

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Harvard Divinity School

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation

Author(s): Birger A. Pearson

Source: *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Jan., 1971), pp. 79-94

Published by: [Cambridge University Press](#) on behalf of the [Harvard Divinity School](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1508972>

Accessed: 23/09/2014 22:28

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Cambridge University Press and Harvard Divinity School are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Harvard Theological Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-16:
A DEUTERO-PAULINE INTERPOLATION

BIRGER A. PEARSON

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF. 93106

IN any discussion of the origins of Christian "anti-Semitism," among a number of New Testament passages that can be adduced, 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 will inevitably be brought to the fore.¹ The purpose of this article is not *per se* to contribute to the current Jewish-Christian "dialog," but to discuss historically and exegetically this important passage in 1 Thessalonians. (Such a study, of course, will not be completely irrelevant to the contemporary theological scene.)

The foundations for an understanding of our passage in its own historical context were laid in the nineteenth century by "the author of historical theology," Ferdinand Christian Baur.² Of 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 he wrote,

This passage has a thoroughly un-Pauline stamp. It agrees certainly with the Acts, where it is stated that the Jews in Thessalonica stirred up the heathen against the apostle's converts, and against himself; yet the comparison is certainly far-fetched between those troubles raised by the Jews and Gentiles conjointly and the persecution of the Christians in Judaea. Nor do we ever find the apostle elsewhere holding up the Judaeo-Christians as a pattern to the Gentile Christians. It is, moreover, quite out of place for him to speak of these persecutions in Judaea; for he himself was the person principally concerned in the only persecution to which our passage can refer. . . . Is this polemic against the Jews at all natural to him; a polemic so external and so

¹ See, e.g., H.-J. SCHOEPS, *The Jewish-Christian Argument*, trans. David Green (London, 1963), 28; also O. MICHEL, Fragen zu 1 Thessalonicher 2, 14-16: Antijüdische Polemik bei Paulus, in W. ECKERT, et. al., ed., *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament? Exegetische und systematische Beiträge* (Abh. z. christl.-jüd. Dialog 1, München, 1967), 50-59.

² The quotation is the title of chapter 1 in PETER C. HODGSON's recent study of BAUR, *The Formation of Historical Theology* (New York, 1966); HODGSON's book is an impressive and sympathetic treatment of that controversial and oft-misunderstood giant of German scholarship. See also HODGSON's general introduction in *Ferdinand Christian Baur on the Writing of Church History* (New York, 1968), 3-40.

vague that the enmity of the Jews to the Gospel is characterized solely in the terms of that well-known charge with which the Gentiles assailed them, the *odium generis humani*? . . . And when it is said that after the Jews have continually filled up the measure of their sins, *ἔφθασε δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος*, what does this suggest to us more naturally than the punishment that came upon them in the destruction of Jerusalem? ³

Baur concludes that the reproach against the Jews in 2:14–16 reflects a later period, at a time when Pauline Christianity was seeking an accommodation with Jewish Christianity, and the Jews were regarded on all sides as enemies of the gospel.⁴

Baur saw in this passage a powerful argument against the authenticity of 1 Thessalonians as a whole; this solution is, of course, unsatisfactory. Other nineteenth-century scholars — though by no means all ⁵ — suggested that the difficulties could be solved by the hypothesis of later interpolation. Albrecht Ritschl proposed to excise 1 Thessalonians 2:16c as a scribal gloss post-70 referring to the destruction of Jerusalem.⁶ He was followed subsequently by a number of other scholars.⁷ Schmiedel extended the scope of the interpolation to incorporate vv. 15 and 16;⁸ Holtzmann included v. 14 as well.⁹

In my view these nineteenth-century scholars were on the right track. Nevertheless most twentieth-century commentators ¹⁰ re-

³ F. C. BAUR, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, trans. from 2nd German ed. A. Menzies (London, 1875), 87f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 88; cf. also 320.

⁵ See, e.g., G. LÜNEMANN, *ad loc.* (MEYER'S *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the New Testament*, 8, American ed., New York, 1889).

⁶ In an article in *Halle'sche allg.Lit.-Ztg.* (1847), cited in P. SCHMIEDEL, *Die Briefe an die Thessalonicher und an die Korinther (Hand-Com.NT)*, Freiburg, 1892), 21. RITSCHL is mentioned in the critical apparatus of the NESTLE-ALAND ed. of the N.T. (Stuttgart, 1963²⁶), *ad loc.* All references to the Greek text of the N.T. in this article are to this edition.

⁷ Amongst the 20th-Century scholars by J. MOFFAT, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New York, 1918⁸), 73; also J. BAILEY in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 11 (New York, 1955), 280.

⁸ SCHMIEDEL, *loc. cit.*

⁹ In his *Einleitung in das N.T.*, 214, according to J. FRAME, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (I.C.C., 38, Edinburgh, 1912)*, 109. HOLTZMANN'S book was unavailable to me. According to S. BRANDON, vv. 14–16 is understandable as “an interpolation made by some Gentile Christians, with an anti-Semitic bias, such as Marcion”; see *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London, 1957), 93.

