

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE GOSPEL

DOMINIC M. CROSSAN, O.S.M.

Loyola University, Chicago

AT A MOMENT in history when the Christian conscience seems to have become anguished at its heritage of anti-Semitism,¹ the title of this article needs little justification but possibly some explanation. If our theological anti-Semitism, be it conscious or unconscious, has throughout the ages fed the streams of political or economic, national or international anti-Semitism, the problem of its origins must be faced before its effects can be eradicated. The problem of this article, then, is historical rather than theological; it concerns itself with the focal point of guilt and responsibility rather than with the obligation of love and forgiveness. It does so because it seems necessary first to ask history what and whom we are forgiving, lest we lavish this gift, which is also an implicit accusation, on those to whom it is not due. If, for example, the vast majority of the Jewish people conspired to oppose and to crucify Jesus, or if they agreed with this action either explicitly or implicitly, we must, with Jesus, forgive that deed and love those who are descended from its perpetrators. This is Christianity. But the question of this article is whether they did so act. This is history. The thesis of this paper is that the often-repeated statement that the Jews rejected Jesus and had Him crucified is *historically* untenable and must therefore be removed completely from our thinking and our writing, our teaching, preaching, and liturgy.

It has often been noted that there are many passages in the Gospel records where the people appear in admiration of Jesus' words and deeds. But it is then taken for granted that this is true only of the early days of the ministry and that gradually the crowds turned against Jesus, until finally there was little difficulty in obtaining a Jerusalem mob to scream for His crucifixion. There are, in fact, four main sources which separately, but especially in combination, have fostered such interpretation. With regard to Palestinian Judaism and

¹ As background for the Vatican II statement on the Jews, cf. G. Baum, *The Jews and the Gospel* (Westminster, Md., 1961), and its review by P. Benoit in *Revue biblique* 71 (1964) 80-90.

Jesus, these are (1) the use of the term "the crowds" in St. Luke, (2) the expression "the Jews" in St. John, (3) the action of the Jerusalem "mob"; and with regard to Diaspora Judaism, (4) the problem of its reaction to St. Paul's preaching.²

THE TERM "THE CROWDS" IN ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL

There are many passages in the Gospel records where Jesus and the authorities of the Jews, be they Pharisees or Sadducees, clash openly and fiercely. But where the passages in Mark and/or Matthew mention the authorities specifically, Luke often has simply "the crowds" (*ochloi*) as the party contending with Jesus.

1) In Mt 3:7-10 the Baptist,

"on seeing many of the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* coming to the scene of his baptism, said to them: 'Brood of vipers! Who advised you to flee before the gathering storm of anger?'"

And the conversation continues in this virulent tone. But in the parallel passage in Lk 3:7-9, the same vituperative attack is launched "to *the crowds* that came out to be baptized by him." Yet this change actually creates a discrepancy in the narrative of Luke, because after this violent attack on "the crowds" in 3:7-9, he turns a most benign response to "the crowds" in 3:10-14. It would also contradict the statement of Jesus found only in Lk 7:29-30:

"The people at large and the tax collectors acknowledged God's just demands and submitted to John's baptism; the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, for their part, frustrated God's intention and did not submit to his baptism."

This accusation agrees with Mt 3:7-10 rather than with Lk 3:7-9. Accordingly, Luke has, through a vague generalization, widened the object of the Baptist's accusation from the authorities (Mt) to the crowds (Lk).

2) During the Beelzebul controversy and the charge of Satanic collusion, Mt 12:24 shows clearly the split in opinion between the crowds and the Pharisees:

"The crowds were all enraptured and remarked: 'May not this man, perhaps, be the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees

² The translation of the *NT* used in this article is that of Kleist-Lilly (Milwaukee, 1954).

heard this, they said: 'This man drives out the demons merely as a tool of Beelzebul, the archdemon.' "

But in the parallel passage in Mk 3:22 the text reads simply:

"Moreover the Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying: 'He is possessed by Beelzebul,' and, 'He drives out the demons as a tool of the archdemon.' "

Finally, in Lk 11:15, where the charge comes from a split in the crowds, the authorities are not even mentioned:

" . . . the crowds were enraptured. But some among *the* people (*tines de ex autōn*) remarked: 'He is a tool of Beelzebul, and this is how He drives out demons.' "

Thus once again Luke places a general allusion instead of the particular one found in Mark and Matthew.

3) This incident concerns the demand for a "sign" (*sēmeion*) as proof of Jesus' mission. But before studying Luke's use of the term "the crowds" in this context, there is a preliminary problem in literary criticism. There are five texts in question: Mk 8:11-12; Mt 12:38-40;³ 16:1-4; Lk 11:29-30; 12:54-56. A careful comparison and analysis of these places would seem to indicate that we are dealing with two separate events. The first concerns a demand in Galilee that Jesus show a "sign" (*sēmeion*) to justify His actions. This is recorded in Mk 8:11-12; Mt 12:38-40; Lk 11:29-30. Jesus refuses such a "sign" (Mk) and offers instead the "sign of Jonah" (Mt, Lk). The second incident takes place, most likely, at Jerusalem and concerns a reproach by Jesus that His audience can well understand the weather's warning signs, the "signs (*sēmeia*) of the times," but they fail to comprehend the equally clear signs He is giving them of the kingdom's present irruption into history. This narrative appears in Lk 12:54-56. However, Mt 16:1-4 has combined the separate incidents, or so received them in his tradition. The bond which generated the combination was the key word "sign" in both events. Thus we are dealing with two separate debates: a Galilean challenge to Jesus (Mk 8:11-12; Mt 12:38-40; Lk 11:29-30; Mt 16:1b, 4) and a Jerusalem challenge by Jesus (Lk 12:54-56; Mt 16:1a, 2-3). But the point here is, who

³ O. Glombitza, "Das Zeichen des Jona (Zum Verständnis von Matt. 12.38-42)," *New Testament Studies* 8 (1962) 359-66.

was the source of the former attack and who was the recipient of the latter one: the authorities or the crowds?

The challenge to Jesus is offered by "the Pharisees" in Mk 8:11 and by "some of the Scribes and Pharisees" in Mt 12:38, but simply by "others" (of the crowd) in Lk 11:16, and Jesus' refusal is then addressed to "the thronging crowds" in Lk 11:29-30. The same phenomenon takes place in the second incident. The composite event in Mt 16:1-4 shows that the challenge of Jesus was addressed to "the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mt 16:1a, 2-3). But in the parallel and fuller account in Lk 12:54-56 these words are uttered to "the crowds."

These four examples might not be too harmful in themselves. But they tend to confuse in the reader's mind, subconsciously or consciously, the rooted opposition of the authorities with the general reaction of "the crowds." If Luke understands the tradition to state that "the crowds" were also opposed to Jesus, it may also have a serious effect on his interpretation of the events in Acts for which we have no parallel passages as balance.

