

Paul, resurrection and “the Law”; the Rise of Christianity

February 21, 2006

- Paul's Gospel 1Cor. 15:3–11
- Paul's Cosmic myth and Jewish eschatological expectation
- The two Pauls and the problem of Judaism
- The rise and spread of Christianity

Housekeeping

- Midterm exam delayed until Tuesday, February 28, 2006
 - Study sessions:
 - Thursday 3:30–5:00
 - Monday: 3–4:30
- Room TBA**

The reason for my absences



Paul's gospel: 1Cor. 15:3–11

- The good news “by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:2)
- Christ: Died, was buried, and resurrected on the third day “according to the Scriptures”
- Post resurrection appearances: Paul’s (independent) claim to apostleship, as well as his example of divine grace.

Paul's Cosmic myth and Jewish eschatological expectation (i)

- 1 Cor. 15:20–28 (e.g.) gives content & specificity to “salvation” (from what?), and to dramatic expectations of “day of the Lord” (e.g., 1 Thess.): Christ undoes the sin of Adam
- Corresponds roughly to a view of the world attested among Jews of a world governed by hostile powers, whose reign will be overturned
- Final cosmic battle restores God to his rightful place. (*Can* have political referents as in Daniel, Revelation.)

Paul's Cosmic myth and Jewish eschatological expectation (ii)

1 Cor. 15:20–28:

... For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to God. Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every authority and power ... When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone.

Paul's Cosmic myth and Jewish eschatological expectation (iii)

Biblical (and Jewish) tradition points in two directions. E.g.,

- Zech. 14:16: Then every one that survives of **all the nations** that have come against Jerusalem shall go up ... to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, (also Isaiah 66:23ff)
- Dan. 12:1–2: At that time shall arise Michael the great prince ... And there shall be a time of trouble; but at that time **your people** shall be delivered, everyone found written in the book.

"Two Pauls" and the problem of the Law

- The "Law": Greek **nomos**, translates Hebrew **Torah**.
- Two Pauls (like two Jewish eschatologies)
 - Law is a trap (Gal. 3:10); the result of sin; Israel cannot understand Scripture (2Cor. 3:14f)
 - Advantage of Jew, circumcision "much in every way" (Rom. 3:1)
- One explanation: **Paul was still working out a Jewish eschatology**, with a special emphasis on the call to "the gentiles" (itself a "Jewish" category)
- Paul put solution first (Segal) : Resurrection is so significant, experience of salvation so great, that it causes Paul to revalue Torah itself

Spread of Christianity: Structure vs. Narrative

- Narrative: e.g., Acts, with an explosion of interest.
- Structure: Stark and Hopkins (with different biases)
 - Explicitly comparative: early Christianity develops as other movements do
 - Basis for critique and/or alternative understanding of sources
(e.g., Stark: can understand both **invisibility** of Christianity, and **Christian** experience of growth)

Projecting Growth of Christian Numbers (Stark and Hopkins)

