

Helmut Koester: The Apostle Paul: His Letters, His Cities, and His Legacy

Thursday 3:00–5.00 Andover Hall, Room 102

SYLLABUS

- Jan. 29 **Introduction:** The continuing controversy surrounding Paul; his interpreters from Bultmann to Boyarin and beyond; overview of the readings and course assignments. First-century Roman Palestine; the founding of communities of followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, Galilee, and the Syrian Diaspora; Paul's call/conversion and the immediate aftermath.
(No assigned readings).
- Feb. 5 **Antioch as the Center of the early Hellenistic Mission:** The city as the capitol of Syria and its Jewish community (structure, relationship to Gentiles) slides. The Antioch church; Barnabas and early missionary activity; conflict at Antioch and the Apostles' Council; Conflict at Galatia: Jewish-Christian propaganda and the question of the circumcision of believers; Paul and the Law. The beginning of Paul's independent missionary endeavor.
Readings: Bultmann 63–121; Stendahl 1–23; Koester, *History and Literature*, 105–120.
Paper Assignment: Acts 15; Gal 2:1–14.
- Feb. 12 **From Philippi to Thessalonike and Corinth: The First Letter to the Thessalonians:** Archaeology of Philippi and Thessalonike (slides); patterns of Paul's missionary organization; Paul's first letter.
Readings: 1 Thessalonians; Koester, *History and Literature*, pp. 113–20; idem *Paul and His World*, pp. 55–69; Schüssler Fiorenza ch. 5.
Paper Assignment: 1 Thess 1:1–10.
- Feb. 19 **Paul's Communities in Corinth and in Philippi:** 1 Corinthians; spiritual experience or communal commitment; the Eucharist and the story of Jesus' suffering and death. Jewish Christian missionaries in Corinth and in Philippi.
Readings: 1 Corinthians; Koester, *History and Literature*, 126–42; Meeks chs. 3 and 4.
Paper Assignment: 1 Cor 1:10–31.
- Feb. 26 **The Collection for Jerusalem:** Paul's hope and concerns as expressed in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Romans. Paul's relations with the Jerusalem Church and the role of Jerusalem in his missionary activities.
Readings: 2 Corinthians 8–9; Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*.
Paper Assignment: 2 Cor 12:11–18.
- March 5 **Rome and Paul's Letter to the Romans:** The city of Rome as the center of the empire; Patrons and clients, imperial cult (slides). Grace by faith and the role of works of the Law; Pauline universalism in historical context.
Readings: Romans; Bornkamm, "The Revelation of God's Wraths (Romans 1–3)"; Koester, *History and Literature*, pp. 142–14.
Paper Assignment: Rom 1:16–2:29.
- March 12 **Paul's Churches after His Death: Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians** Slavery in the Roman world; The runaway slave Onesimus. Household codes; removing the barriers between Jewish and Gentile Christians; the cosmic Christ.
Readings: Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians; Koester, *History and Literature*, pp. 266–280.

Paper Assignment: Philemon 1–25.

March 19 ***The First Major Reshaping of Paul’s Legacy: Luke-Acts:*** Separating the historical world of Paul from the world created by Luke. Paul portrayed as the final act in the Christ drama and as the linchpin of ecclesiastical authority.

Readings: Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*.

Paper Assignment: Acts 20.

March 26 Spring Break, no class

April 2 ***Paul the Apostle in the Tradition of the Churches: 1 Peter, Ignatius, 1 Clement*** The first persecutions; the letter of Pliny to the emperor Trajan; shaping of the churches by recourse to the moral traditions of the Jewish diaspora. Controversies with Judaizers and docetists; the monarchical episcopate; martyrdom.

Readings: 1 Peter; 1 Clement; Ignatius, *Letter to the Smyrneans and Letter to the Philadelphians*, on reserve; Koester 282–98; Allen Brent, “Ignatius of Antioch and the Imperial Cult,” *VigChr* 52 (1998) pp. 30–58 (on reserve).

Paper Assignment: Smyrn. 1–3.

Apr. 9 ***A Tale of Two Apostles: The Pastoral Epistles and the Acts of Paul and Thecla:*** The evolving split among Pauline followers—Paul’s doctrine of freedom in the Spirit vs. the social needs of the Pauline *ekklesia*, the status of women. The Pastoral Epistles and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*: Opposing views of Paul’s legacy.