Is this change from the specific "Pharisees" to the more general "the crowds" an example of Lucan anti-Semitism? Is he doing this in a deliberate attempt to widen the responsibility and guilt for the opposition to Jesus, so that it includes at least a majority of the people? The answer must be no; for if Luke was so writing, he would certainly have done it much more thoroughly. On the contrary, there is ample evidence in Luke himself that the crowds were accepting Jesus (Lk 11:14; 20:19; 22:2) as they had accepted the Baptist (Lk 7:29-35), but that there was a severe clash with the authorities (Lk 11:37-54). The reason for the change in Luke seems to be much simpler. As the tradition went out from a Palestinian milieu, where words like "Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees" meant something to the audience, it moved into a Gentile world, where these terms had little relevance. So, gradually these specific expressions were erased from the tradition and more general terms such as "the crowds" took their place. This had the advantage of warnings to a new audience, new "crowds," that they faced a like challenge as had the "crowds" in Palestine. But the obvious fact is that where anti-Semitism was not inserted by design, some can easily be extracted by mistake.

THE EXPRESSION "THE JEWS" IN ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL⁴

It is well known that John uses the term "the world" (*kosmos*) in two different senses. On the one hand, it denotes simply the material universe and its inhabitants—the world which "God so loved" (3:16); on the other hand, it denotes the sum of the forces of hate and unlove opposed at all times and in all places to the presence of Love manifested in Jesus (15:18–19).⁵ A similar phenomenon appears in John's use of the term "the Jews." Sometimes it is used for the inhabitants of Palestine and thereby includes Jesus and the apostles; but more often it is restricted to mean precisely those forces in authority (Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees) inimical to Jesus. The first or neutral usage does not concern us here. Such phrases as, for example, "the Passover of the Jews" present no problem. Accordingly, we shall not study the expression in 2:6, 13; 3:1; 4:9, 22; 5:1; 6:4, 41, 52; 7:2; 11:19, 31, 33, 36, 45, 55; 12:9, 11; 18:20, 33, 35, 39; 19:3, 19, 20, 21. Possibly some of these cases are ambiguous, but we shall concentrate only on cases where "the Jews" appears in a clearly hostile context. Our purpose is to see who are "the Jews" who constantly oppose Jesus and have Him crucified. The force of the argument is cumulative.

1) *The Baptist* (1:19; 3:25).⁶ This section is important in that it gives the first warning of the special Johannine usage of "the Jews." The Baptist witnesses that he is not the Christ, when *the Jews* of Jerusalem "sent priests and levites to him" (1:19), but since those sent were priests and levites, one suspects the term to mean the sacerdotal circles from Jerusalem. The (other?) delegation in 1:24 is composed of Pharisees; one recalls Mt 3:7–10. The person in 3:25 who disputes with the Baptist on purification may be another indication of this narrower meaning in which "the Jews" mean the authorities.

⁴ R. Kugelman, "Hebrew, Israelite, Jew in the New Testament," *The Bridge* 1 (New York, 1955) 204–24.

⁵ H. Sasse, "*kosmōs* etc.," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (ed. G. Kittel) 3 (Stuttgart, 1938) 894–96.

⁶ For general background cf. G. Richter, "Bist du Elias? (Jon. 2,21)," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 6 (1962) 79–92, 238–56; 7 (1963) 63–80; R. E. Brown, "Three Quotations from John the Baptist in the Gospel of John," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22 (1960) 292–98; M.-E. Boismard, "Les traditions johanniques concernant le Baptiste," *Revue biblique* 70 (1963) 5–42; J. A. T. Robinson, "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community," in *Twelve New Testament Studies* (Naperville, Ill., 1962) pp. 11–27.

2) *The Temple's Symbolic Destruction* (Jn 2).⁷ During the darkening days towards the end of the ministry when Jesus symbolically destroys the Temple (cf. Jer 7:1-15; 26:1-6) by attacking the sacrificial necessities on which it was based, He is challenged by "the Jews" (2:18-20). This symbolic act is narrated also in the Synoptics, and there it is associated with a challenge to His authority by "the high priests, the Scribes, and the elders" (Mk 11:27), by "the high priests and the elders" (Mt 21:23), and by "the high priests and the Scribes, accompanied by the elders" (Lk 20:1).

3) *The Cure of the Cripple* (Jn 5).⁸ Jesus cures the man on the Sabbath and tells him to carry away his sleeping mat. The man is reproached by "the Jews" (5:10) and tells them about Jesus (5:15). So "the Jews" determine to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath and for blasphemy (5:16, 18). In the Synoptics the clash over Sabbath cures is always with the *authorities*—for example, in Mk 3:2-6; Lk 6:6-11; Mt 12:9-10, 13-14 (the dialogue in Mt 12:11-12 is borrowed from the separate incident in Lk 14:1-6), where the authorities in Galilee set up a test case in the very synagogue itself on the Sabbath and therefore determined to kill Jesus.

4) *The Feast of Tabernacles* (Jn 7-8). Jesus will not go up openly to the Feast, as "the Jews" (7:1) are seeking to kill Him (cf. 5:18). At the Feast "the Jews" (7:11) seek Him; discussion ensues among "the crowds" (7:12); "no one, however, expressed his opinion of Him openly because of their fear of *the Jews*" (7:13). Since everyone involved was a Jew, this "fear of *the Jews*" can only mean the authorities. This is confirmed as the narrative continues. When Jesus arrives, "the Jews" are puzzled at His learning (7:15). Jesus demands: "'Why are you so anxious to kill me?' He receives in reply: 'You are not in your right mind,' *the crowd* replied. 'Who is anxious to kill you?'" (7:20). But later:

"Some of the *inhabitants of Jerusalem* said: 'Is not this the man they are anxious to kill? And here He is, speaking right

⁷ Y. M.-J. Congar, *Le mystère du temple* (Paris, 1958) pp. 148-80; O. Cullmann, "L'Opposition contre le temple de Jérusalem: Motif commun de la théologie johannique et du monde ambiant," *New Testament Studies* 5 (1959) 157-73; H. Vogels, "Die Tempelreinigung und Golgotha," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 6 (1962) 102-7.

⁸ J. Bligh, "Jesus in Jerusalem," *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963) 115-34.

out in the open, and they say nothing to Him. Maybe the authorities (*hoi archontes*) have really discovered that this man is the Messiah' " (7:25-26).

Thus the crowds know that it is the authorities that are seeking to kill Jesus. Later it becomes even more explicit:

"These whispered comments of the crowd came to the ears of the Pharisees; so the high priests and the Pharisees sent policemen with orders to arrest Jesus" (7:32).

