

**THE OPPOSITION OF THE PHARISEES TO JESUS
AS TEACHER AND MESSIAH**

by

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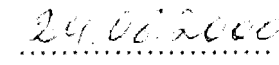
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I declare that

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Definition of the topic, criticism of sources.....1

1. JUDAISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY BC – FIRST CENTURY AD

1.1. Religious trends in Judaism of the first century before and after Christ.....5

2. THE CONFLICT OF TEACHERS

2.1 Jesus and the religious culture of his time.....20

2.2 A parable as an attitude of rabbinical Judaism.....25

2.3 A parable about labourers in the vineyard and its context (Mt. 17:24 –
20:28).....32

3. JESUS CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM AND οὐκ ὠφελεῖτε οὐδεν OF THE PHARISEES

3.1 Harmony of the Gospels. Exegesis of a passage.....39

3.2 The analysis of the text and context. Historical-political realities.....45

3.3 Plot canvas. Relations with the Pharisees.....52

3.4. Excursus about messianic commission.....56

3.5 Reconstruction of events not mentioned by Evangelists.....60

CONCLUSION.....64

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....68

LIST OF THE BIBLICAL ABBREVIATIONS

Gen. – Genesis

Ex. – Exodus

Num. – Numbers

Deut. – Deuteronomy

1 Sam. – The First Book of Samuel

2 Ki. – The Second Book of the Kings

2 Ch. – The Second Book of Chronicles

Neh. – The Book of Nehemiah

Ps. – The Book of Psalms

Eccl. – The Book of Ecclesiastes

Song – The Song of Solomon

Isa. – The Book of Isaiah

Eze. – The Book of Ezekiel

Jer. – The Book of Jeremiah

Zech. – The Book of Zechariah

Dan. – The Book of Daniel

Syr. – The Book of Jesus, Son of Syrah

Wis. – The Book of Wisdom of Solomon

1 Macc. – The First Book of Maccabees

Mt. – The Gospel According to Matthew

Mk. – The Gospel According to Mark

Lk. – The Gospel According to Luke

Jn. – The Gospel According to John

Rom. – The Epistle to the Romans

1 Cor. – The First Epistle to the Corinthians

Gal. – the Epistle to the Galatians

Phil. – The Epistle to the Philippians

Col. – The Epistle to the Colossians

1 Thess. – The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

Ja. – The Epistles of James

Heb. – The Epistle to the Hebrews

INTRODUCTION

Definition of the topic, criticism of sources

The aim of the following research is to examine the political and religious causes of the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and Teacher by the Pharisees. Jesus was rejected by the Jews because, firstly, they wanted to see God and his Messiah from the point of view of rabbinical theology, and, secondly, they forgot that human knowledge *apriori* is limited (1 Cor. 13:9, 12). The phrase “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25) can be ascribed to the Judaism of the first century AD, and it speaks of the fact that Judaic theology had made the human idea of God higher than God himself. The difference between “Torah” (teaching) and “nomos” (a law, a term of LXX) is well-described in two Biblical examples: in Num. 15:32-36 Torah did not permit the Jews to pronounce a criminal sentence themselves; only after God’s instructions were they permitted to beat a sinner; and in Jn. 8:3-11 the Jews demand from Rabbi Jesus to pronounce a criminal sentence according to the Mosaic law. So, “Torah” is a commandment interpreted by God, and “nomos” is a code of criminal laws interpreted by law experts.

For more clarity it is necessary to define the thesis of this research. The thesis is:

Jesus’ reluctance to join one of the schools of the Pharisees and to become a military Messiah resulted in losing the support from the main religious power structures in Israel. Jesus’ authority among people forced the Pharisees and the Sadducees to contract a temporary alliance against the Messiah.

In my opinion, the conflict between the religious establishment of Israel and Jesus from Nazareth had political and religious causes, thus it should be discussed first of all according to the historical documentation of the Gospel. Because I consider the four Gospels to be more biographical texts than theological treatises, I will not compare the Synoptics with John in this work.

The necessity of a thorough knowledge of gospel events can be described by the words of one participant of the Jewish war in AD 66-70: “... Since every one that undertakes to deliver the history of actions truly, ought to know them accurately himself in the first place, as either having been concerned in them himself, or been informed of them by such as knew them” (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* I, 10). A thorough knowledge of Israel’s political situation and religious life in the first century AD can help to explain the *prima facie* strange words of pontiffs and Pharisees in Jn. 11:48

“If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation”. And what is more, a full examination is possible only if we analyse the epoch deeply enough and, as a modern reader of ancient texts, begin to think in categories of their authors. Here I agree with the following statement: “a proper historical methodology must try to understand ancient thought patterns in terms of themselves, rather than forcing them into modern analytical categories” (Ladd 1994:211). Evangelists have seldom explained any of the traditions of Judaism, which were contemporary to them and their readers (cf. *e.g.* Mk. 7:3-4), so examination of their texts is inseparably linked with attentive and thorough analysis of the epoch described in text and of the environment where the texts appeared. Such approach based on historical, grammatical and vocabulary syntactic analysis demands of the explorer a good knowledge of not only the language (or languages) of the ancient document, but also knowledge of all large and small details inside and outside of the text. One of the constituents of such approach is the utilisation of the author’s remarks left in peculiar “under-text lining”.

At the same time it is important to take into consideration the aims and purposes (of evangelists and talmudists) and the sources of their texts. From here automatically arises the necessity of critical approach to any historical document from the point of view of source study and textual study.

The analysis of New Testament events is not the easiest business because many documents of that epoch were destroyed in the days of pagan persecution of Christians (and then in the days of Christian persecution of pagans) or intentionally changed by later re-writers. Even the most authentic sources which escaped these hands (*e.g.* Qumran scrolls) are to be subjected to critical study for reasons of the Qumranites’ undisguised jaundice. Ancient authors for different reasons often distorted the truth – sometimes because of ignorance, sometimes because of flattery or hate (Tacitus, *Hist.* I, 1), sometimes because of the fear of a desire to take vengeance on the emperor after his death (Tacitus, *Ann.* I, 1). This automatically predisposes later explorers to have an *a priori* distrust as to origins. The first official source of the Church Eusebius (ca. 260-340) which writes about many events *post factum*, mentions (*CHI*, 1, 4) the difficulty of his work:

I am unable to find even the bare footsteps of those who have traveled the way before me, except in brief fragments, in which some in one way, others in another, have transmitted to us particular accounts of the times in which they lived.

It is also important to take due consideration of the doubtless fact that any explorer often uses evidences from non-preserved documents, which were conveyed by later authors in fragmentary and selective manner. Yet early historians of the Church had to use information from predecessors' retellings. Let me quote Eusebius again (*CHI*, 1, 4):

Having gathered therefore from the matters mentioned here and there by them whatever we consider important for the present work, and having plucked like flowers from a meadow the appropriate passages from ancient writers, we shall endeavour to embody the whole in an historical narrative...

Unfortunately this research is limited by a small number of sources such as texts of the New Testament and Talmud, and works of such Hellenistic Jewish authors as Josephus and Philo (the first took a pro-roman, anti-Pharisees, stand; the second one was an obvious follower of Plato's teaching). The short remarks that can be found in the writings of some historians – Christian or non-Christian – do not give enough information to come to doubtless conclusions. Talmudic passages that will be used for comparative analysis of dogmas of Jewish sects and of first Christians only partly can be true witnesses as they were often a reflection of already known New Testament events.

For the reason of limited space it is impossible to pay much attention to the criticism of Gospel texts, especially of the Gospel of John which is quoted more often here as a testimony to Jesus' popularity among the people and parts of the religious establishment. Written between AD 85 and AD 95 (Carson 1991:83ff), John's Gospel is often considered to be anti-Jewish and therefore is taken as being quasi-historical. Speaking about stimulating motives of the author of the Fourth Gospel, it is necessary to quote David Rensberger (1984:396-7):

This centrality of political issues for John has often been noticed. Usually, however, John's interest in these issues is seen as apologetic, like that of the other evangelists and the early church generally: he wishes to relieve the Romans of responsibility for the death of Jesus and to assure them that despite appearances to the contrary neither Jesus nor the church is a political threat to the Empire.

Intentionally, I leave the discussion of historicity of the Fourth Gospel outside this research. However, my personal opinion is that the author of the Fourth Gospel did not disfigure the portrait of the Pharisees because (1) in the Gospel of John some of the Pharisees support Jesus and (2) the author's aim was not to have a dispute with

the Jews (although it implicitly takes some place on the pages of the Fourth Gospel), but a wish to turn his readers to faith (Jn. 20:31).¹

Lastly, I hope that the implacability of positions and a final breach between Christianity and Judaism after 90 AD will not prevent us from making a critical analysis of the conflict between Jesus the Messiah and the Pharisees.

¹ Unfortunately, “discussions of the purpose of John’s Gospel have largely ignored John 20:30-31” (Carson 1987:637). Actually, the sentence ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ calls to discuss John’s priorities: whether he continues anti-Jewish polemic about the person of the Messiah (Carson 1987:643-644; Wallace 1996:46: “...not ‘Who is Jesus?’... but ‘Who is the Messiah?’”) or stresses eternal life (ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ)? If the first part of John’s sentence would be preferred, the (anti-Jewish) Fourth Gospel has been addressed to “unconverted Jews, along with proselytes and God-fearers, for the category ‘Messiah’ was important to them, and the concern to identify him would be of great interest” (Carson 1991:662). According to Dunn (1977:§10.4), from the beginning of the middle of AD 80 the claim Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς was the main testing formula in Christian-Judaism conflict.

1. JUDAISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY BC – FIRST CENTURY AD

1.1. Religious trends in Judaism of the first century before and after Christ

There are no doubts that the Jews from beginning were subject to spiritual and religious influences of the cultures of the nations that surrounded them. This is a common factor in the formation of any new nation, especially if the neighbouring nations have a large religious and cultural heritage. Even in Gen. 35:2 we see an attempt of the patriarchs to get rid of “the spiritual heritage” of their pagan ancestry, and in Ex. 32:4 – a return to pagan past, creating a golden calf in the image of Egyptian Black Bull Mnevis (cf. Ps. 106:20), a divinity with mediating functions, to replace Moses as the mediator between God and the people. One of the three parts of the Old Testament in the Hebrew canon – the prophets – is devoted to the struggle against serving local gods: first the gods of Canaan, then of Babylon. During the inter-testamental time Hellenism heavily influenced Hebrew self-consciousness. During this time marked by wars between Ptolemys and Seleucids for dominating Palestine, the whole Jewish land suffered decay which, citing a St. Petersburg specialist in Qumranite studies I. R. Tantlevskij, “could be interpreted by the author (or authors) of the Damascus document as the result of God’s anger (CD 1:5). I think the main reason for the Lord’s “anger” upon the Jews on the border of III and II BC was the fact that from the second half of III BC there was an active spreading of Hellenic ideas and practices among them (even among priests)...” (Tantlevskij 1994:46-47).

The long and bloodless invasion of Greek culture into the East as a general process of Hellenisation of non-Greek nations – after the death of Alexander the Great – lead to a stratification of the Jewish community into two layers modernistic Hellenists and orthodox Hasidaeans. Writing specifically about Hasidaeans the author of one of books of Maccabees (a Pharisee?) mentions *πρῶτοι οἱ Ασίδαῖοι ἦσαν ἐν υἰοῖς Ἰσραὴλ* (1 Macc. 7:13). At the same time among adherents of the law – scribes’ synagogue, “asking for justice” (1 Macc. 7:12), appears such literary texts as the book of Joshua, the son of Sirach, who praises the study of the Torah, and the book of Maccabees, which, with some jaundice, throws light upon war conflicts between Antiochus IV Epiphanus and his enemies. This conflict, which began as an usual struggle for power between Jewish clans transformed into a war for independence, which after the Maccabees' death brought to the throne in Jerusalem the non-Davidian dynasty of Asmonaeans who rather soon refused to follow ideals of the Hasidaeans whose leader was Judas Maccabaeus (2 Macc. 14:6). The pious

author of 1 Macc. condemns any innovation originating from Hellenised Jews: «They built a sports-stadium in the gentile style in Jerusalem. They removed their marks of circumcision and repudiated the holy covenant. They intermarried with Gentiles, and abandoned themselves to evil ways» (1 Macc. 1:14-15). Here our attention is drawn to the “separated” opposition themselves to “nations” with their laws – κατὰ τὰ νόμιμα τῶν ἔθνῶν (cf. usage of ἔθνη in Acts 22:21, where Paul’s speech was interrupted by the Jews in the Temple yard). Later during the time of Pontius Pilate adherents of the traditional school did not want to accept the Roman aqueduct which was sponsored from the temple treasury (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 3, 2).

1.2. The Pharisees

During this same epoch of struggle for independence historians are faced with a power struggle among Israel’s religious groupings. This is the era in the development of Jewish community that some scientist have termed “Intertestamental Judaism” (Charlesworth 1998:120). It is impossible to point out the exact date of the appearance and forming of these sects of Judaism. Eusebius' statement (*CHIV*, 22, 6) about «the ancient heresies which arose among the Jews» does not make clear the problem of dating. The largest and most influential of these sects were reported to be “three philosophical sects among the Jews. The followers of the first of whom are the Pharisees; of the second the Sadducees; and the third sect, who pretends to a severer discipline, are called Essenes” (Josephus, *War* II, 8, 2; also Josephus, *Life* 2); and at the same time we know about the Pharisees and the Sadducees that their «notions are quite contrary» (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6). I. Tantlevskij describes them as “three main ‘answers’ to the Hellenistic challenge” (Tantlevskij 1994:47). It is very likely that the Essenes and the Pharisees originally represented a united movement whose aim was to separate (consecrate) the Jews from foreigners and Hellenised Jews. Then, near 197/196 BC (Tantlevskij 1994:48) the movement split between those who placed emphasis on instrumental temple service (the Essenes), and those who accented their attention on the verbal worship of God through prayers and the study of Torah (the Pharisees и Scribes). The Essenes, waiting for a future worship in the Temple of Jerusalem, concentrated on thorough fulfilment of commandments for ritual cleanness and generated new laws of Temple service (Tantlevskij 1994:122-123). The Pharisees, as successors of those who “separated themselves from foreign nation to Torah (νόμον in LXX – *A. T.*) of God” (Neh. 10:28), “are actively engaged in the process of creation (per se laying the foundation) of oral verbal teaching –

system of galahot having the aim to adopt ancient prescriptions of the Pentateuch to new realities of life” (Tantlevskij 1994:47).

After the split the rejection of the Pharisees by Essenes was repeatedly accentuated in their texts – this way the Qumran Teacher of righteousness “talks about a cruel confrontation with ‘interpreter of slippery’, that is Rabbanites-Proto-Pharisees” (Tantlevskij 1994:91). The nature of this anti-Pharisee attitude can be seen in the Essenes’ zeal to outdo the Pharisees in the creation of religious laws and in the struggle to create a nation which, from the Essenes’ point of view, would reject the teaching of the Pharisees. In a commentary on the book of Nahum (4Q pNah) III, 6 a Qumran author writes: “Moreover, when (eventually) the glory of Judah suffers dishonour, those in Ephraim who have hitherto been duped will flee from the midst of those men’s congregation and, renouncing them that led them astray, attach themselves (once more) to (the true) Israel” (quot. from: Gaster 1964:242). Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* II, 22) notices that the inspectors and enforcers of the law were priests – “for such laws as are not thus well made, are convicted upon trial to want amendment” (Essenes of Qumran who have “improved” temple rituals considered themselves to be priests). Attempts “to make corrections” by adding verbal Torah were made by none other than the Pharisees – that is why the Essenes called them “leading astray” Josephus (*War* I, 5, 2). Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* II, 21), however, took a position opposite to the Essenes when he wrote, that “the Pharisees... are certain sect of the Jews that appear more religious than others, and seem to interpret the laws more accurately”. This is one example of polemics among ancient authors. It is important to remember that the Pharisees appeared to be the only power, which participated in the anti-Roman revolt AD 66-70 and still prospered under Romans in the time of Josephus.²

² Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4 (see below). The Pharisees, perhaps, better than other political and religious movements were able to use the existent state of affairs in *pax Romana*. Let me remind, for example, that former rabbi Saul in his mission trips used with success Roman citizenship. According to many Rabbis of the Roman Empire, «the kings of this earth rule by the appointment of Heaven» (Moore 1997:I, 114), that’s why one of them asserted in the time of persecution under Hadrian, «that this people (the Romans) has been given the kingdom by Heaven» (Abodah Zarah 18a, quote from: Moore 1997:I, 114). The position of a former Rabbi Saul in Rom. 13:1-2 completely coincides with the opinion of the High Priest’s deputy Rabbi Hanina (the overlooker of the destruction of the Second Temple) who appeals (Abot 3:2) to pray for the well-being of the supreme power, fear before which keeps people away from lawlessness. Rabbi Judah (Shabbat 33b) praised a social progress under Romans which can be seen in building markets, bridges and bath-houses. Barnett (1999:139) assumes that the rabbis who supported Romans were followers of Hillel, and the rabbis opposing Romans were followers of Shammai.

The American professor Rabbi Joseph Telushkin (1997:104) admits: “The main thing is that they (the Pharisees. – *A. T.*) are the spiritual forefathers of all modern Jews. Other sects which had existed during this time disappeared soon after the destruction of the Second Temple. Since that time the Pharisees were no longer called by this name and their religious practice became panto-Jewish standard”.³ Praised in the literature of intertestamental Judaism, the wisdom of scribes (Sir. 38:24-39:14) stood through hard time test.

«The Pharisees are those who are esteemed most skilful in the exact explication of their laws, and introduce the first sect» (Josephus, *War* II, 8, 14); they were the most influential religious group at court and among the nation (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 15, 5; *War* I, 5, 2-3). The reason of their popularity among people was that wise men of the Torah were the “accessible aristocracy” (Steinsaltz, Funkenstein 1997:45-46), that means the elite, and every commoner could become a member of their society if he devoted himself to the study of Torah. Moreover, only about the Pharisees has it been said: «by whom this set of women were inveigled» (Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4); this remark equals to Act. 13:50, where “pious and respected women” are shown as instruments in the hands of the Jews (the Pharisees?) in their struggle against Paul. According to one testimony, which has come to our days, there were 6000 Pharisees (Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4). However, it is possible to suppose that *de facto* their numbers were higher. This can be assumed after the consideration of a remark from the same source: (1) the popularity of their ideas among Jewish social groups; (2) their cosmopolitan city settings where they could communicate with more people than the Essenes hermits could; (3) «and indeed the Pharisees, even upon other occasions, are not apt to be severe in punishments» (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6); (4) difficulty to identify whether the 6.000 members refer to all Pharisees or only to those who refused to swear. M. Smith and J. Neusner’s opinion “that the Pharisees were merely a small sect with limited influence” (quoted from Mason 1988:661, n. 16), contradicts Gospel testimonies where the Pharisees are presented as an influential group (at least by the middle of the first century AD).

The Pharisee movement is characterised as the most contradictory. Leading their genealogy from Ezra and Nehemiah when “offspring of Israel separated from all alien sons” (Neh. 9:2), the Pharisees considered themselves to be not implicated

³ Cf., however, “the Pharisees were extremists who were opposed by other ‘proto-rabbis’ and who disappeared without a trace after A.D. 70” (Carson 1982:164).

in deals of the “sons of darkness”⁴ and at the same time took constantly part (often functioning as opponents of the Sadducees) in the political life of the country. “... (Proto)-Essenes escapists blamed Rabbanits-(proto)Pharisees in insufficient “phariseism”, i.e. in proclaiming “separation from world nations” but really continuing to participate actively in religious, political and economic life of Jewish land. (Cf. offensive nickname of the Pharisees ציני (“dyed”); cf. also Mt. 23:2-3(!).)» (Tantlevskij 1994:101). See also the accusation of the Pharisees to be money loving and hypocritical in Lk. 16:14-15. Josephus, who was 19 when he «began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees» (Josephus. *Life* 2), testified about political activity of the Pharisees that they «were in a capacity of greatly opposing kings. A cunning sect they were, and soon elevated to a pitch of open fighting and doing mischief» (Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4). Sharing with the Sadducees the power in the Sanhedrin, one of whose functions was to interpret the Torah and conduct legal law activity, the Pharisees thus shared a political responsibility, too.⁵ Let me underline that, according to the Gospels, it were the Pharisees who took active part in the opposition to the Messiah from Nazareth and for that purpose even created an alliance with their constant opponents the Sadducees, with whom they continued to struggle in the time of Paul (Acts 23:7, 8).

