

Exercise 2.1

There were obvious tensions between Pauline Christianity and Jamesian Jewish Christianity from the start.¹ Any accommodation was gone by the mid 80s with Christians excluded from the synagogue with a liturgy that included, “May the Nazarenes and the heretics be suddenly destroyed and removed from the book of life.”²

A second century Jew is therefore not going to come across a Christian missionary in the synagogue as in Paul’s day.³ Christianity had lost its Jewish roots as the Greek understanding of such ideas as the incarnation has lost the subtlety of Paul’s exegesis and become frankly offensive to Jews.⁴ After the fall of Jerusalem, Judaism was reconstructed along Pharisaic guidelines by Yahanan ben Zakkai with the motivating spirit asserting that only strictest observance of the law could allow recovery from the disaster.⁵ This is not a condition that would encourage the continued existence in the Jewish fold of the God fearers, many of whom had formed the basis for Christian movements, and certainly diaspora Judaism lost its urge to proselytise.⁶

So while diaspora Judaism had laid the groundwork for Christianity, particularly from a scriptural, monotheistic and social welfare perspective⁷, a Jewish reader of the second would very likely have looked upon Christian materials as reflecting an anachronistic and dangerous Hellenistic throwback to the errors that led to the judgment upon their people. The memory of Jesus as one who flouted

¹ H. Koester. *Introduction to the New Testament Volume Two* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 200.

² P. Johnson. *A History of Christianity* Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1978. 43.

³ R. Fox. *Pagans and Christians* Harmondsworth, England: Viking, 1986, 319.

⁴ K. Armstrong. *A History of God* London: Mandarin, 1993, 99-100.

⁵ H. Koester. *Introduction to the New Testament Volume One* New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1982, 407.

⁶ Armstrong 108.

⁷ Johnson, 12.

the purity laws would have been enough to anathematise him in the more uncertain times for the Jewish community.