¹⁰ E.g., M. DIBELIUS (*Handbuch N.T.*, Tübingen, 1925); E. v. DOBSCHÜTZ

ject all theories of interpolation at this point in 1 Thessalonians, insisting that one finds refuge in interpolation hypotheses only as a last resort.¹¹ With this methodological principle I would agree. Yet the historical and theological difficulties in 1 Thessalonians 2 are such that one must begin again to entertain such a hypothesis. On the basis of the insights of previous scholars, and of my own historical, theological, and form-critical observations, I propose to argue that there is, indeed, an interpolation in 1 Thessalonians 2 as it now stands, reflecting a situation in the church post-70, and that this interpolation extends from v. 13 through v. 16.¹²

V. 16c. This concluding sentence is pregnant with interpretive possibilities. Assuming that *ὀργή* here is to be taken in an eschatological sense, the possibilities for *εἰς τέλος* and *ἔφθασεν* are still to be considered. *εἰς τέλος* has been taken as meaning "until the end";¹³ other possibilities are "finally" or "completely."¹⁴ Indeed, it has recently been suggested that the LXX translators intended by the use of this phrase to render the double meaning of the Hebrew *nsh* into Greek, so that the phrase can mean both "utterly, completely," and "finally, at last, forever."¹⁵ In any case, all of these translations indicate the finality of the wrath that has come upon the Jews in this passage. J. Munck's attempt to paraphrase the expression to mean "until the last events at the end of the world," i.e., the conversion of Israel, thus harmonizing

(MEYER, *Kr.-ex.Kom.N.T.*, Göttingen, 1909⁷); J. FRAME, *op. cit.*; C. MASSON (*Com. N.T.*, Neuchâtel, 1957); G. MILLIGAN, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London, 1908); W. NEIL (*Moffatt N.T. Com.*, New York, 1950); A. OEPKE (*N.T. Deutsch*, Göttingen, 1949); B. RIGAUX (*Et.Bibl.*, Paris, 1956); and G. WOHLBERG (*Kom.N.T.*, Zahn, Leipzig, 1903).

¹¹ Cf. W. KÜMMEL's sneering comment about the 19th-century love of dissecting the Pauline letters, *Das literarische und geschichtliche Problem des ersten Thessalonicherbriefes*, in *Neotestamentica et Patristica, Freundesgabe O. Cullmann* (Nov. T., Suppl. 6, Leiden, 1962), 214.

¹² To my knowledge the only previous argument suggesting 13-16 as an interpolation is that of K.-G. ECKART, *Der zweite echte Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Thessalonicher*, *Z.Th.K.* 58 (1961), 33f. For criticisms, see KÜMMEL, *op. cit.*, 218ff. On ECKART's argumentation see below, n. 65.

¹³ See, e.g., K. SCHELKLE, *Die Passion Jesu in der Verkündigung des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg, 1949), 37. For the views of E. Bammel see below.

¹⁴ For a good discussion with numerous parallels see MILLIGAN's commentary *ad loc.*

¹⁵ P. ACKROYD, ΠΣΔ-*eis τέλος*, *Exp.T.* 80 (1968-69), 126. ACKROYD cites Ps. 73(74):3 as an example. For the various Hebrew expressions translated in LXX by the phrase *eis (τὸ) τέλος* see HATCH/REDPATH, *Concordance*, 1344f.

the passage with Romans 11:25f., is untenable.¹⁶ The passage excludes categorically any possibility for the Jews except the naked wrath of God.

The aorist *ἔφθασεν* is to be retained in the text.¹⁷ How is this aorist to be interpreted? Many of the commentators who rejected the views of Baur and others and held to the genuineness of the passage nevertheless took over their suggestions as to what the "wrath" referred to, *viz.*, the destruction of Jerusalem. But they were then reduced to the necessity of interpreting *ἔφθασεν* as a "prophetic aorist": Paul is speaking "im prophetischen Sinne,"¹⁸ either predicting the destruction of Jerusalem or predicting generally the impending judgment. Dibelius, too, speaks of the "prophetic style" of the passage, but disallows looking for specific events in the *Zeitgeschichte* for the reference.¹⁹

Recently E. Bammel has seen in this passage a reference to Claudius' expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D. He argues that this event was enough to set in motion the "apocalyptic machinery" of both Jews and Jewish Christians and a heightening of end-expectation.²⁰ In Bammel's view Paul takes over Jewish apocalyptic motifs and reinterprets them, connecting the contemporary events in the political sphere with the persecution of Christians by Jews, the "enemies of God." The aorist *ἔφθασεν* is interpreted with a present meaning, indicating that the events of the times are an indication that God's judgment is proceeding yet another step "in das τέλος hinein."²¹

All of these suggestions fail to do justice to the text as it stands. The aorist *ἔφθασεν* must be taken as referring to an event that is now past,²² and the phrase *εἰς τέλος* underscores the finality of the

¹⁶ See J. MUNCK, *Christ and Israel*, trans. Ingeborg Nixon (Philadelphia, 1967), 64.

¹⁷ The v.l. *ἔφθακεν* is only weakly attested, and does not commend itself.

¹⁸ So v. DOBSCHÜTZ; see also FRAME, LÜNEMANN, NEIL, OEPKE, and WOHLBERG in their commentaries, cited in n. 10. See now also O. MICHEL: "Paulus spricht nicht im Sinn der Liturgie oder einer Geschichtsbetrachtung, sondern im prophetischen Sinn des sich erfüllenden apokalyptischen Gerichtes." *Op. cit.* (above, n. 1), 58.

