

# Early Christian Writings

RSRU 2610-004

Paul: Epistle to the Romans

- 1) Terms, and meanings of select terms
- 2) Epistle to the Romans – Structure
- 3) Epistle to the Romans – Message/Gospel
  - What does Paul convey
  - What does this mean for the community (hearers)

- 1) Terms, and meanings of select terms

# Paul – Terms – (recap on select terms)

- Gospel
- Conversion
- Mission
- Epistle
- Apostle
- Apocalyptic
- Pagan
- Gentile
- Pharisee

# Select Terms

## Gospel

- O.E. *godspel* "good news," from *god* "good" + *spel* "story, message," translation of L. *bona adnuntiatio*, itself a translation of Gk. *euangelion* "reward for bringing good news." First element of the O.E. word had a long "o," but it shifted under mistaken assoc. with *God*.
  - *Online Etymology Dictionary*, © 2001 Douglas Harper

# Select Terms

## Conversion

- Middle English conversioun, *religious conversion*, from Old French conversion, from Latin conversiō, conversiōn-, *a turning around*, from conversus, past participle of convertere, *to turn around*;

- *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*  
Copyright © 2006 by Houghton Mifflin Co.

- The transformation of an unconscious mental conflict into a symbolically equivalent bodily symptom

- *Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary*, © 2002 Merriam-Webster, Inc

# Select Terms

## Apocalyptic

- any of a class of Jewish or Christian writings that appeared from about 200 BCE to CE 350 and were assumed to make revelations of the ultimate divine purpose
- a prophetic revelation, esp. concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil

- *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1) Based on Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006*

- 2) Epistle to the Romans – Structure



# Paul's Epistle to the Romans

- Longest of Paul's letters
- Some say clearest of Paul's thinking/theology
- He did not know the community
- Influential:
  - Included in the orthodox canon
  - Augustine (his thinking and theology)
  - Catholic vs. Protestant (fueled controversy)

# Romans - structure

- Structure:
    - As we developed in class
    - Generally attributed to Ehrman's 7 part structure (there are other structure theories for Romans)
    - Compiled from Danny's notes
- (fill in as needed - I have not added /edited /corrected these notes)

# Romans - structure

1: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- Opening/ Greeting
- Apology (for not writing/visiting sooner)
- Gospel of Christ is power
- God is clearly seen, so sinners are without excuse

# Romans - structure

2: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- Judgment of God
- establishes difference between Gentiles and Jews
- importance of the law
- "Those who have sinned by the law shall be judged by the law"
- Salvation does not come from following the law alone

# Romans - structure

3: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- "righteousness", "justify" -key phrases
- law alone does not beget salvation
- God is righteousness it is he that justifies the one who has faith in Jesus
- The law brings wrath, but where there is no law there can be no wrath

# Romans - structure

4: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- You die to the law through the Body of Christ
- United in Resurrection
- Do not let sin exercise Dominion
- Set the mind on Spirit and Peace
- We are debtors
- Children of God through adoption

# Romans - structure

5: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- It is God who shows the ultimate mercy
- you don't receive mercy for working hard, you receive it by truly believing
- have to believe with all you heart to proclaim it

# Romans - structure

6: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- concluding summary
- illustrates his view of faith and encourages theirs-leading by example
- emphasizes following the examples of Saints in Charity



# Romans - structure

7: Seven-part structure (Ehrman)

- Closing
- tells them to go with God and wishes them well

- 3) Epistle to the Romans – Message/Gospel
  - What does Paul convey
  - What does this mean for the community (hearers)

# Paul's Epistle to the Romans

- What does the Epistle convey?
- What does Paul wish to tell, reveal, effect?

# Romans - conveys

- Paul's gospel Romans conveys:
  - A Christian's relationship to Jesus Christ
  - What Christians should believe and how to live
  - Conveys God's message/gospel
  - God's message/gospel is means to salvation
- And
  - Shares gospel and of completed work in other locales
  - Seeks support for his missions etc...

# Paul's gospel

- One should live in accordance with the Law
- If one does not, then eternal damnation
- But people do not live properly with the Law
- Everybody sins/transgresses
- Therefore no salvation

# Paul's gospel

- Gospel of Christ as hope/redeemer/salvation/...
- Jesus died unfairly
- He was redeemed/resurrected
- What does this mean for us?
- Can his death redeem us?
  - No (But...)

# Grace - Atonement

- Salvation
  - Will not come through actions/work/merit
  - Salvation is through grace (a gift)
  - Grace (associated) of/by Holy Spirit  
Received through Jesus Christ

## Through faith for believers - Grace as gift

- But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and it is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.
- ... Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ whom God put forward as sacrifice of atonement by his blood effective through faith. 3.21-23



# Atonement - At one with

- Sinners become at one with Jesus and in this process through faith, Jesus' crucifixion (his innocence undergoes punishment for others who would have suffered divine retribution).
- They deserve to be punished and he took it for them.
- They are justified by his death, and are now saved by him from divine retribution (Rom: 5:9).

# Grace - Atonement

- Gift of Grace: (Relationship with Christ)
  - “We who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (6.4).

- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death....
- For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin... 7

# Name/ hearing/ preaching

- Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. 10.13
- And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim ...
- So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. 10.17

# Under the God's Grace Love fulfills the law

- Should not live under the law, but under the Grace of God. Obedience to God, rightfully delegated authority, study scripture and share, and love others, they will not sin. Love worketh no ill to its neighbor: Love is fulfilling of the law. 12.15

- How does Paul convey the justification by

‘Faith’

and not by

‘Works’

# Faith not works

Appeal to consider Abraham and David

- What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor, according to the flesh? 4.1
- Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him to be as righteousness. 4.3
- Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift, but as something due. ... faith is reckoned as righteousness.
- So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God righteousness apart from works... Blessed...

- Note:

I have pulled from here the slides about Abraham and faith.  
They will be added to the slides on Mark or Matthew.