Jesus speaks to them (7:34 will be recalled later in 13:33) and "the Jews" reply (7:35); but the result is:

"The police finally returned to the high priests and Pharisees, who asked them: 'Why did you not bring Him?' 'Never,' the policemen explained, 'has man spoken as this man speaks!' The Pharisees replied: 'Have you, too, perhaps been led astray? Has anyone of the authorities (*tōn archontōn*) or of the Pharisees ever believed in Him? Oh, this rabble which does not know the Law is a damnable pack!' " (7:45-49).

As the debates continue into Jn 8, the problem of interpreting who "the Jews" are becomes more difficult. It will be necessary to look at the literary structure of Jn 7-8. After the introduction (7:1-13), the chapters fall into seven balanced dialogues: (1) 7:14-24; (2) 7:25-36; (3) 7:37-44; (4) 7:45-52; (5) 8:12-20; (6) 8:21-30; (7) 8:31-59. John seems to have structured the seven in reversed parallelism (a, b, c, d, c', b', a')⁹ around the central nucleus of 7:45-52, where all the reactions are summed up. In the first three dialogues (7:14-44) the emphasis is on the people and the tension between their generally favorable reaction to Jesus (7:12, 25-27, 31, 32, 40-43, 49) and that of the authorities (7:25, 32). But even within the crowd Jn shows the debate about the identity of Jesus continuing (7:12, 26-27, 30-31, 40-44). In the fourth and central dialogue the crowd recedes into the background and the authorities themselves are shown to be divided on Jesus (7:45-52). The final three dialogues will not mention the crowds any more but will concentrate on the authorities instead: "the

⁹ On parallelism in general, cf. S. Gervitz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago, 1963) pp. 7-14; D. M. Crossan, "The Biblical Poetry of the Hebrews," *Bible Today* 13 (Oct., 1964) 832-37. For the use of reversed parallelism in Jn, cf. X. Léon-Dufour, "Trois chiasmes johanniques," *New Testament Studies* 7 (1961) 249-55.

Pharisees" (8:13) or "the Jews" (8:22, 31, 48, 52, 57). Some of these also believe (8:30-31) but others wish to stone Jesus (8:59). This agrees with the summary statement in 12:42-43. But it seems that in Jn 8 the term "the Jews" is used not just for the opposing authorities but for the authorities in general (e.g., 8:31).

5) *Cure of the Blind Man* (Jn 9).¹⁰ This carefully structured chapter of ironic satire shows "the Jews" seeking to negate a miracle performed by Jesus. The section opens with the opposition of "the Pharisees," since "the man who was born blind was taken before the Pharisees" (9:13, 15, 16), but thereafter these are referred to as "the Jews." Thus, for example, the trial begun by the Pharisees in 9:13 is continued with the statement:

"*The Jews*, therefore, did not believe that he had been blind and then obtained sight" (9:18).

The equation of the contradicting authorities and "the Jews" is strengthened by:

"His parents said this because they were afraid of *the Jews* (cf. 7:13); for the Jews had already agreed among themselves that, if anyone should acknowledge Him as the Messiah, he should be put out of the synagogue" (9:22).

Finally, at the close of the incident, Jesus speaks:

"To be the parting of the way—that is my mission to the world: henceforth the sightless are to have sight and those who see are to become blind.' Some of the *Pharisees*, who happened to be near, heard this and said to Him: 'Maybe we, too, are blind, are we?' " (9:39-40).

"The Jews," that is, some of the authorities, are the prosecution throughout Jn 9. But the concluding 10:19-21 uses "the Jews" once again in the sense of the authorities in general (cf. Jn 8:31)—some are against Jesus and some are for Him.

6) *The Feast of Dedication* (Jn 10:22-39). There is another attempt to stone Jesus for blasphemy by "the Jews" (10:24, 31, 33). In the context there is no precise way of determining the scope of the expression; but earlier in Jn 7-8 we saw that "the Jews" who wished to kill Jesus were exclusively the authorities.

¹⁰ A. Feuillet, "La composition littéraire de Jo. 9-12," *Mélanges bibliques André Robert* (Paris, 1957) pp. 478-93.

7) *The Raising of Lazarus* (Jn 11). During this incident the term "the Jews" is used mostly in the ordinary neutral sense. But in 11:8 it is "the Jews" who are striving to kill Jesus in Judea. Finally in 11:45–53 a meeting of the Sanhedrin takes place and they determine on Jesus' death and,

"as a result, Jesus would no longer move freely among *the Jews* but left the place and, retiring to a town called Ephraim in the region skirting the desert, tarried there with His disciples" (11:54).

Since He is still among Jews, the terms must be used in the restrictive sense. The final verse clarifies the situation:

"By that time, the high priests and the Pharisees had given orders that, if anyone knew of His whereabouts, he should make it known so that they might arrest Him" (11:57).

It must also be mentioned that in the epilogue in 12:37–50, when John summarizes the reaction of Jesus' audience (12:37–43) and repeats His eschatological challenges (12:44–50), he states explicitly:

"Just the same even among the leading classes a good many individuals believed in Him; only, on account of the *Pharisees*, they would make no open profession of it, for fear they might be put out of the synagogue. After all, they cared more for the approval of men than for the approval of God" (12:42–43).

8) *The Arrest of Jesus* (Jn 18).¹¹ The arrest is described as conducted by "the company of soldiers, led by the chief officer and the attendants (*hypēretai*) of *the Jews*" in 18:12. But earlier, when the band enters the garden, it is described as "a band of soldiers and attendants (*hypēretas*) of the Pharisees and high priests" in 18:3. Moreover, Caiaphas is identified in 18:14 as

"the man who had counseled *the Jews* that it was to their advantage that one man should die to save the nation."

¹¹ On the relations between the Passion narratives, cf. E. Osty, "Les points de contact entre le récit de la passion dans saint Luc et saint Jean," *Recherches de science religieuse* 39 (1951) 146–54; X. Léon-Dufour, "Mt et Mc dans le récit de la passion," *Biblica* 40 (1959) 684–96; P. Borgen, "John and the Synoptics in the Passion Narrative," *New Testament Studies* 5 (1959) 246–59; I. Buse, "St. John and the Marcan Passion Narrative," *ibid.* 4 (1958) 215–19; "St. John and the Passion Narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke," *ibid.* 7 (1960) 65–76.

But this advice was actually given in 11:50, when "the high priests and the Pharisees convened a meeting of the supreme council" (11:47). Once again "Jews" means the authorities plotting against Jesus.