After a scandal made by one of the *haverim* on the symposium of the king John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC), the Pharisees for some time yielded control over the king’s court more than the Sadducees (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 5); but they regained their influence after the death of Alexander Janneus (103-76 rr. BC) during the reign of his widow Alexandra (76-67 BC), and the following testimony had been kept about it: «So she had indeed the name of the Regent; but the Pharisees had the authority» (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 16, 2) and «while she governed other people, the Pharisees governed her» (Josephus, *War* I, 5, 2). Political activity of the Pharisees harmed them and lead them to a catastrophe more than once. The participation in an national insurrection against Alexander Janneus and an appeal to the Syrian king Demetrius III Euerus (95-83 rr. BC) in 88 BC lead to the fact that after the suppression of this insurrection in the same year 800 leaders – “obviously principally

⁴ Cf. the harshly negative attitude of the author of 1 Macc. concerning those who said διαθώμεθα διαθήκη μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν κύκλω ἡμῶν ὅτι ἀφ’ ἧς ἐχωρίσθημεν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν εὖρεν ἡμᾶς κακὰ πολλά (1 Macc. 1:11).

⁵ «... The Pharisees and the Sadducees (and information about the beginning of their activity is rather fragmentary) appeared first as politic parties» (Steinsaltz, Funkenstein 1997:46).

the Pharisees” (Tantlevskij 1994:170; also Amusin 1971:121) – together with their wives and children were executed by crucifixion according to an order of Alexander Janneus (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 16, 2; *War* I, 4, 6), “and these executions he saw as he was drinking and lying down with his concubines” (Josephus, *War* I, 4, 6). The Pharisees together with the Essenes supported the insurrection of religious fanatics in 66 AD. This led to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD, and in 135 the Pharisee Rabbi Akiba admitted Simon Bar Kochba to be the Messiah.

Since the Babylonian captivity when the Jews did not have the physical opportunity to perform temple sacrifices, worshiping God was mainly accompanied by reading Torah (Neh. 8:3,6,8), “for ‘if there is no Torah there are no synagogues or houses of instruction’ Lv. r., 11 on 9:11” (Schrage 1993: 811). The appearing of synagogues was a sign for a disavowal from centralized cult of Yahweh and the return to ancient worship of God in different places. It is impossible to date their appearance exactly, though «many even believe a pre-exilic origin is likely. But much discussed text like Ps. 73:8 and Jer. 39:8 do not prove any precise date. Unless no answer is given, it is best to follow the majority in putting the rise of the synagogue under Ezra or during the exile” (Schrage 1993:810). Josephus’ statement (*Ag. Ap.* II, 17) that Moses ordered «to assemble together for the hearing of the law, and learning it exactly, and this not once or twice, or oftener, but every week», can not help in dating the appearance of the synagogue. The appearance of synagogues like “study houses” can be referred to the Maccabean era (cf. συναγωγή γραμματέων in 1 Macc. 7:12). “But their commencement may well be transposed considerably farther back, perhaps to the time of Ezra” (Schurer 1998:II, 2, 54). The appearance of synagogues can be documented to the date of the middle of III BC: “The oldest testimony to a Dispersion synagogue (προσευχή) on an inscription is to be dated under Ptolemy III Euergetes (247-221 B. C.) and it comes from Shedia in Egypt” (Schrage 1993:811).

Undoubtedly, the Pharisees with their adherence to bookish wisdom played a leading hand in the appearance and the development of synagogues like “study houses” and “meeting-houses”. It is because of the Pharisees that there “has appeared a study-oriented community, a crowd oriented to religious sermon” (Kovelman 1996:63).⁶ In New Testament testimonies the main opponents of Jesus during each of his appearances in the synagogues were the Pharisees (often together with Scribes),

⁶ Here is concluded the main idea of a struggle between the Pharisees against the Sadducees, adherents of secret, priestly knowledge (Steinsaltz, Funkenstein 1997:41-42).

they «are supposed to excel others in the accurate knowledge of the laws of their country» (Josephus, *Life* 38). Such resistance of Israel's teachers to the Teacher from Galilee is an important witness to the Pharisees' leadership in "meeting-houses" and their desire to suppress any alternative influence upon the nation (cf. fear of many leaders to be excommunicated from a synagogue by the Pharisees in Jn. 12:42). Keeping the balance in the Sanhedrin with the Sadducees and conceding to them leading posts in the Temple, the Pharisees focused their efforts on developing the verbal Torah and verbal worshiping of God (i.e. sermon and prayer). Probably it began with a simple reading of the Torah, later some comments were applied, Jesus also did it (Lk. 4:15,16,31). The homily became that service *per se* for the sake of which Sacred Scrolls were read. «How early the homily became an independent part of the synagogue service is not known» (Moore 1997:I, 305) – it is interesting for me to point out the change from an instrumental priestly worship of God to a verbal. The longstanding work of the Pharisees converted the synagogues from meeting-places to peculiar theological schools: «in the New testament too, the διδασκειν always figures as the chief function of the synagogue» (Schurer 1998:II, 2, 54). Emil Schurer lists different terms used in the book of Acts in relation to Jewish meetings: προσευχή and συναγωγή (Schurer 1998: II, 2, 72-73). In my opinion, the synagogue as a "study house" was converted into a "chapel" when there were not enough men attending (cf. Acts 16:13,16, where "a place of prayer" near a river is mentioned and not a synagogue as a building, the reason is usually seen in the fact that there were less than 10 men among parishioners). George F. Moore, exploring Philo's works, says that «the name 'places of prayer' is of itself testimony to the fact that instruction was not their [synagogues – *A.T.*] sole function» (Moore 1997: I, 307). In the time of the New Testament probably the synagogue had the function rather of a *building*, where the Jews gathered to read the Torah scrolls and to solve different problems, than of the holy place like the Temple in Jerusalem: «It may be noted in conclusion that in LXX. ∴ συναγωγή is never used for the house of assembly. <...> Unlike the LXX NT Judaism uses συναγωγή es: in the local cultic sense for the "house of meeting", "the synagogue"» (Schrage 1993:805, 807).

However it is not enough to relate the Pharisees' actions only to creating the synagogues. There are indications which propose that a part of the temple priesthood

joined (or even participated) in the Pharisee movement.⁷ This part of the priesthood was in agreement with the Pharisee teaching about angels, immortality and Messianic expectations. Probably the remark, «whatsoever they do about divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform then according to their direction» (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 3), testifies to the fact that some of the Pharisees had priestly functions in temple services. A comparison of Jn. 1:19 with 24 (see below) testifies to the entry of priests and Levites into the Pharisee party, what can be seen in Josephus' biography (*Life* 1). Probably, «...the opponents of the Pharisees were not the priests as such, but only the *aristocratic* priests: those who by their possessions and offices also occupied civil positions» (Schurer 1998:II, 2, 30). We can suppose that the clergyman and a scribe are related concepts, though this creates a conflict with the opinion of Tessa Rajak (1993:31) who supposes “that in general clergymen in Hebrew tradition were not very famous for interpretation the Holy Scripture... we haven't even heard that clergymen pretended themselves to any attitude to the Torah”. I shall not stop at the criticism of this opinion, which has already been done by Mason (1988:659). The theme of relations between the Pharisees and priests caused many quarrels. Some of them can be found in the writings of Neusner who thinks that some of Rivkin's opinions about the Pharisees [1969-70:205-49] are “groundless ‘historical’ statements” (Neusner 1971:I, 3). Neusner (1971:I, 4) criticises Rivkin's opinion [1969-70:205] about the leading hand of the Pharisees in Jewish history. In contradiction to Mason, Neusner thought (together with M. Smith) that (falsely as Mason thinks) “the Pharisees were merely a small sect with limited influence” (Mason 1988:661, n. 16).⁸

All of the religious groups of Israel wanted to sit on Μωϋσείως καθέδρας i.e. to become interpreters of the Torah and this way claim of themselves that

the Lord apportioned to them great glory, his majesty from the beginning. There were those who ruled in their kingdoms, and were men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and proclaiming prophecies; leaders of the people their deliberations and in understanding of learning for the people” (Sir. 44:2-4).

⁷ I can hardly agree with statement, that “the Pharisees are group of uncertain origin, generally learned, committed to the oral law as well as to the written, almost never priest...” (Carson 1982:167). See below the analysis of Jn. 1:19-24.

⁸ But Mason himself suggests that the Pharisees and the Sadducees “are implicitly belittled by the short space given to them” by Josephus (Mason 1988:661, n. 18). Actually, pro-Roman works of Josephus (written after AD 90) reflect a great disappointment with former sects of pre-70 AD Judaism.

From the beginning law interpretation was one of the functions of priests (cf. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* II, 21), this can be seen clearly in the example of Ezra who was simultaneously priest and a scribe (cf. *Ezr.* 7:6 and 10:10).

For the reason that priests had different religious beliefs they belonged to different Jewish sects. The only group not represented among priests of the Temple were the Essenes who were “excluded from the common court of the temple» (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 5). Allow me to analyse the example of Zechariah the Priest (Lk. 1). Zechariah seems to readily accept the appearance of an angel and does not seem to object to the existence of angels. Therefore it is difficult to imagine Zechariah as a Sadducee as that sect did not believe in the existence of angels. The Pharisees, according to Rivkin, were successful at «unseating the Aaronite priests from the chair of Moses and reducing them to temple functionaries» (quoted from: Mason 1988:657). However, Mason (also citing Josephus) contradicts Rivkin’s view holding that Josephus «believes that the priests are the real adepts at scriptural exegesis» (Mason 1988:661). Thus, the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, groups which sprang from a single movement that struggled against Hellenism (Tantlevskij 1994:47), come primarily from the area of exegetic and hermeneutic methods and views on the Scripture canon – «and concerning these things it is that great disputes and differences have arisen among them» (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6).

Therefore, I hold that the main groups of Judaism at the time of the Second Temple – the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes (a group which is not important to this dissertation) – differed primarily in their approaches to the interpretation of sacred texts.⁹ These groups were also differentiated by their specific messianic ideas. Thus, Eusebius (CH IV, 22, 6), quoting his predecessor Hegesippus whose books did not reach our time, writes about these groups saying, «the following were those that were opposed to the tribe of Judas and the Christ».

1.3. The Sadducees

The formation of the Sadducees sect was a natural step in Israel’s post-captivity response to the expansion of Greek culture and was in essence a consolidation around priestly Judaism. The civil-temple community in Jerusalem could not rely on

⁹ Probably, the OT canon implicitly witnesses to discussions between the Pharisees and Sadducees. “Undoubtedly, the Sadducees, influenced the process of formation of

prophetic Judaism to repel the expansion of Hellenism as the prophets proclaimed a form of universalism (i.e. the equality of all nations before God), therefore they rallied around the study of Torah and the cult of the Temple.¹⁰ Even their name, “Sadducees”, indicates their efforts to show heredity from the High Priest Zadok (not Antigonus of Socho, who was called Zadok, – see Schurer 1998:II, 2, 32-33), who first supported David in his struggle against Absalom and later Solomon against Adonias. In the eschatological temple of Ezekiel’s vision there will serve “Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me” (Eze. 44:15). The Sadducees were well positioned in their struggle against the Pharisees for power. The dispute between the priestly and the rabbinical traditions of first century Judaism did not end until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Until that time the balance of power periodically shifted from one faction to the other on the basis of court intrigues and political earthquakes. The position of the High Priests was weakest during the pre-Maccabean period, as a result, the Maccabean insurrection against Antiochus IV Apiphanes was initiated not by the High Priest, but by Mattathias, a provincial priest of Modein. After the success of Hasidaeans,¹¹ Jonathan (the son of Mattathias) was anointed as High Priest in 152 BC (1 Macc. 10:21; Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 2, 3). This event was the beginning of the Hasmonian dynasty, a dynasty in which the kings also served as the High Priests. This new dynasty of priestly kings replaced a priesthood of the descendants of Onias and notably weakened the Sadducees’ position of power (Schurer 1998:II, 2, 41). Thus, during the time of Hyrcanus the Sadducees took the leading role with regard to political influence; under Alexander Jannaus many Pharisees were put to death being crucified for rebellion and high treason; and under Herod the Great the Pharisees were again persecuted for their refusal to swear allegiance to the king. However, after the Temple had been destroyed by the Romans the prolonged struggle between the Sadducees and Pharisees was resolved in favour of the Rabbis forever.¹²

the Tanah and, possibly, due to them such questionable books as the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes and others were included into the Tanah” (Weinberg 2000:117).

¹⁰ A transition from prophecy which stopped being a social norm to public forms of discussion became a revolution in religious life of Israel (Steinsalts, Funkenstein 1997:39-40).

¹¹ When Judas Maccabee displaced the High Priest Alcimus (a Sadducee?), the former High Priest complained to king Demetrius Hasidaeans (2 Macc. 14:5-10) which was normal tactic of the Sadducees.

¹² Cf. different opinions of D. Carson (1982:164) and rabbi J. Telushkin (1997:104). Independently of identification of the Pharisees I regard disappearance of the

Since information about the Sadducees is found only in Jewish and Christian scriptures, it is not possible to precisely date the appearance of this religious sect. However, it is more readily possible to date the time of their identification as a religious group. According to Josephus (*Ant.* XIII, 10, 6), the Sadducees represented a notable power even in the time of John Hyrcanus' reign (134-104 BC).

The Sadducees, being one of two (or three¹³) main parties in the Sanhedrin, took an active role in politics – an activity that sometimes resulted in serious consequences. For instance, Herod, when he became a king, executed all except one of the members of the Sanhedrin (Josephus, *Ant.* XIV, 10, 4). It is quite possible that the forty-five supporters of the priestly king Antigonus who were executed upon Herod's order (after Antigonus had been captured by Anthony) also belonged to the Sadducees' party (Josephus, *Ant.* XV, 1, 1).

On the pages of the Gospels we often see the Pharisees and the Sadducees mentioned as united opponents of Jesus, this undoubtedly testifies to the frequency of contacts between these two *prima facie* irreconcilable opponents. The Sadducees arose simultaneously with the Essenes and the Pharisees on the wave of anti-Hellenistic moods among pious Jews at the beginning of the second century BC; they, “advanced the idea of an unconditional and scrupulous fulfilment of all instructions of Moses' Torah (Pentateuch) and the idea of national consolidation around the cult at the Jerusalem Temple” (Tantlevskij 1994:47). The common origin and shared interests of the Sadducees and the Pharisees led to frequent alliances between these two groups of post-captivity Judaism. With this in mind, the following statement of Josephus is of significant interest: «they are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them» (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 4). Meanwhile it was one of the representatives of the Sadducees who assured John Hyrcanus that the outrage he suffered from one of *haverim* during a drinking party,

Sadducees after AD 70 as a victory for synagogues leaders (the Pharisees, scribes, “proto-rabbis” etc.).

¹³ “Two recent discussions of the Sanhedrin summarize the evidence and conclude, rightly, that the Sanhedrin was made up of Pharisees (most of whom were scribes), Sadducees (most of whom were priests) and elders. The ‘elders’ were not distinguished so much by theological position as by social position: They were respected community leaders, ‘nobility’, and normally neither priests nor scribes but ‘laymen’...” Carson (1982:166). I suggest to not include the third group in this

was in fact, the general opinion of all Pharisees (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6).

Undoubtedly, the union of these two sects had a temporary and political character.

This can be seen on Gospel pages in their unified efforts to arrest Jesus; but they had different ideas with regard to his punishment.¹⁴ Likewise, Josephus, according to Mason, did not have a high opinion about Pharisees' behaviour because «both the Pharisees and Sadducees are implicitly belittled by the short space given to them» (Mason 1988:661, n. 18).

The Sadducees from their social composition came predominately from the aristocracy and financial oligarchy of Israel (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6; XVIII, 1, 4). This permitted G. Moore (1993: I, 70) to make the following conclusion:

They were, it is said, not properly a religious party, or sect, as the Pharisees were, but primarily a social class, the aristocracy of the priesthood, together with the wealthy and influential laity whom community of interests and culture attached to the sacerdotal nobility, with whom they were frequently allied also by marriage.

The following remark of Josephus (*War* II, 8, 14) can only be explained by the ceaseless struggle of the Sadducean aristocracy for priest authority and for influence upon the kings of Israel:

...the Pharisees are friendly to one another, and are for the exercise of concord and regard for the public. But the behaviour of the Sadducees one towards another is in some degree wild; and their conversation with those that are of their own party is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them.

The social differences between these two sects was evident enough for rabbi Nathan to record the Pharisees' indictment of the Sadducees, "they used silver vessels and gold vessels all their lives". Rabbi Nathan also mentions the following retort, "but the Sadducees said, 'It is tradition among the Pharisees to afflict themselves in this world; yet in the world to come the will have nothing' (ARNa Chap. 5, trans. Goldin, p. 39)" (quot. from: Neusner 1971: I, 60).

As it was said earlier, the Sadducees had frequently made political unions with their ancient enemies – Pharisees. During the struggle of the religious establishment of Israel against the Messiah of Nazareth these two sects again were united. In my

research and to stay within the framework of the Gospels which mention only two groups of the Sanhedrin.

opinion, the Pharisees deliberately allied themselves with the Sadducees for the following purposes: (1) to neutralise the unruly Messiah; (2) to defile the Sadducees in the eyes of the people; (3) to stimulate the nation against the Romans (see below). According to Flusser (1999: 74-75), the Pharisees criticised the Sadducees for their persecution of the first Christians. It could also be that the Pharisees' support for the first Christians (*e.g.* from rabbi Hamaliel) was inspired by affinity between the groups and by the presence of Pharisees in Jewish-Christian communities. However, the degree to which the Pharisees' influenced the dogmatic and practice of the first Christians remains to be seen.

1.4. Comparative analysis

The first Jewish-Christian communities borrowed heavily from the comradeship and community structure of the Pharisees (Acts 18:27; 1 Cor. 12:20 etc.). The Pharisees (especially House of Hillel) about whom it was said, "travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte" (Mt. 23:15) unlike other Jewish sects of the epoch were busy with what is now called mission (*cf.* ἔξαποστειλῶ in Acts 22:21). It is also interesting to compare the Pharisees' strong influence on women (Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4) with the frequently mentioned in Acts women who turned to the faith through the sermons of Saul – a former Pharisee (Acts 17:12: καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων ... οὐκ ὀλίγοι). Moreover, women are already seen in the role of deaconesses (διηκόνου) in Lk. 8:3.

From its very origin Christianity, which assimilated from the Pharisees a tradition in interpreting the Scripture, utilised rabbinical methods of Old Testament scriptural interpretation to oppose the Jewish understanding of the person of the Messiah. The differences between their hermeneutic approaches to the messianic and halakhic questions made Judaism and Christianity antagonists.

Unlike the Sadducees, the Pharisees believed in predestination (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 3), but conceded: (1) "that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate, and some of them are in own power" (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 5, 9); (2) "that to act what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of men, although fate does co-operate in every action" (Josephus, *War* II, 8, 14). In connection with this it is necessary to note a short remark in Acts 13:48 (τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον) and

¹⁴ Cf. the definite decision of the High Priest Caiaphas (Jn. 11:50) and his colleagues (Jn. 12:10) to crucify Jesus with the uncertain opinion of the Pharisees (Jn. 12:19), who referred to Jesus as a teacher (Lk. 19:39).

also the position of Saul the Pharisee and a righteous Jewish-Christian James in Ja. 4:15.

The faith of the Pharisees' in ἀνάστασις εἰς ζωὴν (2 Macc. 7:14 – for righteous men!) is noted by Josephus (*Ant.* XVIII, 1, 3; *War* II, 8, 14) and Luke in Acts 23:8. Here our sources show rare unanimity. The author of the Fourth Gospel especially underlines that after Lazarus' resurrection witnesses of this story tell *the Pharisees* (Jn. 11:46) about it. Still it is difficult to propose that the first Christians borrowed this idea directly from the Pharisees because eschatological hope of resurrection pre-existed in Jewish thought such as in Job 19:25.