¹⁹ DIBELIUS, *op. cit.*, 11.

²⁰ E. BAMMEL, *Judenverfolgung und Naherwartung*, *Z.Th.K.* 56 (1959), 294ff. The phrase "apokalyptische Maschinerie" occurs on p. 301.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 308f.

²² B. BACON, *Wrath "unto the Uttermost," Expositor*, Ser. 8, 24 (1922), 356ff., accepting the past-tense force of *ἔφθασεν* finds a whole list of "current events" to

“wrath” that has occurred. It need only be inquired further what event in the first century was of such magnitude as to lend itself to such apocalyptic theologizing. The interpretation suggested by Baur and others is still valid: 1 Thessalonians 2:16c refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.²³

Nevertheless, it is not sufficient merely to excise this one sentence as a post-70 gloss, for formally it constitutes the conclusion to the material represented in the participial clauses of vv. 15 and 16 modifying τῶν Ἰουδαίων in v. 14.

VV. 15-16. It is universally agreed that much of the material in vv. 15f. is traditional and formulaic.²⁴ The phrase καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων picks up a theme from Graeco-Roman anti-Semitism, as was noticed already by Baur.²⁵ It is somewhat surprising to find the characteristic Gentile charge of “misanthropy” against the Jews reflected in the Pauline correspondence, though it is widespread in the Graeco-Roman world of the period.²⁶ The charge of killing the prophets is a reflection of a Jewish tradition widespread in New Testament times, as has been thoroughly documented by H. J. Schoeps,²⁷ and appears at numerous points elsewhere in the New Testament.²⁸ In early Christian literature it be-

which he believes Paul is referring: the death of Agrippa in 44, the insurrection of Theudas ca. 44-46, the famine in Judaea in 46-47, and the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius in 49. These events are a sign that God's patience with Israel has come to an end. S. JOHNSON, Notes and Comments, *Angl. Theol. Rev.* 23 (1941), 173ff., adds to BACON's list a riot in Jerusalem between 48 and 51 (*Jos. Ant.* 20.53) and a famine in Greece and Rome ca. 49 A.D.

²³ The relationship between 1 Thess. 2:16c and T. Levi 6:11 is beyond the scope of this paper to define. For discussion, see RIGAUX, *op. cit.*, 456ff.; also BAMMEL, *op. cit.*, 309, n.1. Cf. also Daniel 11:36. Both T. Levi 6:11 and Daniel 11:36 refer to God's punishment of the persecutors of his people.

²⁴ See the commentaries. For a recent discussion see R. SCHIPPERS, The Pre-Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians II 13-16, *Nov.T.* 8 (1966), 223-34. The notion of “pre-synoptic” tradition has to be qualified at the point of distinguishing traditional formulae from the way in which these formulae are put together. See on this further below.

²⁵ See especially DIBELIUS' commentary for discussion and for a list of texts from Greek and Latin authors illustrating pagan anti-Judaism, *op. cit.*, II, 29-31. See also the texts assembled by TH. REINACH, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au judaïsme* (Paris, 1894, r. p. Hildesheim, 1963), with the aid of the index entry, “misoxénie.”

²⁶ For discussion see V. TCHERIKOVER, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, trans. S. Applebaum (Philadelphia, 1966), 357ff.

²⁷ H.-J. SCHOEPS, Die jüdischen Prophetenmorde, in *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit* (Tübingen, 1950), 126-43.

²⁸ SCHOEPS cites the following passages as representative of all parts of the N.T.: Mt. 23:31ff.; Acts 7:52; Heb. 11:36ff.; 1 Thess. 2:15. *Ibid.*, 126.

comes standard to interpret the death of Jesus in connection with the murder of the prophets.²⁹ But precisely when the charge of "killing the Lord Jesus" was levelled against the Jews is problematical. It will certainly not do to use the speeches in Acts as an example of the early origin of this *topos*,³⁰ for, as U. Wilckens has shown,³¹ one finds very little of primitive Palestinian Christianity in the speeches of Acts; on the whole the speeches reflect the work and thought of the author of Luke-Acts. In my view, one must look to a time after 70 AD for such a development.³²

There is ample evidence that Christians post-70 interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem as a punishment inflicted by God upon the Jews for killing the Christ.³³ Indeed, certain of the rabbis connected the destruction of the nation and the temple with the theme of the persecution of the prophets by the fathers.³⁴ A common origin for both of these interpretations might be suggested: reflection on and study of scripture. One particularly applicable passage in such a situation would be 2 Chronicles 36:15f.:

The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, till there was no remedy. (RSV)³⁵

This passage, in any case, presents the basic outline of 1 Thessalonians 2:15f.

²⁹ See, e.g., Acts 7:52; Mt. 21:34ff. (Matthean allegorization: see below); IGN., *Magn.* 8.2; BARN., 5.11; JUSTIN, *Dial.* 16; *Mart. Pionii* 13.2; HIPPI., *De antich.* 30f., 58; TERT., *De res. carn.* 26; CLEM. Alex., *Strom.* 6.15.127; etc.

³⁰ As, e.g., RIGAUX, citing Acts 2:36. *Op. cit.*, 446.

³¹ U. WILCKENS, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (*Wiss.Mon.A.N.T.*, 5, Neukirchen, 1963²), see esp. 120f.

