

#4

Not a week. p. 424 "made of p. 430" *Handwritten note*

next week
H g G
still chap 3

Christianity: the New Testament

Christianity was the product of Jewish messianic hopes and expectations and was considered by its adherents to be their fulfillment.

after the return from exile, apocalyptic expectations had come to play an important part in Jewish psychology.

Judaism after the the exile developed several tendencies of religious opinion which have been somewhat discussed last week.

The Pharisees probably derived from the hasidim or Pious ones who supported the Maccabean revolt against Greek paganism.

They were the most accurate interpreters of the law. they placed great emphasis upon obedience to the law but they also looked forward to the fulfillment of Israel's sacred destiny and believed in the resurrection of the dead, thus they believed in the importance of individual as well as group religious expression.

The Sadducees held their position as priests by hereditary right and were often wealthy. They practiced a kind of cooperation and compromise with Roman power.

they accepted only the pentateuch as scripture and maintained a conservative position in regard to any ideas coming from Persia. Thus they did not believe in devils,

Christianity

angels or resurrection of the dead.

the Essenes are not mentioned in the N. T. but were monastic. They looked forward to a coming triumph of good over evil which would be the culmination of history and a fulfillment for Israel. They saw themselves fulfilling the call of Isaiah to prepare a highway in the desert for God's coming.

The Zealots, at least one of which was Jesus disciple (Simon).

They originated around the time of the revolt of Judas the Galilean as a protest against the census taken under the Roman procurator Quirinius.

They were absolutely opposed to foreign domination and the payment of taxes to foreign rulers.

They appear to have been regarded with disapproval by the majority of Jews.

They practiced political violence and were important in 66 C.E. as the leading advocates of war against Rome and remained important enough to take part in another rebellion three generations later.

influence of these on Christianity

The relationship and influence on Christianity is complex and hard to determine.

The pharisees are spoken of critically yet Jesus and his

followers shared their belief in the resurrection of the dead and their emphasis upon the individual as well as the collective aspects of religious life.

Jesus also appears to have generally followed the Pharisaic discipline and Paul was himself a former Pharisee.

the Saducees had no immediate influence but the early church saw its worship as a transformed version of temple sacrifice

Those who converted to Christianity saw it as the fulfillment of the hopes of Judaism, the fulfillment of the covenant who embraced all who believed.

It embraced as central to the religious life the Jewish emphasis upon morality, righteousness as a personal disposition and sin as an offense against God.

It saw Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, the expected anointed one of YHWH and looked forward to his return to earth to be followed by the end of the present world, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgement on all humans.

Jesus quotes the Shema (Deut. 6) when asked what the greatest commandment is and Lev. "love neighbor as self" as the second.

All three synoptic gospels (Matt., Mark and Luke) see Jesus identifying himself as the messiah thus identifying himself with the deepest hopes and aspirations of the Jewish people.

Jesus of Nazareth

The New testament presents to us those characteristics of Jesus and his career which were the foundation of the faith of the church seen in the light of the development of that faith that had taken place within the community in the first three or four generations.

according to the gospel narratives Jesus preached, taught, healed, died and rose from the dead. He preached the imminence of the Kingdom of God and called for repentance.

the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was in inner condition and relationship to God and an outer expression of moral behaviour and compassion with respect to others.

Central to Jesus teaching was love of God and one's fellow man. Jesus accepted and took his stand upon the Hebraic conviction of the immediacy of God and the centrality of ethics, and in typical Jewish fashion he saw them as inseparable parts of a single reality. Central to his preaching was a call for repentance, a demand for justice and righteousness from men, and an assurance of mercy from God.

Jesus stressed the importance of love--man's love for God and God's for man--thus giving renewed emphasis to the ideas found in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Isaiah.

Jesus passion and death

Jesus Passion and Death

All the canonical gospels see Jesus going deliberately to Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover, and event he appears to have anticipated as closely bound up with the manifestation of his own messianic mission.