Jesus was a teacher from provincial Galilee, he knew Scripture though he had never studied under the rabbis (Jn. 7:15) and did not belong to either of the dominating Jewish schools, yet he dared to reject “the traditions of the elders” (Mk. 7:3-13) claiming that they had become a *de facto* alternative to written Torah (see below).⁶ Thus, Jesus was implicitly allied with the Sadducees in criticism of the Pharisees on account of the oral Torah (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6). However, he had nothing in common with Sadducees, especially after the event “when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees” (Mt. 22:34, ἐφίμωσεν – lit. “muzzled”). Briefly, Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt. 16:6, 11, 12) presents the theologies of both sects as unacceptable to Christians.

1.5. Conclusion

In this short review I preferred to follow Josephus who, being himself a witness of many events of the time of New Testament, left more or less detailed testimonies of only three largest Judaistic sects of that time. I did not pay attention to the Essenes, who are not mentioned directly in the New Testament, nor to the Zealots, religious fanatics whom Josephus probably speaks of as “the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy” (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 6¹⁶). My reason for bypassing this “fourth sect” is not only that “these men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions” (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 6), but also that the concept of Zealotism is not clearly presented in the literature of that epoch. For example, a former religious fanatic Saul in his speech to

⁶ Cf. polysemantic attitude to a tradition of a former rabbi Saul in Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8; 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Phess.2:15; 3:6.

¹⁶ Cf. *Ant.* XIV, 9, 2, where they are described as bandits rather than as lovers of freedom.

the Jews in the court of the Temple in Jerusalem (secured from tribesmen by Romans!) calls himself Zealot (ζηλωτής; cf. Gal. 1:14).

If we take into consideration his words καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον (Acts 22:3), then a concept of zealotism becomes too general. Josephus' words «that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value doing any kind of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man Lord» (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 6), could be related to any one of the described sects. Moreover, during a period of persecution of the Church these words also apply to Christians (cf. λαὸν περιούσιον, ζηλωτὴν in Tit. 2:14).

Tracing the influence of Judaism upon first Christians (especially upon Hebrew Christians), I shall only highlight its influence within the following spheres: (1) practical ecclesiology – *kagal* as a model for *ecclesia*; (2) hermeneutics – *midrash* as a model for *homilies* of the church fathers; (3) the relationship between religion and politics, here, separatism – cf. words of the Apostles "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29) and the refusal of the Pharisees to swear to Herod even under fear of death (Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4), and also the report about Judah the Galilean (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 6).

Despite great similarity with Jewish sects in the first century AD, Christianity from its beginnings based itself not on an interpretation of sacred Jewish texts but on the *kerygma* of Jesus. No pre-Christian religious movements in Judaism overstepped the limits of Judaism itself, i.e. the legacy of Moses and Ezra. The Torah was that stone which served as the basis for Israel's faith ("the Jews kept the Torah and the Torah kept the Jews"). Israel was Yahweh's wife, whom He could not divorce ("sinning Israel still remains Israel" or Sanhedrin 10:1: "all Israel has part in future world"). Appearing in the middle of the first century AD Christianity had absolutely different postulates. If rabbinical Judaism has as its basis the attitude of the Jews to the Tōrah, then Christianity emphasises a relationship between God and man, the Creator and creation. The apostolic *kerygma* could not be limited by frames of Jewish particularism and appeared remote from the scheme "the Jews – Torah". Even in the Sermon on the Mount with a direct opposition "you heard it was said... but I tell you" Jesus oriented His hearers to follow new rules and, so strongly and clearly, maintained the superiority of own hermeneutics over rabbinical ones. In the next part I am going to look at the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees as a conflict between the teachers of the Law.

2. THE CONFLICT OF TEACHERS

2.1. Jesus and the religious culture of his time

The Jewish nation has been *formed* (not just singled out from the environment of nations) as the nation of the Book, that is why from the time of Exodus all its existence as an ethnically independent population was determined by the Torah. Per se, the Pentateuch appeared as the legislation of a new-formed nation. The divine imperative of the Pentateuch soon extended to the entire Torah, made the Scripture the exceptional book of an exceptional nation. Moses the lawgiver and Aaron the priest are considered to be its first interpreters. The Torah became not only the witness of Yahweh's testament with His nation, but also a specific guarantor, because the attitude to the Torah was the indicator of spirituality as of an individual person as well as of the entire nation. Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* II, 22) transmits this in the following short anthem:

But while we are ourselves persuaded that our law was made agreeably to the will of God, it would be impious for us not to observe the same; for what is there in it that any body would change! And what can be invented better! Or what we can take out of other people's laws that will exceed it!

It seemed natural to build the Jewish education system primarily on learning the Torah understood as a code of religious decrees and also as a civil-criminal code. According to Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* II, 18) Moses, the lawgiver and leader of a new nation,

did not suffer the guilt to ignorance to go on without punishment, but demonstrated the law to be the best and the most necessary instruction of all others, permitting the people to leave off their other employments, and to assemble together for the hearing of the law, and learning it exactly, and this not once or twice, or oftener, but every week

Exactly this vitally important demand can be characterised with a famous statement "the Jews kept the Torah and the Torah kept the Jews". It became even clearer after the Hellenisation of the Near East. If in Greek *scholas* boys studied grammar with help of "Iliad" of Homer from the age of five, rabbinical Judaism set the Torah as the corner stone of Jewish education. For Jewish mentality education can not exist separate from religion, therefore, according to Dodd (1965:75), "the key word of the Jewish religious vocabulary is חוקה". Moreover, "the studying the Torah

is understood with the tradition as one of important and, may be, the most important commend, i.e. as the goal” (Lvov 1999:172).

In addition to this, the Torah became that book which not only separated the Jews from other nations¹⁷, but also divided the Jews themselves into two groups: the wisemen and the crowd (ὄχλος in the usage of the Evangelists). The Pharisaic concept of separation from the pagan world while simultaneously engaging in its fate is very similar with what we hear in the High Priest's prayer of Jesus, especially in His request to sanctify those who are sent into the world (Jn. 17:11-19). This notion, in the opinion of many commentators, is placed in the word פְּרוּשׁ which traditionally, keeping in mind Israel's aloofness from other nations (Ezra 6:21; Neh. 9:2), is translated as “separatist”. However, with an insignificant change of the pointings of the consonants it is possible to read this word in a different way. This way A. I. Baumgarten perceives two variants of publicity: *paroshim* and *perushim* and on the basis of this offers not the usual traditional definition, but another one: “specifiers” (Baumgarten 1983: 428; also Moore 1997: I, 62). Unlike other “nations” the Jews were divided not only into poor and rich, but also into סופרים (Scribes, e.i. interpreters of the Torah) and עַם-הָאָרֶץ (the nation of earth). Christ, in His praise to the Father for hiding knowledge “from the wise and intelligent” (Mt. 11: 25) earned Himself a multitude of enemies (cf. an offence of one of the experts in the law [i.e. Torah lords – בְּעַל הַתּוֹרָה in Lk. 11: 45). A scribe was blessed by God, *ignoramus* (generally, a man from a crowd) was cursed as witnessed in an exclamation of the Pharisees: “This crowd (ὄχλος) that does not know the law is accursed” (Jn. 7:49) and the phrase of Hillel the Oldest אין בור ירא חטא ולא עַם-הָאָרֶץ חסיד “no *boor* (*ignoramus*) fears to sin, and no *am haares*” (crowd)¹⁸ is pious (Abot 2:5).¹⁹ Nearly two centuries before the gospel events one of Israel's teachers (a Pharisee?) said that ἐκκλησίαν ὄχλου was one of three things that caused his fear (Sir. 26:5; cf. also Thucydides, IV, 28, 3, where a characteristic of a crowd is its insistence and

¹⁷ The Pharisees worked hard to make «the ideal of holiness for Israelites the ideal of separateness» (Moore 1997:I, 61); later this ideal was proclaimed by the Apostles (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:5 and others).

¹⁸ According to Dodd (1965:78), the terms «people of earth» and «ignoramus» are equal: «The עַם-הָאָרֶץ is also called בור ‘empty’, ‘uncultivated’».

¹⁹ Unlike A. Oppenheimer (1977:189), according to whom wisemen in the beginning of the third BC made peace with people of earth under the threat of nation extinction and loosing the interest to Torah (Kovelman 1996:n. 29), Moses Maimonides thought, that a crowd «was ignorant, is ignorant and will remain the same in times of Mashiah» (Steinsaltz, Funkenstein 1997:96).

demanding attitude). A similar attitude to the crowd can be seen even in the works of the ancient Greek authors. Plato, for example, thought that a crowd: (1) carried false wisdom (Plato, *Phlb.* 49a); (2) disturbed a philosopher in his contemplation of the divine (Plato, *Phdr.* 249c, d); (3) pressured an individual person (Plato, *Rep.* 492b-c).

It is important to take particular attention to the next fact: unlike the former (Hellenistic?) rabbi Saul who several times quoted Greek poets (Acts 17: 28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Tit. 1:12) Jesus preached as an adept of Judaism, scribe,²⁰ a rabbi (though having not been acknowledged as a scientist-scribe – Flusser 1999: 27), and that is why he always built his arguments exactly on texts sacral for Jews. However, He used *classic* biblical texts²¹ and condemned their *substitution* by doctrines of authoritative schools of Hillel and Shammai: “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition” (Mk. 7: 9; Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 10, 6: “The Pharisee have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers which are not written in the law of Moses”).

The Pharisees' attempt to save the Torah from being converted to “an archaic relic” (Dunn 1997:§16.1) eventually led to a verbal Torah – a product of wisemen of civil-temple community – which became an equivalent to the written Torah, given by God himself on Sinai. No doubt, in the first century a rabbinical Judaism, which was founded by *the Pharisees*, had already more or less developed (Dunn 1997:§16.2) Mishnah (30 BC-200 AD), the teaching and learning of tradition, in distinction from Mikra (Moore 1997:I, 319). The phrase of the Jews (the Pharisees?) πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ μεμαθηκώς (Jn. 7:15) clearly testifies to (1) the independence (μὴ μεμαθηκώς) of the teacher of Galilee from any leading schools of Judaism in the first century AD,²² each of which “had its own Mishnah” (Moore 1997: I, 94); (2) the knowledge of the son of a carpenter of the γράμματα (Mishnah?). For “He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mk. 1: 22), and His teaching was διδασχὴ καινὴ κατ’ ἐξουσίαν (Mk. 1:27).

However “a new teaching with authority” was new in its *contents*, rather than in *form*. Robert Gundry (1992:74) suggest a comparison of various verses “for the

²⁰ “But what kind of of teacher was he? The Semitic title might suggest that he was regarded as a ‘scribe’, the contemporary equivalent of what later became the office of ‘rabbi’” (Vermes 1984:30).

²¹ It was the Tannaim’s traditions: «the authors of the Mishna occasionally cited verses of scripture, but they never articulately alluded to any other Jewish writing before their own» (Neusner 1986:500).

²² Or «from a recognized master» (Brown 1966:316).

closeness διδάσκω and κηρῦσσω in Mark", on basis of which he infers: "We might also think that Jesus is teaching what he has been preaching, i.e. the nearness of God's reign, repentance, and faith". James Edwards (1994:221) considers that "the scribes stand in the tradition of the fathers (7: 8-13), however, whereas Jesus receives his authority directly from the Father (1:11). The scribes derive their authority from Torah, but Jesus appeals to a superior authority resident in himself". This leads me to propose the following image: Jesus has filled the old wineskins of Judaism with the wine of his own *kerygma*.

In the analysis of passages in the Gospels that contain Jesus' parables, obviously addressed to high priests and Pharisees and directed against them, it is always necessary to remember three Old Testament categories where appear anointed sovereigns of the Most High: king, priest and prophet. Being the Messiah, i.e. an anointed sovereign, Jesus showed up in the roles of all three of the above-mentioned categories. The function of the expositor of the nation was the important prerogative of prophets who at the same time frequently used parables. As in the case of Jesus, the function of a prophet was doomed to an unsuccessful result. While forming a civil-temple community, rabbinical Judaism removed and at last ultimately replaced prophetic Judaism. The propaganda of the equality of nations and the greater responsibility of serving as a nation chosen by the Creator could not unite the post-captivity Israel. During the so-called intertestamental period scribes replaced prophets and mainly removed priests. Alexander Lvov (1999:155-156) suggests that

in the center of attention is found not the king and not the priest, but the wise man – the chairman in court, the leader of the people (*nasi*), the expert of Torah, who is able to defend his point of view in verbal, excluding direct intervention of supernatural forces, combat with other wisemen as well as with the Gentiles...

The formation of the holy text of the Torah was finished (with book of Esther which like Pentateuch describes the death of the enemies of the Jews and comprises one more commandment, the order to celebrate Purim), and God, in rabbinical opinion, began to speak not through prophets and His Spirit (Jeremias 1999:III §9.2), but through the Torah interpreters, i.e. scribes. During the intertestamental period any prophet of Judaism was finally denied for two reasons: (1) the universalism of prophets stood against the idea of a God-chosen Jewish nation; (2) the belief that

God spoke through the Torah (hence, through scribes), not through revelations of a single person.²³

The appearance of such prophets as John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth excited Jewish society. John the Baptist did not consider himself to be a prophet (Jn. 1:21), but he exposed the Pharisees; after his execution the task of exposing the Pharisees completely passed to Jesus. But in the middle of the first century AD the rabbinical Judaism of scribes and law-teachers was so strong that the prophetic service of a teacher who had not studied anywhere (at rabbis? prophets?), just had no real chance for success²⁴. I agree with a statement of Carson (1982:165):

Jesus cannot be reduced to a “proto-rabbi”, training his followers to repeat his legal decisions. Reports of his messianic claims cannot be dismissed as anachronistic as easily as Sigal thinks, and to onlookers he appeared not as “proto-rabbi” but as a prophet.²⁵

However, even if “formal ordination was unknown in Jesus’ day” (Carson 1982: 165)²⁶, any rabbinical institute as folk teachers still had some more or less formal appearance for Jesus to be called a teacher, i.e. rabbi, by the Pharisees themselves (Jn. 3:2; Cf. 13:13). “Jesus as rabbi who taught disciples in private is culturally consistent with the rabbinic ethos of first-century Judaism... Jesus and his disciples had been born into and nurtured by the powerful religious culture of first century Judaism” (Barnett 1999:161). That is why Jesus is frequently shown to be

²³ As an example of the change in the approach to God's revelation can serve the book Job, in which the author (or authors), probably, tried to analyse the reasons for captivity. Such places, as Job 3:19 and 19:25 are not accompanied with usual claims for prophets “the Lord says this” or “and it was God’s word to me”. The whole dispute of a hero with his friends in its form reminds more of Plato’s dialogues than of the monologues of Jewish prophets.

²⁴ See the reference by Josephus (*War* VI, 5, 2-3; Cf. II, 13, 4) “a great number of false prophets” who succeeded because “a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises; for when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such deliverance... Such were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself”; See also *War* VI, 5, 3 about one Jesus, the son of Ananus, whose sermon about the destruction of Jerusalem by Romans not only received no acceptance, but, in the opposite, resulted in wrath and beating upon him.

²⁵ Cf. Jeremias (1999:III, §9.1) who has described Jesus as real prophet.

²⁶ «In Jesus’ day the “rabbis” were not an official class of ordained men: Ordination had not yet come into vogue» (Carson 1982:164; also Flusser 1999:27-28).

the true Rabbi²⁷ who preached (first of all) to the Jews and who used the usual rabbinical composition of hermeneutic and homiletic methods²⁸, one of which was a parable²⁹.

2.2. A parable as an attribute of rabbinical Judaism

In the history of Christian theology the interpretation of Jesus' parables became a testing ground for every serious theologian who tried to make his own deposition to the treasury of sacred knowledge. In order to understand the difficulty and ambiguity of interpreting parables it is enough to recall one of the first attempts – the interpretation (Christian Midrash) by St. Augustine who “provided the classic example of ancient allegorizing with his interpretation of the parable of the good Samaritan” (Blomberg 1990:31). Setting a point in the identification of parable heroes, modern jokers ask the following question: “And who then is a donkey of a good Samaritan, without which he could not bring in the wounded stranger?” – and they answer this question themselves: “the one who pays attention to such interpretations!” I do not desire to follow either sides, so let me continue with an exegetical and historical-literary analysis of one of the narrative parables of Jesus containing a distinctly expressed plot – for example, the parable about the workers in the vineyard in which is explained both God's authority and the changeableness of existence (instability of society). That changeableness of existence, when the first become the last and the last become the first, happened to Joseph and his nation and to the royal family of Troy. The concept also refers to Jesus himself who was given for crucifixion by that nation that had called Him Christ and who even wanted to make him a king (Jn. 6: 15).

Jesus' parables, which occupy an important place in the Synoptics and are distinguishing them from other parts of the New Testament (including the Fourth

²⁷ Jesus (and later Paul) is shown as a Teacher who had a profession that, according to rabbi Gamaliel ben Judah, was necessary for those who devoted themselves to study the Torah: “Study combined with a secular occupation is a fine thing, for the double labor makes sin to be forgotten. All study of the Law with which no work goes will in the end come to naught and bring sin in its train” (Abot 2, 2).

²⁸ Moore 1997: I, “311: The teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels exhibits the same popular forms”. So, for example, Jesus used the rabbinical method of concluding which was necessary for authoritative admonishment: “Very often, as in Rabb. an application is appended, and this is introduced by οὕτως, Mt. 13: 49; 18: 14, 35; 20: 16 etc., and impressed upon the listeners by added imperative, Mk. 4: 9, 23...” (Hauck 1993: 754).

Gospel³⁰), obviously deserve to claim a separate chapter in New Testament theology. Being so different from the aphorisms of Solomon, Ecclesiastes or of ben Sirach which are notable among the parables of the Old Testament, Jesus' parables became one of the main toolkits in the dispatch of the Gospel κήρυγμα and showed Jesus not only as an authoritative speaker for the Jews, but also as the Teacher, who bravely transferred the action of his own parables into the crowd (this will be examined more-detailed below).

The popular statement that a “fairy tale is a retired myth” can be assuredly projected on a parable which in that case can be presented as an age epic. From early times men tried to fix and hand down to their descendants their own ideas about cosmos and existence in the form of some phantasmagoria. All ancient Mediterranean societies developed peculiar parables as a product of human consciousness, and these later began to form human consciousness. Even the first religious sceptics – ancient Greek philosophers – used parable as an instrument of the adaptation of their own doctrines for the thinking of demos. Fables of Aesop, whoever hides behind this name, turned out to be the obvious example of popularity of this genre.

But in Near-Eastern culture where mythological consciousness co-existed with Egyptian medicine and Babylonian astronomy, the parable had a particular significance. Indeed, the thinking of the Ancient East did not perceive the logic of Greek philosophers³¹ and aimed to express the surrounding world and the history of

²⁹ According to Kovelman (1996: 58 and n. 45), the rabbis (Tannaim) used a parable for preaching to the crowd, and Midrash – for pupils.

³⁰ It seems, that parables as a rabbinical preaching method did not have much importance for John who described Jesus as Logos the Incarnated. Moreover, most of his parables were used by Jesus for the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is not the main topic of John (cf. Jn. 20:31), and so it was mentioned only in Jn. 3 (the kingdom of God) and in Jn. 18 (“My kingdom”).

³¹ Cf. position of Aristoteles, who was sceptic regarding mythologization of religion: “However, it is not worth while to consider seriously the subtleties of mythologists...” (Aristoteles, *Metaph.* III, 4, 1000a). However his idea of myths is not so unique: “It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize... (thus the myth-lover is in sense sense a philosopher, since myths are composed of wonders)” (Aristoteles, *Metaph.* I, 2, 982b9-10). Sooner they accept myth only as method of infusion on crowd: “The rest of their tradition has been added later in a mythological form to influence the vulgar and as constitutional and utilitarian expedient” (Aristoteles, *Metaph.* XII, 8, 1074b5) and of popularization of complex ideas: “what is expressed in the form of myths and is childish simple... has bigger power than knowing laws” (Aristoteles, *Metaph.* II, 3, 995a). The century of philosophers, which influenced through Christianity the development of all Western European thought, did not leave behind epic works, in which heroes with ease travel

its own society in phantasmagoria (whether in myth, epic³² or parable). Indeed, Plato's dialogues, built on the symposium of philosophers, are impossible to be compared with Sinai revelation, parables about God's Kingdom and Apocalypse. The contempt of intellectual persons for the religious crowd can easily be seen in the following words of Glaucon: "they would never go near anything like a philosophical discussion, though they run around at all the Dionysiac festivals in town or country as if they were under contract to listen to every company of performers without fail (Plato, *Rep.* 475d).

