

NEW TESTAMENT AND JUDAISM OF THE N. T. PERIOD

TRANSLATION OF ARTICLE

THE CRUCIFIED ONE AND THE JEWS

by

Prof. David Flusser*

*To the Theological Faculty of Lucerne
in gratitude*

Hostility towards the Jews is not a Christian invention, but it has been grossly intensified by Christianity; and Christian anti-Judaism is only slowly disappearing. Well-intentioned friends of the Jews often say: "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the Jews" (cf. Matt. 23 : 30ff.). For obviously apologetic reasons, pseudo-historical constructions are added to excuse the terrible sufferings of the Jews at the hands of the Christians as a lapse. This theory is passed on and the Jewish participant in the discussion is expected to live happily with the well-intentioned excuse. This might perhaps be bearable, but how is a researcher to react to it? Unfortunately it can easily happen that if he is Jewish, and his scientific conscience does not permit him to accept gratefully the "anti-Judaistica" in the New Testament as "prophetic rebukes", his Christian colleague may become aggressive! Should the Jewish researcher therefore deny the simple truth which speaks in the texts, just for the sake of preserving peace? However, we do not want to deal here with general questions. We shall show, by means of one example, how the original fact of the sympathy of the Jewish people for the crucified Jesus was turned at a very early stage into the hostility of the mocking crowds. If we succeed in revealing this change in tendency in the Scriptures we shall touch a sore point. It started perhaps with a tendentious shift – and the consequences are well known. I want to emphasize that it is the duty of the historian who comes upon a cruel injustice which contains the seed of future crimes, to evaluate it as such. Otherwise he is only a collector and not a scholar.

One more preliminary remark: in my work I have assumed¹ that the original report about Jesus is best preserved in Luke, that Mark has made

* Original title: "Der Gekreuzigte und die Juden", published in *Jahresbericht 1975/76* of the Lucerne Theological Faculty and Catechetical Institute.

¹ See: David Flusser, *Jesus*, pp. 10ff.

a thorough revision of the material, and that where Mark is available Matthew is mostly dependent on him. In my book about Jesus,² unfortunately, I did not use this realization thoroughly enough in the report of the Crucifixion. Only now have I recognized the special importance of the differences between Luke and Mark in the description of that event. The conclusions which I shall set down do not, therefore, have an ideological, but a philological basis. They are founded on the method of literary criticism.

The crowd is proverbially known to cry "Hosanna" one day and "Crucify" the next. This saying comes from a particular interpretation of the Mark-Matthew report about the Crucifixion. This popular sentence does not express the true sense of these reports, however. If Luke had not been preserved we might have supposed that the groups of people who passed the Crucified One were made up partly of the Sadducean high priest's party, but in the main simply of a sadistic mob who amused themselves at the expense of the crucified Messiah. I have even assumed that the words of the Psalm (22:2) which Mark (15:34) and Matthew (27:46) report as the last words of Jesus are an unfriendly interpretation of Jesus's last cry by the onlookers, which Mark then mistakenly puts in the mouth of Jesus himself.³ Why should it not be possible that there was a coarse mob among the Jews? The passers-by could really rail, the high priests could mock him, the two crucified with him could revile him, and the onlookers could mockingly think that the dying man called upon Elijah: "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him". The scribes (Mark 15:31; Matt. 27:41) and the elders (Matt. 27:41), who joined with the high priests in mocking him, could then either be considered a secondary addition, or they could be interpreted in another way.⁴ What we read in Mark does not, therefore, have to be a tendentious description; one could imagine such a thing really happening –

² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 132 (bottom) and Note 237. This assumption is improbable. There was an early Christian tendency to connect the words of Ps. 22 with Jesus's death. In Mark (15:34; cf. Matt. 27:46), verse 2 becomes the cry from the Cross; Luke (23:35) and Mark (15:29; cf. Matt. 27:39) allude to verse 8; the casting of lots for Jesus's garments (Luke 23:34; Mark 15:24; Matt. 27:35; John 19:23f.) depends on Ps. 22:19. It seems there is the possibility that there was a successive influence of the Psalms on the Gospels. This can even be true of Luke, for which reason we cannot know to what extent the words of Ps. 22 had already influenced Luke's source. Ps. 22:8 in its Greek form has had an influence on Luke 23:35. In Ps. 22:8 it is written: "All who see me mock at me . . . they wag their heads"; Only the wagging of the heads is recorded in Mark 15:29; Matt. 27:39, whereas in Luke 23:35 can be read: "And the people stood by watching; but the rulers scoffed at him . . .". The seemingly clear connection between Ps. 22:8 and Luke 23:35 is in fact unclear: in the Psalm the watchers are the jeerers, whereas in Luke the people watching have nothing to do with the scoffing; the watchers in Luke 23:47 (Mark 15:39; Matt. 27:54) and 23:48, 49 (Mark 15:40; Matt. 27:55) sympathize with Jesus. See also below, note 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118f.

