

## Jews and Christians

6/22/06

## Goals for Today

- Follow-up to synagogue visit
- Ancient Christian ideas about Jews
- Jewish ideas about Christians
- Developments up to now

## Christians and Jews - Sources

- New Testament - diverse views, polemics
- Christian writings - polemics
- Jewish writings - side notes, polemics
- Historians - some references, not always reliable, (Christians and Jews “irrelevant”)
  - Legitimacy of “ancient” traditions
  - Self-Definition



## New Testament Texts

- Matthew 5:17-48
- Mark 7:1-23
- Acts 10, 15:1-29
- Romans 2-3
- Galatians 3-4
  
- What do they argue? How interpret Law?
- Implications for Christians?

## New Testament - Overview

- Gospels - varied perspectives
  - Matthew - Jesus very Jewish - observant
  - Luke - Jewishness downplayed
- Acts - Jews opposed Paul, but Jewish Christians still important
- Galatians - Faith over Law
- Hebrews - Jesus is better

## Later Christian Writings - Barnabus

- 2nd-3rd Century CE - Alexandria
- Judaism = false religion from beginning
  - Jews always broke covenants, misunderstood Bible
- Bible is not history, but allegory and the Jews always misunderstood the allegory
  - Ex. - Food laws were moral examples, not diet
- Bible belongs to Christians, not Jews

## Later Christian Writings - Others

- (Christians were in extreme minority)
  - Lower classes, met in homes - not public
- Justified selves by attacking Jewish critics
- Circumcision - not sign of covenant, but almost of curse
- Bishop Melito - Jews guilty of Jesus' death
  - And Jews who refuse to believe in Jesus continue to crucify him

## Jewish Opinions

- Jesus was illegitimate
- He was cursed by his death (Deut. 21.23)
  - So could not be Messiah
- Various references to “Minim” may be to Christians

## Texts – Issues? Concerns? Debates?

- Justin Martyr (2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE)
  - Dialogue with Trypho (418)
- Aphrahat (4<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Syria)
  - Rejection of Israel (421)
- Epiphanius (4<sup>th</sup> Century)
  - Refutation of Heresies (424)
- Codex Theodosianus (5<sup>th</sup> Century) (529)
- Novels of Theodosius (5<sup>th</sup> Century CE) (529)
- Codex Justinianus (6<sup>th</sup> Century CE) (529)

## Jewish Developments

- 70/135 - 2 Revolts failed, Temple destroyed
- Aristocracy, priesthood lost power
- Apocalyptic ideas had failed
  - Needed new approach, less focus on afterlife
- Pharisees survived, reorganized community around Prayer, Oral Torah
- Focus on following Torah precisely

## What happened?

- Internal Jewish disagreement produced factions, further subdivided
- Constantine's conversion gave Christians political power, and thus ability to hurt Jews
- Centuries of Anti-Semitism and violence followed, up to Holocaust
- Recent Vatican statements

## Jewish-Christian Dialogue

- Dabru Emet
- Sacred Obligation
- Relationships and Obligations

## What do you think?

- Do the covenants with Jews still hold?
- Which Christian writers do you agree with as far as Jews are concerned?
- Should the Church apologize for things which were said and done so long ago?

## For Next Week

- Tues. – no readings – prepare presentations
- Thurs. – No readings – bring questions