The main characteristic of myth and parable is the neglect of historic truth, for that reason its message becomes valuable. As a result of human consciousness phantasmagoria at some characteristics (overstatement, abstractness, neglect for detailed authenticity) is close to sacred text and in many forms, especially in parable form, accessible to any listener and even in some degree makes him an indirect accomplice of an action. Some of Jesus' parables are an obvious example of this, since they are addressed directly to listeners as participants and appeal to them for a judgement – a method used by authors to describe action within action, theatre within theatre, what will be spoken about below. Unlike brief parables-aphorisms in Mt. 3, the parable about the workers in the vineyard is presented in a narrative and subjective form: its heroes are not speechless, but vice versa – clear and exacting. Jesus utters the monologues of the heroes of the parable; changing the tone according to stance of the hero, and thereby He achieves a larger effect. About the widespread method of verbalization of action Weinberg (1993: 87) writes: "Direct speech differs... by effect or illusion of the effect of a direct presence and the participation of the story-teller in a story. This effect permeates archaic myth and ancient epic, and on it is based the acknowledgement that the text existed inside of life situation".

It is remarkable, incidentally, that unlike modern preachers Jesus did not use his own vital experience in the *kerygma*. Anyhow, about wonderful catches of fish or about two-drachma in the bowel of a fish caught by Peter we learn from evangelists themselves, rather than from Jesus' sermons. This feature basically distinguishes His λόγοι from sermons of modern preachers who love fishing. In any case, "He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes" (Mt. 7:29). Perhaps,

to other worlds or resist gods. "In Philo, who expounds the OT allegorically, and whose abstract nature has no taste for comparisons, παραβολή plays no role" (Hauck 1993: 750, n. 6). It is remarkable that "in NT παραβολή is used only in the Synoptic Gospels (48 times) and Hb. (twice)" (Hauck 1993: 751).

³² Cf. ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν in Heb. 7:9.

from this point of view his parables are similar to the aphorism of Ecclesiastes, where rich life experience can be seen in every maxim. As to its essence a parable is the unchanged projection of the past into the future, a transference to hearers of the experience of predecessors through the transformation of the concrete into the abstract. So I can consider a parable to be a narrative form of transmitting information.

It is important to distinguish different kinds of parables. Craig Blomberg (1990:73) suggests the following way:

Parables subdivide into three categories: (a) *similitudes*, short comparisons between two basically unlike objects using present tense verbs...; (b) *parables proper*, complete stories narrated in past tense, with metaphorical significance; And (c) *example stories*, narratives in past tenses simply depicting behavior to be imitated, with no level of meaning... The parables in categories (b) and (c) are fictitious narratives which are not intended to systematize theological doctrine.

Unlike the Old Testament which includes the book of Leviticus and various references to Jewish and pagan customs and ceremonies, the New Testament only casually – in The Epistle to the Hebrews and The Revelation – mentions some resemblance of temple services, but conducted in heaven. This distinction can be explained firstly by the change of accent from cultic, priestly service to verbal service, which, firstly being peculiar to prophetic Judaism, later received a peculiar spread with the beginning of Babylon captivity.

If in early compositions “speaking” – a prayer, a complaint, a beatification, an oath, an anathema and etc. – appears mostly like “an appendix” and/or “addition” to the main ceremony – sacrifice (Num. 23:1 f. and etc.), then in time sacrifice more frequently is portrayed only as a “prologue” to the main action which verbal admittance is confessed to be (Weinberg 1993:226).

The scene of the tax-collector and the Pharisee in Lk. 18 testifies about the obvious domination of verbal form over ritual in subjective-objective relations between God and man. Exactly in this way a man who brings sacrifices can manifest and demonstrate his personal attitude towards divine holiness and his own depravity. “Verbal method of ritual as a method to realise the relationships ‘God – man, man – God’ differs from the instrumental by its larger individualism” (Weinberg 1993:226).

The principle of verbal service underlies the parable as a method of evangelistic *kerygma*. Starting from intertestamental period of Israel history a parable became an unchanged attribute of rabbinical Judaism, which was opposing

Hellenistic, often pessimistic, wisdom, and legalistic temple service. Even more, the perception and comprehension of parables of Jesus became a criterium of dedication (Mk. 4:11,12; Mt. 11: 25)³³ and demanded “grasping the similarity between image and reality” (Hauck 1993:756). On the part of his hearers penetration into sacred meaning of a parable (Mt. 13:11) was a great problem – “so far as they were able to hear it” (Mk. 4:33). However to the Pharisees the sense of the tirades of Jesus was clear enough (Mt. 21:45), because they constantly spoke in parables themselves. In the process of the historical evolution of the Jewish diaspora and rabbinical wisdom a parable in the form of an aphorism received even greater significance, and already in times of Ben Sirach became the usual instrument in composing lectures, a collection of which is presented by the book of Ben Sirach. G. Moore (1997:I, 310) writes about post-Sirach tradition (the second century BC) the following: “It should be noted that the schoolmen of later times also cultivated the parable and the apophthegm as an art (see Eccles. 12: 9-12), and some of them achieved a notable mastery in it”.

The very Jewish word מָשַׁל has many shades of meaning, and among them there is a “prophetic figurative discourse” (Brown, Driver, Briggs 1951:605).

Furthermore, *mashal* indicates in the Bible a generally elevated speech (syn. מָשַׁל; Cf. Isa. 49: 5; 78: 2), as well as well known bywords (1 Sam. 10: 12), can be seen in the meaning of an example for mockery (Isa. 14: 4; Mich.2 and 4 and others). As for the significance of “parable”, i.e. elucidation and verifying any idea or a moral generalization by a concrete example *mashal* occurs only in the book of Ezekiel (17: 2; 21: 5; 24: 3) (Kamenetsky 1991:724-725).

The synonym for Jewish *mashal* in ancient Greek authors – παραβολή – is used in such various meanings: conformity, postponement, monetary deposit (contribution), twist, deviation. Another significance of παραβολή is “the comparison in which two things or processes from different fields are set side by side so that in virtue of the similarity the unknown may be elucidated by the known ”(Hauck 1993:745-746). The word παραβολή meant apophthegm or byword (1 Sam. 10:12; 24:14; Eze. 2:22) as, for example, Solomon’s proverbs and those of other ancient authors. With time, this word got additional meanings and began to designate brief narratives including fables. Let me note that Jesus unlike the popular in the Greek-

³³ “Slowness of disciples –usual topic of Gospels. A literary admittance is seen there, denotative teachers’ thoughts (Best E. The Role of the Disciples in Mark // New Testament Studies. Cambridge, 1977. Vol. 23, #4, p. 384)” (Kovelman 1996:31).

Roman world Aesop did not tell fables at all (!) and generally used parables as such, only sometimes resorted to aphorisms-comparisons gathered by Matthew in a separate chapter (Mt. 13).

The common link between them is that fable and parable both have a didactic purpose and prove the generalised idea by a bright concrete example; but while fable imagines improbable and unbelievable cases from the world of animal and plants which are made to speak and act like people, parable contains nothing unnatural and impossible and only wears an abstract moral idea in artistic capsule of individual event (Kamenetsky 1991: 725).

Still such selective approach of “the Teacher who came from God” remains a mystery.

Acknowledging a parable to be a widespread method of writers and speakers of ancient times³⁴, it is necessary to arrange accents correctly in the comparison of doctrines of Jesus and rabbis contemporary to him. No doubt, Jesus’ parables in their form were not different from parables of scribes and the Pharisees, and what is more “both the Rabbis and Jesus take their parables from the same relationships and customs” (Hauck 1993:753). There is nothing special about it, if one remembers that in literature and colloquial genre nobody thinks of changing usual forms or inventing new plots. A disciple first of all took from a teacher a form: “the study of the Scriptures and skill in parables and proverbs go hand in hand” (Moore 1997: I, 310). The task of writer or speaker was to impart to a ready shape (for example, to abstract plot) personal contents, what could let him achieve his own authority as teacher (cf. Lk. 6: 40). I agree with the following statement of Craig Blomberg (1990: 59):

So just as Jesus obviously invested other well-established forms of speaking (e.g. Proverbs, hyperbole or prophecy) with distinctive content, he most likely adopted a well-known method of instruction when he spoke in parables. The difference lay in his message and his authority (cf. e.g. Mt. 7: 28-29).

However speaking of a parable as a method to dispatch Gospel *kerygma* it is necessary to note the interesting fact that Saul, a rabbi and a disciple of the famous rabbi Gamaliel (i.e. a follower of the House of Hillel), the Apostle and the author of many theological works, thrice (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 5:33; Tit. 1:12) quotes pagan

³⁴ Cf. Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* I, 17: Solomon gets much money from Hiram who was not able to solve his puzzle (παράβολαί), and then paid himself much more being not able to solve puzzles of Abdemon, a man of Tyre.

poets, but never (!) uses a parable in messages and in oral speeches (at least the book of Acts does not mention the usage of parables by apostle Paul)³⁵.

NB! In the research of Jesus' conflicts with the Pharisees the accent should be made not on primogeniture (hardly demonstrable!) in applying parables as instrument of teaching, but on its contents and sense. Some of Jesus' meaningful parables, for example, about unkind winegrowers and workers in the vineyard, contained not only the usual theocentrism, but also a strong political implication.

In this context it is necessary to remember that in some parables of Jesus one can see obvious inevitable Old-Testament analogies. Especially it is noticeable in Mathew's Gospel material, containing a lot of the Old Testament quotations-pesher (Dunn 1997:§23.2). A conventional opinion about the work of this evangelist is presented by Guthrie (1990:32) and he expresses it in the following way: "...one of Matthew's main characteristics is the dominance, throughout his account, of Old testament citation and allusions".³⁶ The parables we look at, about the unkind winegrowers and about workers, per se present specific transformation (with the mentioned above presence of theocentrism) of the various ancient plots of Near-East folklore which is directly connected with sacred texts. A place of action chosen for parables entirely meets the requirements of genre – it is enough to recall that even a known tragic story about Naboth the Jezreelite happened because of *vineyard* (1 Ki. 21:1-16). The vineyard as a criterion of stability and a well-off society is mentioned also in the description of the Jews walking alone in the desert (Num. 6:14). Isaiah has the image of vineyard referring directly to Israel (Isa. 5:7; 27:2-6; cf. Ps. 80:8). Moreover, "a popular festival in the days of the second temple was kept on the fifteenth of Ab, on which, as on the Day of Atonement, the girls of Jerusalem danced in the vineyards and challenged the young men to choose partners in marriage" (Moore 1997: II, 54; cf. mentions of the vineyard in one of ancient bridal anthems Song 8:11-12). In the agricultural culture of Greece vineyards occupied the same significant place, and this was the reason for Plato's reply (*Leg. II, 674c*) who enumerates a number of reasons, for which people who had a mind and correct understanding of law should not drink wine:

³⁵ «“Paul does not use the word παραβολή. But his speech, too, is rich in comparisons drawn from the most varied spheres of life... He often uses metaphors (R.13:12: armour of light; 1C.5:8: leaven of wickedness) and comparisons, e.g. R.6:13 f.: the members of weapons...”» (Hauck 1993:760).

³⁶ One more characteristic of Mathew's is creating the text without real OT parallels [Dunn 1997:§23.3]).

Hence, according to this argument, there would be no need for any State to have a large number of vineyards; and while all the other agricultural products, and all the foodstuffs, would be controlled, the production of wine especially would be kept within the smallest and most modest dimensions”.

A plot of an Eastern parable frequently displays situations of conflict caused by social differences; scenes usually were allotments. At the same time, “hostilities were not uncommon in first-century conflicts between absentee landlords (especially Roman ones) and their tenants” (Blomberg 1990:249). Biblical texts follow a usual scheme “rich – poor” and use particular cases of this scheme, often “owner – lessee”. For example in such parables as: about talents, about the wise housekeeper, about workers in the vineyard and about unkind wine-makers. In parables whose action take place in vineyards, Jesus made one of His heroes exactly the Pharisees – those who were considered to be lessees of the vineyard (=Israel). One such parable – a parable about workers in a vineyard – seems to me to be worth particular attention.

2.3. A parable about labourers in the vineyard and its context (Mt. 17:24 – 20:28)

In the parable about workers in the vineyard there can easily be seen cues from the history of Israel in the period of the second century BC–the first century AD. This was the time of education and an active religious and political activity inside Judaism, which constantly struggled, for leadership. It is necessary to remember that the main opponents (not enemies) of Jesus as the teacher and the Messiah were not Sadducees, but *the Pharisees* whom He called painted coffins. In this case a parable about workers in the vineyard that was told by rabbi whom “a rule of the Jewish” acknowledged to be the Teacher from God (Jn. 3:2) has received new aspects. Having accepted as entirely valid the already mentioned opinions of A. I. Baumgarten (1983: 428) and G. Moore (1997: I, 62) that for the Hebrew word פרושים which generally is called *perushim* (separatists)³⁷ it is possible to sound like *paroshim* (specifiers), I notice in a parable about workers in the vineyard with, at minimum, two problems: (1) whether it was told with the purpose of detracting the role of the Pharisees as “teachers of Israel” and (2) whether the Pharisees were implied with those who were called to the vineyard early in the morning?

The trend of events in the passage Mt. 17:24-20: 29 enables one to distinguish it into a separate segment with a distinctly claimed theme which is suggested by a

³⁷ “Cf. also the term ἀμιξία (the non-confusion), which is used by Josephus Flavius in ‘Antiquities’ XIII, 245, 247 for designation of Phariseism” (Tantlevskij 1994:101).

former tax-collector Levi Matthew in the form “a question / an answer”: “Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Mt. 18:1) – “the last shall be first, and the first last”(Mt. 20: 16). I shall give particular attention to the particular segment, to its prelude and its end, and also on two climaxes, in it straightway connected with financial and political problems of the contemporary to the author society. Based on the opinion of some theologians about the purposes of the Gospels’ authors (and of Matthew specifically³⁸), I can consider this segment to be a guide to the first Christians in the unsteady political and economic situations of the second half of the first century AD.³⁹ This difficult situation in the Roman empire was a result of the emperors’ madness and court revolutions, when the great empire with large numbers of different nations was ruled by freed slaves, provincial landlords and soldiers leaders, and when non-Italians – just for a brief period – became emperors.

In such a restless situation followers of the Apostles who had never seen Christ wanted to know His opinion about: (1) necessity of paying taxes to maintain the religious and political structures; (2) forgiving debtors; (3) divorce; (4) opportunity to reach people to be followers of a teacher who self did not have any property; (5) historical Hebrew heritage and primogeniture heritage followed from it; (6) religious hierarchy.

Matthew in his answer used the usual method of classic tragedies – the unity of place, time and actions. According to Guthrie (1990:42):

The author’s methodical mind is also seen in the large number of times that he groups together similar sayings of events... Methodical arrangement marks him out from the other gospel writers. It may be that Matthew generally cited three or more instances of a type of saying or event because he was influenced by the Mosaic principle that evidence is established by two or three witnesses. For him the multiplication of examples would be regarded as an authentication of the material incorporated.

Matthew only grouped separated scenes from Jesus’ life in a united act, several scenes of which bit by bit sharpen relations even between positive heroes (Mt. 20: 20-24). Such prerequisite of building an evangelistic message allows one to divide

³⁸ According popular opinion, “...the gospel is in some sense the product of a community or at least written to meet the needs of a specific community” (Guthrie 1990:39).

³⁹ Carson 1982:161: “about AD 85”. But “those who place emphasis on a date about AD 85 should recognise that it is possible that that conjecture is wrong” (Guthrie 1990:56). In my opinion, dating Matthew before AD 70 can explain the position of

the segment Mt. 17: 24-20:29 into six points with a question between points (a) and (b) and with an answer between points (e) and (f). Thus, the segment has the following structure:

a) *Prelude* – a problem of (inner) dues (Mt. 7: 21-27);

Question: “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Mt. 8: 1)

b) *first culmination*: forgiveness of debtors (Mt. 8: 21-35);

c) *Peripeteia*: a problem of divorce;

d) *Peripeteia*: rich followers of Christ;

e) *second culmination*: overthrow of spiritual (pharisaical) hierarchy (Mt. 20:1-16);

Answer: “So the last shall be first, and the first last (Mt. 20: 16)⁴⁰;

f) *A final*: denying religious hierarchy (Mt. 20: 17-28).

It is remarkable that a question “who is greatest” follows right after the scene were very simply (that distinguishes evangelistic plots) an old problem is described that has become the core of existentialism, philosophical teaching of the twentieth century: opposition of *ego* and society. By its essence the whole segment is the anthem of a divine person whose presence in an all-sufficient society (in opinion of society self) creates the conflict of characters when the divine nature is stronger than the human nature for the simple reason that the divinity manifests humility. In the passage of Mt. 17: 24-27 Jesus’ power destroys established from the time of Homer’s epic views upon the idea of force as integral attribute of personality. Humility of force destroys social *status quo*. Ancient readers of the first Gospels who once read biographies of Alexander the Great and *De Bello Gallico* of Julius Caesar, on their own question about who is greater in this world received an answer from a former adjuster of dues – a humble person (cf. Mt. 20: 28)⁴¹.

One more circumstance inside the text makes me to limit the segment exactly with that frame which directly touches upon financial problems. If in the beginning of the segment there is Jesus’ agreement to pay the due (tax for the temple!), that immediately (according to Matthew) provoked the question “who is greater”, then in the end there is an unhidden imperative of submission to the will of Messiah who,

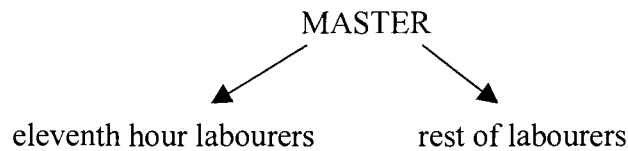
the first Christians in AD 66 who fled to Pella from Jerusalem that should be destroyed according to Jesus’ prophecy.

⁴⁰ Gundry (1994:398): «The final verse of the parable echoes 19:30»

⁴¹ In Homer the theme of humility is presented in embryo: cf. admonition of Achilles by Athena and angry words of Achilles towards Agamemnon in Homer, *Il.* I, 210-214, 292-296.

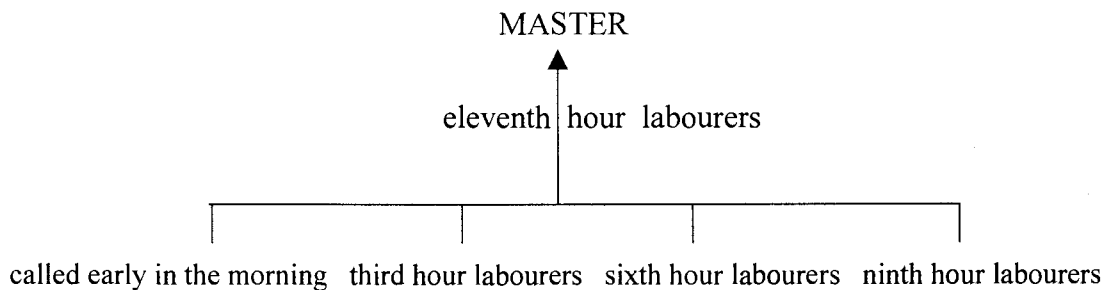
being David's descendant, behaves in a manner suitable to his progenitor in problems of fair collective requital (cf. 1 Sam. 30:20-25).

The structure of the parable about workers in the vineyard in Craig Blomberg's representation divides all employees into two unequal groups – those called near 11 hours and the rest who were called earlier (Blomberg 1990:221). This untraditional division contradicts with the contents of Mt. 20:10.11, if ονε translates ἐλθόντες οἱ πρῶτοι as “those who came first”, i.e. called early in the morning. However, if ονε translates ἐλθόντες οἱ πρῶτοι as “those who came later” or “predecessors” the position of Blomberg has a valid argument. It looks the following way.