9) *Jesus before Pilate* (Jn 18-19).¹² Since this incident is so important, it will be necessary to note that 18:28-19:16 is carefully constructed and tightly interwoven in seven balanced scenes as follows:

Scene 1 (18:28-32) OUTSIDE: "The Jews" demand death of Jesus (a)

Scene 2 (18:33-38a) INSIDE: Pilate questions Jesus (b)

Scene 3 (18:38b-40) OUTSIDE: Jesus is declared innocent (c)

Scene 4 (19:1-3) INSIDE: Jesus is thorn-crowned King (d)

Scene 5 (19:4-7) OUTSIDE: Jesus is declared innocent (c')

Scene 6 (19:8-11) INSIDE: Pilate questions Jesus (b')

Scene 7 (19:12-16) OUTSIDE: "The Jews" obtain death of Jesus (a')

The schematic balance of scenes 1 and 7, 2 and 6, 3 and 5 around the central climax of scene 4, and the alternative settings "outside" and "inside" the praetorium of Pilate which serve to differentiate the scenes from one another, bespeak consummate artistry. But more importantly, such a tautly constructed unity makes us certain that we are dealing with the same protagonists throughout. But in 18:31, 36, 38 the accusers of Jesus are simply "the Jews." Then in 19:4-7, with no change of speakers involved, we read this dialogue between accusers and Pilate:¹³

"Pilate went outside once more and said to the crowd: 'Now look! I am bringing Him out to you, and you must understand that I find no guilt in Him!' Jesus, therefore, came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. 'Here is the man!' Pilate said to them. But when *the high priests and their attendants (hypēretai)* saw Him, they burst out shouting: 'To the cross! To the cross!' 'Then take Him in charge yourselves and crucify Him,' Pilate said to them; 'I certainly find no guilt in Him.' 'We have a law,' countered *the Jews*, 'and according to the law He must die, for He has declared Himself the Son of God.'"

¹² For the structure cf. A. Janssens de Varebeke, "La structure des scènes du récit de la passion en Joh. XVIII-XIX," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 38 (1962) 504-22.

¹³ The Kleist-Lilly translation reads "to the crowd" in 19:4. The Greek is simply *autois* ("to them"). This is a striking mistake, as no "crowd" ever appears before Pilate in Jn.

Thus the "high priests and their attendants" (19:6) are equated with "the Jews" (19:7; cf. 19:12 also). Later in 19:14-15, still within the closely-bound frame of 18:28-19:16, a similar change takes place:

"He then said to *the Jews*: 'Look, there is your king!' Then they shouted: 'Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!' 'Your king am I to crucify?' Pilate replied. The *high priests* answered: 'We have no king but Caesar!'"

The only conclusion is that throughout the scene before Pilate the accusers are the inimical core of the authorities, especially the house of Annas;¹⁴ once again "the Jews" simply means this group. This is also the meaning of "the Jews" in 19:31, 38 and 20:19.

Accordingly, the only proper translation for this special use of *hoi Ioudaioi* ("the Jews") in John is: those among the authorities of the Jews who constantly opposed Jesus. The reason for this Johannine usage is fairly clear. Besides the ordinary deletion of specific designations such as "Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees," etc., as the tradition moves deeper into the Gentile environment, there is the Johannine penchant for symbolism. Thus the term "the Jews" is a loose and ambiguous term for those who rejected Jesus in the earthly ministry and who engineered His death. To accept it otherwise involves numerous contradictions in the text. But it is also a very dangerous symbolic term, and one cannot but wonder if it might be a root of anti-Semitism in the Christian subconscious.

"THE MOB" AT JERUSALEM DURING THE PASSION

The background to the condemnation of Jesus is usually painted as the screamed instructions of the Jerusalem mob. However much culpability is placed on the shoulders of the authorities, the presumption ordinarily is that they were able to gather and arouse a mob or a crowd to agree with their intentions. From this the inference is that this must have been somewhat representative of the feelings of the majority of the people in Jerusalem and possibly of all of Palestinian Judaism. This mob, then, deserves most careful consideration.¹⁵

¹⁴ P. Gaechter, "The Hatred of the House of Annas," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 8 (1947) 3-34.

¹⁵ For example, the presence of such a mob is taken for granted by J. Blinzler, *The Trial of Jesus* (Westminster, Md., 1959). The expressions used widen gradually: "crowd" (p. 208), "populace" (p. 209), "the crowds" (p. 209), "the people" (p. 210), "the masses"

This initial comment is intended to be *a priori*, and its argumentative value is no stronger than that of any such statement. It may be useful, however, to restore perspective to a situation where the hysterical has long prevailed over the historical. Jerusalem was the occupied capital of an occupied country. At the time of any great feast it was a tinder-box needing only a spark to start the flames; just how swiftly the Roman garrison was poised to descend on any mob may be deduced from Acts 21:31-39. It is then, *a priori*, not too likely that the Roman *praefectus* would allow a mob to gather, let alone work itself into a fury at such a time. And if any other Roman might have tolerated this, Pontius Pilate would hardly have done so. The three main incidents which Flavius Josephus¹⁶ chooses to narrate about this man all concern one topic: his somewhat gleeful and certainly vicious dispersal of the crowds. The multitudes importuned him at Caesarea to remove the Roman standards from the Holy City. He had them secretly surrounded, and only their open willingness for unresisting martyrdom deflected his purpose (*Ant.* 18, 3, 1). The people gathered to protest his use of Temple funds for the construction of an aqueduct; they are secretly surrounded and slaughtered (*Ant.* 18, 3, 2). Finally, he is sent back to Rome to answer charges made against him after he has killed a group of Samaritans gathered to find the sacred vessels hidden by Moses on Mt. Garizim (*Ant.* 18, 4, 2). So we should not too readily accept the idea of a mob shouting at Pilate during the Passion.

Secondly, there is strong evidence that the people of Jerusalem were actually on the side of Jesus and against the designs of some of their leaders. Any theory of a crowd representative of the thinking of Jerusalem shouting for Jesus' death must face and explain the change from this clearly-stated position. There are three main places where their mind is expressed.

- 1) After the symbolic destruction of the Temple, Mk 11:18 states:
 "The high priests and the Scribes heard of it, and they looked

(p. 210), "the mob" (p. 214). It is his conclusion that "Only now did the circle of those guilty of the death of Jesus widen from the small circle of the leaders of the people to a great part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (p. 211). It is precisely this thesis that is denied in the present article.

¹⁶ *The Works of Flavius Josephus* 2 (tr. W. Whiston; New York, n.d.) 441-43, 446-47. There is no mention of "the crowds" in *Ant.* 18, 3, 4, as Josephus discusses the death of Jesus.

for ways and means of doing away with Him. The fact is, they were afraid of Him, since the people (*ochlos*) were lost in admiration of His teaching."

The same effect is mentioned in Lk 19:47-48:

"Meanwhile, the high priests and the Scribes, as well as the leaders of the people, were scheming to destroy Him; but they could not discover just what to do, for the mass of the people (*ho laos gar hapas*) hung upon His words."