without its incriminating the Jews unhistorically. But it has once more been shown that an event can easily be wrongly evaluated historically if the sources are not first compared and examined in a literary-critical analysis. In our case it has a dangerous effect, in that we have all forgotten how to read Luke without being involuntarily influenced by Mark and Matthew.

Now let us see what Luke (23:26-49) was able to report about the crucifixion of Jesus. Or, to put it another way: who were Jesus's friends at the Crucifixion and who were his enemies? On the way, the Romans forced a passing Jew, Simon of Cyrene in North Africa, to carry the cross of Jesus. It was not unusual for the occupying Roman forces to demand compulsory services of the pilgrims on Jewish holidays – a terrible humiliation in this case, such as were also experienced at the time of the Nazis. "And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him" (Luke 23:27). These and the following words of Jesus to the daughters of Jerusalem (23:28f.) are peculiar to Luke. In the first instance it might be thought that Mark, and following him Matthew, left these words out because he also omits the other lamentations of Jesus over Jerusalem almost completely. Perhaps Mark's behaviour becomes significant, however, if his description of Jesus's crucifixion is compared with Luke's. In any case, not only are the lamentations, the words of Jesus to the daughters of Jerusalem, missing in Mark, but also references to the great multitude of the people and the women who bewailed and lamented Jesus. Even the words of the Crucified One: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34) are only to be found in Luke, and even here not in all manuscripts. Since the second century these words have often been omitted by copyists who well knew what they were doing.⁵ They were obviously of the opinion that Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father for forgiveness for his Jewish opponents, and for this reason they did not consider the words genuine: such a thing should not be allowed to appear in their manuscripts. If they had appeared in Mark's source, it is possible that he could not let the words remain for the same reason. However, it is not certain that Jesus prayed for his Jewish adversaries. Perhaps he was praying for the Roman soldiers who crucified him.

But let us come to the point. On the way to his crucifixion, Jesus was followed by a multitude of the Jewish people, and as was usual at that time the women showed their grief by singing laments. When Jesus was crucified "the people stood by, watching" (Luke 23:35). And when Jesus had died the crowd is mentioned for the third time: "And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight, watching what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts" (23:48). The threefold mention of the crowd is artistically linked with guiding words: the first (23:27) and second times

⁵ I shall write about the history of this word of Jesus elsewhere.

(23:35a) Luke speaks of the “people”, the second (23:35a) and third times (23:48) he speaks of “watching”, and he twice, in the first (23:27) and third (23:48) cases reports the lamentations of the multitude of people present on Jesus’s way to death and after the multitude saw that Jesus was dead. It is therefore certain that the same Jewish people are three times referred to as sympathizing with Jesus. We assume that this is how it was written in Luke’s source, as was the additional piece of information: “And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things,, (23:49). Here too the word ‘saw’ is used, as it was earlier of the centurion: “Now when the centurion saw what had taken place,⁶ he praised God,⁷ and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent!’” (23:47). That one of the executioner’s helpers is deeply shaken by the execution of a pious man has often been reported in history, and this is understandable. That in Mark’s report the centurion called Jesus “the Son of God” and not, as in Luke, “innocent”, is not very plausible and is an additional argument for preferring Luke’s report to Mark’s.

Let us summarize what we have seen thus far. The sympathy of the Jewish crowd with the one to be crucified is expressed three times in Luke’s report, which never mentions any mockery by the Jews present: the multitude of the people accompanies him and the women lament him, the people attend the Crucifixion and when the whole crowd sees that Jesus is dead they beat their breasts as a sign of grief and go home mourning. The sympathy of the people is understandable. The crowd was with Jesus the whole time he was in Jerusalem and the high priests did not dare arrest him in public because “they feared the people” (Luke 20:19; Mark 12:12). When the Romans crucified him and displayed the inscription which was so insulting to the Jews, could one of the Jewish people feel anything but grief for the martyr, the victim of Roman cruelty? What Luke tells us is also historically probable, and if it was not written thus, then this is how one ought to reconstruct it. We did not realize this before because we interpreted Mark too benevolently.