In this case each of the four groups composing the category of “the rest of the workers” (i.e. those who were called early in the morning and till ninth hour), sets itself – indirectly, but expressing a murmur to the master himself, – up to the logical opposition to the workers of the eleventh hour.

But I suggest that one must consider the murmur against the rest of the labourers as the murmur against the Master Himself. Here is a scheme as it looks:



All employees who worked in the vineyard more than one hour could express their discontent of equalling the payment of their work and the work of the employees of the last call. Thus, during the short time of scenic action all murmured characters go the way that any nation passes in process of class stratification. Even those who worked two hours more than employees of the last call feel class unity with those who were called early in the morning and separate themselves from those who came last.

Based on the aforesaid, this parable can be considered to be only an opposition of historically more or less existing religious flows in Judaism and new-formed

groups, which have not yet been founded as an independent religious movement (Moses → priests → prophets → the Pharisees... Jesus' disciples). Jesus forestalls further frictions between old and new and maintains the right of new religious education to exist with old flows in the context of general labour. Though Blomberg (1990:223) thinks, that the Pharisees did not see themselves in an image of those who were called earlier, but exactly they, who were proud of their origin from Ezra the scribe and who had never let anyone take the primogenitor away from them in the nation, can be seen in this image. But Jesus has placed in the centre of the conflict the master of the vineyard (i.e. himself) and thereby has shown the Pharisees, who were not the most merciful teachers of a nation, – that there is an important political implication in the parable. According to Brown (1986: 920),

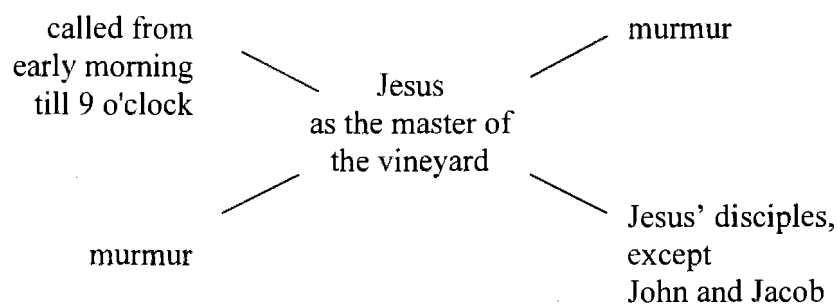
the main point of the parable is not to teach about vocation or that all men are of equal value in God's sight. D. Hill sees it as teaching God's sovereign grace which (in contrast with the grumbling attitude of the Pharisees) welcomes latecomers into the kingdom.

The scheme, which includes a personality of the master of the vineyard but still examines only the opposition of two unequal groups of employees, cannot be completed because of the inactivity of "the master of vineyard", whose good aims led to the appearance of a conflict. Let me notice that Jesus' *kerygma* in the Gospels always has a strong personal beginning,⁴² and this is especially manifested in the Gospel of John in the form of the seven-times-repetitive statement ἐγώ εἰμι. The conclusion "the first shall be last and the last first", that is not based on opinions of any known at that time rabbinical schools (e.g., struggling with each other the Houses of Hillel and Shammai), is very categorical. This allows one to conclude that Jesus (who not long ago appealed several times to representatives of different groups of the society to become His disciples) implies himself to be in the image of the master of the vineyard. That is why the above-mentioned scheme illustrates only one aspect of the parable about employees in the vineyard which responds to one of the questions that appeared in the early church (see above).

Let me return to the principle of "the theatre inside a theatre" mentioned at the beginning, in order to present the parable about workers in the vineyard as an approbation of the author's method on audience. Jesus and the master of the vineyard cannot be separated from one another, like in the literature very often an

author and his character cannot be separated from one another. As a talented actor makes the audience sympathise with the action and draws it into the dialogs of heroes so that it begins to reply for heroes, so Jesus (in Matthew's presentation, as it was already noted above) erases a border between the players and the spectators and converts a scenical intrigue of a parable into a conflict of his own disciples. It is remarkable that the last phrase, near the end of an act, is uttered not as part of a parable (Mt. 20: 16), but as a result of a conflict among disciples (Mt. 20: 25-27). Jesus as an author transferred the finality of drama to the environment of the audience (and even more!) imparted a particular sense to all segments by transferring the centre of attention upon himself (Mt. 20: 28).

Thus, the parable lost its distinctly limited frame of time and place of the action. Hence, the quantity of heroes of a parable can be augmented and can include also Christ's disciples. In a schematic it can be portrayed in the following way.



During all segments of Mt. 17: 24-20: 28 Jesus is presented by the evangelist Matthew as the doubtless authority in deciding halakhic problems, a role normally considered the prerogative of the Pharisees, as can be seen not only from Mt. 23: 2,3, but also according to *Josephus, Ant. XIII, 10, 6* ("the Pharisee have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers") and *XVII, 2, 4* ("for there was a certain sect of men that were Jews, who valued themselves highly upon the exact skill they had in the law of their fathers"). Rabbis described their rights to comment the Torah with next words (Abot 1:1):

Moses received the Torah from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets delivered it to the men of the Great Synagogue. These said three things: be deliberate in judging, and raise up many disciples, and make a hedge for the Torah.

⁴² But Dunn (1977:§3.6) supposes that Jesus did not consider Himself to be the context of his own kerygma.

It makes clear the Pharisees' opposition to the teacher from Galilee who was independent from any rabbinical school.

Even in the scene with the denarius in Mt. 22:15-22 Jesus is shown as a typical rabbi who decides a deadlocked problem of paying dues to invaders; to support the peaceful relationship with Romans was a wise position⁴³ after the anti-Romans alliance of the Pharisee Saddok with Judas the Galilean in AD 6 (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 1; *War* II, 8, 1).⁴⁴ I agree with Barnett (1999:137) who suggested, that:

If he replied 'yes' he was damned with those like Joazar as a pro-Roman quisling, but if he replied 'no' he was damned in the eyes of the Gentile Romans as a later-day Judas the Galilean. By his deft answer Jesus distanced himself from cause of violent revolution.

Moreover, I agree with Barnett's conclusion, "Religious nationalism and violence were not to be the way of the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus" (:137), but for the listeners, especially the religious establishment of Israel, his answer was a rather cautious position of a wise man than the teaching of a coming kingdom.

Mt. 23 provides words of Jesus which leave no doubt about his opposition to the Pharisees as *teachers*: "they love the place of honour at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, but are not to be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. But the greatest among you shall be your servant" (Mt. 23:6-8, 11).⁴⁵

Here, to the utmost the essence of the segment of Mt. 7:24-20:28 with its multiple repeats "so the last will be the first, and the first last" is opened.

⁴³ It is important to note that using a dinar by evangelists (instead of δραχμὴν τῆς ἡμέρας as in Sir. 5:15) like daily payment makes employee's in the vineyard, including the separatists – the Pharisees, Roman hirelings because a dinar had an image of Caesar (Mt. 22:20-21) and was used, e.g. as payment to soldiers (Tacitus, *Ann.* I, 17).

⁴⁴ Cf. εὐραμεν διαστρέφοντα τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν καὶ κωλύοντα φόρους Καίσαρι in Lk. 23:2; it seems that in the Jews's opinion forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar meant perverting the nation.

⁴⁵ "Hummel's thesis is that the church had a valid *halakah* which conflicted with Pharisaism and led to a break with it" (Guthrie 1990:34, n.3).

3. JESUS CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM AND οὐκ ὠφελεῖτε οὐδέν OF THE PHARISEES

3.1. Harmony of the Gospels. Exegesis of a passage

The synopsis and harmony of the Gospels allows one to restore a complete picture of those events that changed the history of humanity. The “whole Gospel” has important significance for examining of Gospel’s events that have been described by *only four* authors. Fortunately for researchers, the Church declared as true only four Gospels from great numbers of witnesses of the Gospel events. “It may be for the simple reason that there are four divisions of that world through the universal length of which they, by their number as by a kind of mystical sign, indicated the advancing extension of the Church of Christ” (Augustine, *Harm.* I, 2, 3). More than that, the traditional determination of authorship “first – Matthew, then Mark, thirdly Luke, lastly John” (Augustine, *Harm.* I, 2, 3) obliges an explorer to compare the data from eyewitnesses self (Matthew and John) with information that was handed down by eyewitnesses through the mediators – Luke (Lk. 1:2) and Mark as hermeneut of Peter (Eusebius, *CH* III, 39, 15). The absence of any qualitative difference in the reports of witnesses and their intermediaries was noted (probably, as an expression of common notion) already at the beginning of IV by Augustine (*Harm.* I, 1, 2):

And to preclude the supposition that, in what concerns the apprehension and proclamation of the gospel, it is a matter of any consequence whether the enunciation comes by men who were actual followers of this same Lord here when He manifested Himself in the flesh and had the company of His disciples attendant on Him, or by persons who with due credit received facts with which they became acquainted in a trustworthy manner through the instrumentality of these former, divine providence, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, has taken care that certain of those also who were nothing more than followers of the first apostles should have authority given them not only to preach the gospel, but also to compose an account of it in writing. I refer to Mark and Luke.

In the exploration of this episode from the life of Jesus Christ I suppose to consider testimonies of all evangelists to be equal and complementing each other. Fortunately for the explorers of this episode, evangelist John (in my opinion) follows the Synoptics⁴⁶ in their aim to describe the earthly life of Jesus; this does not comply

⁴⁶ Follows as a witness, not like re-writer (cf. Eusebius, *HE.* III, 24, 7-8). It «may be understood to mean that John wrote his gospel literarily independent of the synoptics but that he knew them and their tradition(s)» (Dvorak 1998:201). Dunn (1977:§18:4) suggest that John re-made the tradition, rushing to adapt it to his situation.

to the classical definition of the Synoptics and John as authors who followed different purposes.⁴⁷

In the research of the essence of the Jews' opposition to the Messiah of Nazareth by the Pharisees to the ceremonial entry of Jesus to Jerusalem became one of the most important for the understanding of the Pharisees' position between many significant evangelical events (*e.g.*, the service of John the Baptist, cleansing of the Temple, Last Supper and etc.) which were preserved by all evangelists. A comparative analysis of the four Gospels (see Aland 1996:365-368) helps to find some important details not contained in the context of main plots. Presence of these details urges to reduce texts of all evangelists to one trunk. So, for example, in the description of events two of the evangelists – John and Luke – put an accent on the opposition between the Messiah from Nazareth and the Pharisees, which soon led to notorious events. More than that, each of evangelists sometimes made his own accents. Such “Jesus’ *exousia* also manifests itself in the political realm. This is most evident in Luke” (Edwards 1994: 224); Moreover Luke mentions owners, –more exactly *lords* (οἱ κύριοι), of a foal, what, as it will be noted below, has an important meaning as a testimony about the power of Christ in the few days before His arrest.⁴⁸ In Luke’s description, Jesus is praised exactly by His disciples, not a nameless crowd, as according to other evangelists⁴⁹. John dates events (Jn. 12:12: τῆ ἐπαύριον)

⁴⁷ Cf.: «These three evangelists, however, were for the most part engaged with those things which Christ did through the vehicle of the flesh of man, and after the temporal fashion. But John, on the other hand, had in view that true divinity of the Lord in which He is the Father’s equal, and directed his efforts above all to the setting forth of the divine nature in his Gospel...» (Augustine, *Harm.* I, 4, 7); also Eusebius (*CH VI*, 14, 7): «But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel... composed a spiritual Gospel. This is the account of Clement».

⁴⁸ However, if one believes Randall Buth’s statement (1985:685) about idiomatical usage in Lk. 19:33 בעלי (delivered as οἱ κύριοι) in singular, then a foal was taken from one man, not from the group of people, what belittles a bit Jesus’ authority at that moment.

⁴⁹ Witnesses of evangelists here can be divided into three groups: (1) according to Matthew and Mark (where verse numeration is equal) Jesus is welcomed οἱ προάγοντες καὶ οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες; (2) according to Luke – τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν; (3) to John – ὁ ὄχλος πολὺς. These contradictory witnesses prove that the Messiah was welcomed by those who followed Him and also those who met Him (see below the witness of Josephus in *War II*, 13, 5 about resistance of inhabitants of Jerusalem to lying prophet from Egypt). Bultman (1957:319): “Die Quelle kann nicht einer der Synoptiker sein; denn die unterscheidet sich vom synoptischen Bericht dadurch, daß Jesu jubelndes Geleit dort offenbar durch die mit Jesus nach Jerusalem ziehenden

and explains the reason for the peoples' greetings (Jn. 12:18). For Matthew, whose work is saturated with Old Testament quotations, it was important to note that the Teacher responds to criticism of the High Priests and Scribes with quotation from book of Psalms.

Let me reduce a plot of events according to all four testimonies into a table.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus at Olivet mountain sends His disciples to nearest settlement to find a foal	+	+	+	
disciples fulfil instructions	+	+	+	
crowds lay palm branch and/or clothes	+	+	+	+
crowds greet Jesus as a King			+	+
"Hosianna"	+	+		+
"blessed is He Who comes"	+	+	+	+
the reason for greetings (Lazarus resurrection)				+
the Pharisees ask Jesus to reproach the disciples			+	
indignation of High Priests and Scribes	+			
Jesus' answer quoting psalms	+			
the Pharisees establish the absence of any use from the Messiah				+

Thus, having explored these passage, we automatically come to the conclusion about the necessity of harmony of all four Gospels, which will allow one to recreate the more complete picture of that events.

Mk 11:1-4 Καὶ ὅτε ἐγγίζουσιν εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα εἰς Βηθφαγὴ καὶ Βηθανίαν πρὸς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν, ἀποστέλλει δύο τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν κώμην τὴν κατέναντι ὑμῶν, καὶ εὐθὺς εἰσπορευόμενοι εἰς αὐτὴν εὐρήσατε πῶλον δεδεμένον ἐφ' ᾧ οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν· λύσατε αὐτὸν καὶ φέρετε. Καὶ ἐάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ, Τί ποιεῖτε τοῦτο; εἶπατε, Ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρειᾶν ἔχει, καὶ εὐθὺς αὐτὸν ἀποστέλλει πάλιν ὧδε. Καὶ ἀπῆλθον καὶ εὗρον πῶλον δεδεμένον πρὸς θύραν ἔξω ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀμφοδίου καὶ λύουσιν αὐτόν. *Mat. 21:4-5* Τοῦτο δὲ γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, Εἶπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών· Ἴδου ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται σοι πραῦς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκῶς ἐπὶ ὄνον καὶ ἐπὶ πῶλον υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου. *Lk. 19:33* λυόντων δὲ αὐτῶν τὸν πῶλον εἶπαν οἱ κύριοι αὐτοῦ πρὸς αὐτούς, Τί λύετε τὸν πῶλον; *Mk 11:6-7* οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτοῖς καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἀφήκαν αὐτούς. Καὶ φέρουσιν τὸν πῶλον πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἐπιβάλλουσιν αὐτῷ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπ' αὐτόν

Anhänger gebildet wird, hier dagegen durch die aus Jerusalem entgegenkommende Menge".

^{Jn.12:14-16}καθώς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον, Μὴ φοβοῦ, θυγάτηρ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται, καθήμενος ἐπὶ πῶλον ὄνου. Ταῦτα οὐκ ἔγνωσαν αὐτοῦ οἱ μαθηταὶ τὸ πρῶτον, ἀλλ' ὅτε ἐδοξάσθη Ἰησοῦς τότε ἐμνήσθησαν ὅτι ταῦτα ἦν ἐπ' αὐτῷ γεγραμμένα καὶ ταῦτα ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ. ^{Mk.11:8}Καὶ πολλοὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἔστρωσαν εἰς τὴν ὁδόν, ἄλλοι δὲ Στιβάδας κόψαντες ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν. ^{Lk.19:37-38}Ἐγγίζοντος δὲ Αὐτοῦ ἤδη πρὸς τὴν καταβάσει τοῦ Ὄρους τῶν Ἐλαιῶν ἤρξαντο ἅπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν χαίροντες αἰνεῖν τὸν θεὸν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ περὶ πασῶν ὧν εἶδον δυνάμεων, λέγοντες, Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου· ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰρήνη καὶ δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις. ^{Matt.21:9-11}Οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι οἱ προάγοντες αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἔκραζον λέγοντες, Ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυὶδ· Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου· Ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις, Καὶ εἰσελθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐσεῖσθη πᾶσα ἡ πόλις λέγουσα, Τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος; οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι ἔλεγον, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ προφήτης Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀπὸ Ναζαρεθ τῆς Γαλιλαίας. ^{Jn.12:17-18}Ἐμαρτύρει οὖν ὁ ὄχλος ὁ ὢν μετ' αὐτοῦ ὅτε τὸν Λάζαρον ἐφώνησεν ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου καὶ ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. Διὰ τοῦτο [καὶ] ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος, ὅτι ἤκουσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποικέναι τὸ σημεῖον. ^{Lk.19:39-40}Καὶ τινες τῶν Φαρισαίων ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου εἶπαν πρὸς αὐτόν, Διδάσκαλε, ἐπιτίμησον τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου. Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, Λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν οὗτοι σιωπήσουσιν, οἱ λίθοι κρᾶξουσιν. ^{Matt.21:15-16}Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τὰ θαυμάσια ἃ ἐποίησεν καὶ τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς κρᾶζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ λέγοντας, Ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυὶδ, ἠγανάκτησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ἀκούεις τί οὗτοι λέγουσιν; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ναί, οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωντε ὅτι Ἐκ στόματος νηπίων καὶ θηλαζόντων κατηρτίσω αἶνον; ^{Jn.12:19}οἱ οὖν Φαρισαῖοι εἶπαν πρὸς ἑαυτούς, Θεωρεῖτε ὅτι οὐκ ὠφελεῖτε οὐδέν· ἴδε ὁ κόσμος ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ ἀπῆλθεν.

^{Mk.11:1-4}And when they draw near to Jerusalem to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of the Olives, he sends two disciples of his and tells them, "You go into the village opposite you, and immediately entering into it you will find a colt tied on which no one of men not yet sat; loosen it and bring. And if

⁵⁰ Or gentle, humble – from Greek. πραῦς.

⁵¹ Possible translation – «mounted». But cf. using the verb ἐπιβαίνω in Acts 21:4.

⁵² Greek ἐπιτιμάω in translations of New Testament is used as a prohibition, for example, concerning demons (Lk. 4: 41), sickness (Lk. 4:39) or nature (Mt. 8:26), and also as a blame for people (Lk. 23:40 и 2 Tim. 4:2) – see also Mt. 16:22, where Peter reproached (ἐπιτιμᾶν) Jesus with a purpose to dissuade the Teacher from the crucifixion.

⁵³ Other possible translations οὖν: therefore, accordingly, consequently.

⁵⁴ From Greek verb ὠφελέω – help, aid, benefit, be of use (here is understood useless of such Messiah for the Pharisees). From the whole semantic field of the word ὠφελεία the most used in the New Testament is the meaning «use» (Mt. 27:24; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 2:25; 1 Cor. 14:6; Gal. 5:2; Hbr. 4:2; 13:9 etc.). In Septuagint we see a similar usage of this verb – see, e.g. Job 35:3; Is. 30:5; 47:12; Jer. 2:11; 7:8; Sir. 34:25; Wis. 6:27; 2 Macc. 12:11 etc. This one and close to its meanings in the New Testament see Louw & Nida 1989:§§ 35.2 (to help), 65.41 (advantage, benefit), 68.33 (to accomplish, to do); «The LXX translates gain, advantage by *opheleia*» (Siede 1986:137). In classic Greek-Roman literature we see these meanings (especially when describing war events) and others (with a shadow of serving) (Liddell & Scott 1996:2041-2042).

anyone says to you, “Why are you doing this?” You say, “The Lord of it has need, and immediately he will send it again here”. And they went and found a colt tied at a door outside on the street, and they loosen it. ^{Mt.21:4-5} Now this happened that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “tell you the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold King of thee is coming to thee merciful⁵⁰ and cometh⁵¹ upon a donkey and on a colt, a foal of a beast of burden’.” ^{Lk.19:33} And as they were loosing the colt, owners of it said to them, “Why are you loosing the colt?” ^{Mk.11:6-7} They said to them as Jesus said; and they let them go. And they bring the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it. ^{Jn.12:14b-16} as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King comes sitting on a donkey’s colt. These things His disciples did not understand at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this was written of Him and they did this to him. ^{Mk.11:8} And many spread their garments in the way, and others spread wisps of twigs, cutting out of the fields. ^{Lk.19:37-38} And as he was approaching now, to the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with the loud voice for all which they saw powerful deeds, saying, “Blessed is the coming King in the name of the Lord; in heaven peace and glory in the highest”. ^{Mt.21:9} The crowds going before him and the following after were crying out, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is the coming to the name of the Lord; ^{Mk.11:10} Blessed *is* the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest! ^{Mt.21:10-11} And when He had entered to Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?”. The crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee”. ^{Jn.12:17-18} Therefore the crowd being with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead. For this cause the crowd met Him, because they heard that He has done the sign. ^{Lk.19:39-40} And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke⁵² disciples of thee”. And he said, answering, “I tell you, if these shall be silent, the stones will cry out”. ^{Mt.21:15-16} The chief priests and the scribes, having seen the wonderful things that he had done, and the children, having crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David”, were incensed and said to him: “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus says to them, “Of course; never did you read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou didst prepare praise?’”. ^{Jn.12:19} So,⁵³ the Pharisees said to one another, “Behold, you profit not anything.⁵⁴ Look, the world has gone after him”.