2) After the very pointed parable of the evil vineyard-keepers,¹⁷ which was clearly addressed to the authorities, we read:

"They would have liked to arrest Him, but they feared the people (*ton ochlon*). They understood, of course, that He had aimed this parable at themselves. So, turning their back on Him, they walked away" (Mk 12:12).

The parallel passage in Mt 21:45-46 says:

"On hearing His parable, the high priests and the Pharisees understood that He had been referring to themselves. They would have liked to arrest Him, but they feared the masses (*tous ochlous*), since these regarded Him as a prophet."

And the same appears in Lk 20:19. Obviously, then, the authorities and the populace disagreed sharply on Jesus (cf. also Mt 23:33; Lk 20:39).

3) After the special conference of the Sanhedrin at which the death of Jesus was decreed (Jn 11:45-53), they are forced to conclude:

" 'not during the festival, or a riot may break out among the people' " (Mk 14:2).

Their considered opinion is that it is impossible to take Him "secretly" (*dolō*) during the festival, and the obvious reason is that the people are on His side and a riot could easily start at such a time. This appears in Mk 14:1-2; Mt 26:3-5; Lk 22:2. One may also note the statement which appears only in Mk 12:37b after the attack of Jesus on the Scribal teaching on the Messiah: "Of course, the common people (*ho polus ochlos*) liked to listen to Him."

We have, then, both historical and textual difficulties to an easy acceptance of the idea of a Jerusalem mob. In the light of these ex-

¹⁷ C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (3rd. ed. rev.; London, 1961) pp. 96-102; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London, 1963) pp. 70-77.

licit statements, the burden of proof must rest with him who would have the authorities introduce the Jerusalem crowds into the proceedings against Jesus. It is precisely this they fear; it is explicitly this they cannot risk. Against this background, is it possible to trace origins of the idea of a Jerusalem mob (*ton ochlon*)?¹⁸

1) "*The Mob*" in *St. John*. There is none, absolutely none. There is no crowd, there are no crowds, in Jn 18-19. There are, of course, "the Jews," but we have already seen what this means for John.

2) "*The Mob*" in *St. Luke*. They first appear *ex abrupto* and without any introduction in Lk 23:4:

"Then, turning to the high priests and the crowds (*ochlous*),
Pilate declared: 'I can detect no guilt in this man.' "

This does not help the problem of origin; their presence is just mentioned, and we have no understanding of how the authorities who were seeking to avoid the crowd in Lk 22:2 suddenly find themselves with one in Lk 23:4. Luke clearly understands the tradition as stating that there was a representative crowd or mob from Jerusalem accompanying the authorities to accuse Jesus. Three times he has Pilate declare Jesus innocent (23:4, 13-16, 22), and these declarations are made "turning to the high priest and the crowds" (23:4), and when he had "called together the high priests, the leading men, and the people at large (*ton laon*)" in 23:13. For the moment, it suffices to note that Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence was made to "the Jews," i.e., to the high priests and their attendants, in Jn 18:38b and 19:4. However, Luke has the Jerusalem crowd or mob, but he does not tell us whence it came; he merely records its presence and influence. But we also recall that Luke is heir to a tradition in which "the crowds" were against Jesus even in Galilee. He would probably find no difficulty in accepting the idea of a Jerusalem mob, and so takes the tradition at face value.

3) "*The Mob*" in *St. Matthew*. Scant assistance in solving the problem is afforded by Matthew. The first statement in 27:20 reads:

"But the high priests and the elders persuaded the people (*tous ochlous*) to demand the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus."

¹⁸ Cf. articles on the Passion narratives cited *supra* n. 11.

The question still stands: Where in a city where the authorities feared the people in Mt 26:5 did they obtain the crowd in Mt 27:20?

4) "*The Mob*" in *St. Mark*.¹⁹ It is only in the narrative of Mark that the problem is eventually solved. The pertinent text is as follows:²⁰

"Now at the festival he was wont to humor them and release one prisoner—the one they petitioned for; and it so happened that the man called Barabbas was in prison with his fellow rioters who had committed murder during the riot. So, when the multitude (*ho ochlos*) came up and set about petitioning him to comply with their custom, Pilate answered their request by saying: 'Do you want me to release as your choice the King of the Jews?' He understood, of course, that it was from sheer malice that the high priests had handed Him over.

But the high priests had stirred up the mob (*ton ochlon*) to demand the release of Barabbas as their choice" (Mk 15:6–11).

This text is quite clear—against the background of an occupied city. Barabbas and his companions had risen against the Roman domination and killed either some Roman soldiers or Jewish quislings during their revolt.²¹ Thus Jn 18:40b describes Barabbas as a *lēstēs*; and Jesus is crucified along with two *lēstai* (Mk 15:27, 32; Mt 27:38, 44; Lk 23:32–33, 39–43). This term does not mean a robber in our sense of the term, but rather an insurgent, a rebel, a guerilla fighter against the occupation authorities. Barabbas and two followers were, then, to be crucified that day; "the crowd" came up to ask for the rebel's release according to the customary amnesty. There is no indication in Mark that they came up as a mob or that they came up against Jesus or that they were gathered by the authorities from the populace. Their first introduction in Mk 15:8 has no parallel in Mt 27:16 or Lk 23:17;

¹⁹ On the Marcan account of the Passion, cf. V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London, 1959) pp. 654–64. The section in Mk 15:6–11 pertains to the Petrine tradition, which this author claims Mk united with a Roman tradition to form the complete narrative.

²⁰ Once again (cf. supra n. 13) the Kleist-Lilly translation must be protested. The same Greek word *ochlos* ("crowd") changes from "multitude" in 15:8 to "mob" in 15:11, 15. Secondly, the aorist *aneseisan* is translated in pluperfect as "had stirred up" in 15:11. While this is grammatically a possible translation, it is based here on the presupposition that the Sanhedrists had brought up an excited mob along with them to Pilate. For example, with a more neutral translation, RSV reads "stirred up" and NEB has "incited."

²¹ J. Blinzler, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–21; J. J. Twomey, "Barabbas was a Robber," *Scripture* 8 (1956) 115–19.

and they arrive to obtain the freedom of Barabbas. One can reasonably presume that they are friends or followers of the rebel leader and that they are a small band; neither the character of Pilate nor the use of "the crowd" (*ho ochlos*) in Mk 15:8 warrants the idea of a very large group. They find themselves faced with a possible disappointment; there is now somebody else in prison and we cannot even be certain that adherents of Barabbas would necessarily know who Jesus is. Pilate knows that Barabbas is more dangerous than Jesus and tries to release the latter to them. Strengthened, no doubt, by the promptings of the authorities who had brought Jesus before Pilate, they insist on their original purpose: free Barabbas to them and let Jesus undergo punishment, crucifixion, in his place. This would seem to be the picture which emerges with relative clarity from Mark; later the tradition (e.g., Luke) seems to have taken the crowd as being a mob from the populace, but this cannot be substantiated from Matthew or John.