He went in riding on a donkey to the acclamation of the multitudes, according to the synoptic tradition, reminiscent of the ass-riding princes of the early Israelite confederation as portrayed in the Song of Deborah and Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 9:9)

His last supper with his disciples on Thursday evening has become the archetype of the basic Christian act of worship ever since. The bread and wine of the traditional seder were interpreted by Jesus as his body and blood.

It was the conviction of his followers and the belief of the early church which resulted from their efforts that Jesus had risen from the dead and that his death and resurrection taken together represented the beginning of that messianic kingdom which Jesus had proclaimed in his own earthly ministry.

The resurrection became the keystone of the Christian faith, the guarantee that Jesus was of God and the sign of the general resurrection to come.

There are two traditions in the N. T. concerning Jesus resurrection. The empty tomb tradition and the appearances of the risen Lord to the disciples and many others in Galilee.

But the testimony of all traditions is that Jesus, whom the early followers had known in his earthly existence, had been put to death, was interred in a tomb, had been raised from the dead, and had appeared to numerous eyewitnesses. Thus the Easter event was the foundation of the Christian faith.

the new messianic age had commenced. Jesus had returned to the Father but would come again.

The Kerygma was the preaching of the early church which brought new communities together in which Jesus' disciples repeated the communion of bread and wine and where they believed they felt the presence of the risen lord.

They lived in the expectation of the return of Jesus in glory, an event which they apparently felt would come in their own lifetimes.

The Kerygma had 6 major points.

1. preaching—they felt it was their duty to give out this information concerning Jesus.

2. Evangelism — they must tell people the "good news" (see below)

3. kingdom (concept) new realm of existence that was now at hand. they were convinced that the kingdom came in Jesus and was now in the world.

4. repentance—metanoia was required, meant to turn about. one needed to change one's life to take part in the kingdom.

5. faith-meant faith in What God has done in Jesus.

6. the Kairos means the right time. This concept was that it was the right time for Christ to come into the world and also the idea that it is the right time to make a decision to accept the 'Good news' (gospel)

What is the Good News

1. God acted in Christ (man is not involved). God has entered human history unlike any other religion.

2. God has raised Jesus from the dead to show us the reality of his entry into history.

3. Since god raised Jesus from the dead then God has kept his promises--has declared Jesus is the messiah--saw everything of Hebrew Bible fulfilled.

4. Through Christ God redeems his people. Redeems means pay for something to get back. people can be saved from alienation, etc. and brought together in fellowship -have meaning in life. (this is the ultimate concern)

5. the Cross is God's way to victory--how someone can win by losing--paradox is that suffering can be used for others.

6. Christ is Lord (Christos Kyrios)-not Ceaser. They were being revolutionary without knowing it.

7. this Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead.

8. result of the kerygma-repent, believe (faith), and follow (become a disciple.

the ultimate concern is salvation both in and out of the

&The Early Church&

The &Acts of the Apostles& was written by Luke, the gospel writer probably between 80 and 90 C.E. it begins with the ascension of Jesus and the Pentacost event (the coming of the Holy Spirit) to the 120 or so people in a room in Jerusalem.

It is not history in the sense we have modern history. it presents the fundamental conditions characteristic of the infant Christian community--the absence of Jesus now believed to be risen and returned to the Father, the expectation of his return and the lack of knowledge of the times and seasons fixed by God for its occurrence, and the orientation to proselytism.

the book reflects the conviction of the author that the promises to Israel were being fulfilled in the new church, which was the new Israel and heir to the old. The new church defines itself as the new covenant community and is oriented to the conversion of gentiles tho still predominantly Jewish.

Thus the book of Acts is trying to present an idealized picture of the early Church. Actually the early Christian community at this time was divided among a number of trends both within Palestine and among the Christian gentile groups.

Despite its statement that "The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul (Acts 4:32) the book does reveal the existence of the severe inner conflict that divided the Church over the status of the law and the temple in early Christian life.

Acts shows us the followers of Stephen driven out of Jerusalem, Peter after his escape from arrest departing and going "to another place" (Acts 12:17) leaving James, the brother of Jesus, totally in authority.

