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 (2nd Century CE)
  - Dialogue with Trypho (418)
- Aphrahat (4th Century CE, Syria)
  - Rejection of Israel (421)
- Epiphanius (4th Century)
  - Refutation of Heresies (424)
- Codex Theodosianus (5th Century) (576)
- Novels of Theodosius (5th Century CE) (583)
- Codex Justinianus (6th Century CE) (589)

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