We could summarize our conclusion under two points: the evidence explicitly and definitely points against any representative Jerusalem crowd shouting for Jesus' death; it is quite possible that the crowd before Pilate was interested primarily in Barabbas as a rebel hero, and in Jesus only in so far as He became a threat to Barabbas' release.

An objection might be offered to this conclusion from the earliest Christian preaching in Acts,²² where both rulers and people seem indicted together for the crucifixion. Thus, the people are included in Peter's "you crucified and slew Him by the hands of wicked men" (2:23). The Sanhedrin is blamed by his statement "whom *you* crucified" (4:10) while on trial before them; and again, "whom *you* put to death, hanging Him on a gibbet" (5:30). But the most terrible accusation is that of Stephen to the Sanhedrin:²³

"Stiff-necked, ill-disposed to understand or hear, always you oppose the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so you do also.

²² For an analysis of this early kerygma, cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development* (London, 1951) pp. 17-20, and more generally cf. J. Dupont, *Les sources du livre des Actes: Etat de la question* (Bruges, 1960).

²³ J. Bihler, "Der Stephanusbericht," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 3 (1959) 252-70; D. M. Stanley, "Judaism and Christianity," *Thought* 37 (1962) 330-46; A. F. Klijn, "Stephen's Speech = Acts 7,2-53," *New Testament Studies* 4 (1957) 25-31.

Was there a single prophet that your fathers did not persecute? They killed even those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now become the betrayers and murderers, you who received the law delivered by angels, yet did not keep it" (7:51-53).

But in other places both people and rulers are specifically blamed: by Peter's "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers" (3:17); by the community's

"there assembled together in this city against your holy servant Jesus, whom you have anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the tribes of Israel" (4:27);

and by Paul's

"Really the citizens of Jerusalem and their leaders fulfilled the words of the prophets which are read every Sabbath by condemning Jesus in their ignorance" (13:27).

One can hardly dismiss these statements as mere rhetorical exaggerations. Yet, on the other hand, it is difficult to accept them at face value as a general accusation against Jerusalem over against the frequent affirmations, which we saw earlier, that the authorities feared the crowds and sought to exclude their awareness of the proceedings. They would seem to be the earliest evidence for what appears clearly in Luke's account of the Passion: the enlargement of the Barabbas group to a representative crowd of the people of Jerusalem. It also seems far more likely that they are due to Luke's retelling of what these speakers had said than to the actual words as spoken. Luke, after all, understands that the people of Jerusalem had played a significant role in the death of Jesus. Indeed, the idea of culpability on the part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is contrary to Jesus' own prophecies of what was to happen to Him at Jerusalem. The triple prophecy in Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34, with parallels in Mt 16:21; 17:22; 20:17-19; Lk 9:22, 44; 18:31-34, never mentioned any culpability on the part of the people of Jerusalem for His death; only the authorities are specifically mentioned, be they Jewish or Roman. And if one claims that these prophecies are post-factum assertions of the early Church placed beforehand on the lips of Jesus, the point is only strengthened: they are then description of the past event rather than prophecy of

the future happening. In summary, the weight of evidence seems against any crowd or mob representative of the mind of Jerusalem playing a role in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Before leaving the point, however, one might ponder another factor. For the crucifixion to have taken place, the co-operation of three simultaneous forces was needed. There was Judas; without his offer of locating the precise position of Jesus close to the city on the night of the paschal meal, the authorities would have been unable to take Jesus secretly. They had already given up hope of touching Him (Mk 14:1-2; Mt 26:3-5; Lk 22:1-2), as Jesus was deliberately staying at Bethany every night so that He would not be in the city itself (Mk 11:11-12, 15, 19-20, 27). It was Judas who suddenly offered them the chance they needed (Mk 14:10-11; Mt 26:14-16; Lk 22:3-6), for he was "to betray Him to them in the absence of the crowd" (Lk 22:6). Thus Judas left the Supper as soon as he had ascertained for certain where Jesus would be afterwards (Jn 13:30; 18:1-3). Secondly, there were Annas and the sacerdotal circles around him together with those of the Pharisees who agreed on the necessity of Jesus' death. Thirdly, there was Pontius Pilate, cynical but necessary. Three forces, then, were the treachery of Judas, who was a Christian; the hatred of Annas, who was a Jew; and the indifference of Pilate, who was a Gentile. It took a Christian, a Jew, and a Gentile. Since these were the spiritual divisions of the known world at that time, there might possibly be a divine symbolism behind that fact.

DIASPORA JUDAISM AND ST. PAUL

It is often stated that Diaspora Judaism refused credence to Paul's preaching and so they in turn acted as Palestinian Judaism had done before them: they rejected Jesus and implicitly approved His crucifixion. The investigation of this statement pertains to our title, since it is recorded in Acts, that is, the "latter book" of Luke's two-volume account of the gospel. It is further relevant in that this stated reaction of the Diaspora is usually taken as a continuation and reflection of that of Palestinian Judaism to Jesus. Our purpose, then, is to see as clearly as possible what exactly happened between Paul and Diaspora Judaism.

The problem is obviously more difficult than that of "the crowds"

in Luke or "the Jews" in John, because in Acts we have no parallel texts to assist in judgment. If, for example, Luke states that the Corinthian Jews rejected Paul, we cannot ascertain directly whether he means all or some or the majority or possibly just their leaders. However, we shall focus attention on two points: (1) the way Luke discusses those Diaspora Jews who accepted Paul, and (2) the reasons which we can glimpse for his rejection by those who did not acknowledge his witness.

Acceptance in the Diaspora

It must be remembered that the gospel record of Luke in its two carefully united volumes has a definite apologetic and polemical purpose. This may well be indicated already in the prologues (Lk 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-5), in which the high Roman official named Theophilus is promised the exact truth about the (anti-Christian?) information he has received (Lk 1:4).²⁴ But aside from this possibility, the apologetico-polemical intent appears clearly from two points: (a) the innocence of Paul, (b) the culpability of the Jews.

First, the innocence of Paul. Almost every important official of the Roman rule with whom Paul is in contact declares his innocence. Thus Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, throws the accusation against Paul out of court with:

"If there were some questions of misdemeanor or serious crime, O Jews, I should with reason bear with you. But if these are questions about words or names or your law, look to it yourselves. I have no desire to decide such matters" (Acts 18:14-15).