This short passage contains some important details an exegetical analysis of which will help to understand better the complexity of gospel events and to more distinctly delineate the opposition of Jerusalem’s leaders to the Messiah from Nazareth. First of all it is necessary to return back in time and to note the reaction of witnesses about Lazarus’ resurrection. According to Jn. 11:45-46, “many from Jews” who saw the miracle of resurrection believed; then “some of them”⁵⁵ informed the Pharisees about what happened. Thus, the role of the Pharisees converts from a

⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the author of the Gospel does not identify the group described by the word “some”. Were they only the followers of Christ or the Jews as such? In the first case messengers one more time tried to testify the carpenter from Nazareth as

collateral to a main one – from this moment (forthcoming final of a drama) they come forward not like simple observers, but like acting persons.

Now let me trace a causative-investigation connection in our passage.

He personally made a sign,

for this cause

- the crowd met Him
- some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke disciples of thee”
- and he said, answering, “I tell you, if these shall be silent, the stones will cry out”
- the Pharisees said to each other, “Behold, you profit not anything. Look, the word has gone after him”.

Another possible version of a causative-investigation connection looks like the chain of interrelated actions, where one action coming out of previous ones, creates the necessity for the following one.

He personally made the sign → the crowd met Him → some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke disciples of thee” → and He said, answering, “I tell you, if these shall be silent, the stones will cry out” → the Pharisees said to each other, “Behold, you profit not anything. Look, the word has gone after him”.

So, in each scheme for the analysis of Jesus’ actions, of the crowd and of the Pharisees Lazarus resurrection⁵⁶ becomes the key moment which can be characterised with words “for this cause” (διὰ τοῦτο), though in a second scheme it sooner serves as a starting point for the following chain of actions. The miracle of Lazarus’ resurrection was the reason of following one: (1) the crowd met Jesus; (2) the Pharisees were envious of Jesus’ fame and tried to stop the proclamation; (3) Jesus replied that stones will shout about His glory; (4) the Pharisees noticed the absence of any use⁵⁷.

real Messiah (cf. Jn. 7:26), in the second – to warn the Pharisees about the success of Jesus, uncontrolled by them.

⁵⁶ For explorers this event as *a sign* becomes a stumbling block according to Mt. 12:39; Lk. 11:29, and even to Mk. 8:12. Probably, Lazarus resurrection (together with resurrection of Jesus himself) is considered to be examined as the «sign of Jonah».

⁵⁷ Still, the last point can have some meaning in an exegesis only of the Fourth Gospel. The synopsis of Gospels shows one more reason of disappointment of the Pharisees – Jesus’ unwillingness to rebuke his disciples (Lk. 19:40).

3.2. The analysis of the text and context. Historical-political realities

An adequate assessment of the Son of David's entry into Jerusalem needs a historic excursus, that can help to make clear the strong rejection of the Messiah from Nazareth by the Pharisees.

It is important to take notice of the direction which the crowd under the leadership of Jesus and his disciples took when moving into Jerusalem. The Synoptics unanimously mention that Jesus gave necessary forewarnings about his entry into Jerusalem when he was with the disciples near the mountain of Olives⁵⁸. This mountain had an important military significance, repeatedly mentioned in our sources. Josephus (*War* V, 3, 4) mentions that during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus the well-known X legion disposed there. Even earlier and for the same military purposes it had been used by

an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; For he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; These he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; And if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his that were to break into the city with him, but Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with the Romans soldiers, while all the people assisted him in this attack upon them... (Josephus, *War* II, 13, 5; cf. brief remark in Acts 21: 38).

During the siege by Titus Jews tried to break forth from the blockade ring exactly in the district of the Mount of Olives (Josephus, *War* VI, 2, 8); and once the same route was used by David when he escaped from Jerusalem from the advancing troops of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:30).

Thus, the crowd with the leader Jesus and his disciples took the same route which could be used in an attack on the Golden Gate (the nearest to the Temple) by any armed group, and occupied the foothold of the Mount of Olives on the east side of the city.⁵⁹

The fact that all Synoptics do not have plot pauses between the entry to the city and the visit to the Temple, most likely testifies to the purposeful motion of Jesus.

⁵⁸ It is remarkable that Jesus, preaching at the Temple at daytime, at night went to the Mount of Olives (Lk. 21:37) – the place where once his forefather David “worshiped God” (2 Sam. 15:32).

⁵⁹ Cf. mention of the messianic expectations of disciples (Act. 1:6), that were said exactly on this mountain (Act. 1:12).

His route also could have a particular significance for the witnesses of events, also for readers of Gospels. The Temple “was built upon a strong hill” (Josephus, *War* V, 5, 1) and “was a fortress that guarded the city” (Josephus, *War* V, 5, 8), and its towers were “made very great resistance, and were indeed extraordinary both for largeness and magnificence” (Josephus, *War* I, 7, 3). Exactly the Temple served as the last bulwark for defending Jews in the times of the sieges of the city by Pompey the Great and Titus. Before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD the groups of Judaism fighting among themselves started a hard struggle for power in the Temple. Really the control of the Temple meant the control of the whole city in military and religious aspects. That is why Jesus, who made His way from the Mount of Olives to the Temple (whence he, according to Jn. 2:13 ff., once banished the dealers and salesmen), could be seen by the triumphant crowd as a popular member of the opposition to the religious establishment of Israel.

This can be proved by the actions of a crowd who did not hide its approval. That the Evangelists mention that clothes and branches were laid on the road is also not accidental, because (despite the fact that Luke refers only to clothes and John only to branches) clothes and branches of trees were in ancient times laid on the earth in particularly solemn cases. So, on the occasion of anointing of Jehu to be the king of Israel, his brothers-in-arms “each man took his garment, and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, and said: ‘Jehu is king!’” (2 Ki. 9: 13; cf. Josephus, *War* IX, 6, 2). And after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (164 BC) the Jews purified the Temple

...and so they carried garlanded wands and branches with their fruits, as well as palm fronds, and they chanted hymns to the One who had so triumphantly achieved the purification of his own temple. A measure was passed by the public assembly to the effect that the entire Jewish race should keep these days every year” (2 Macc. 10: 7-8).

After the fall of Jerusalem’s fortress in June 141 BC Simon Maccabee “made his entry, with a chorus of praise and the waving of palm branches, with lutes, cymbals, and zithers, with hymns and songs, to celebrate Israel’s final riddance of a formidable enemy. Simon decreed that this day should be observed as an annual festival” (1 Macc. 13:51-52). Persians responded to a message about taking Athens by Xerxes by “strewing by myrtle branches all the streets of the city, to burn incense, made sacrifices and assigned feasts” (Herodotus, VIII, 99). In the march of the army of Xerxes to Europe through the Hellespont channel, Persians “covered the way with

myrtle branches” (Herodotus, VII, 54). According to Laney (1992:224), “in time, the palm became a symbol of Jewish nationalism and victory”⁶⁰. F. F. Bruce (1994: 259) considers that “palm-branches may have signified the ’peoples expectation of imminent national liberation, and this is supported by the words with which they greeted our Lord” (also Carson 1991:432). Showing such honour to Jesus from Nazareth was an obvious challenge to Jerusalem’s leaders from the side of *am haares*, “people of earth”, whose numbers on holidays reached impressive sizes⁶¹.

Exactly the size and fanaticism of a crowd, gathered in Jerusalem for the celebrations, caused Romans to strengthen measures of security “for they always were armed and kept guard at the festivals, to prevent any innovation which the multitude thus gathered together might make” (Josephus, *War* II, 12, 1). Jealousy (Zealotizm) frequently motivated the Jews to conflicts which then were suppressed by force: so, procurator Pontius Pilate used the soldiers to suppress fanatics (Josephus, *War* II, 9, 3-4). There was no doubt that a noisy entry of the Galilean prophet into Jerusalem on Passover eve should at last determine the balance of political forces and to give an answer to the question of the Jews about the messianic identity of Jesus (Jn. 10:24). Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem took place after the miraculous feeding of 5.000 men and Lazarus’ resurrection, and Jewish fanatics, who were waiting for the reestablishment of Israel’s kingdom (cf. Lk. 24:21; Acts 1:6) took these signs as evidence of invincibility of Jewish army: soldiers would not be hungry nor would they die⁶². In Jerusalem the appearance of Jesus was awaited with

⁶⁰ He also writes (Laney 1992:224, n. 6): «Palm trees ornamented Roman coins celebrating the demise of Jewish independence with Titus’s capture of Jerusalem in AD 70. Jewish coins minted during the Second Jewish revolt (AD 132-35) also featured palm trees» (also Bruce 1994:259 and Carson 1991:432).

⁶¹ «Jeremias [Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus 1969:82-84] estimates that the population of Jerusalem swelled from 55.000 to 180.000 during Passover» (Laney 1992:224). According to Josephus (*War* VI, 9, 3), in Jerusalem on Passover by a census, which took time in Nero’s government there were «two hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy». J. Lightfoot, who tells the Talmudic story about so-called Crowded Passover (Echah Rabba 1, 2), considers that «it is true, indeed, that the multitude of those that celebrated the Passover at every feast could hardly be numbered, it was so great» (Lightfoot 1997:III, 378). Generally any calculation has a conditional character because «numbers are a weak side of tradition» (Kovelman 1996:44).

⁶² The appeal of Jesus voiced in the Sermon on the Mount to not worry about material things while searching for the kingdom could be perceived as a promise of a pretender for the kingdom to care for his adherents (cf. expressed in 2 Tim. 2:4 well-known conception using a hired army frequent practice of the time). The constant misunderstandings of the Teacher, even from the side of disciples, takes preaching God’s Kingdom to appeals to restoration of David’s kingdom (or Herod’s): cf., e.g.,

anxiety (Jn. 11:56): some wished to see the Galilean miracle-worker (Jn. 12:18), others planned to arrest him and thereby avoid Roman occupation (Jn. 11: 48).

In the description of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem two evangelists – Luke and John – not only mention the Pharisees, but also show them as active persons. It seems that the whole scene was written as an explanation for the final decision of Jerusalem’s leaders to get rid of the uncontrollable Messiah from Galilee. And if in Luke (who was a colleague and, maybe, disciple of a former Pharisee Saul) the Pharisees appealed to Jesus as to a teacher and asked him only to reproach (ἐπιτίμησον) his disciples, then in John, the author of the anti-Jewish Gospel, they openly acknowledged a complete absence to them of any profit (οὐκ ὠφελείτε οὐδέν) from this Messiah.

John’s narrative, that throughout has marks of Pharisaic activity, contains an insertion in the scene of entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. This insertion is included between the words of the leaders of the Sanhedrin “if we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him” and “look, the world has gone after him”.⁶³ Thereby, the description of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem serves the specific verifying of correctness of High Priests and the Pharisees. Moreover, the salutations by the religious crowd (not only by his disciples!), gathered for the main Jewish celebration (the celebration of freedom from slavery), acknowledged the aptitude of fear of High Priests and the Pharisees as members of Sanhedrin before reciprocal actions of Roman authorities (Jn. 11: 47-48). Undoubtedly, the crowd’s reaction to Jesus’ entry “made him politically dangerous” (Ladd 1993:182). It was necessary for the Sanhedrin to make a choice in favour of struggle for the complete exemption of Israel or for political autonomy under Roman power.

ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ in Mt. 6:33; adding τῶν οὐρανῶν or τοῦ θεοῦ are contained only in part of the Greek manuscripts, what could testify about attempt of copyists to interpret the true meaning of Christ’s words. Now one hardly may conclude whether Jesus’ vocabulary was formed by OT or rabbis’ terminology: «It is a curious fact that the expression “Kingdom of God” does not occur in the OT. The reality, however, is affirmed in various ways throughout its length, above all in its assertions of the Sovereignty of God» (Beasley-Murray 1992:19). Although, according to Geza Vermes (1984:35), “...the Bible’s concept of the nations’ acknowledgement of God’s rule coincides with rabbinic thought...”, rabbis, used same term מְלִכּוּת מְבִיָּוָה (coming world), could not say “my kingdom” (Jn. 18:36: ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ).

⁶³ This can be best noted with the help of synopsis of Gospels: the Fourth Gospel has missed a secondary in John’s mind event about searching a foal for the Messiah – see Aland 1996:365-366.

In favour of supposition that during the pre-70 AD Roman protectorate the civil-temple community had large autonomy witnesses another source of the same period with the Gospel of John (if this Gospel was written after AD 90). According to Josephus (*War* VI, 6, 2), Titus in his denunciatory speech to the rebels in the Temple reproached Jewish fanatics the abuse of Romans' philanthropy and described the Israel's autonomy in the following words:

Who, in the first place, have given you this land to possess; And, in the next place, have set over you kings of your own nation; And, in the third place, have preserved the laws of your fore fathers to you, and withal permitted you to live, either by yourselves or among others, as it should please you? And what is our chief favour of all, we have given you leave to gather up that tribute which is paid to God, with such other gifts that are dedicated to him; nor have we called those that carried these donations to account, nor prohibited them; till at length you became richer than we ourselves..."

So, the Sanhedrin had something to lose; the question is only whether the activity of the loyal followers of the Prophet from the Galilee⁶⁴ could provoke Romans to a military expedition. Ladd (1993: 137) considers

...that Jesus' ministry appeared to involve a messianic element with political implications is apparent from the fear of the Pharisees and the priests that his popularity would stir up a movement of such a character that the Romans would interpret it as rebellion and would intervene to crush both the movement and the Jewish nation (Jn. 11: 47-48).

Judging by communications of Josephus, the military interference of procurators of Judea or deputies of Syria province arose generally because of two reasons: (1) in cases of direct danger for the existing order from the side of the larger crowds of fanatics; (2) as a consequence to adventurous actions of the representatives of Rome who disturbed religious traditions of Jews or who encroached on temple money. It is difficult to imagine that Pontius Pilate, who during three years did not react to the activity of a Prophet from Nazareth, could be worried about the demonstration of disciples of Jesus and other Jews, even despite any big noise accompanying this demonstration. On the opinion of D. A. Carson (1991:435),

...doubtless the scene was fraught with potential explosiveness. Jesus could have begun an armed revolt then and there. The Pharisees observe the crowds

⁶⁴ Cf. Mt. 22:15-22; Mk. 12:13-17; Lk. 20:19-26. It is remarkable that the episode of test with Caesar's tax is placed by all synoptic right after triumphal entry of David's Son to occupied Jerusalem.

and are greatly disquieted. Less accommodating to the Roman overlords than the Sadducees, they nevertheless thought that the path of wisdom was to endure the occupation, and chafe under their perception of Jesus' rising popularity.

Though the pre-Passover situation in Jerusalem was really dangerously explosive, "the Pharisees qualms were groundless: Jesus had no intention of doing what they feared he would" (Bruce 1994: 262). Incidentally, the time had come, and the fears of leaders of Sanhedrin for the security of the city and the Temple were justified, however, absolutely in a different way. "By the time this Gospel was written, the catastrophe which they dreaded had taken place, but not because of the presence and activity of Jesus" (Bruce 1994: 250). Jesus who banished *a legion* of demons into pigs and who called to take the cross and to follow him⁶⁵, finally didn't lead Hebrews to the storm of the fortress of Anthony.

In this aspect the Pharisees' appeal to the teacher should be considered. If only the disciples had praised Jesus as King (Lk. 19:38)⁶⁶ then the attempt of the Pharisees to bridle superfluous fanaticism of disciples becomes clear for the existing political situation. It is difficult to determine identically the position of the Pharisees who previously have shown the examples of political loyalty to authorities and of irreconcilable opposition which sometimes led to military conflicts. According to the testimony of John (who, possibly, did not set before himself the purpose to disclose the essence of political fuss about a prophet from Nazareth at all), the Pharisees entered into a duumvirate with the Sadducees for opposition to the Messiah from Galilee. Since the "Sadducean establishment thought... the path of wisdom lay in co-operation with the occupying power" (Bruce 1994: 262), in such alliance of two competitive sects it is possible to see the fear of the Sanhedrin' leaders about losing

⁶⁵ Execution through crucifixion (meaning hanging on a tree because in classical Ancient-Greek literature *σταυρός* is frequently used in significance stake) was spread in Mediterranean countries for several centuries before Gospel events. Darius (middle of the fifth century BC), the Persian king who ordered to rebuild the Temple, "issued a decree that any man who violates this edict, a timber shall be drawn from his house and he shall be impaled on it" (Ezra 6:11). Alexander the Great crucified a doctor after the death of his friend (Plutarchus, *Alex.* 23). Carthaginians during the First Carthaginian war (mid III in. BC) executed rebels in this way (Polybius, I, 86, 4). So an appeal to take a cross and to follow the Messiah made Jesus a new Maccabeus. According to Ladd (1994:202), "A cross is not a burden; it is an instrument of death. To take up one's cross means to be willing to go as Jesus went to a martyr's death".

⁶⁶ However, Jn. 12: 15-16 may be an evidence for the fact that Jesus was greeted as King by the crowd, and his disciples only unconsciously echoed them.

their political autonomy after virtual proclamation by the crowd of Jesus from Galilee to be a king of Israel.

Besides this, certainly, there was one more reason – the fear for their own authority among *am haares*; this reason is implicitly witnessed by Matthew’s and Mark’s mentions of envy as the stimulus of treachery (Mt. 27: 18; Mk. 15: 10)⁶⁷. Primarily, from the scandal on a feast at John Hyrcanus (Josephus. *Ant.* XIII, 10, 5), the Pharisees struggled with the Sadducees for political leadership, and with the waiting for the Messiah Essenes for the authority of theologians; finally they showed their complete disillusionment in the prophet from Nazareth. The Pharisees even warned Jesus about a danger from Herod Antipas (Lk. 13:31), but he did not cooperate with them. Moreover, he did not search for any possibilities to please them, but, more than that, being a man, he made himself God (Jn. 10:33), that was completely unacceptable for Israel’s teachers. Here it is very timely to cite Plato’s remark (*Phdr.* 253b) about one of religious traditions in Ancient Greece:

⁶⁷ In Greek-Roman culture a problem of envy frequently is found in the writings of philosophers and historians long before Gospel events. Plato (427-347) considered that envy, at par with wrath, fear, melancholy, sorrow, love and hate, is an illness of the soul (Plato, *Phlox.* 47e). According to the opinion of Aristotle’s (384-322), “[Envious] appear to be people, especially respected for something, principally for wisdom or luck. And ambitious people are more envious, than non-ambitious people are. And imaginary wisemen [are also envious], because their ambition has as its object wisdom” (Aristoteles, *Rh.* X). According to Herodotus (485-ca. 425), a brother of Persian king Xerxes assured a monarch that envy is the way that is “dear to the hearts of all Greeks: they are jealous of success and they hate power” (Herodotus, *Hist.* VII, 236). Jesus’ actions and negative attitude to “blind Pharisees” (Mt. 23:26) contradicts with the sense of maxim that Xenophon (ca. 430-ca. 355) has put into Persian king Cyrus’ mouth: “I suppose that people who are expected to be true adjuvants in any business, can be sooner attracted to you by kind words and benefactions, than bringing them nuisances and applying violence. What about these who are expected to be our brave adherents in war, that they are more, as I think, to be attracted to you by kind words and deals. People whom we expect to obey us absolutely, must become not my enemies, but our friends, – those who will not become envious of us in a case of success and will not betray in hardships” (Xenophon, *HG.* II, 4, 10). In New Testament envy is frequently mentioned in the messages of Apostle Paul (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21, 26; Phil.1:15, 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:3) who considered envy to be the result of perverse intellect (Rom. 1: 28, 29). Envy in the meaning of jealousy is ascribed also to God (Ja. 4: 5). Aristotle’s (*Metaph.* I, 2, 982b30-983a3) disproved the opinion of poets that “envy is in the deity’s nature”. Documents of Hellenistic Judaism report that “it was the devil’s spite that brought death into the world, and the experience of it is reserved for those who take his side” and that “the spiteful man will have no share in wisdom” (Wis. 2: 24; 6: 25), and about system of Roman power – “all obeying this one man without envy or jealousy among themselves” (1 Macc. 8:16).

