Early Christianity: The Jewish Context (ii)

January 31, 2006

- Diaspora and Palestine
- Institutions
- Sectarianism and movements

Housekeeping

- Waitlist: I will now open the course to all remaining students on waitlist.

Diaspora and Palestine

- Origins and Development
- Significant differences
- Modes, evidence of interconnection
Origins and Development

- Individual communities can be traced to 6th/5th centuries BCE
- Spread through: warfare (captives, exiles, and refugees), imperial service (e.g., military colonies), perhaps other opportunities
- Some spread (how much?) through adherence (“conversion”)
Significant differences

Palestine
- Centrally dominant institutions
- Density of documentation
- Density of settlement allows for formation of parties, groups
- Embedded in a full ethnic, social, political network
- Aramaic language

Diaspora
- Regional variation, dispersed
- Scattershot documentation
- Little evidence for “sects” and “movements” (but NB Christianity)
- Minority urban groups organized as “voluntary associations”
- Greek language

Modes, evidence of interconnection

- Pilgrimage
- Contributions of funds
- “Disaster stories” that imply connections:
  - Philo hears of the Gaius’ planned statue in the Temple
  - Revolts in Cyrene, Egypt and Cyprus, 115–117

Institutions and literatures

- Jerusalem Temple and Priesthood
- Synagogues
- A post-classical culture: Scripture and interpretation
Sectarianism and movements

- The three “philosophies”
  - Pharisees
  - Sadducees
  - Essenes
- Other groups and movements
  - Revolutionaries (e.g., sicarii)
  - Messianic movements (e.g., Jesus)
  - Prophetic movements (e.g., John Baptist)