Paul was in conflict with the Hebrew Christians and in Galatians really shows the depth of his feelings. He raised money from the gentile churches to bring to Jerusalem which was meant to be a symbol of unity between the gentile and Jewish Christians. It symbolized Christian unity, as the Jewish unity was symbolized by the temple tax paid each year by the Jews of the diaspora.

When Paul arrives in Jerusalem James and the other leaders tell him that Hebrew Christians "all zealous for the law" believe that he is telling the Jewish Christians of the diaspora to "forsake Moses" and to give up circumcision (Acts 21:21); and are aroused against him. There follows Paul's arrest and his eventual martyrdom in Rome tho this is not related in Acts.

a council was held at Jerusalem in probably 49 or so concerning whether the gentiles would have to keep the law or were free of it. It was basically decided that they would not enforce circumcision or dietary rules upon the

gentile converts and Paul's apostleship was approved. However, many problems still remained and not all agreed with this decision.

&Gnosticism& ~ show scene 8 ~ 1st 1000 years of X

After the appearance of the mystery cults, the religious and philosophical phenomenon known as gnosticism appears in the Greco Roman world.

it is not clear where it originated. it had been called Greek, Near Eastern, and Egyptian and it shows elements of all these. There is a Jewish gnosticism which was considered heretical just as later there was a Christian gnosticism which was considered heretical and combated vigorously by the church as a dangerous heresy.

It expresses severe disillusionment with life in this world, as may be seen in various conflicting dualisms--spirit/flesh, soul/body, light /darkness, life/death, good/evil, and God/world.

In it is the effort to break out of the here and now to find salvation carried to exaggerated lengths.

Gnosticism held the world in which man found himself, the world of matter and our daily existence, to be radically evil and man, or at least the spiritual element in him, to be imprisoned in it and in the body composed from its substance.

salvation comes from secret knowledge of God and the divine realm, the nature of the transcendent world and the

pathway leading to it.

Reception of this saving knowledge is by means of learning esoteric doctrine and the transforming experience of inner illumination.

Thus the spiritual element in man is freed and related to the hidden god.

they also believed that there were different kinds of humans.

&hylikos&-were those who were carnal and had no hope of salvation.

&psychikos& were those who were 'soulish' they had a chance of salvation but were bogged down in the world.

&Pneumatikos&-were the spiritual persons who could be saved thru knowledge, in fact are saved, all they have to do is wake up and realize it.

in some gnostic doctrines the notion of a divine agent sent to help man, an idea probably developed in imitation of Christianity. Christian gnosticism saw Jesus in this role.

The gnostic heresy came to comprise a dire threat to Christianity in the second century.

such doctrines see the God of the old Test. as an evil God related to or creator of this world, (the demiurge), in opposition to the good God who is beyond this world. Saturninus of Antioch for ex. declared that Christ came to destroy the God of the Jews.

evidence of the conflict with gnosticism can be found in such Christian writings as John, Col. and the pastoral Epistles (I II Tim and Titus)

There are many gnostic gospels including the gospel of Thomas and the gospel of truth both found a Nag Hammadi in 1945.

&Paul&

Paul presents us with what is probably the earliest extant statement of belief characteristic of that Church:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, tho some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. (I Cor 15:3-7)

There are only 7 letters of the 13 attributed to Paul that we know were from Paul.

Paul has been called the "second founder of Christianity" because he did so much to interpret Christ to the church. All but the letter to the Romans are "occasional letters" written for a specific problem. Romans is the only true epistle that draws together all his ideas in some ordered fashion.

&the saving event&

Christ came to bind the chaotic forces and reconcile us to

God. In Caananite myth Baal overcomes chaotic forces and binds them in the nether world at the "end time" tho no real eschatology in this myth. Baal will bind and destroy the chaotic forces but must return every year to do so. (cyclic view of history).

Christ comes to reign fully and destroy all chaotic forces.

Israel did not choose the desert experience for emphasis but the red sea event. (God binds the forces of chaos, yam, the sea).

God the Father for Paul planned everything to do with salvation. God relates to the individual with gratuitous initiative. He calls a person to faith.

