 66, these leaders and their followers mostly used guerilla tactics in their fight against Herodian and Roman rule, and did not shrink from using political assassination as a weapon against their enemies. They hid daggers in their clothes and used the cover of festival crowds to get at their victims—hence their nickname *Sicarii*,

[36]Josephus's portrait of the Zealots is analyzed, e.g., in Valentin Nikiprowetzky, "Josephus and the Revolutionary Parties," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), pp. 216-36.

daggermen.[37] It seems that these Sicarii were, during the last years before A.D. 70, distinguished from other Zealot groups.

It seems that there were two things Judas found outrageous about the Roman census under Quirinius. First, counting the people of Israel is prohibited in the Bible, and second, the census was the first step of taxation. The tax had to be paid in heathen coins, bearing a three-dimensional image of Caesar (cf. Mt 22:15-22).

Our sources are inadequate for an extensive description of the development of the Zealot movement starting with Judas and ending in A.D. 70, and many scholars now think that Josephus has exaggerated in portraying the Zealot movement as a continuous movement of a more or less organized nature.

The highly dramatic climax to the activities of the Zealots was the Great War against Rome in A.D. 66-70, which Josephus describes in detail. It is not our purpose here to recount the whole story told by Josephus; but a few relevant points should be noted. The first is that this war did not begin as a revolt by "the Jews" against Rome, but as a Zealot rebellion. There was much Jewish opposition to the revolt. The priestly aristocracy was of course against it, and so were the leading Pharisees. The first phase of the revolt therefore had the character of an internal civil war in Jerusalem, in which the Zealot party gained the upper hand. They crowned their victory by murdering—after treason—the Roman watch force which had taken refuge in the three towers of Herod's Palace in the Upper City (now within the Citadel at the Jaffa Gate).

After this, the war partly changed its character. The priestly aristocracy and the leading men of Jerusalem realized that a massive Roman retaliation could not be avoided, and they joined the rebels and mobilized most of the country. However, when the Roman onslaught came, these leaders and their hastily improvised armies could offer the Roman legions little resistance, and for the duration of the war the leadership and military power

[37]It has been suggested that Judas's appellation, Iscariot, means that he belonged to the Sicarii, and that his disapproval of Jesus' non-violence motivated his betrayal. But this is speculation and is linguistically unlikely, since the obvious meaning of Iscariot is *ish Kerioth*, a "man from Kerioth." On the other hand, the second name of Jesus' disciple Simon *the Cananaean* (Hebrew *haKannai*) could indicate that he belonged to the Zealot party, for *kannai* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *zeelotes* (cf. Mk 3:18). But a man being called a zealot, or calling himself a zealot, in the 30s A.D. did not necessarily imply that he belonged to anything like an organized militant group. Paul refers to himself as "a zealot for the traditions of my ancestors" in Gal 1:14, thus demonstrating the rather non-technical meaning of the term in his time (before the Great War against Rome A.D. 66-70, when the term was appropriated by one faction among the freedom fighters).

Temple Square

The temple has been with us throughout this chapter. The different Jewish parties gave different answers to the question of how the purity of the people related to the purity of the temple. Nevertheless, all were thinking within a shared framework: holiness and purity are related to the presence of God according to a system of concentric circles, with the Holy of Holies in the center, then the sanctuary, then the courtyards, then Jerusalem, the Land, the earth. A corresponding system of concentric circles involves human beings: in the center the high priest, the only one to enter the Holy of Holies; around him priests, Levites, Jewish men, Jewish women, Gentiles.

For the Sadducees, that was it; there was nothing more to say, except that Roman occupation did not in any fundamental way interfere with this system.

For the Pharisees, the point was to extend the priestly circle to include themselves as laypersons; to extend the temple realm into their own houses and courtyards. Their intent was not meant to create a replacement, only an extension of the temple. But when the temple in the center disappeared, the temple in their homes did not.

The Qumran community had the biggest problem with the whole system: for them, the very center of holiness was polluted. Accordingly they had to establish a new center elsewhere, and did so at Qumran. Since this was not, to begin with, a sanctified place, the requirements of ritual purity were even harsher at Qumran than anywhere else. Here these requirements had to create a sacred space that did not exist beforehand. But it was all meant to be temporary. For the time being, the Qumran community itself functioned as the temple, but their aim was to recapture the sanctuary in Jerusalem and rededicate it for pure worship.

