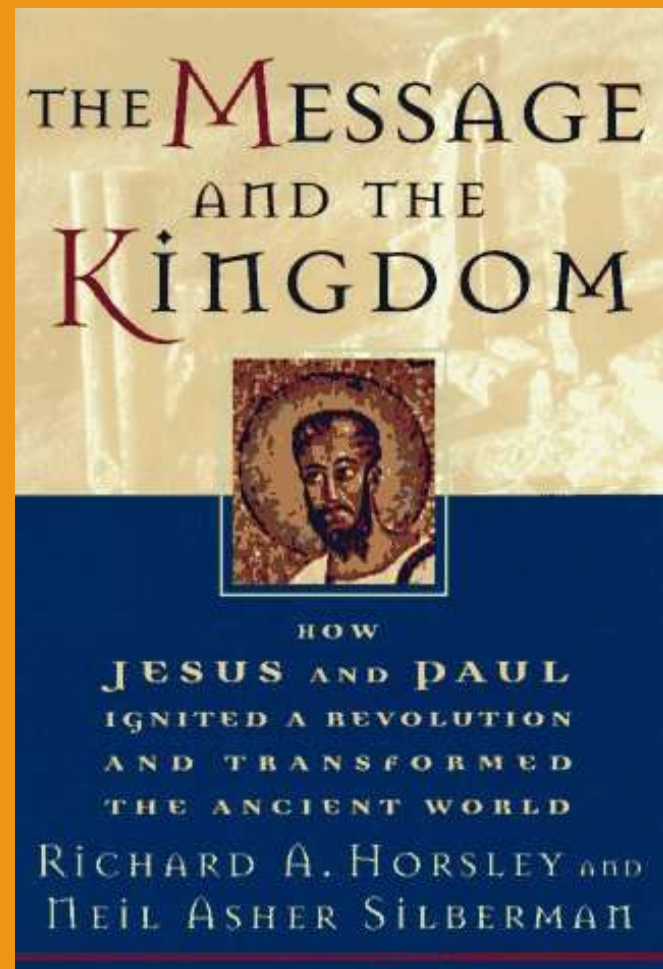


Paul and Jesus

Jack Risk



Paul's references to the historical Jesus

- Galatians 4:4-5
 - *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.*
- Romans 1:3-4
 - *the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord*

Access to historical information

- Paul's main source of information was the Twelve
- No indication he had access to Galilean communities of followers of Jesus
- No indication he shared other information about Jesus with his own followers

Knowledge of Jesus Christ

- Not from memory or recorded traditions
- Collective fervour of communities
 - People seeking escape from current reality
 - *Our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of people we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit.*
 - (1 Thess. 1:5-6)
 - Healings

Historical Jesus

- Villages of the Galilee of Herod Antipas
- Final prophetic demonstration against Jerusalem authorities

Paul's Christ

- Abstract
- Redemptive power
- Universal protector and saviour
- Soon-to-return triumphant redeemer who would usher in the end of the present sinful world

Paul's main focus regarding Jesus

- Martyrdom and heavenly vindication
 - *For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve...*
 - (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

Paul's images of Jesus

- Crucified victim
- Self-sacrificing divine figure
- Conquering general wreaking vengeance on his enemies

Language

Atonement

- Passover lamb
 - (1 Cor. 5:7)
- Offering of firstfruits
 - (1 Cor. 15:20)
- Sin offerings of Exodus 29 or Leviticus 4
 - (Rom. 8:3)
- Sprinkling of goat's blood on the lid of the ark of the covenant
 - (Rom. 3:25)

Martyrdom

The tyrant was punished, and the homeland purified—they having become, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation. And through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been mistreated.

- (4 Maccabees 17:21-22)

Jesus' death and resurrection

- Not a tragic injustice
- Not the sacrifice of a noble leader for a specific political cause
- An event of cosmic dimensions and a divine drama in which the political and spiritual fate of all the world's peoples was at stake

Jesus as Lord

- “Lord” is ironic — Jesus is not a patron demanding submission
- Both Jesus and Paul challenged Roman authority and power

Jesus as model

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

(Phil. 2:3-7)

- Jesus was the model of self-sacrifice in the cause of economic and spiritual resurrection

Changes in behaviour

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.

- (Gal. 5:19-21)

- Behaviours that reflected the dominant culture
- Without changes they would be helpless to effect or be part of world-transforming change

Transformational symbols

The Cross

- No longer a symbol of Roman oppression
- Now a symbol of the impending salvation of the righteous and destruction of the wicked

Baptism

- In Galilee and Judea it was a symbol of commitment to the renewal of the covenant
- Paul turned it into a symbol of personal transformation

It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

(Gal. 2:20)

Building the kingdom of God

Jesus

- Q
 - Sayings of Jesus about separation, renewal, establishing an egalitarian kingdom of God
- Mark
 - Jesus as a spirit-filled prophet and teacher performing healings, exorcisms, miracles
 - A movement of community renewal and liberation

Paul's

- Communities of like-minded people opposing social structures of violence and inequality
- A global network of communities committed to building God's kingdom