The town clerk at Ephesus warned the crowds that their rioting against Paul was illegal; there were, he said, "court days . . . and proconsuls" (Acts 19:38), but "these men . . . are neither guilty of sacrilege nor blasphemers of our goddess" (Acts 19:37). Claudias Lysias, tribune at Jerusalem, turns Paul over to Felix the governor with the statement: "I find him accused about questions of their law, but of no charge

²⁴ On the prologues cf. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles* 2 (London, 1922) 133-37, 489-510, and 4 (London, 1933) 1-7. This is, of course, just one possible translation of Lk 1:4; cf. E. Osty, *L'Evangile selon saint Luc* (2nd ed. rev.; Paris, 1953) p. 28.

deserving death or imprisonment" (Acts 23:29). Festus, successor to the position but not to the character of Felix, explains about Paul to his guests Herod Agrippa II and Bernice: "But I, for my part, found that he had done nothing deserving of death" (Acts 25:25). After hearing Paul speak, Festus and Agrippa agree that "This man is engaged in no activity that deserves death or imprisonment" (Acts 26:31). Finally, after two years at Rome and the failure of Paul's accusers to appear before the imperial court, Paul is released (Acts 28:30-31).

Secondly, the guilt of the Jews. In town after town visited by Paul, a basic pattern repeats itself; it has four points. Paul always goes first to the synagogue and preaches to the Jews: some accept his preaching, while others reject and oppose it; he turns from them and goes to the Gentiles with initial success; but the hostile Jews stir up riots against him and he has to leave the place. This pattern can be seen at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14-50), at Iconium (14:1-6), at Lystra (14:8-20), at Thessalonica (17:1-9), at Beraea (17:10-13), and at Corinth (18:4-17), and the first three points are repeated at Rome (28:17-31).

Because of Luke's apologetico-polemical intention, we realize at once that the picture may be somewhat oversimplified. We can focus attention, therefore, on this fact of a split in the reaction of the synagogues to Paul. This is given in some detail for Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Thessalonica. What is to be noted in these texts is the confusing tendency to mention those Jews who accept Paul and then ignore them by terming the opposition simply "the Jews," as if all had rejected him.

At Antioch in Pisidia, Paul preaches in the synagogue (13:14-15) and

"the people begged to have all this repeated to them on the following Sabbath. After the assembly had been dismissed, many of the Jews and worshiping proselytes went away with Paul and Barnabas, who talked to them and urged them to hold fast to the grace of God. The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. On seeing the crowds, *the Jews* were filled with jealousy and contradicted what Paul had said, and abused him" (13:42-45).

And later it will be "*the Jews*" who will incite the riot against Paul. But what happened to the Jews who accepted him?

At Iconium, once again Paul begins with the synagogue (14:1) and "a great throng of Jews and Greeks accepted the faith. But the *disbelieving Jews* stirred up. . . the Gentiles. The people of the city were divided, some siding with *the Jews* and some with the apostles" (14:2, 4).

Here again there is first a split among the Jews, but the accepting Jews are forgotten as the "disbelieving Jews"²⁵ of 14:2 become simply "the Jews" in 14:4.

At Thessalonica Paul begins at the synagogue (17:1) and "*Some of them* were won over and were allotted to Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the worshipping Greeks and not a few women of rank. But *the Jews*, moved with jealousy. . ." (17:4-5).

Again, even though "some" of the Jews believed, those who did not are simply entitled "the Jews."

Accordingly, we must note that there was also a division in the reaction of Diaspora Judaism and that the polemical intention of Luke tended to make him pass very lightly over those who were accepting Paul, to pay more attention to those opposing him.

It is necessary to pay special heed to this opposing group and to ask why they reject Paul's message. This question has not been asked with sufficient intensity; but once one questions the simple thesis that Palestinian Judaism as a whole rejected Jesus, one necessarily asks a second question: what exactly happened in the Diaspora with Paul? Who rejected whom?

Rejection in the Diaspora

A striking fact which is often forgotten is that even after the crucifixion the early Church makes very good progress in Palestine and even in Jerusalem itself.²⁶ Acts constantly mentions the fact of the

²⁵ The Kleist-Lilly translation "disbelieving" is stronger than either the "unbelieving" of RSV or the "unconverted" of NEB.

²⁶ It is not just a case of any single text but a dominant impression from many texts. No difficulties with the events behind the first half of Acts and their historical exactitude can erase the repetitive force of this theme.

increase in Jewish converts within the Church; the first Gentile convert does not appear until Acts 10:

“those who accepted his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand persons” (2:41);

“day by day the Lord added to their company such as were to be saved” (2:47);

“but many of those who heard the message believed, the number of the men grew to about five thousand” (4:4);

“more and more came to believe in the Lord and were added to their number—a great crowd of men and women” (5:14).

And even outside Jerusalem itself

“the people of Samaria . . . believed Philip as he proclaimed the Good News of God’s kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ, (and) they were baptized, men and women alike” (8:12).

Then going farther afield,

“throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, meanwhile, the Church was in peace and it developed spiritually and lived in awe of the Lord. At the same time it increased in numbers through the exhortation inspired by the Holy Spirit” (9:31).

Secondly, Acts insists on the good will of the people towards the infant community:

“Daily with one accord they attended the Temple and, breaking bread at their homes, took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having the good will of the people” (2:46).

After the miracle of the lame beggar,

“all the people ran in amazement to them in the portico called Solomon’s” (3:11);

“with great power the apostles continued to give testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, the Lord, and without exception to enjoy great popularity” (4:33);

“and although the common people made much of them, no one of the rest dared join them” (5:13).

Presumably “the rest” are the authorities. It is also clear that the pattern of reception which had confronted Jesus is now being repeated

to the early community; while the ordinary people listen gladly to them, the authorities resent and reject their activities:

"Now while they were speaking to the people, the priests and the chief of the Temple police and the Sadducees came upon them, annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in the case of Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They arrested Peter and John . . . but many of those who had heard the message believed . . ." (4:1-4).

This scene ends with a statement that echoes the last days of the ministry of Jesus:

"The authorities, after further threatening them, let them go, not finding any way of punishing them, *because of the people*, who were all glorifying God because of what had happened" (4:21).

The details of the second arrest are also important:

"The high priest, however, and all that sided with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees) took action, as they were filled with jealousy . . ." (5:17);

"the officer went off with his men and brought them, but without violence because *they feared* that they might be stoned by the people" (5:26).

The accusation of the Sanhedrin is that "You are determined to make *us* responsible for this man's death" (5:28b). But even here, just as Jesus had found a Nicodemus, so they now find a Gamaliel to warn the Sanhedrin to "let them alone" (5:38b-39). A final point is the statement of James of Jerusalem to Paul around Pentecost of 57 or 58. This is made even after the authorities had managed the death of Stephen (Acts 6:8-8:3) and of James, the brother of John (12:1-24). He says: "You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews. . ." (21:20). This is the middle of the first century.