But who were Jesus’s enemies at the Crucifixion, according to Luke? After reporting (23:34b), following Ps. 22:19, that the Roman soldiers cast lots to divide Jesus’s garments, he says: “But the rulers⁸ scoffed at him,

⁶ Here, too, as immediately afterwards (Luke 23:48) the death is euphemistically described as “what had happened”.

⁷ These words could be a comment by Luke.

⁸ In the Greek text: *de kai*, therefore literally: “But the rulers also scoffed and said . . .” This does not mean that the watching people also mocked Jesus (see above, note 3). Luke simply wanted to say: But the rulers, who were also standing there, mocked. The inexact expression used by Luke, anti-Jewish prejudices, and Mark’s (and Matthew’s) tendency are the reason why in some manuscripts and old translations can be read: “But the rulers scoffed with them”, i.e. with the people!

saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!"⁹ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews'. One of the criminals who was hanged railed at him, saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!'" (Luke 23:35-39). Then there follows in Luke the dialogue with the second, good criminal.¹⁰

As in the description of the sympathy of the people with the Crucified One, the reaction of Jesus's opponents as recorded in Luke is artistic, and here too he makes use of the threefold repetition, although here they are not the same people three times, but three different kinds of adversaries. The description is fluent, and is only interrupted by the information about the inscription on the Cross. This is understandable, since the soldiers before the Cross deride the "King of the Jews", and this is what is written on the Cross. There is an accomplished parallelism in the description. The words which signify the mockery vary ("scoff", "mock", "rail")¹¹ but the meaning of the mockery is actually the same in all three cases: the impotence of him who thought himself the Saviour. "Save yourself, you who wanted to save others!" One of the thieves, who will suffer the same fate on the cross adds: "Save yourself and us". In all three expressions of mockery, Jesus is addressed as the Messiah. The Roman soldiers mockingly call him "the King of the Jews", a non-Jewish, Roman designation which could be read on the Cross. If we are right,¹² the Messianic titles vary here as well: the Jewish rulers say, "the Chosen of God"; the Roman soldiers, "the King of the Jews"; one of the thieves, "the Messiah".

As with the crowd of the Jewish people, which is sympathetic to the Crucified One, the mocking enemies of Jesus also correspond to historical probability in Luke. "The rulers" (*archontes*) is Luke's name for the dignitaries who delivered Jesus up to the Romans,¹³ and the mockery of the Roman soldiers is natural. According to Luke, Jesus is only derided by one of the malefactors crucified with him, but according to Mark and Matthew he is mocked by both. In this case they are either criminals or, more likely,

⁹ We suppose that in the old report only "the Chosen One of God" stood. The Messiah is also called the "Chosen One" in the Book of Enoch, and according to Luke (9:35) the heavenly voice declares him to be "my Son, my Chosen".

¹⁰ We intend to discuss this dialogue elsewhere.

¹¹ In Mark (15:29f.; cf. Matt. 27:39f.), too, there is a triad of jeers and their mockery is expressed in three different verbs. We shall see that in Mark the triad is different from that of Luke, and that the mockery is no longer uniform – the content of the jeers of the criminal is not even mentioned at all (Mark 15:32b; Matt. 27:44).

¹² Cf. above, note 9.

¹³ Cf. Luke 23:13, 35; 24:20; Acts 3:17; 4:5, 8; 13:27. *Archontes* is what Josephus (*Bellum* VI, 303) calls those who handed over the prophet of doom, Jesus the son of Ananias, to the Roman Prefect.

zealots from the group around Barabbas. A zealot is not likely to have had much sympathy for the crucified, unpolitical, suffering Messiah.¹⁴

Therefore Luke has given us an historically probable description of who mocked and who mourned the Crucified One, and it seems as if this is what was written in his source. However, Luke's sketch gains immensely in importance – also with regard to the question of the alleged guilt of the Jews in the Crucifixion – if it is confronted with Mark's version (and with Matthew's, which is derived from this). In Mark there is no mention of the lamenting and mourning Jewish crowd, whereas he describes groups of mocking and deriding Jews, simple people who passed by or stood watching. As we shall see, this change probably came about by manipulation and invention. The old enemies from among the Jews in Luke – the rulers and the two (in this case) who were crucified with Jesus – are also to be found in Mark, of course. The friends who remain are the Roman centurion, who now bears witness to Jesus as God's Son – i. e. the converted Roman, so to speak – and the many women "who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered to him, and also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem" (Mark 15:40f.; cf. Luke 23:49; Matthew 27:55f.), i. e. the women from the Christian community in Galilee, so to speak. According to Mark and Matthew, no other Jew stands by Jesus – in stark contrast to Luke.

