

EARLY ARTICULATIONS CHRISTOLOGY

Reading: Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha*; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* (excerpts in Norris)

NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATIONS

1-2 Thessalonians, Romans, Galatians, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude, Hebrews

Implications of the work of Christ

- The Body
 - The importance of the body
 - The transformation of the body
 - Acts 2:1-36, Pentecost
 - I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh
- Destiny of all creation
 - Communion
 - Reinterpreting death
 - We have been baptized into his death
 - We will rise again
 - We now live in Christ Jesus
- Summary
 - Dawning of the Last Day
 - Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor 15)
 - The current reality for Christians is both the presence of the kingdom and its absence.
 - The day of salvation
 - Living in the risen Christ is living in his healing presence, in all senses of the term
 - The Spirit is at work within, renewing your mortal body (Rom 8.10–11)
- The End of the World
 - The consummation of history (liberation) and a continual critique of the present
 - The current situation
 - Pentecost & the meaning of the Church
 - Living in the resurrection
 - The struggle against evil
 - Opening creation to the living presence of Christ
 - Christ's Victory
 - Second Coming / Parousia
 - Judgment
 - The Book of Revelation
 - The New Creation
- Waiting
 - Standing vigilant
 - The attitude of Christ
 - False attitudes



FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES

Clement of Rome (d. 101 trad.)

Letter of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth (c. 95)

- Jesus is Son of Israel and Son of the Father

Ignatius of Antioch (d. c. 113)

- Emphasis of Jesus' historical identity
- Jesus is the pre-existing Word of God
- Christ brings humanity and divinity together
 - He was born of Mary and of God (Smyrneans 1)
- Importance of the resurrection
 - He was flesh after the resurrection (Smyrneans 3)
- Jesus is the truth; he is the summation of Revelation, surpassing the Old Testament (Philadelphians 8)
 - "To my mind it is Jesus Christ who is the original documents." (Philadelphians 8)
- Suffering is redemptive: to imitate God is to suffer for the good
- "I hope, indeed, by your prayers to have the good fortune to fight with wild beasts in Rome, so that by doing this I can be a real disciple." (Ephesians 1)
- "Let me be fodder for wild beasts—that is how I can get to God. I am God's wheat and I am being ground by the teeth of wild beasts to make a pure loaf for Christ. I would rather that you fawn over the beasts so that they may be my tomb and no scrap of my body be left." (Romans 3)
- Desire should pass through the cross: "My desire has been crucified and there burns in me no passion for material things" (Romans 7)

Justin Martyr (d. c. 160)

- Logos theology
- The Logos was with God in creation; now he has taken flesh
- The Logos mediates between God and creation
- Christ the Word and Wisdom of God, thus Christ is the goal of philosophy
- "Our doctrines, then, appear to be greater than all human teaching; because Christ, who appeared for our sakes, became the whole rational being, both body, and reason, and soul. For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Word. Put since they did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves . . . For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine, but in Christ, who was partially known even by Socrates (for He was and is the Word who is in every man, and who foretold the things that were to come to pass both through the prophets and in His own person when He was made of like passions, and taught these things), not only philosophers and scholars believed, but also artisans and people entirely uneducated, despising both glory, and fear, and death; since He is a power of the ineffable Father, not the mere instrument of human reason." (2nd Apology, 10)

Melito of Sardis (d. c. 180)

- Typological reasoning
- Unity of opposites: God and humanity in Christ, Old Testament and New Testament

- “He who hung the earth in place is hanged. He who fixed the heavens in place is fixed in place. He who made all things fast is made fast on the tree. The Master is insulted. God is murdered.” (96)
- “For as a Son he was born, as lamb he was carried off, as sheep he was slaughtered, as human being he was buried. He rose from the dead as God, being by nature both God and a human being. He is everything: Law inasmuch as he judges, Logos inasmuch as he teaches, grace inasmuch as he saved, Father inasmuch as he begets, Son inasmuch as he is begotten, sheep inasmuch as he suffers, human inasmuch as he is buried, God inasmuch as he rises.” (8-9)

Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 140-c. 195)

Against Heresies written c. 175-185

- Refutation of Gnosticism and Adoptionism
 - Docetism / Gnosticism
 - Valentinus
 - Marcion: Expelled from Rome in 144, died c. 160
- Adoptionism
 - Ebionites
- Importance of Tradition
 - Keeping to the Tradition and not inventing levels of divinity
 - Christ proclaimed the Father; the Son is the revelation of the Father
 - The Scripture (Old Testament) names only God the Father and his Son as God
- How our redemption is accomplished
 - Recapitulation
 - “There is, therefore, one God the Father, as we have shown, and one Christ Jesus our lord, who comes through a universal plan and recapitulates all things in himself. But in every way he is also a human, a creation of God; he, therefore, recapitulated humanity in himself. The invisible became visible, the unchangeable became subject to change, and the Word became human, recapitulating everything in himself.” (3.16.6)
 - The suffering of Christ saves us; if there was no suffering, then there was no salvation. How can our suffering be meaningful if Christ did not suffer? (3.18.6)
 - A truly human Christ gives meaning to our suffering (3.18.6)
 - A truly human Christ truly unites humanity to God (3.18.7)
 - “For if a human being had not conquered humanity’s foe, that foe would not have been conquered justly. Conversely, unless it was God who conferred salvation, we should not possess it securely, and unless humanity had been closely united to God, it could not have become a sharer in incorruptibility.” (3.18.7)
 - Realist (Russell, 105) or ontological account of the transformation of humans into gods (Ps 82:6)
 - The Divinity and Humanity of Jesus
 - Christ was always with the Father (3.18.1)
 - He entered history and became a human being (“summed up in himself the long history of the human race”) (3.18.1)
 - Humanity was incapable of attaining salvation, being reconstituted, by itself (3.18.2)
 - Humanity saved itself through Christ (3.18.2)
 - Against Gnostics, Christ is a human being who was born and suffered (3.18.3)
 - Christ and Jesus are not two different things, Christ did not come upon Jesus, Jesus is Christ (3.18.3)
 - The Father has anointed, the sun has been anointed, the Spirit is the ointment (3.18.3)

- “The Logos of God became a human being, and the Son of God was made Son of man, so that humanity, having received the Logos and accepted adoption, might become Son of God.” (3.19.1)
- Real participation in God is a slow process (AH 4.38, discussed in Russell, 107)
- “The glory of God is a living person and the life of humanity is the vision of God. If the revelation of God through creation already gives life to all living beings on earth, how much more does the manifestation of the Father through the Son give life to those who see God.” (AH 4.20.7, quoted in Clément, 265)
- Various ways of approaching our redemption
 - Exchange formula: God became human so that we might become gods (AH 5, preface)
 - Redemption (5.1.1)
 - Ransom (5.1.1)
 - Communion with God (5.1.2)
 - Jesus must be human; Jesus must be divine (5.1.2-3)
 - Eucharist as manifestation and realization of redemption (5.2.2)
 - Becoming Children of God
 - The Incarnation is the prerequisite for our participation in God

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