³² See below for a discussion of the historical context in Jewish-Christian polemics post-70.

³³ See, e.g., BARN., 512; JUSTIN, *Apol.* 1. 47; TERT., *Adv. jud.* 13; *Apol.* 25; ORIGEN, *Contra Cels.* 1.48; 4.23; and cf. *Ev. Petri* 7.25 and the v.l. at Lk. 23:48. For discussion see H.-J. SCHOEPS, *Die Tempelzerstörung des Jahres 70 in der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte*, in *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit*, esp. 145ff.

³⁴ R. MEIR: "The citizens of Jerusalem were also smitten because they despised the prophets, for it says, 'But they mocked the messengers of God' (2 Chron. 36.16), and it is written 'They have made their faces harder than a rock' (Jer. 5.3)," *Exodus Rabba* 31.16 (Trans. S. Lehrman, London, 1939); the reference is cited by SCHOEPS, *Aus fr. Zeit*, 150. He also cites *Pes. de Rab. Kah.* 14 (R. Levi).

³⁵ Note that this passage is partially quoted by R. MEIR in *Ex. Rabba* 31.16.

Could Paul have written such a statement? In my view there are some basic incompatibilities between 1 Thessalonians 2:15f. and Paul's thought as expressed elsewhere in his epistles. Though Paul undoubtedly knows the current tradition concerning the persecution of the prophets — he quotes the basic "proof-text" for this tradition, 1 Kings 19:10, 14 in Romans 11:3 — he never attributes the death of Jesus to the Jews.³⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:8 is the best example of Paul's own view: Jesus was brought to his death by the demonic "rulers of this age" who did not know that by so doing they would defeat themselves in the process.³⁷ And even if one wants to take the phrase *οἱ ἄρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου* in 1 Corinthians 2:8 as a reference to purely human agencies,³⁸ then one can credit Paul with historical accuracy in pointing to the Roman imperial authorities as responsible for the crucifixion rather than the Jewish people.³⁹

I find it also virtually impossible to ascribe to Paul the *ad hominem* fragment of Gentile anti-Judaism in v. 15. Paul seems to have been rather proud of his achievements in Judaism prior to his "conversion" (Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:5f.); in fact, even after he became a Christian he continued to refer to himself as a Jew (*ἡμεῖς . . . Ἰουδαῖοι*, Gal. 2:15; *ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλῆτης εἰμί*, Rom. 11:1).⁴⁰ Moreover, the thought that God's wrath has come upon

³⁶ In J. MÜNCK's view, *op. cit.*, 115, Paul's quotation of Ps. 69:22f. (=LXX 68:23f.) in Rom. 11:9f. implies also a reflection on Ps. 69:21 and "a common early Christian interpretation" of the Psalm connecting it with the crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews. But Paul does not quote Ps. 69:21; it is quite unacceptable to read it into the text of Romans. The only other passage in Paul that MÜNCK uses to support the statement that "the Jews had killed the Messiah" is 1 Thess. 2:14-16, *op. cit.*, 99.

³⁷ So the passage is interpreted by ORIGEN in his commentary on Mt. (13.8, on Mt. 17:22). The "gnostic" interpretation, as argued, e.g., by U. WILCKENS, *Weisheit und Torheit* (*Beitr. Hist. Th.*, 26, Tübingen, 1959, 71ff.), reads too much into the text.

³⁸ See, e.g., A. FEUILLET, Les "chefs de ce siècle" et la Sagesse divine d'après 1 Co. II, 6-8, in *Le Christ Sagesse de Dieu d'après les épîtres pauliniennes* (Paris, 1966), 25-36.

³⁹ The best discussion of the historical problems connected with the execution of Jesus is that of P. WINTER, *On the Trial of Jesus* (*Studia Judaica*, 1, Berlin, 1961).

⁴⁰ According to N. MÅNSSON, *Paulus och judarna* (Uppsala, 1947), 205, *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* in 1 Thess. 2:14 does not refer to the Jewish people as a whole, or even to the inhabitants of Judaea. They are the "fanatic Torah-Jews" (*fanatiska lagjudarna*), whom the apostle identifies with Messiah- and prophet-murderers. If indeed there is such a "theological" meaning attached to "the Jews" in 1 Thess.

the Jewish people with utter finality (v. 16) is manifestly foreign to Paul's theology which, unique in the New Testament, expresses the thought that God has *not* abandoned his ancient covenant people (Rom. 9:1), and indeed "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26).⁴¹

V. 14. Here, too, historical and theological questions arise. In this verse the author draws a connection between Jewish persecutions of Christian churches in Palestine⁴² and Gentile persecution of the church in Thessalonica. Some have sought to explain this with reference to the book of Acts and the troubles Paul and his coworkers are said to have had at the instigation of local Jews (Acts 17:5ff.).⁴³ However, the passage refers specifically to persecutions in Judaea, and the persecution in Thessalonica has been caused by *συμφυλέται*, "compatriots" of the Thessalonians, Gentiles, as Theodore of Mopsuestia correctly interpreted the word centuries ago.⁴⁴

With reference to the alleged persecutions in Judaea, 1 Thessalonians 2:14 would be the only New Testament text — were it a genuine expression of Paul — to indicate that the churches in Judaea suffered persecution at the hands of the Jews between 44 AD and the outbreak of the war against Rome.⁴⁵ Those who have

2:14 — see also MICHEL, *op. cit.*, 53 — it is that of the interpolator and not of Paul, for such an interpretation of "the Jews" is without parallel in the Pauline epistles.