Readings: 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus; *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, on reserve; Schüssler Fiorenza ch. 8; Koester, *History and Literature*, pp. 300–10.

Paper Assignment: 1 Tim 2–3.

Apr. 16 ***The Second Major Reshaping of Paul’s Legacy: Marcion:*** The radicalization of Paul’s rejection of the Law and the implications of the cosmic Christ. Early Christian Gnosticism and the Pauline legacy.

Readings: Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, 15–92, on reserve.

Paper Assignment: Marcion’s Antitheses (copy will be distributed in class).

Apr. 23 ***The Ethics of the New Community:*** The law of Moses and the gifts of the Spirit. The implications of Pauline Ethics for today.

Readings: Koester, *Paul and His World*, pp. 3–14, 195–206.

Paper Assignment: Galatians 5:13–25.

Apr. 30 ***From the Prophets of the Bible to Jesus and Paul:*** How the call for justice by the biblical prophets was continued in the Christian proclamation.

Readings: Koester, *From Jesus, to the Gospels*, pp. 234–50 (on reserve).

Paper Assignment: Amos 5:18–24

May 7 ***Review Session,*** Final take-home examinations will be distributed at the end of the class

May 14 ***Final examinations due:*** Final examinations must be received by 8 PM on this day, preferably handed in person between 3 and 4 PM, or copies handed in to the office of Cole Gustafson in Andover Hall, 3rd floor before 4 PM, or by e-mail to cgustafson@hds.harvard.edu to be received by noon that day.

Requirements

Assigned Readings: Read the New Testament or early-Christian text assigned for that week *before* the weekly section meeting, and read at least one of the assigned secondary literature. The bibliography provides a selection of books and articles for further study.

Assigned Papers: Students taking the course for credit must submit weekly short papers (not more than 2 pages) in the week, for which the text is assigned (papers submitted later cannot be accepted!). Graduate students must submit at least 7 papers, undergraduates must submit at least 4 papers during the spring semester, each on the date, to which they are assigned; Late submission will not be accepted! Papers will be read and, if possible, returned within one week, graded $\sqrt{+}$, $\sqrt{}$, or $\sqrt{-}$; if you receive a $\sqrt{-}$, make an appointment to discuss your problems with me personally.

Final Examination: There will also be a final take-home examination in May, consisting of two essay questions (a number of essay topics will be given, from which you may choose).

Bibliography

* = on Reserve

= ordered in the Harvard Coop.

Required

Harper Collins Study Bible (New Revised Standard Version; San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989). ISBN Student Edition 0-06-065526-7

*# Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

*# Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

*# Helmut Koester, *Paul and His World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) ISBN 13:9780-8006-3800-0.

*# Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. 2: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (1982; rev. ed. New York: de Gruyter, 2000). pbk ISBN 3-11-014692-4

*# Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).

Recommended Reading

* Rudolf Bultmann, "Paul," *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann* (pp. 111-146) on reserve.

* Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (pp. 1-23).

* Günther Bornkamm, "The Revelation of God's Wraths (Romans 1-3),". In idem, *Early Christian Experience*, pp. 47-70.

* Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992)

* Marianne Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

Supplemental Bibliography

1. Paul

- * Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Part 2 (New York: Charles Scribners, Sons, 1955).
- * Günther Bornkamm, *Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995). LC # 9085068
- * Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).
- E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983)
- N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).
- Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).
- Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).
- J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997).
- John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

2. Post-Pauline Writings

- Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).
- Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997).
- Ernst Käsemann, "Ephesians and Acts," *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966) pp. 288–297.
- Barbara E. Bowe, *A Church in Crisis: Ecclesiology and Paraenesis in Clement of Rome* (HDR 23; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988).
- Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).
 - John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981).
- William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).
- Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983).

3. Social, Historical, and Literary Background for Paul and His Churches

- Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).
- Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70–170 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
- Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).
- S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, eds., *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
- Ross S. Kraemer, ed., *Maenads, Martyrs, Matrons, and Monastics: A Sourcebook on Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).
- Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter-Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986).
- Helmut Koester, ed., *Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. 1: History, Literature, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age* (New York: de Gruyter, 1995).
- Martin Goodman, *The Roman World 44 BC–AD 180* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
- Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997).
- Charalambos Bakirtzis and Helmut Koester, *Philippi at the Time of Paul and After His Death* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998).
- Helmut Koester, ed., *Ephesus: Metropolis of Asia* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995).

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