Before his last words on the Cross, Jesus is reviled three times, according to Mark (15:29-32; Matt. 27:39-43): "And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the Cross!' So also the chief priests mocked him to one another, with the scribes, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down from the Cross, that we may see and believe'. Those who were crucified with him also reviled him."

We have been able to see in Luke the three insults are constructed in parallel. In Mark (and Matthew) the words of the third insult (that of the criminal) are missing. In Luke (23:39) one of the thieves is known to say: "... help yourself and us", which corresponds well with the situation. In Mark (and Matthew) the two insults are not constructed in full parallel, as is the threefold mockery in Luke. In Mark (and Matthew) the summons to come down from the Cross is added both times to the mocking invitations to Jesus to save himself, but the thrice-repeated mocking title of Saviour, given to Jesus in Luke only appears once in Mark, in the words of the high priests and scribes: "Christ, the King of Israel" (Mark 15:32; Matt. 27:42). The high priests and scribes in Mark, to whom further the elders are added

¹⁴ This is also true, if the conversation between Jesus and the 'good' criminal is historical. The latter recognizes in Jesus the innocent executed one and repents of his guilt.

in Matthew (27:41) correspond to the rulers in Luke (23:35b). Here Luke uses a word which is typical for him, but he could just as easily have used the same term as Matthew and Mark. However, perhaps the mention of various "guilty parties" in Mark and Matthew is intentional: we have seen that in the whole description by Mark the intention is to put the blame on Jewish people, in contrast to Luke, according to whom the simple Jews show their solidarity with the Crucified One.

This intention is already shown by the first mocking group in Mark (15:29; Matt. 27:39): "And those who passed by derided him . . ." Later, after the cry from the Cross, Mark speaks of the "bystanders" who mock (15:35; cf. Matt. 27:47), and one of them is the one who makes sport of Jesus with the sponge¹⁵ filled with vinegar (Mark 15:36; Mat., 27:48). All Jews, therefore! But let us return to the group of passers-by. They do not mockingly call Jesus the Saviour, but "they wagged their heads, and said, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days . . .'" (Mark 15:29). Mark repeats the accusation, which according to him was pronounced by the High Council (Mark 14:58), through the passers-by. In Luke, it is absent in both cases.

Mark interprets mockingly the words of the Psalm spoken on the Cross (15:35 f.; Matt. 27:47 f.): "And some of the bystanders hearing it said, 'Behold, he is calling Elijah.' And one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down'".

This mocking on the part of the Jews is absent in Luke! That the twofold scorn relating to Elijah is an invention of Mark's is very probable, because of the act of the single mocking Jew, who allegedly gave the man on the Cross vinegar to drink. Luke, however, reports this of the Roman soldiers (23:36 f.). This manipulation seems to betray Mark's intention. Here it should be noted that the important point is the incrimination of the Jews, and not the fact that in Mark (and Matthew) the mocking of the already crucified Jesus by the soldier is missing, since according to Mark (15:16-20; Matt. 27:27-31), the Roman soldiers mock Jesus before the Crucifixion (cf. Luke 23:11).

In the part of the report we have dealt with, it would therefore be difficult to find anything in Mark which would add to our knowledge of Jesus's crucifixion as gained from Luke — perhaps with one exception:¹⁶ according to Mark (15:23) Jesus was offered wine mingled with myrrh on

¹⁵ Mark (15:36) tells us: "And one ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink". In Luke (23:36), "the soldiers mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar". Perhaps the sponge on the reed is a picturesque addition invented by Mark.