⁴¹ E. STAUFFER, *New Testament Theology*, trans. J. Marsh (London, 1955), 190, speaks of "an astonishing *volte face*," from the thoughts expressed in 1 Thess. 2 to those expressed in Rom. 11.

⁴² "Judaea" here refers to the Roman province, which includes all of the territory formerly ruled by Herod Agrippa I (41–44 A.D.); cf. MILLIGAN, *op. cit.*, 29. In addition to the texts he cites (Lk. 4:44; Acts 10:37; JOS., *Ant.* 1.160) see also JOS., *Ant.* 19.363.

⁴³ So, e.g., FRAME, *op. cit.*, 110; MILLIGAN, *op. cit.*, 29; also J. MUNCK, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, trans. F. Clarke (London, 1959), 120.

⁴⁴ "Contribulibus" ut dicat 'Gentibus'; *Com., ad loc.* (ed. Swete, Cambridge, 1880).

⁴⁵ BACON interprets the account of the death of James in Acts 12:iff. as referring to a systematic pogrom against the Christians, *op. cit.*, 370. There is no evidence that it was any such thing. See on this D. HARE, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Soc. N.T.S., Mon. 6, Cambridge, 1967), 30ff. M. GOGUEL, *The Birth of Christianity*, trans. H. Snape (New York, 1954), 123, suggested that 1 Thess. 2:14 refers to the persecution of the "Hellenists" (Acts. 8:1; cf. 6:iff.), but this event had occurred almost 20 years prior to the time of the writing of 1 Thess.

recently dealt with this question in some detail⁴⁶ argue that, in fact, there was no significant persecution of Christians in Judaea before the war. We are told by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.200) that the execution of James, the brother of Jesus, by the Sadducean priesthood so angered those who were "strict in observance of the law" (the Pharisees) that some of them went to meet the incoming Roman governor with the news, and had Ananus deposed from his high-priesthood. This would indicate that the Christians in Judaea, at least up until 62 AD, were living in harmony with their fellow-Jews. Of course Paul himself encountered quite a bit of hostility in the Diaspora synagogues,⁴⁷ but there is, indeed, a serious question as to how friendly the Christians in Judaea were towards Paul (Rom. 15:31).

With respect to the situation in Thessalonica at the time of the writing of 1 Thessalonians, Paul speaks generally — this is a theological *topos*, revealing his eschatologically oriented theology — about the apostle and his congregation undergoing "tribulation" (*θλίψις*, 1:6, recapitulated at 3:3), but that the Thessalonian Christians were actually suffering systematic persecution in the apostolic period is very much in doubt.⁴⁸

Mention should also be made of the *mimesis* terminology which occurs in v. 14. Not only is it improbable that Paul would cite the Judaeans Christians as examples for his Gentile congregations;⁴⁹ the *mimesis* usage in this verse does not cohere with Paul's usage elsewhere. It is a very interesting fact that when Paul uses the terminology of "imitation," he uses it with reference to the imitation of himself (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6; cf. 2 Thess. 2:7-9).⁵⁰ Nor does he counsel his congregations to

⁴⁶ See HARE, *op. cit.*, and BRANDON, *op. cit.*; also L. GOPPELT, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism*, trans. E. Schroeder (London, 1964), 105ff.

⁴⁷ 2 Cor. 11:23ff., on which see HARE, *op. cit.*, 62. L. BRUN, *Segen und Fluch im Urchristentum (Norsk vidensk.-ak. Oslo, Hist.-fil. kl., 1.1, Oslo, 1932)*, 127, argues with reference to Rom. 9:3 that Paul was under a curse by the Diaspora Jews, and sees a hint of this also in 1 Cor. 4:12. This interesting theory goes beyond the evidence. On the *Birkhath ha-Minim* see below.

⁴⁸ So also HARE, *op. cit.*, 64.

⁴⁹ B. GERHARDSSON asserts that 1 Thess. 2:14 implies that Paul expects the Thessalonian congregation to "receive" from the Judaeans churches the word of God and to "imitate their halakic practice." *Memory and Manuscript (Acta Sem. Neot. Ups., 22, Uppsala, 1961)*, 274. I am unable to understand how such a conclusion could be suggested by the text.

⁵⁰ For a full-scale treatment see W. DE BOER, *The Imitation of Paul* (Kampen,

“imitate Christ” directly.⁵¹ Characteristic of his usage is 2 Corinthians 11:1: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” In 1 Thessalonians 1:6 Paul uses the expression in the indicative mood: “You became imitators of us (me), and of the Lord.” Here, too, I would see an expression of the intermediary function of the apostle in the *mimesis* process.⁵² What is involved in this usage is nothing less than an intense apostolic self-understanding on the part of Paul. He and no one else — surely not the Judaeen churches — is, under the Lord, the supreme authority and “model” for his congregations.⁵³ Given this unique understanding of his own apostolic role and authority on the part of Paul, and given the otherwise coherent picture of the *mimesis* terminology in the Pauline letters, 1 Thessalonians 2:14 stands out as not only historically incongruous but theologically incongruous as well. What it is, in fact, is a secondary extension on the part of a later editor of the *mimesis* motif that occurs in 1 Thessalonians 1:6.

