

From Jesus to Christianity, Part II

Religion and Society: Fall 2009

Last time...

I. Major Events and Texts

II. Some Main Factions in Judea

III. The Eschatological Tradition

and now...

IV. Jesus' Mission and Crucifixion

V. Changing Images of Jesus, 30-100

VI. Views on Jesus' Relation to God

Jesus' Mission

Understood within apocalyptic eschatology

Entry into Jerusalem

(Mk 10:7-10; cf. Zec. 9:9)

Jesus at the Temple

(Mk. 11:15-17)

(cf. fig tree: Mk. 11:12-14; 20-21)

Trial: Who were Jesus' enemies?

Crucifixion

Perceived threat to Rome

Crucifixion a Roman punishment

Crucified between two *lēstai* (often trans. “thieves” or “robbers”; could also be “rebels”)

Developing Images of Jesus

Problem: The Crucified Messiah

The Messiah (=anointed one) is to be victorious in battle

- (1) Why, then, did Jesus die on the cross?
- (2) In what sense was Jesus the Messiah?

A Likely Early View: Jesus' Imminent Return:

- Jesus died on the cross to be resurrected, thus signaling the impending end of time
- Resurrected Jesus to return during lifetime of disciples and lead God's army
- Understood within Jewish eschatology
- Resisted by many Jews

The Apostle Paul

Life and Mission

Member of the Diaspora and a Roman citizen

Read and wrote in Greek

Conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9)

Preached to the congregations of the Diaspora including Gentiles

Tension with “Jerusalem leaders” – Peter, John and James, brother of Jesus (Mk 6:3; Acts 12:17, 15:1-22; 1 Cor. 1:10, Gal 1-2)

Epistles

Seven are undisputed as authored by Paul:

In probable chronological order:

- 1 Thessalonians
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Philippians
- Philemon
- Galatians
- Romans

Written between 48 and 60 CE, most likely 51-8.

Differences with the Gospels:

Closer to Jesus in time (c. 50-60 vs. 70-100)

Written prior to Jewish Revolt

Not concerned with the life of Jesus

Written for specific issues & congregations

Paul's Jesus Christ:

Three questions:

- (1) Should Gentiles who follow Jesus also follow the Torah?
- (2) Why did Jesus, the Messiah, die on the cross?
- (3) Why had the end of time not come (ca. 50)?

1. Opposition to Judaizing

- Mission to the Gentiles in the Diaspora
 - Gentiles in Diaspora synagogues
 - Judaism coexisting w/ paganism
- Did followers of Jesus have to follow the Law?
 - **No!** Galatians 2; cf. Acts 15
 - Righteousness through faith not law (Rom. 9:30-33)
 - Jesus a savior for **all** nations
 - Thus: "Messiah" takes on new meaning

2. Jesus's Death: "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3)

3. Delay in the Return: The end is at hand (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

Mark's Jesus:

- Ascribed to disciple of Peter
- Synchronous with Jewish revolt
- Strong parallels between Jesus' last days and destruction of Temple
- Return of Jesus to follow destruction of Temple?
- "son of Man" (one who suffers and is vindicated)

Matthew and Luke's Jesus:

- Ascribed to Apostle (Mt); disciple of Paul (Lk)
- Sources: Q, Mark, and Septuagint (LXX)
- Jesus' return no longer immanent
- Emphasize conflict with Pharisees

John's Jesus:

- Ascribed to Apostle
- Sources: Mark, LXX, Luke (?), lost discourses?, non-Christian myths?
- God is the Word (λογος) – cf. Stoicism
- In Jesus "the Word became flesh" (1:14)
- Jesus is fully divine (Synoptic Gospels vs. Jn)
 - Gethsemane
 - Final words on the cross

Christology: Relation between Jesus and God

Scriptural terms: Lord, Son of God, Son of Man:

What did these mean when written?

Jesus was...

- “adopted” by God as His son (Ebionites)
 - fully human
 - natural child of Mary and Joseph
 - raised by God and exalted to heaven

- God the Savior (Marcionites, some Gnostics)
 - fully divine
 - rival to God of the Jews (Marcionites)
 - not part of material world (docetism)
 - not born, no body

- Possessed by divine emissary (many Gnostics)
 - fully human
 - Christ “occupied” the body of Jesus
 - Christ abandoned Jesus at the crucifixion

- Fully human but promoted to divine (Arianism)
 - of *similar* substance as God the father
 - homoiousion

- Fully human ***and*** fully divine (“proto-orthodox”)
 - of the *same* substance as God the father
 - homoousion