¹⁶ Another concrete piece of information would be the Aramaic Psalm on the Cross (Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46) — if it is historical.

the way to the Crucifixion, but he did not take it. It was in fact the custom, at that time, to anaesthetize the condemned person before death with such a drink.¹⁷ Mark has heard of this custom¹⁸ but whether it actually happened in Jesus's case, we do not know.¹⁹

Let us summarize the results of our investigation. As we have seen, the threefold mention of the Jewish crowd (Luke 23:27-32, 35, 48) which laments and bewails Jesus of Nazareth on his way to death, is absent in Mark (and Matthew). After the third mention of the crowd the information (Luke 23:49a) that all his acquaintances stood at a distance is missing. If we assume that Mark had a similar text to Luke, then we might assume that Mark carelessly omitted the information about Jesus's acquaintances along with the mention of the whole crowd which lamented his death (Luke 23:48). As already stated, the only friends of Jesus who remain are those who, so to speak, represent the Christian community: the converted heathen, the centurion (Mark 15:39) and the Christian women from Galilee (15:40). The enemies to be found in Luke are also present in Mark, although the mocking soldiers are absent (Luke 23:36f.), probably because Mark has transferred the motif of the Roman soldiers offering vinegar to an anonymous Jew (Mark 15:36). The other old enemies, the Jewish ones from Luke, are still present in Mark: the Jewish rulers (Luke 23:35b: Mark 15:31f.), and the two malefactors (Luke 23:39; Mark 15:32b). The fact that both of them deride Jesus in Mark, and only one in Luke, does not seem to indicate an increase in the guilt of the Jews in Mark. In this connection, however, the difference in the behaviour of the crowd in Luke and in Mark is of particular importance. In Luke, the crowd feels with Jesus his suffering and death. In Mark we only hear of the deriding and maliciously mocking Jews, once before the cry from the Cross (Mark 15:29f.) and twice after this (15:35f.). And finally: in Luke there is no single Jew who is not affected by the death of Jesus, whereas in Mark all the "non-Christian" Jews are enemies of Jesus, and as followers there are only the Christian women from Galilee (and the centurion).

The most important difference between the Crucifixion as described by Luke and by Mark could be explained if we assumed that Mark was Luke's source of information, and Luke has revised his source to give it a pro-Jewish tendency, by changing the hostile Jewish mob into a crowd which sympathizes with the Crucified One. This does not work out, however, as

¹⁷ Billerbeck I, 1037f.

¹⁸ Mark often reports details which are based on information. Sometimes they are correct and relevant, sometimes he seems to be mistaken. In any case, I would suppose that his special bits of news are based on information and not on oral tradition.

¹⁹ Matthew (27:34) did not know of the merciful custom of the Jews, which is why he could not understand Mark. He writes that "they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it".

the preceding description of Jesus's condemnation in Luke (23:13f.) shows. "Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people" and wanted to let Jesus go (Luke 23:13f.). "But they all cried out together, 'Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas'... Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus; but they shouted out, 'Crucify, crucify him!' A third time he said to them, 'Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death'; ... But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voice prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that their demand should be granted..." (Luke 23:18f.; see also 23:4f.).

We have seen that at the Crucifixion Luke (23:27, 35) speaks of the sympathetic "people", whereas earlier (23:13), when sentence is passed on Jesus, Luke names "the people" together with the high priests and the rulers, i. e. together with Jesus's enemies. These shouted all together and demanded the death of Jesus. Three times²⁰ Pilate turns to them, and three times the answer is hostile to Jesus. The second and third times the answer is "Crucify!". The cry gets stronger in Luke – and only here – until it becomes unbearable: "But they were urgent, demanding with loud voices that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed". There is therefore no reason to believe that Luke changed the story of the Crucifixion as it stood in his source, because of his sympathy towards the Jews.

In this connection, something else should be noted. We can see from the Acts of the Apostles what Luke thought about the participation of the Jews of Jerusalem in the crucifixion of Jesus. There (2:22f.) Peter says to the people dwelling in Jerusalem, "This Jesus ... you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men". And later (3:13f.) Peter says of the death of Jesus to the men of Israel: "God ... glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of life ... And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers." This refers mainly²¹ to the passing of sentence on Jesus (Luke 23:13f.), of which we have spoken. In any case, if Luke thinks like this about the guilt of the Jews it is difficult to suppose that the description of the sympathy of the Jewish crowd at the Crucifixion (Luke 23:26f.) comes from Luke. This is how Luke found it in his source, since the parts of his story of the Acts of the Apostles quoted above shows that Luke himself would not have had anything against the hostile, mocking crowd depicted in Mark. Therefore Luke's source in the description of the Crucifixion is not Mark.