VV. 13–16. Formally v. 13 introduces a “thanksgiving” period, indicated by *εὐχαριστοῦμεν*.⁵⁴ The “thanksgiving” form in the Pauline letters was delineated and described form-critically in the pioneering work of P. Schubert.⁵⁵ In the case of 1 Thessalonians (and 2 Thess., which is deutero-Pauline and in structure a slavish

1962). See also D. STANLEY, “Become Imitators of Me”: The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition, *Biblica* 40 (1959), 859–77; and E. EIDEM, “Imitatio Pauli,” in *Teologiska Studier tillägnade Erik Stave* (Uppsala, 1922), 67–85, unfortunately unavailable to me.

⁵¹ On the “imitation of Christ” see now H. BETZ, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (*Beitr. Hist. Th.*, 37, Tübingen, 1967).

⁵² Against BETZ, *op. cit.*, 143.

⁵³ So. W. MICHAELIS understands Paul’s use of *μιμῆσθαι* to imply a claim to obedience, in his article, *μιμῆσθαι*, *Th. Dict. N.T.*, 4, 668f. DE BOER argues against this interpretation, *op. cit.*, 138, 185f., 209f., but MICHAELIS’ view is preferable. On Paul’s apostolic consciousness see especially H. WINDISCH, *Paulus und Christus* (*Unters. N.T.*, 24, Leipzig, 1934), still a very important study; on “imitation” see 250ff., and cf. BETZ, *op. cit.*, 154ff.

⁵⁴ K. THEIEME, in his structural analysis of 1 Thess., places v. 13 at the end of a subsection beginning in 2:1; Die Struktur des ersten Thessalonicherbriefes, in O. BETZ, et. al., ed., *Abraham Unser Vater* (*Festschr. O. Michel*, Leiden/Köln, 1963), 450–58. I cannot see any merit at all in his analysis.

⁵⁵ P. SCHUBERT, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving* (*Beih. ZNW.*, 20, Berlin, 1939). For a study of the liturgical background of the thanksgiving formula see J. ROBINSON, Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Frühchristentums, in W. ELTESTER, ed., *Apophoreta* (*Festschr. Ernst Haenchen*, Berlin, 1964), 194–235.

imitation of 1 Thess.)⁵⁶ there is an apparent anomaly in that it has as now constituted two “thanksgiving” sections⁵⁷ — or even three, if one counts 3:9 as a further instance, where the *εὐχαριστῶ* formula does not occur but the clause *εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι* could be taken as parallel to it. Schubert decided that in fact there was only one “thanksgiving” period in 1 Thessalonians, which is simply repeated in 2:13ff. and 3:9ff., these repetitions “serving to unify formally the entire section from 1:2-3:13.”⁵⁸

Subsequently J. Sanders analyzed the transition from “thanksgiving” to “body” in the Pauline letters.⁵⁹ He pointed out that in the case of 1 Thessalonians the opening “thanksgiving” period is rounded off with an “eschatological climax” in 1:10, and that the following verse, 2:1, is an opening formula introducing the “body” of the letter. This “body” draws to a close at 2:12, and with 2:13, strangely enough, a second “thanksgiving” period begins which continues up to 4:1. “Thus,” he writes, “these two thanksgiving periods may be more concisely delineated, on the basis of formal considerations, than is done by merely uniting them functionally into one.”⁶⁰

R. Funk has done further form-critical work on the Pauline corpus, and has delineated an entirely new form, the “travel-

⁵⁶ I find W. WREDE's thorough study of 2 Thess. entirely convincing, *Die Echtheit des II Thess.* (*Texte u. Unters.*, 24, Leipzig, 1903).

⁵⁷ WREDE already remarked about this peculiarity in 1-2 Thess., *ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, 18ff. He further concluded that in the case of 1 Thess. the “thanksgiving” period itself constituted the main “body” of the letter. *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁹ J. SANDERS, The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus, *JBL* 81 (1962), 348ff.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 356. For theories dividing 1 Thess. into two separate letters, see K.-G. ECKART, *op. cit.*, and W. SCHMITHALS, Die Thessalonicherbriefe als Briefcompositionen, in E. DINKLER, ed., *Zeit und Geschichte (Festschr. R. Bultmann, Tübingen, 1964)*, 295-315. ECKART, rejecting the authenticity of 2 Thess., deals only with 1 Thess., dividing it into two genuine letters, and marking off as non-Pauline interpolations 2:13-16; 4:1-8; 4:10b-12; 5:12-22. SCHMITHALS finds four genuine Pauline letters in 1-2 Thess. Neither study demonstrates any form-critical control. For criticism of ECKART, see SCHMITHALS, *op. cit.*, and KÜMMEL, *op. cit.* For criticisms of SCHMITHALS, see C. BJERKELUND, *Parakalō. Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalō-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen (Bibl. Theol. Norw., 1, Oslo, 1967)*, 125ff. and R. FUNK, The Apostolic Parousia: Form and Significance, in W. FARMER, et. al., ed., *Christian History and Interpretation (Festschr. John Knox, Cambridge, 1967)*, 249-68, see 263, n. 1.