...and likewise the followers of Apollo, and of each of the gods, go out and seek for their beloved a youth whose nature accords with that of the god, and when they have gained his affection, by imitating the god, so far as each of them can do so; They exhibit no jealousy or manners toward the loved one, but endeavour by every means in their power to lead him to the likeness of the god whom they honour.

The fact that Jesus for some time preached in synagogues controlled by the Pharisees (cf. Jn. 12:42), testifies to the propensity towards him of religious leaders of Israel who probably had far-ranging plans regarding the new Messiah⁶⁸. Probably, Israel's religious leaders and political opposition⁶⁹ remained close to each other little by little losing their primary interest to the Messiah, during three years of his ministry has not changed existing *status quo*. After that, when a prophet from Galilee at the head of a large and fanatic crowds entered Jerusalem and purified not the city from Romans, but the Temple from Jews themselves, the Pharisees finally refused to use Jesus for their own purposes⁷⁰. Among common people Jesus still had large reputation – so much larger that masters of a foal allowed his disciples to use their animal. According to Ladd (1993: 262), such authority stands witnesses to the phrase of the Pharisees “the world follows Him” in Jn. 12:19.⁷¹

3.3. Plot canvas. Relations with the Pharisees

As has already been mentioned above, some of the Pharisees tried to warn the prophet of Nazareth about the danger of death from Herod Antipas (Lk. 13:31) who had previously executed John the Baptist, Jesus' relative. This tetrarch was in

⁶⁸ Cf. repeated references by Luke of invitations to meals from the Pharisees: Lk. 7:36; 11:37; 14:1. Luke as an associate of a former Pharisee Saul obviously was attracted to Pharisees. According to Luke's plot, after the warning about imminent danger from Herod Jesus went to the house of one Pharisee leader (Lk. 14:1). However “Mark almost always has Jesus teaching outside the synagogue (2:13; 4:1-2; 6:6, 34; 8:31; 9:31; 10:1; 11:7; 12:35; 14:49 – the sole exception: 6:2)” (Gundry 1992:79).

⁶⁹ See mentioning in Mk. 3:6 and Mt. 22:16 the union of the Pharisees and the Herodians against Jesus and equalization of Pharisees' mold and Herod's mold in Mk. 8:15. The Herodians, probably, were adherents of reconstruction of Jewish autonomy of even independence under a king in limits of the kingdom of Herod the Great. Some explorers (C. Daniel, Y. Yadin) tried to identify Herodians which are not mentioned in the New Testament Essenes: see Tantlevskij 1994:31, 177-178.

⁷⁰ The role of the Pharisees in a judgement of Jesus still remains unclear in synoptic Gospels (Flusser 1999:74).

⁷¹ Greek verb ὀπίσω is generally used (Mt. 4:19; Mk. 1:17, 20; Lk. 9:23 etc.) to describe complete following of someone, especially a teacher (Bauder 1986:493). So the Pharisees (according to the Fourth Gospel) establish Jesus' authority as a teacher.

perplexity (or difficulty: διηπόρει), because of rumours about Jesus and looked for the opportunity to meet Him (Lk. 9:7-9). As a man who was in the last moment denied a Jewish kingdom by his own father, Antipas incited by Herodias' wife, did not give up hoping to receive his lost king's title, and this quest eventually killed him⁷². Feeling cheated by and envious of his brother Herod Agrippa, who was raised by Caligula from complete misery, Antipas plunged into political intrigues and became cautious. Carrying out an order in his tetrarch areas (Galilee and Perea),

Herod undoubtedly wishes to remove any source of agitation. While this looks like a friendly attempt to help Jesus (Fitzmyer 1985: 1030), it might be an expedient way to get Jesus out of the region without resorting to violence (Marshall 1978: 570-71)" (Bock 1996:1246).

It is not excluded that between the procurator of Judea and the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea there was some friction, but the obvious reasons of it are not fixed by historians or evangelists. According to Philo (*Leg. ad Gaium* 38), Herod Antipas considered that procurator Pontius Pilate acted "not as much as for Tyberius, but for grief of nation ... for he was harsh by nature, self-confident and inexorable". The massacre of Galileans (Lk. 13:1) verifies Herod's words and probably was the reason for a struggle between the procurator of Judea and the tetrarch of Galilee. Only some years after the appointment of Pilate as procurator of Judea which took place in AD 26, did the two rulers cease their antagonism between them (Lk. 23:12)⁷³.

It is quite probable that concerning the prophet from Galilee the tetrarch had a plan that had been left unknown and wished to elicit benefit from the popularity of his subject in *am haares*⁷⁴. However, Jesus himself did not try to see Antipas.

⁷² On a judge of Caligula Herod Antipas was blamed as a member of conspiracy of Sejanus in time of Tiberius and a conspiracy against Caligula – in support it was mentioned that in tetrarch's arsenal there were enough arms for 70.000 warriors (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 7, 2).

⁷³ On the opinion of Bock (1996:1821), reconciliation took place after changing state policy of Rome in attitude to Jews. In AD 31 Sejanus who hated Jews (Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium* 24), was on Tiberius' order smothered in a prison, after which time Pilate had no need to please a head of the praetorian guards and actual owners of the empire.

⁷⁴ For our research it will be interesting to quote an idea expressed four centuries before the gospel events: "...to be 'just' means serving the interest of the stronger who rules, at the cost of the subject who obeys; whereas injustice is just the reverse, asserting its authority over those innocents who are called just, so that they minister solely to their master's advantage and happiness, and not in the least degree to their own" (Plato, *Rep.* I, 343c).

Moreover, by the phrase “you will not see Me” (Lk. 13:35)⁷⁵ he declared a complete breakaway from any extracurricular activity⁷⁶. However this breakaway had a temporary and provisory character. In Luke’s presentation of the events Jesus prolonged his social activity. Most likely, he broke official relations with *leaders* of the Pharisees and passed on from preaching the Kingdom of heaven to exposing the religious heads of Israel.

According to testimony of the evangelists, Jesus frequently debated with the Pharisees on questions of ritual purity and his own messianic authority. As was mentioned at the beginning, this exploration uses texts, most of which belong to authors with different religious convictions. So, rabbi Joseph Telushkin (1997: 104) writes

“New Testament” invariably describes the Pharisees as narrow-minded religious hypocrites. As a result the word “Pharisee” became in many languages the synonym of “hypocrite”. Really the greatest teachers of Talmud Judaism – such as Hillel, rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Akiba – were the Pharisees.⁷⁷

Weinberg (2000:117) shares this view and continues:

Ancient Pharisees were not “Pharisees”, but men with clear religious and political views and goals; their essence was the striving to make strong Judaism with way of adaptation it to changed conditions of life, and such way to give it more effectiveness as a basic of national-cultural identity of Jewish nation.

Many authors (Martin Buber, rabbi Joseph Telushkin, Hyam Maccoby, Jacob Neusner, Albert Baumgarten etc.) suggest that Jesus belonged to the Pharisees or Pharisees’ doctrines had some influence on him.⁷⁸ That first Christians were close to the Pharisees is noted in Acts 15:5 and probably in the apologetic speech of Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39), Hillel’s grandson. The influence of the Pharisees especially was reflected on the activity of the most prolific author of New Testament who changed the initial sense of text without changing the form of it (Dunn 1997:§23.1), – Apostle Paul, who is rather fairly called a creator of Christian circumlocution. Evangelists

⁷⁵ According to Matthew, however, Jesus says these words after his entry into Jerusalem (Mt. 23:39).

⁷⁶ Cf. Abot 2:3, where rabban Hamaliel ben Judah warns against co-operating with leaders who only use people for their own needs.

⁷⁷ But Flusser (1999:69) rightly notes that only historian Josephus and Apostle Paul called themselves the Pharisees.

⁷⁸ Flusser disagrees with this point of view (1999:71-72).

themselves frequently mention the positive attitude of the Pharisees to Jesus such as: benevolence of Nicodimus the chief, and the curiosity of wealthy Pharisees who invite the teacher from Galilee to dinner in their homes (Lk. 7:36; 11:37).

Unfortunately, rabbi Joseph Telushkin and Joel Weinberg in their criticism of the Gospel's approach to the Pharisees' image did not pay attention to all these facts, as well as to divisions among Jews (Jn. 7:12; 9:16; 10:19) which occurred between schools of Judaism in the first century BC. "Schlatter observes that such a division would correspond to the known tendencies of the schools of Hillel and of Shammai respectively" (Dodd 1965:80). Perhaps, we can maintain that Jesus for a long time (till the events described in Mt. 23) did not break relations with the Pharisees and, according to Flusser (1999:71-72) criticised them in softer terms than did the Essenes.

Bringing together several places from different Gospels (generally from the Gospels of Luke and John) shows the increase of tension between the Pharisees and the Messiah. Their relationship (based on harmony of the Gospels) looks like a scenic dialog and can be seen more clearly in the following scheme:

- Phar. A prevention about deadly danger (Lk. 13:31) and invitation to Pharisee's house (Lk. 14:1).
- Jes. Repeated exposure of the Pharisees (Lk. 11:37 ff.; 16: 14; 18: 9-14); Lazarus resurrection and the Jews conversion (Jn. 11:1-45).
- Phar. Decision about arrest and murder (Jn. 1:46-53).
- Jes. Glorious entry into Jerusalem and purifying the Temple (Mt. 21:1 cf. Lk. 19:29 cf. Mk. 11:1 cf. Jn. 12:12 cf.
- Phar. Disillusion and final decision about arrest and crucifixion (Mk. 11:18; Lk. 19:47; Jn. 12:19).
- Jes. Exposure of High Priests, the Pharisees and scribes (Mt. 21:23; 23 – all chapter).

So, a plotted canvas of gospel events shows the quick deterioration of relations between the Galilean Messiah and Pharisees, which led them to the unhidden antagonism in pre-Passover days. Religious establishment of Israel gave the order for the arrest of Jesus, Jesus publicly called them blind leaders⁷⁹. Exposure by a

⁷⁹ According to Ladd (1993:225), «throughout Matthew's Gospel Jesus is shown as increasingly in conflict with the leaders of the nation (particularly, but not only, the Pharisees). This opposition reaches its climax in chapters 21-23». I assume that this

provincial from the Galilee of the adepts of Judaic law at Jerusalem (Mt. 23) forced all his hearers to make a choice – to follow a carpenter from Nazareth or to remain a blind flock led by blind shepherds⁸⁰. And though evangelists do not describe the reactions of hearers (cf. *e.g.* Jn. 6: 41, 42, 52, 60, 66), it is possible to assume that this speech of the Prophet from Galilee lead to a decrease in the number of His supporters. After being arrested Jesus aroused not Herod's worry but his simple curiosity (Lk. 23:8). The One whom people wanted to become a king (Jn. 6:15), lost His last supporters represented by a small group of disciples, armed by two swords (Lk. 22:38). Actions of crowds during solemn entry to Jerusalem.

...make it clear that Jesus' words and deeds had roused the messianic hopes of the people to fever pitch. However, when a few days later Jesus was presented to the crowds by Pilate, beaten, bound, and bloody, he looked like anything but a victor over the enemies of Israel (Ladd 1993: 141).

Thus, relations between Jesus and the only influential party, which sympathized with him, were publicly broken. The Pharisees, whose opinion could not be ignored even by kings of Israel, refused any partnership with the Galilean Messiah, because they finally were persuaded that he could not be controlled.⁸¹

3. 4. Excursus about messianic commission

For many historic reasons, after centuries-old and tragic formation, the Judaism of the times of Jesus and Jewish nation as sole and rightful carrier of this religion are inseparably connected with messianic idea. The idea of the Messiah not only split the religious forces of Israel into three enemy groups, but twice (in AD 70 and 135)

Gospel was written close to AD 70 as apologetic of pro-Romans position of the first Church and as result of Matthew's design all Jesus' diatribes was collected in one group. However, even half of his diatribes was enough in order to regard Jesus politically dangerous. Cf. Josephus' mentions of Judah the Galilean, who appealed to Jews to not pay taxes to Romans (Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII, 1, 1; *War* II, 8, 1; also *Act.* 5:37).

⁸⁰ From Talmud's point of view public exposures from the side of Jesus who did not acknowledge traditions of elders was clear and a serious sin (see *Abot* 3,11 that exposure of people in face of many, nullifies the covenant of Abraham; also *BT*, *Sanhedrin* 24a; 43b; 99a; 150a).

⁸¹ Cf. ancient opinion that a law guides energy of political leaders for good of community: «when by persuasion, when by power it provides solidarity of all citizens, making them useful for each other in a way so they can be useful to the whole community. It includes outstanding people into a country not to give them a chance to elude where they want, but to use them for strengthening the country» (Plato, *Leg.* VII, 519e-520a)

brought on them national catastrophes, the consequences of which the entire nation (as nation of kings and priests) and Jerusalem (as a holy city) suffers till now.

The image of advocator appeared long before the activity of large prophets (probably in Gen. 3:15) and is connected first of all with the idea of exemption, of Exodus, of the central motive of all Jewish history. Appearing for the first time in Ex. 5:13, this image is still urgent in the book of Job, the work of an unknown author of the fifth century BC, in literary form reviewed the history of Israel and its relations with 4 friends (Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and Persia). Job who lost everything mentions לְבֹשֶׁתִּי (my Redeemer) as a pledge to restore not only his own body, but also of relations with God (Job 19:25 ff.). More than that, the final words of a hero in this chapter allows one to consider לְבֹשֶׁתִּי also a justice judge, one who makes retribution to the enemies of Job-Israel.

Having appeared in the time of Exodus, the image of advocator became one of central themes of sermons of the prophets who were waiting for the rebuilding of David's Kingdom. Prophets frequently speak specifically about a Messiah as a defender of Israel. During several centuries the messianic idea suffered big changes. Here are only several points from the book of Tantlevskij (1994:190-191) which should be important to be noted: (1) in time of captivity appeared three various messianic concepts of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Second-Isaiah; (2) in the last book of the Old-Testament canon (164-165 BC) appears the image of a transcendent Messiah; (3) after Zerubbabel left from politics, the dynasty of David gave up power to a high priest who received the title of prince (נָשִׂיא). After the first half of the second century BC this title was used for the leader of the Sanhedrin.

In the first century AD the title Messiah gets a meaning different from OT usage (Bruce 1994: 75). The Messiah was perceived not like God's servant, as, for example, the Persian king Cyrus (Isa. 45: in LXX: χριστῶ μου Κύρω) or even Alexander the Great who marvelously moved an army through the sea (Josephus, *Ant.* II; 16, 5). The Messiah is David's successor (4Q Flor I:11; CD 7:16; CD 7:16), military leader, anointed to free Israel from profane occupation (cf. Ps. of Sol. 17: 23-38) and even to attain world reign (1 QSb 5:24-29; Josephus, *War* VI, 5, 4;⁸² Tacitus, *Hist.* V, 13; Svetonius, *Vesp.* 4, 5). However the Messiah was appointed not for making any military operation (cf. 2 Ch. 22:7: "whom the Lord *had anointed to*

⁸² According to Josephus (writing *post factum*), prophetic words "'about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth'... certainly

cut off the house of Ahab”), but in order to begin a religious awakening in Israel. The personality of the Messiah had sacred significance that can not be mixed with secular meaning.⁸³ According to the opinion of Talmudists, the Name of the Messiah was created before the world was created (Dodd 1965:85), and from Gospel testimonies (Jh. 12:34) it is known, that “Christ is to remain forever” (ὁ Χριστὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). The term “anointed” transforms from appellative⁸⁴ to the personal name, sacred: “The Messiah is... not merely with reference to a past act of anointing but to the sacred character and power which He possesses in consequence of that act” (Bruce 1994: 75). Evangelists repeatedly emphasize “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (Jn. 20:31). A pagan cannot be considered to be Christ, Servant of Yahweh. The main difference between an anointed in Old Testament and Christ of New Testament can be expressed by quotation from F. F. Bruce (1994:88): “Who is Servant? He is manifestly not Cyrus: Cyrus fulfilled Yahweh’s command, indeed, but not because he recognized and accepted it as such and not by the way of humiliation and suffering”. Christ in the New Testament is one of the Jews (not proselyte!), the adept of law and miracle-maker. Thus, God acts not from outside through profane leaders (Sib. or. III, 652: king from East), but from inside through that One about whom probably Moses prophesied (Deut. 18:18; cf. 1 QS 9:11).

It is interesting to note that the Prophet-Messiah had to give answers to difficult questions (1 Macc. 4:46), to replace a High Priest (1 Macc. 14:41), to renew a Testament (1 QSb 3:26; 5:21), also to become a sacred object and the luminary (1 QSb 3:27). He also had to (or had the right) baptise people (Jn. 1:25). New-Testament authors repeatedly emphasised the execution of similar promises in Jesus Christ. More than that, the quantity of miracles done by Jesus was sufficient to acknowledge Him to be the Messiah (Jn. 7: 31).

The appearance of John the Baptist at the Jordan aroused the messianic expectations of the Jews. The usage in Jn. 1:19 of the words *the Jews from Jerusalem* testifies that the whole religious establishment (of Jerusalem?⁸⁵) attentively watched

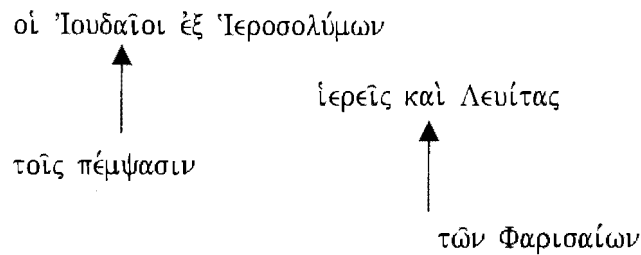
denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea” (Josephus, *War* VI, 5, 4; cf. same position of Tacitus).

⁸³ Cf. Jews’ charge against Jesus λέγοντα ἑαυτὸν χριστὸν βασιλέα εἶναι (Lk. 23:2).

⁸⁴ In Mandaean religion Hermes, the planet Mercury, is called also Christ (Dodd 1965:118).

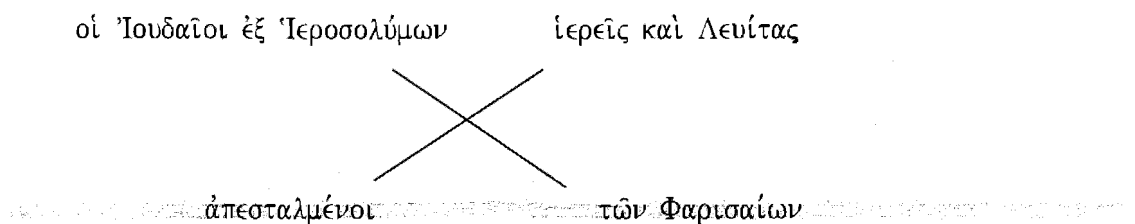
⁸⁵ I suggest to translate ἀπέστειλαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας as «the Jerusalem Jews sent priest and Levites». Carson (1991:142) suggests: «the *Jews of Jerusalem*, then, possibly leaders of the Sanhedrin...»

the messianic activity of modern prophets. Let me examine a scheme made by an author in 1:19-24:



I can suppose that in the times of Jesus there was a certain “accreditation” commission, which is mentioned casually in Jn. 7: 26: μήποτε ἀληθῶς ἔγνωσαν οἱ ἄρχοντες ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός? Having confronted this passage with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων in Jn. 1:19, we can conclude that a commission consisted of the most authoritative representatives of Jerusalem aristocracy (it is possible that temple aristocracy was also included) similar to the Pharisees. There are different versions of identification of τοῖς πέμψασιν and ἀπεσταλμένοι. There are different variants (Brown 1966:44): (1) those who sent (the Jews from Jerusalem) were the Sadducees (and the elders?) united with the Pharisees (cf. Mt. 3: 7); (2) if Jn. 1:24 may be translated as “and they had been sent from (= by) the Pharisees” then the Jews from Jerusalem are identified with the Pharisees.⁸⁶

In the last case (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων = πέμψασιν = τῶν Φαρισαίων) it is easy to see a usual for biblical authors chiasmus:



So, there are two variants of interpretation of Jn. 1:19-24: (1) the Jews from Jerusalem (the Pharisees) sent priest and Levites; (2) the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites (the Pharisees).