All the evidence, then, points to the conclusion that the Jews of Jerusalem and Palestine were accepting the Church in large numbers despite the same rooted opposition of their authorities which had crucified Jesus. The tremendous problem of the Mosaic law's continuance was worked out in principle and theory by the terse statement in Acts 15:11 "we believe that we [i.e., Jews] are saved through

the grace of our Lord Jesus, just as they are [i.e., Gentiles].” On the practical level of emotion and psychology, the Church was patient enough to follow certain minimal practices so that Jew and Gentile could live together in community (Acts 15:13–29; 21:20–25; cf. Lv 17:8–18:30). Patience, one of the primary manifestations of love, could have worked out the problem of the Mosaic law in time without tearing to shreds the sensibilities and traditions of Jews who had accepted Christ.

But if this is the picture of Palestinian Judaism as late as the middle of the first century, what went wrong, went tragically wrong, in the relations of Diaspora Judaism with Paul? What accounts for the change in Jewish reaction between Palestinian Judaism in the first half of Acts and that of Diaspora Judaism as described by Luke in the second half? The reason may be very painful for the Christian conscience to bear, but it must be faced. Does it not seem that Paul was in far too much of a hurry, and that if one must speak of rejection, such action was somewhat mutual between Paul and Diaspora Judaism?

The message of Paul proclaimed the dawn of the eschatological era in the risen glory of a crucified Messiah. One would hardly expect such an announcement to be accepted too easily; one would expect even centuries before the witness of Christian Jews to the presence of Love in their midst could persuade their brethren. Yet, in reading through Acts, one receives a terrible feeling of haste. Paul always begins with the Jews in every city, but as soon as he receives opposition from some of them, he turns to the Gentiles. The exact length of the period given them is specifically recorded in three instances. On the first journey, the Jews of Pisidian Antioch are given only two Sabbaths (13:42–44); on the second journey, those of Thessalonica are given three Sabbaths (17:2); and on the third journey, those of Ephesus are given three months (19:8).²⁷ This is not to deny that Paul received opposition among the Jews, but to suggest that opposition was to be expected at first to such a message. But if from the beginning there were always Jewish converts, why was there such a hurry to turn from those who

²⁷ It might be argued that too much weight is being placed on these three texts; but this small detail of time strikes one as the sort of unimportant fact that only remains in the text because of precise historical truth; it was surely not created and added for any kerygmatic purpose.

opposed him and go to the Gentiles? Why this speed, this almost intransigent haste, which makes what happens outside Palestine differ so sharply from what happens within the land in Acts? It is not that Paul does not care, that unconcern and indifference had bred impatience. The man who wrote "I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sadness and continuous sorrow in my heart. For I would wish to be cut off myself from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom 9:1-3) was not unconcerned. But Paul presumes, along with the early Church of his time, that the solemn prophetic warning of Jesus about the judgment to descend on Jerusalem and its Temple and the ingathering of the elect into the community of His risen and returned self involved necessarily the end of the world, the cosmic *eschaton* as well.²⁸ For Paul, then, the end of the world is presumed to be proximate; there is very little time left (Phil 4:4; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Rom 13:11). This urgency presses him forward to spread the gospel message as widely as possible. One wonders, however, against the perspective of John, where Jesus has already returned in the Spirit to the community (20:22-23) as He had promised (14:18, 28; 16:16-23), if Paul would have given the synagogue such a short time before turning to the Gentiles. If initial but partial opposition was hardened into the iron of rejection in Diaspora Judaism while things were going well in Palestinian Judaism, the question stands: Was the "theological haste" of Paul a serious factor in what happened between himself and Diaspora Judaism?

The purpose of this paper was to show that the simple statement "the Jews rejected Jesus" is historically indefensible and must therefore be removed from our thinking and our writing. A small hard core of Palestinian Jewish authority opposed Him and had Him crucified,

²⁸ Mk 8:38-9:1; Mt 16:27-28; Lk 9:26-27; Mt 19:28; Lk 22:28-30; Mt 10:23; Mk 14:62; Mt 26:64; Lk 22:69; Mk 13; Mt 24-25; Lk 21, and especially such parables as Mt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; 25:31-46. For background on the eschatology of Jesus, cf. A. Feuillet, "Le discours de Jésus sur la ruine du temple d'après Marc 13 et Luc 21,5-36," *Revue biblique* 55 (1948) 481-502; 56 (1949) 61-92; "La synthèse eschatologique de saint Matthieu 24-25," *ibid.* 56 (1949) 340-64; 57 (1950) 62-91, 180-211; "Les origines et la signification de Mt 10,23b," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961) 182-96; "Le sens du mot 'parousie' dans l'évangile de Matthieu: Comparaison entre Matth. 24 et Jac. 5.1-11," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Dodd *Festschrift*; Cambridge, 1956) pp. 261-80.

and in so doing they opposed the mind of their people. And the tragic clash of Paul and Diaspora Judaism while the Church in Palestine was making many Jewish converts had responsibility on both sides. One cannot but feel that things might have been very different; but all too soon the iron had entered the soul of both sides and it was too late.

The promise of Paul in Rom 11:25-26 that when the "fulness" (*plērōma*) of the Gentiles will be gathered in, then "all Israel will be saved," may stand as a conclusion.²⁹ This is hardly a prophecy of some magical number of Gentiles to be redeemed nor of some secret moment in future time when God will call a halt to the conversion of the nations. But at present the Jew stands over against us by the very fact of his historical continuance as a communal entity in witness that we have not allowed God fully to establish the eschatological rule of Love among us. We have claimed to be the fulfilment of the Old Testament expectation of a divine rule of love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, patience, and peace; the Jew also knows these prophecies, because he wrote them, and he looks for their fulfilment and does not find it. Much of our Christian anti-Semitism is based on the fact that the communal existence of the Jew is a divine accusation of our failure to realize on earth the final vision of Jesus in Jn 17:21-23. When we do actualize it fully, or even strive openly and mightily towards the realization of the Church as a community of love witnessing thereby to the world the presence of Yahweh as a Community of Love in our midst, the Jew will see in us that for which patriarchs and prophets yearned, that towards which his own hopes and expectations turn, that for which Israel has always waited, prayed, and suffered. And as a beginning, we Christians shall have to examine honestly, as an invitation to dialogue, our own collective historical conscience, and we shall have to begin far back in the first half of the first century.

²⁹ J. M. Oesterreicher, "Israel's Misstep and Her Fall, Rom 9-11," in *Studiorum Paulinorum congressus internationalis catholicus 1961* 1 (Rome, 1963) 317-27; F. J. Caubet Iturbe, " ' . . . et sic omnis Israel salvus fiet' (Rom 11,26)," *ibid.*, pp. 329-40; C. Journet, "The Mysterious Destinies of Israel," *The Bridge* 2 (New York, 1956) 35-90.