⁶¹ R. FUNK, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (New York, 1966), 263ff.

ogue,"⁶¹ more recently defined as the "apostolic *parousia*."⁶² This form has as its function the effective application — in letter, as a substitute for personal presence — of the apostle's authority in his churches. It includes such items as the apostle's travel plans, his desire to be with his congregation, etc. In the case of 1 Thessalonians Funk has defined the "apostolic *parousia*" as constituting the verses from 2:17 through 3:13.⁶³

Funk's analysis now allows us to solve the apparent difficulty of the double "thanksgiving" in 1 Thessalonians, for it is clear that the "apostolic *parousia*" is introduced formally not by the verses from 13-16 at all, but by the apostle's remarks in vv. 11-12:

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (RSV)

Note, then, how naturally the transition to apostolic *parousia* takes place by means of these verses, the apostle continuing in v. 17:

But we, brethren, were bereft (*ἀπορφανισθέντες*) of you for a short time in person if not in spirit, etc.

Now, we are able to solve Schubert's *aporia* in his discussion of the "thanksgiving" period in 1 Thessalonians, for he noted the absence of a formal transition from 2:16 to 2:17, and remarked that 2:17 "follows most naturally upon the reminiscences of his former relations to the church (2:1-12)." ⁶⁴

⁶² *Op. cit.* (above, n. 60).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁶⁴ SCHUBERT, *op. cit.*, 23. O. MICHEL, *op. cit.*, 51, and P. RICHARDSON, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (Soc. N.T.S., Mon. 10, Cambridge, 1969), 105, n.3, see a connection between the anti-Jewish polemic of 14-16 and v. 18, "but Satan hindered us." Paul is undoubtedly referring to his illness in v. 18, whatever it was (cf. 2 Cor. 12:7), and I find MICHEL and RICHARDSON's interpretation impossible. There may, indeed, be a connection between v. 16 and v. 18, but it is to be explained in a different way. See below.

⁶⁵ As indicated above (nn. 12 and 60) K.-G. ECKART has also suggested that 13-16 is an interpolation. He sees in 15-16 a programmatic "Judenpolemik" which exhibits a quasi-poetic parallelism. V. 13, too, shows "einen ähnlich straffen Satz-parallelismus" which in content is general and unspecific. V. 14 deals generally with suffering, and is not specific enough for the Thessalonian situation. Thus 13-16 is an interpolation. (*Op. cit.*, 32-34.) However, Paul may just as easily have used "traditional" material as a later interpolator, and there is lacking in ECKART's study both form-critical control and *Sachkritik*. Incidentally I wish to point out

The conclusion, therefore, which form-critical analysis suggests is this: vv. 13-16 do not belong to Paul's original letter at all, but represent a later interpolation into the text.⁶⁵

What, then, is the *modus operandi* and the motivation of our hypothetical interpolator?

If one now compares the passage 13ff. with the opening "thanksgiving" in 1:2ff., one immediately notices that both passages begin by saying the same thing! Identical words and phrases, or equivalent words and phrases, are used. The divergence occurs at v. 6 and v. 14: in 1:6 Paul commends the Thessalonians for imitating him and, therefore, the Lord in that they have received the word joyfully and faithfully albeit with concomitant "affliction." In 2:14 the author commends the church for imitating the churches in Judaea which have suffered persecution at the hands of the Jews; then follows the anti-Jewish polemic. The method of our hypothetical interpolator is strikingly similar to that of the author of 2 Thessalonians, *viz.*, to use Pauline words and phrases from a genuine letter in order to provide a putative "Pauline" framework for a new message. In the case of 2 Thessalonians the new message is contained especially in the eschatological passage, ch. 2.⁶⁶ In the case of 1 Thessalonians 2:13ff. the new message has as its purpose, in circumstances of persecution, to encourage the readers with reference to the embattled Christians in Palestine and to underscore now in a post-70 situation the "united front" of all Christians against the Jews who have at last suffered in the destruction of their city and temple the ultimate rejection and judgment from God. The position of the interpolation is suggested by the structure of the original letter, at the end of the "thanksgiving" period beginning in 1:6 (it thus serves as a repetition of the "thanksgiving") and before Paul's discussion of his travel plans. The author of the interpolation has "Paulinized" the anti-Jewish polemic by means of 16a, *κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν*, possibly under the influence of a misinterpretation

that my own study of the text had led me to the conclusion that 13-16 is an interpolation before I was aware of ECKART's article.

⁶⁶ See in addition to WREDE's work the unpublished dissertation by ROBERT J. PETERSEN, *The Structure and Purpose of Second Thessalonians* (Harvard Divinity School, 1968).

of Paul's reference to Satan in 2:18,⁶⁷ and probably with reference to the memory of what happened to Paul upon his arrival in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 21:30ff.; Rom. 15:31).

As has already been noted above, much of the material in the interpolation is traditional and formulaic,⁶⁸ yet it constitutes a new message as it is incorporated into the Thessalonian epistle. The importance of a proper historical understanding of this "traditional" material can hardly be overstated, for what is reflected here is the fact that "traditional" building blocks are given new form in a historical situation post-70. This thesis can be tested with reference to the parallels in the gospel of Matthew, quoting the relevant passages from Matthew 23 and 24 (RSV):⁶⁹

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . You are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up ([ἀνα-] πληροῦν), then, the measure of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you *prophets* (προφήται) and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will *kill* (ἀποκτείνειν) and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and *persecute* ([ἐκ-] διώκειν) from town to town, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth . . . Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *killing* the *prophets* and stoning those who are sent to you. . . . Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. . . . Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down.