Anyway, we can conclude that this commission had enough power to question a national leader, whose great influence feared even Herod Antipas (Josephus, *Ant.*

⁸⁶ Carson (1991:144): «the Pharisees were not strong enough to control the Sanhedrin (though they were influential members of it), still less to send a delegation of priests and Levites».

XVIII, 5, 2): “Why then are you baptising, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” It is also very likely that a representation of this commission witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus and reported it to the Pharisees (Jn. 11:46). Nicodemus’ using a pronoun *ὁ δὲ αὐμὲν* testifies that one of the leaders of the Pharisees spoke on behalf, probably, of the same commission⁸⁷.

The commission, whose members (scribes, legalists, the Pharisees and, probably, the Herodians) are constantly present on the pages of the Gospels, received enough testimonies about the messianic authority of Jesus of Nazareth (Jn. 3:2; 7:26, 31).⁸⁸ The army of the Messiah who is able to feed 5000 people with 5 breads and 2 fishes in a desert and who resurrects the dead potentially could not lose a war even against the mighty Rome. Jesus was the best for the role of *מָלֵךְ*. The question of John the Baptist (Mt. 11:3) contains the hopes of all Israel; the answer of Jesus leaves no hesitations: “God is fulfilling these works of the kingdom in and through Jesus... He is God’s representative, the Messiah through whom the kingdom comes” (Beasley-Murray 1992: 22).

3.5. Reconstruction of events not mentioned by Evangelists

It seems to be evident and unquestionable that behind gospel texts there are many events which for some reasons were not described (or even not noticed) by evangelists. Evangelists (as faithful followers of their “rabbi” Jesus) noted down first of all the basic events which were: (1) directly connected with the life and activity of Jesus and (2) claimed by the first Christians (*e.g.* Theophilus) as specific customers. Thus, in their stories authors described even those things which they could not see themselves (*e.g.* the dialog of Pilate with Christ or a note of procurator’s wife), unwillingly (or intently) left out from the field of vision not only real facts from the life of community; but – even more! – unrealised aims of different political and social groups. These aims were the reflection of Jewish messianic expectations which are witnessed marginally in the Gospels (*e.g.* Lk. 24:21; Jn. 10:24; Acts 1:6);

⁸⁷ However using of plurals in Jn. 3:11 can signify that Jesus and Nicodemus discussed like representatives of different religious groups (*e.g.* the Essenes and the Pharisees).

⁸⁸ Cf. Vermes’ position (1984:156, n. 40): whether Jesus’ messianic authority in the Gospels is “in any way associated with the historical expectation of the Jewish people, let alone with Jesus’ self-awareness”. But what is “the historical expectation of the Jewish people”? Remember that Bar Kochba was acknowledged as Messiah for his military ability.

three and the half decades later these implicitly described desires came to the fore in the tragic war of AD 66-70.

Permanent repartition of power in the context of Jewish autonomy under the power of Rome, as well as inextirpable desire of some extremist groups to get rid of this power,⁸⁹ does not leave any doubts as to the existence of political activity deployed around the Messiah of Nazareth. Being in eyes of Jews the next pretender to the authority, he had some real opportunities to receive this authority as a king (Jn. 6:15), a teacher (Mk. 1:22) and the adept of law (Jn. 7:15). Clearly understanding his position, during several years Jesus the Lamb (Jn. 1:29) was reticent (Jn. 6:15; 7:3-10; 10:39) and cautious in his utterances (Flusser 1999:73). But in the evening before Passover he provoked his arrest (cf. Jn. 13:27) and transferred the place of this action to the Mount of Olives which according to Zec. 14:4 should be split in two parts under the Lord's feet. In Synoptics the role of the Pharisees as a judge upon Jesus remains unclear. It is possible that they were eliminated from the process at the proper time,⁹⁰ in order not only to get rid of Jesus, but also to tune the nation against Romans and against the political opportunists, the Sadducees. A High Priest, who expressed the common opinion of members of the Sanhedrin, suggested that religious problem should be decided by absolutely political methods. Rudolf Bultmann (1957:314) writes about it in the following words:

Die scheltenden Worte, mit denen der Vorschlag eingeleitet ist, stellen die Verblendung kraß ins Licht: gerade Klugheit und Überlegung, wie sie in der Welt Geltung haben und stets einen Ausweg wissen, führen hier ins Verderben. Als politische Frage wird beurteilt, was sich in politische Kategorien nicht fassen läßt. Die politische Klugheit fordert, das kleinere Übel dem größeren vorzuziehen, und verlangt die Durchführung des Grundsatzes, daß im Interesse des Volkes der Einzelne geopfert wird.

The obvious hint to Judas that his plan was entirely known to the teacher perhaps pushed the Sanhedrin to make the arrest on Passover eve, when the Messiah, still popular with the religious crowd (Mt. 21: 46),⁹¹ was able to call for help 12

⁸⁹ Faithful to the Romans, Herod the Great during the war with Asmoneas' followers for the power in Israel had to give a real fight in Galilee to one of such groups (Josephus, *War* II, 16, 2-3).

⁹⁰ According to Flusser (1999:74-75), the concealment of their role in the judgement is idea of Evangelists. However, it could be explained that the Pharisees did not have enough competition to judge Jesus as heretic (cf. Mt. 26:65-66). That is why in the Gospels the High Priest looks like as the leader of the Sanhedrin.

⁹¹ Size of a crowd, which was discussed above, could be limited. Probably the word ὁ κόσμος in Jn. 12:19 can't describe exactly the real number of Jesus' adherents. In this

legions of the ἀγγέλων (Mt. 26: 53). Jesus had already warned the Pharisees, that a fatal denouement could come only according to classic scheme, i.e. in Jerusalem (Lk. 13: 33).⁹² And in Jerusalem he as if playing into the hands of the Sanhedrin, moved away from the city, overcrowded by pilgrims, to the Mount of Olives, accompanied by the small group of disciples with two swords (cf. Jn. 11:54). Stirring up the crowd was unnecessary to the procurator and the high priests; that is why, despite the permanent desire of religious leaders to arrest the Messiah, the arrest was actually planned for after Passover.⁹³ However Jesus unexpectedly accelerated the process. In that case it was advantageous for the Sanhedrin to have present in Jerusalem a Roman officer on whom it was possible to place all responsibility for the Messiah execution⁹⁴. More than that, as further events have shown, opponents of Jesus used for the achievement of their purpose also a tradition to free in time of celebration one convicted – a robber, Barabbas, his release satisfied the religious fanatics, more than the Galilean carpenter with his exposures. Thus, arrest on Passover eve became more convenient to the quick and final decision about long-standing problem than its postponement.

Against a background of increasing friction between the Messiah and the Pharisees Jesus' glorious entry into Jerusalem served as the last drop which overfilled the bowl of the patience of the teachers of Israel. Knowing the hour of his own death (cf. Jn. 6:7 and 13:1) and not worrying about the political situation in Jerusalem, the Messiah met it like a (eschatological?) King from Zec. 9:9. Seeming

question there are two points of view. According to Guthrie (1981:131) «the world is almost a synonym for people in a generic sense. Presumably we are to understand, however, that in this sense “world” stands for a considerable number of people». But F.F. Bruce (1994:262) supposes that «by “the word” (*cosmos*) these Pharisees meant “everyone” (cf. Jn. 7:4), i.e. everyone in Jerusalem – a natural exaggeration». See also Hermann (1983:548), who thinks ὁ κόσμος to be a Greek equivalent of Heb. כל העולם.

⁹² Even if Jesus would have been captured in Galilee according to Jewish laws He as a false prophet would need to be judged by Sanhedrin – so the place of final events would anyway be Jerusalem (Lightfoot 1997:III, 144).

⁹³ Usual Jewish practice according to Talmud views proposed delinquent's execution when many people were in Jerusalem during one of the holidays in order to educate people (Lightfoot 1997:III, 144).

⁹⁴ Before that Jerusalem leaders had already tried to neutralize the Messiah. Tempting Him with the question about Caesar's tax «the Pharisees and the Herodians personify the two horns of a dilemma: (1) if Jesus favors paying the tax, the Pharisees can destroy his popularity; (2) if Jesus opposes paying the tax, the Herodians can haul him to the Roman authorities under the charge of seditious teaching (cf. *b. Pesah*. 112b)» (Gundry 1994:442).

contradictions between two portraits of the coming Messiah (Zech. 9 and Dan. 7) elicit from Bruce (1994: 107) the following comments:

We know how the rabbis of a later date debated this oracle: how could the Messiah come “meek and sitting on an ass” if he was also to come “with the clouds of heaven”? Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, who propounded the riddle, supplied his own solution: “If they are worthy, he will come with the clouds of heaven; if they are not worthy, meek and sitting on an ass” (TB *Sanhedrin* 98a).

In that case, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem finally spoiled relations between the Messiah and the religious leaders of Israel. “To sum up, the Triumphal Entry is a σημεῖον of the universal sovereignty of Christ as Conqueror of death and Lord of life, and as such the sequel to His (symbolic) burial” (Dodd 1965: 371).

CONCLUSION

Even such a brief analysis of the grandest from of the conflicts, which had ever shocked humanity, shows much ambiguity and the obscurity of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus preached to Israel in that time, when the authority was divided between Roman invaders and civil-temple community under the leadership of the Sanhedrin. At the end of the intertestamental period the honorary place in a community was determined not by belonging to the oligarchy or the ancient (secular and sacerdotal) generations which were annihilated first during the period of Maccabean wars, and then by Herod the Great. Division of society between poor and rich, so usual for other countries of ancient Mediterranean, in the Jewish community had no determining significance, which can be seen even in related Semite cultures (e.g. in Phoenicia). More than that, the greatest wealth belonged to the institution of the Temple (single in the whole country), and in the intertestamental time various Jewish (Judaic and Hellenistic) clans struggled for the control of the Temple. This first of all means that greatest financial wealth belonged to God. The wealth of God's servants consisted of the knowledge of the Torah – the book around which had been formed a Jewish nation.

As a result of that grand activity which was started in the fifth century BC by a scribe and a priest Ezra, the population of Israel divided into two unequal groups: (1) people as crowd (Hbr. *am haares*, Gr. *ohlos*); (2) interpreters/experts of the Torah (the Pharisees, Essenes, scribes, etc.), i.e. those who later, approximately in a century after Jesus, will be officially called *rabbis* (Carson 1982:164; Flusser 1999:27-28). Already in the second century BC one can see sharp delimitation between nation and wise men: so in Sirach 38 after praising the necessity of the labour of nation for accomplishment of *polis* a pronoun *ἀλλὰ* (v. 33) the author begins the praise of scribe wisdom as a necessity for the right ruling in *ecclesia*.

In the first century AD the authority of scribes was strong enough in order for people to know the Torah as well as rabbis had interpreted it (cf. Mk. 9:11: ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς; Jn. 12:34: ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, i. e., most likely, from the interpreters of law). Actually, Jesus criticized not the Torah as such, but rabbinical commentary, i. e. the oral Torah (Mt. 23:2 ἐπὶ τῆς Μωϋσέως καθέδρας ἐκάθισαν οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι). After Babylonian captivity Judaic mentality accepted oral worship to Yahweh rather than temple sacrifice (cf. great role of the synagogues in Jewish life: Jn. 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). The idea of the cross is a return to achieving holiness through the sacral blood, but now it could not be blood

of animals (cf. Heb. 10:4). Moreover, Jesus cross has rejected rabbinical conception of holiness through meditation of the Torah, strict and regular fulfillment of the commandments, and separation from the pagan nation (in form of non-participation in sport, symposiums, state celebrations etc.).⁹⁵

Unlike the Pharisees who “learned to become flexible and adaptable, adjusting the demands of Torah by finely developed exegetical procedures” (Carson 1982: 164) Jesus represented himself as a lawgiver, when in the Sermon on the Mount he replaced doctrines of Moses by his own (“You have heard that it was said to the ancients... but I tell you”). Having not joined the temple oligarchy, political party (e.g. Herodians) or any known schools of Pharisees, the Messiah of Galilee was deprived of support of influential forces and could reckon only on support from a nation – the most powerful force⁹⁶. However a nation among whom the Pharisees had great authority for many years did not support a Messiah who did not move on from appeals to search the kingdom to concrete actions to banish Romans. Military acts of 66-70 and 132-135 AD showed the benevolence of nation and the Pharisees⁹⁷ (Flusser 1999:115) to military leaders. Just like in time of the un-successful attempt to enter Canaan soon after the exodus from Egypt, the nation refused to follow its leader and was rejected by God. In about 30 AD appeared the first signs of destruction of Temple – temple lamps began to sink, and the heavy east gate of Sanctuary was opened by itself (Josephus, *War* VI, 5, 3; *Ioma* 39b)⁹⁸. Probably, after Pharisees’ conflict with Jesus the term “the Messiah” had not been used often by religion establishment for some time (till the appearance of Bar Kochba). Moreover, the messianic idea as such excited suspicion: “One trying to find out, when the Messiah should come, will not have part in coming world” (Derekh Eretz; cf. Mt. 24:36; Mk. 13:32). According to Guthrie (1981:238),

It is of some importance to note that there is no evidence that the rabbis before AD 70 used the term “the Messiah”, but information regarding rabbinic

⁹⁵ In my opinion, discussion in the Epistles to the Hebrews about the excellency of the “new covenant” touches on the new form of discharge of the Sinai’s covenant between Yahweh and his people. Jesus (and author of the Epistle to the Hebrews after him) suggested his sacral blood as substitution for the blood of animals.

⁹⁶ Hegemony of crowd in deciding religious and political problems is mentioned in Bible many times: Ex. 32:22, 25; 2 Ki. 11:13-21; 14:21; Mt. 21:26, 46; Mk. 12:12.

⁹⁷ Allow me to remind that exactly the Pharisee Rabbi Akiba acknowledged Bar Kochba to be the Messiah.

⁹⁸ According to Steinsaltz (1996:42-43), the destruction of the Temple was foreseen by a Leader of the last Sanhedrin rabban Johanan ben Zakkai. He «died with hope for the Messiah on his lips (*Abot R. Nat.* 25a)» (Rensberger 1984:397).

teaching of this period is scarce. The term, moreover, was understandably never used by Josephus in his attempt to make Judaism more acceptable to the Romans.

For same cause also kingdom-terminology was not mentioned often enough (Jeremias 1999:I §3.3). Before and after AD 70 rabbinical literature ordinarily has used the term עולם הקבא (coming world).

Unfortunately, because of the limitations of space the analysis of relations of Jesus with one of three popular denominations of the first-century Judaism the Essenes (if we do not consider them to be the Herodians mentioned in the Gospels) did not receive its place. If one takes into account the quantity of the Essenes (4000 against 6000 the Pharisees – Josephus, *Ant.* XVII, 2, 4; XVIII, 1, 5) and their messianic expectation, it would be necessary to conclude that Jesus should have had some contacts with them (prob. Jn. 1:11; Mk. 1:13 [τῶν θηρίων]⁹⁹), which have not been recorded by the Evangelists. Probably, in the last days of His activity in Jerusalem Jesus closely contacted the Essenes. According to Otto Michel (1986:116), Essenes had camped close to Jerusalem:

Bei der ausführlichen und genauen Beschreibung der drei Mauern Jerusalems kommt Josephus bell. 5,145 auch auf das Essenertor an der Südseite der Stadt zu sprechen. Die Tübinger Josephusarbeit, die 1963 Bd.II,1 herausgab, schrieb zu dieser Stelle: Das Essenertor hat seinen Namen vielleicht auf Grund der Tatsache erhalten, daß in seiner Nähe das jerusalemische Essenerquartier lag, wahrscheinlich aber deshalb, weil man durch dieses in der Nähe der Südwestecke der Mauer befindliche in das Hinnomtal hinabführende Tor zum Zentrum der Essenergemeinde Hirbet Qumran gelangte. Wie ich kürzlich durch R. Riesner mündlich belehrt wurde, haben inzwischen Ausgrabungen in der Nähe dieses Tores essenische Reinheitsbäder freigelegt, die analog den bekannten von Qumran als solche identifiziert werden konnten. Das Quartier sollte nicht in der Nähe des Tempels liegen, mußte auch die ausführlichen Reinheitsvorschriften von Qumran berücksichtigen.

Mir ist bei dieser Gelegenheit die Frage wichtig geworden, wo eigentlich die Urgemeinde nach der Anweisung des Petrus (Apg. 2, 36) getauft hat. Sie wird nach „reinem Wasser“ gefragt haben, da eine neue Reinheit vermittelt wurde. Ich vermute, daß die Urgemeinde in engem Kontakt mit dieser Essenergemeinde gestanden hat und auch ihre Bäder dort benutzen durfte. Kidrontal, Essenerviertel, vielleicht auch Abendmahlsstradition (im Westen auf dem sogenannten Zionshügel) könnten zusammenhängen. Dazu gehören Spuren der Passionsgeschichte: Der andeutende Bericht Mk. 11,2b (junger Esel und Besitzer); Mk. 14,13 (Mann mit Krug) gehören wahrscheinlich in den Bereich dieser essenischen Spuren. Der andeutende Stil braucht keineswegs legendär zu sein.”

⁹⁹ The “wild beasts” was a name used by the Essenes (1QpHab 12:4); see also Tanlevskij, 1994:178-179).

Probably, contacts of the Messiah and separatists from Qumran community, who pretended to be true Pharisees (in both meanings of this term), were close enough in order for the first church (according to quotation from Otto Michel) to continue them (cf., e.g., using the Essenes' terminology by NT authors in Act. 2:40; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:5). A connection with the Essenes could only repulse Jerusalem leaders, who pretended to be the head of messianic movement in Israel, even more from the Messiah.

In my view, rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and the teacher happened for absolutely political reasons, an idea more evident in John: "the political nature of the accusations against Jesus is emphasised far more strongly in the Fourth Gospel" (Rensberger 1984:396). According to the Gospels (if one considers them as historic documents), He showed all necessary attributes of Messiah and Teacher. But exactly in the time of his activity in Palestine happened one of those fatal crises, which led Israel to national catastrophe. The Pharisees, whose activity only sharpened messianic expectations, survived after the catastrophe in 70 AD and began to cooperate with the Romans (see quotation from Abodah Zarah 18a in 1.2). Rensberger (1984:397) concludes:

The Pharisees thus commended themselves as the agents through whom Rome could and must deal to achieve the pacification of the Jews, accommodating themselves to Roman rule and so gaining the ascendancy in the guidance of Judaism, which they steered toward concentration on religious faithfulness.

In that situation the position of the Messiah of Nazareth presented a fatal dilemma. Having shown to the nation a multitude of miracles, including healing and resurrection, Jesus could not just become one of its outstanding rabbis and enter his name to Talmud pages. The most outstanding teachers did not feed a crowd of five thousand with five barley loaves, did not walk on water, did not heal chronic and desperate illnesses, and even more did not resurrect stinking corpses. From Jesus much more was needed. He was to become the leader of all Israel or to go away. However if he did so Jesus would have lead the patriotic forces of Israel and hasten Jewish war 30 years earlier, as result he would have died like Bar Kochba. So Jesus refused from the political struggle, i.e. the restoration David's kingdom on the territory of Israel, and *permitted* the execution of himself. The first death would bring him complete oblivion; the second turned out to be a complete victory.

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