Sin for Paul is always singular. it is a power embodied in a person not just a totality of the acts of a person. It is basic hostility to God.

Rightousness of God is a major quality of God for Paul. God manifests his mercy and fidelity in acquiting his people and vindicating them.

Jesus is the sin offering for the gentiles. God's righteousness leads Him to this activity so they are considered as cleansed, to show God's righteousness.

Paul takes this notion and expands it to say that the effect is not just for the gentiles but also for the Jews. The law is out.

effects of salvation event

1. reconciliation—2 Cor 5:18-20, Rom 5:10-11. Return of humans to God's favor after a period of estrangement and rebellion in God's initiative.

2. redemption is Paul's view, the idea of God paying slave owner money so slave would belong to the god.

Paul has idea of the Mercy seat which was just above the ark of the covenant. The cross is the new mercy seat with the blood of Jesus being the redemption. For Paul Jesus is the redemption--the act of liberation, not the redeemer.

Faith is the acceptance in obedient trust and trustful obedience of God's saving act proclaimed in the kerygma. more than intellectual assent.

Abraham's faith makes him the father of both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul goes back to Abraham and the covenant of grace to Abraham rather than to Moses. only new thing for Paul was the faith was to be in Christ Jesus.

For Paul, Jesus was raised by the Father and becomes a life giving spirit, the principle of life for believers.

the Lord and the Spirit--spirit of the Father, spirit of the Son--the Lord is the spirit.

triadic formula, Father, Son and Spirit--not separate persons for Paul.

Paul believed in the pre-existence of Christ as he quotes in a hymn in Philipians 2. He quotes a hymn already

extant so it is assumed the idea of Christ's pre-existence was in much of the Hellenistic church.

Paul expected the immediate return of Christ (see I Thess.) however, he was executed, we believe, in the persecutions under Nero in 62-64 C.E.

many letters attributed to Paul that are most certainly not his. I and II Timothy and Titus were written between 100-130 C.E. when the church had gone a long way in its development of administration. It was seeing gnosticism as its greatest threat and argued against it. Bishops and deacons and were common. Women had been put back in a position of subservience which they did not have under Paul.

Faith was seen not as a relationship but as a body of doctrine.

II Thess, Colosians, Ephesians were also attributed to Paul but most certainly were not. had very different theological viewpoints than Pauls.

John

John was writtn in the last decade of the first Cent. either from Ephesus or Eddessa in Eastern Syria.

He probably did not know of the synoptic gospels, but he undoubtedly had sources (a sayings source, a passion account).

the important thing is that John is writing polemic against gnosticism using their own style of question and answer.

John's Christology is the highest in the New Testament. He pushes Christ back to before the creation "in the beginning was the Word." whereas Mark (the first gospel) begins with Jesus baptism in the Jordon and Matt. and Luke go to his birth, John goes back to the very beginning.

John uses all the symbols he can to make Jesus appeal universally. Draws from all religions.

John's main concern is to argue against gnostic ideas that say knowledge is what counts. In John, belief is all that is necessary as he reiterates over and over. (John 8, 11, 14, 20)

John does not see a 'second coming' in the way the rest of the N. T. does. For John, Jesus parousia was when he met with the apostles the day of his resurrection and breathed on them so they received the Holy Spirit.

Realized Eschatology is the word for John's view. The minute you beleive in Christ and The One who sent him, then you are beginning eternal life. It is not 'pie in the sky by and by' but something now.

Before John was accepted into the canon, an ecclesiastical redactor added in some things to make it acceptable to the great Peterine church. This redactor apparently changed the

order of some chapters (reversing chapters 5 and 6) and added chapter 21 (giving Peter preeminence) as well as probably adding in some verses, such as in the Bread of life discourse to make it more sacramental. John was not sacramental.

In John, Jesus is in complete control of his destiny even when crucified. for ex., when he is captured, he is asked if he is Jesus and answers 'I am He' at which all those coming for him fall to the ground.

He is seen as the king who is firmly in control of events and ultimately confounds his opponents.