It is, of course, probable that Jesus had disputes with opponents, some of whom may have been Pharisees. He may have referred to the stock idea current in Judaism concerning the persecution of the prophets. He may even have prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem.⁷⁰ But it is the author of the gospel of Matthew

⁶⁷ Cf. my remarks re MICHEL and RICHARDSON, n. 64. Only in a time of intense Jewish-Christian polemic could such a connection be made. See below on the situation post-70.

⁶⁸ R. SCHIPPERS, *op. cit.*, 224, refers to the quasi technical language of *paradosis* in v. 13, and interprets the phrase παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς to mean "tradition," the substance of what is contained in 14-16.

⁶⁹ Using the work of J. ORCHARD, *Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels*, *Biblica* 19 (1938), 20ff., but disagreeing fundamentally with his conclusions.

⁷⁰ On Mt. 24:2b see R. HUMMEL, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäusevangelium* (*Beitr. Ev. Theol.*, 33, München, 1966), 85.

that must be credited (or debited!) with putting these motifs together in the way in which they now stand in the passage quoted. His work reflects a historical situation that did not pertain prior to the destruction of Jerusalem: the final break between the church and the synagogue has taken place.⁷¹ In the years following the destruction the Pharisaic leaders, at first under the leadership of R. Johanan ben Zakkai, have assembled at the coastal town of Jamnia, and have begun the task of consolidating the practice of Judaism so as to require a new uniformity.⁷² Christians are being cursed in the synagogues and excommunicated therefrom; ⁷³ their prophets and teachers are being persecuted, and denounced as "children of hell."⁷⁴ These developments are not limited only to Palestine, but are apparently also felt in the Diaspora.⁷⁵ In short, not only has the final break between church and synagogue occurred, but the relations between Jews and Christians are now acutely polemical.

It is only in this situation that the author of the gospel of Matthew (and other N.T. writers) can speak of the Jewish nation as culpable not only for the death of the prophets but also for the death of Jesus. This is graphically portrayed in the Matthean passion narrative with the chilling words, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Mt. 27:25). Even the parables of Jesus are the subject of creative rehandling so as to connect the death of Jesus and the prophets to the destruction of Jerusalem. In the parable

⁷¹ See, e.g., HARE, *op. cit.*, 167ff., and *passim*; also W. TRILLING, *Das wahre Israel* (Stud. A.N.T., München, 1964³), 75ff., and K. STENDAHL, *The School of St. Matthew* (Philadelphia, 1968²), xiff. Probably all of the N.T. writings, with the exception of the genuine letters of Paul, were written after 70 A.D.

⁷² See J. PARKES, *The Foundations of Judaism and Christianity* (Chicago, 1960), 224ff. For a full discussion of the developments in Jamnia see W. DAVIES, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, 1964), 256ff. See also S. SANDMEL, *The First Christian Century in Judaism and Christianity* (New York, 1969), 58ff.

⁷³ On the *Birkhath ha-Minim*, the twelfth "benediction" of the synagogue prayer *Shemoneh Esreh* cursing Christians and heretics composed by Samuel the Small under the direction of R. Gamaliel II ca. 85 A.D. (*Berakhoth* 28b), see DAVIES, *op. cit.*, 275f. As this relates to ἀποσυναγωγός in Jn. 9:22 see especially the brilliant treatment by J. MARTYN, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York, 1968), 18ff.

⁷⁴ According to H.-J. SCHOEPS' interpretation of *Abodah Zarah* 17a, *Jewish Christianity*, trans. D. Hare (Philadelphia, 1969), 33. Cf. also *Tos. Sanh* 13.4, 5, quoted in R. T. HERFORD, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (r.p. Clifton, New Jersey, 1966), 118f.

⁷⁵ Cf. JUSTIN, *Dial.* 108.

of the marriage feast (Mt. 22:2ff.) the king's (cf. Lk. 14:16) servants are mistreated and murdered with the result that "the king was angry (*ὀργίσθη*), and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city" (v. 7).⁷⁶ For Matthew the church — now increasingly of Gentile constituency —⁷⁷ is in every respect the inheritor of the promises of God; the church is the "true Israel."⁷⁸ The non-Christian Jews, on the other hand, are denounced as "children of hell" (Mt. 23:15; cf. Jn. 8:44).

So one must, in speaking of parallel traditions between 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 and the gospels, consider also the parallel mode of handling these traditions, reflecting a common historical situation. For it is only in the period post-70 that an editor working with the text of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, in a situation of local (presumably Gentile) persecution against the church in Thessalonica,⁷⁹ could hold up as a shining example "the churches of God which are in Judaea." And very possibly one of these churches has in its leadership the author of the gospel of Matthew.

⁷⁶ See on this and other redactional elements in Mt. R. HUMMEL, *op. cit.*, 82ff.

⁷⁷ STENDAHL, *op. cit.*, xiii.

⁷⁸ See especially the treatment by W. TRILLING, *op. cit.* That the church is the "true Israel" seems to be a universal assumption in the Christian literature of this and subsequent periods.

⁷⁹ For general remarks on how Christians fared in the Roman world of the period, see W. FREND, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), 155ff.