²⁰ This is expressly written in Luke (23:22). In Mark (and Matthew) Pilate turns to them four times.

²¹ "The rulers" come from Luke 23:13, 35b. Cf. also the above verses, note 13.

The description of the sympathy of the Jewish crowd with Jesus at the Crucifixion is certainly stylized, as can be seen by the three-fold mention of the crowd; the second reference (Luke 23:35a) does not say much, and is in fact unnecessary. However, the fact of this sympathy is certainly historical and not constructed by the source. We know that in Jesus's last days in Jerusalem the Jewish crowd was on his side.²² According to Luke (21:38), "All the people came to him in the early morning, to hear him." And as the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover, the chief priests and the scribes were "seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people" (Luke 22:1f.; Mark 14:1f.; Matt. 26:1f.). Before Jesus's capture we only read in the Gospels of the sympathy of the Jewish crowd for him, and not of a hostile tension of the people with regard to him. "He was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him; but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people hung upon his words" (Luke 19:47f.; Mark 11:18f.; cf. also Luke 20:19; Mark 12:12; Matt. 21:45f.). It is natural for the people to mourn the martyr of Roman cruelty. For this reason too, Luke is reliable and Mark distorts the facts.

However, what is the connection between the two descriptions of the Crucifixion, that of Mark and that of Luke? Should we assume that there were two sources, one more historical, friendly towards the Jews, a "proto-Luke", and one more hostile and less historical, our Mark? Or are both Luke and Mark based on the same source? Both possibilities indicate a progressive movement away from the reality in the sense of a hostile estrangement with Jewry. This is true of Mark's report, even if something else might play a part here.

It is possible that, with his inventions, Mark also wanted to express that Jesus was forsaken by everyone, apart from the Christian women and the converted centurion; apart from these, Jesus died in a hostile world. However, even someone who is willing to accept this as Mark's main intention cannot avoid noticing the hostile, mocking Jews around the Cross in Mark, whereas in Luke the crowd of people mourn Jesus. We have listed enough reasons for finding the mockery of the simple Jewish people at the Crucifixion unhistorical. One thing is certain: if it is true that Mark invented the mocking Jews, in order to emphasize the "existential" loneliness of Jesus on the Cross, then it is improbable that he was well-meaning towards the Jewish crowd. He was near to the idea that the Jewish crowd "rejected" Jesus. Recognition of this fact appears significant to me.

The question whether Luke here draws on a special source, or whe-

²² However, the crowd demanded the release of Barabbas at the instigation of the high priests. "The crowd did not hate Jesus, but they loved the freedom fighter Barabbas" (Flusser, *Jesus*, p. 125).

ther Mark is dependent on the same source as Luke, which was then altered to suit his tendency, is not as difficult to answer as it first seems, as far as I see. I have also at other times in the course of my work found that the Gospel according to Mark represents a thorough revision of the old material and is hardly identical to the old report, whereas Luke, on the contrary, gives us the same old report, without being dependent on Mark – and perhaps Mark even depends on Luke. In short, Mark and Luke did have a mutual source, but Luke's version is much preferable to Mark's. The present investigation confirms the other results of my research: there too Luke is more true to the original, more historical, whereas Mark has thoroughly revised his source.

I believe that also in the chapters dealt with here, there is an indication that Mark based his report on a text similar to that from which Luke worked, but which he rewrote independently. Particular attention should be paid to the excellent construction of the tale in Luke, which has been spoilt in Mark. The threefold mention of the crowd which was sympathetic to Jesus is lacking, as we have seen, in Mark. Through this the profound words of Jesus to the daughters of Jerusalem about the future destruction (Luke 23:27f.) disappeared along with the first mention of the sympathetic crowd of people. The other lamentations of Jesus about future doom are also almost completely erased in Mark. With the third mention of the lamenting crowd (Luke 23:48) the following words (v. 49a), "And all his acquaintances stood at a distance . . ." are removed, and what remained in Mark (15:40) is: "There were also women looking on from afar". Mark has therefore not noticed that his source contained a Psalm (Ps. 38;11): "My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my kinsmen stand afar off". Therefore he has omitted the first part of the biblical reference, without realizing it.