Josephus's "Fourth Philosophy," more commonly known as the Zealot movement, found Roman presence and Roman control of the Land problematic, and Roman control of the center unacceptable. For them, the king of heaven and the emperor in Rome were rivals when it came to the temple. One had to give way to the other. Gentile-Roman control of the center was itself a pollution.

Samaritanism was not Judaism, for the simple reason that the Samaritans did not recognize the true center.

Finally, we have the lonely figure of John the Baptist (and maybe others like him). We don't know much about him. But apparently he thought that the center of purity and holiness was not the Jerusalem temple, nor any other, nor any specific place at all. For him, the center seems not to have been a place, but something he himself did: his cleansing, sanctifying baptism. The ideal place for his preaching and his baptism of repentance was the desert, not the temple. For John, this raised the question of who constituted the true Israel in a new and radical way.

Approaching Jesus and his followers from this temple background raises many intriguing questions. How did Jesus fit into this picture? Did he?

reverted back to the hands of the Zealots.

As the war went on, they all assembled in Jerusalem to protect the temple. They did this with the utmost dedication and courage, while at the same time engaging in brutal acts of revenge amongst themselves and cruel persecution of anyone in the city suspected of sympathizing with Rome.

Thus the Great War began and ended as the war of the Zealots. The Pharisaic opposition should be especially noted. We have already seen that the founder of rabbinic Judaism, Johanan ben Zakkai, slipped silently out of

Jerusalem in the midst of the uprising. His way was not the way of the Zealots. But it was his way that was to provide a future for Judaism.[38]

Suggestions for Further Reading

A useful anthology of older studies is Lee Levine, *Jewish Sects, Parties and Ideologies in the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1978).

A comprehensive, balanced and readable account of the traditional picture of Pharisees and Sadducees is contained in *New Schürer* 2:381-414. Cf. also Murphy, *Religious World*, pp. 187-245.

A more recent synthesis, taking account of current developments within Qumran research, is Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). Stemberger is highly critical of many established points of view, but may be over-skeptical in some respects. For a more balanced statement of the "new" position, see Grabbe, *Judaism*, pp. 29-50. For E. P. Sander's contribution to the picture of Jewish leadership, see his *Judaism*, pp. 170-89; 315-490.

Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, "E. P. Sanders' 'Common Judaism,' Jesus, and the Pharisees," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s, 46 (1995): 1-70, provide a magisterial evaluation of much recent research on the Pharisees and other leading groups.

On the Pharisees:

A useful anthology of translated source material is John Bowker, *Jesus and the Pharisees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

The two classic works on rabbinic theology and practice, assuming a basic continuity within the Pharisaic tradition, are George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927-1930 [reprinted in 2 volumes, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997]); Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975 [and reprints]). Cf. also Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith*, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962). This contains a theory of the social setting of Pharisaism that has been contested by other scholars. For critique of the "old" approach, see e.g., Gerald J. Blidstein, "The Import of Early Rabbinic Writings for an Understanding of Judaism in the Hellenistic-Roman Period," in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series 10 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 64-72; Jacob Neusner, "The Use of the Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of First-Century Pharisaism," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, ed. William Scott Green, Brown Judaic Studies 1 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 215-28.

[38] On Johanan's flight and its significance, cf. Peter Schäfer, "Die Flucht Johanan b. Zakkais aus Jerusalem und die Gründung des 'Lehrhauses' in Jabne," in Haase, *Aufstieg* 2 19.2:43-101.

On the "new" approach in Pharisaic studies:
Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*, 3 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971; reissued as South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism, 202-4 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999). An attempt to sift out the historically reliable traditions concerning the Pharisees contained in later rabbinic literature. Cf. also his one-volume summary, *The Pharisees: Rabbinic Perspectives*, Studies in Ancient Judaism 1 (Hoboken, N.J.: 1973); and his historical sketch: *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Ktav, 1979). Neusner spearheaded the new methodology in Pharisaic studies.

E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM Press/ Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), contains two extensive essays in which he discusses Neusner's theses about the Pharisees: "Did the Pharisees have Oral Law?" (pp. 97-130); and "Did the Pharisees Eat Ordinary Food in Purity?" (pp. 131-254).