In contrast to the crowd which stands by Jesus, which Luke mentions three times, there are three kinds of jeerer: the rulers (23:35b), the soldiers (23:36f.) and one of the criminals (23:39). We have already seen that the three insults are, in Luke, variations on one theme: "He saved others, let him save himself, if he is the Messiah of God, his Chosen One!" (23:35). In Mark too, three kinds of jeerer are present, but the parallelism of the insults is destroyed and the identity of the jeerers is not the same as in Luke. The jeers of the criminal (Luke 23:39) are missing in Mark (15:32b); only the words of the rulers (Luke 23;35b) are similar to those in Mark (15:31f.). In Mark the mocking soldiers (Luke 23:36f.) are missing completely, but he introduces the passers-by as the first group (Mark 15:29f.), and their mockery is new and different. Only the ending, "Help yourself", is parallel. If, from one version to another, a parallelism is destroyed, this almost always means a secondary, less successful treatment of the report.

In Mark (15:35f.) new Jewish jeerers appear after the words on the Cross. The description demonstrates Mark's fabulistic talent, which we have also discovered elsewhere, but one thing, *inter alia*, speaks against the originality and historicity of what is described: the motif of the vinegar (Mark (15:36), which Mark has so picturesquely introduced. This comes, as we have seen, from the jeering Roman soldiers (Luke 23:36f.), of whom Mark knows nothing. Mark does not seem to have been very successful with the manipulation: the Roman soldiers surrounding the Cross could mockingly offer the Crucified One vinegar, but it is hard to imagine that they would allow one of the bystanding Jews to approach and reach up a sponge with vinegar on a reed to Jesus. Such a thing cannot be completely excluded at a tumultuous execution, but such a supposition proves to be superfluous, as we have Luke. This consideration applies not only to the incident with the vinegar, but to the whole description of the Crucifixion. What we read in Mark is a lively, not completely impossible, picture, but it is the fruit of his imagination – and certainly in our case – of his inclination. We could not recognize this without Luke's report, but when we compare Mark with Luke we see that, on the basis of Luke, we can appreciate the flaws in Mark's construction and the reason for his treatment of the material. We can therefore assume that, in our case also, Mark and Luke had similar texts to work from, which Mark dealt with according to his taste and inclination.

In Luke, therefore, the Jewish crowd mourns the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, in Mark they are against him. If it has been shown that what Luke tells us is historically true, then this is very important for the alleged Jewish guilt of the death of Jesus. It is also just as important that already in Mark there is a shift to the disadvantage of the Jews. Therefore already with Mark we find the beginning of the movement towards the defamation of the Jews, which was to have such cruel, inhuman consequences throughout history. Apart from this, we could see that even Luke is not free of this unhappy tendency, with the cry, "Crucify!".²³ It is almost certain that the first sources were free of this distortion and we assume that it was also still lacking in the Greek translations which served as the basis for the Gospels.

The description of the Crucifixion in Luke cannot be secondary also for the reason that in the history of early Christianity there has never been a movement towards friendship with the Jews, but always a development towards hostility to Jews.²⁴ In order to define Mark's place in this process it would be necessary to investigate the whole of Mark. As far as the description of the Crucifixion in Mark is concerned we could see that the Jews

²³ John, too, tendentiously increases the volume and the repetition of the cry "Crucify" (John 19:6, 15), but the first people who cry in John (19:6) are still "the high priests and the officers".

²⁴ The Jewish-Christian sects are an exception. After they had been rejected by the Church they began to emphasize their Jewishness, and became closer to the Jews.

are incriminated, but not yet condemned as a nation and a religion. Matthew is not more hostile to the Jews than Mark in his description of the Crucifixion: in this chapter he does not change the tendency of his source, Mark. Otherwise, however, the final editor of Matthew has gone further in his anti-Jewish tendencies, as I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere.²⁵

The whole picture is not very pleasant. Perhaps tension between Christians and Jews and Jewry was once historically necessary for the development of Christianity as an independent, different religion. Now the scaffolding can confidently, but unfortunately too late, be removed. Christianity will only then no longer be prone to anti-Judaism when the root of the disease is treated. Self-righteous excuses do not help. It should be recognized that Christian anti-Judaism was not a coincidental lapse. Anti-Judaism stood godfather to the formation of Christianity. We have tried to show this on the basis of one example, and wanted through this to do our Christian brothers a good service.

Translated by Yvonne Bearne

Professor David Flusser is professor of Judaism of the Second Temple period, and early Christianity, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

²⁵ *Immanuel*, Number 5, Summer 1975.