Other studies representing the "new" approach, but with different conclusions:
The question of continuity and discontinuity between the Pharisees and later rabbis is instructively dealt with in Alexander Guttmann, *Rabbinic Judaism in the Making* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).

Ellis Rivkin, "Defining the Pharisees: The Tannaitic Sources," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 40/41 (1969-1970): 205-49. Idem, *A Hidden Revolution* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978).

Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1988; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989).

Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study*, Studia Post-Biblica 39 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991). A landmark in careful reading of Josephus's evidence.

Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 55 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997). Attempts a cultural-sociological explanation of the phenomenon.

Cf. also Schiffman, *Text to Tradition*, pp. 98-119.

On the history of research:
Roland Deines, *Die Pharisäer: Ihr Verständnis als Spiegel der christlichen und jüdischen Forschung seit Wellhausen und Graetz*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 101 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997). In its concluding chapter, pp. 534-55, this study makes a significant contribution toward drawing a balanced and updated picture of the Pharisees, at the same time holding on to valid insights in earlier research, which, according to Deines, has been grossly misrepresented by some of the leading representatives of the new paradigm.

On the Sadducees:
The great classic study is J. Le Moyne, *Les Sadducéens* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1972). This study may claim to know more about them than we actually do. Cf. Günther Baumbach, "The Sadducees in Josephus," in *Josephus, the Bible, and History*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), pp. 173-95.

On the synagogue:
Concerning the origin and early history of the synagogue, cf. the titles listed in note 32, page 123 above. On the development of synagogue liturgy, see the recent survey in Raphael Posner, Uri Kaploun and Shalom Cohen, eds., *Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service Through the Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975).

The classic monograph on the historical development of the synagogue service is Ismar Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (orig. ed. Leipzig, 1913; 3rd ed. Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1931 [reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olm, 1967]). English trans.: *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993).

More summarized, but also more readable, is A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York: Schoken, 1967).

The most recent synthesis of liturgical research and history is Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993, paperback ed. 1995).

On Qumran and the Essenes:
For a short introduction, see *New Schürer* 2:550-97, or Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 4th ed. (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 1-64. Another, more complete, one-volume English translation of the scrolls is Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden/New York/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1994).

For full-scale and up-to-date treatment, see J. C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994); Lawrence H. Schiffmann, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia/Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994).

A profiled and provocative study with interesting discussion of the relationship between the Essene movement and John the Baptist, Jesus and the early Christian community, is Hartmut Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus*, 4th ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1994). English trans.: *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998). Stegemann also has useful comments on recent sensationalist publishing on Qumran (e.g., Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* [London: Cape, 1991]; Barbara Thiering, *Jesus and the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Unlocking the Secrets of His Life Story* [San Francisco: Harper, 1992]; Robert H. Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* [Shaftesbury: Element, 1992]).

Full discussion of the unreliable information in these "bestsellers," and reliable up-to-date information is also provided in Otto Betz and Rainer Riesner, *Jesus, Qumran und der Vatikan: Klarstellungen* (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1993). English trans.: *Jesus, Qumran and the Vatican: Clarifications* (London/New York: Crossroad, 1994).

On Qumran and the New Testament:
Krister Stendahl, ed., *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1957; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975; reprint, New York, 1992); Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament*, Brown Judaic Studies 48 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983 [orig. ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961]); James H. Charlesworth, ed., *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); idem, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992); Jerome Murphy-O'Connor and J. H. Charlesworth, eds., *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2000).

On the Zealot movement:
See *New Schürer* 2:598-606. The standard study in large format is Martin Hengel, *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I bis 70 n. Chr.*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 1, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976 [1st ed. 1961]). English trans.: *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I Until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989).

The theory that Jesus had close connections with the Zealots and was, basically, a Zealot himself, is propounded in S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967). This theory has been widely rejected among scholars, we think rightly so. Cf. Martin Hengel, *War Jesus revolutionär?* Calwer Hefte 110 (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1970). English trans.: *Was Jesus a Revolutionist?* Facet Books, Biblical Series 28 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971); idem, *Victory over Violence: Jesus and the Revolutionists* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973); Ernst Bammel and Charles F. D. Moule, eds., *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

PART 2

CHRISTIAN BEGINNINGS

FROM JEWISH PARTY TO GENTILE CHURCH