

Jerusalem and Paul

E Bruce Brooks

University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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I here take up some problems connected with Paul's three visits to Jerusalem, plus the ill-fated mission journey of Mark with Paul between the second and third visits, and add a brief note on one of Paul's major opponents: Jacob the Lord's Brother.

1. Paul's Conversion and First Visit to Jerusalem

Paul persecuted the early Christians. As he himself says in Gal 1:13,

For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it.

Why did Paul persecute the early Christians? His self-descriptions make it clear. Jesus openly flouted the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-24) and argued against purity rules (Mk 7:5f); he recognized only six commandments (Mk 10:19). Jesus was thus a Jewish reformer. Paul was a Jewish conservative, focused on the Law, "being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal 1:14). Naturally he took offense. As with others whom we shall meet presently, offense for him took the form of arrest and murder.

Why then did he later *join* this hateful movement? Probably because it had changed in the meantime, to include the idea of Jesus' bodily resurrection.¹ This touched Paul's other nerve. As a Pharisee, he believed in the Law, whose exceeding many provisions made sin and death inevitable, but as a Pharisee, he also believed in the resurrection of the dead. The seemingly well-attested resurrection of Jesus resolved this dilemma. For Paul, Jesus' resurrection became the whole content of religion (1 Cor 6:14, "And God both raised the Lord and will raise up us through his power").

When did this Resurrection doctrine appear in Christianity? Its secondary status in Mark does not give us a date. Paul does. "After three years" (Gal 1:18) he went up to Jerusalem to consult Peter, most likely to hear about Peter's vision of Jesus.

Now we come to a sticking point: chronology.² What does "after three years" mean? From 1 Cor 9:1-2, we know that Paul was jealous of his Apostolic credentials. It would be like him to date his vision to the same year as Peter's, which was in 30; this was Paul's claimed year of rebirth as a Christian. Then by "three years" he may mean "in the third year of my life as a Christian." This would be 33, give or take a year for inclusive versus exclusive dating. I will adopt the date 33 as a working hypothesis for this first Jerusalem visit of Paul.

¹For the lateness of the Resurrection idea in Mark, see Brooks **Resurrection**.

²Moffatt **Introduction** (1911) 62f already lists 23 solutions to the chronology problem.

2. The Food Issue and Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem³

Jewish purity rules kept Jews and Gentiles from sharing meals. As Gentiles joined the Jesus movement, and as commensality grew in ritual importance, this became an issue. Paul, who had abandoned food rules with the rest of the Law, saw no problem. Others did. To resolve the matter, Paul went to Jerusalem, “after the space of fourteen years” (Gal 2:1) If these, again, are Paul's years as a Christian, the year is 44. “I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles” (Gal 2:2). There, “Jacob and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.” In Jacob and John [Zebedee] and Cephas [or Peter], we may easily recognize the disciples who regularly accompany Jesus in Mark.⁴

Paul in Gal 2:12 complains that “certain from Jacob” later came to Antioch, demanding observance of the food rules. Why would Jacob give a liberal ruling, and then enforce a conservative one? I believe Beare has found the answer: the two Jacobs are not the same.⁵ The liberal Jacob Zebedee had ruled in favor of abrogating the food laws. Jacob the Lord's conservative Brother, who after Jacob Zebedee's death became the chief figure at Jerusalem, sought to countermand the other Jacob's liberal ruling.

If so, we must read Gal 2:9-12 this way:

Gal 2:9. and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, Jacob [Zebedee] and Cephas and John [Zebedee], they, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; [10] Only that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was also zealous to do. [11] But when Cephas came to Antioch I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. [12] For before certain came from Jacob [the Brother], he ate with the Gentiles, but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.

The three who extended fellowship to Paul in the year 44 will then have been the Jesus Three: Peter and the Zebedees. In Mark, Peter is the leading figure. But in a seemingly late passage, Mark also notes the Zebedees' desire for leadership in the movement; Jesus accepts their request, but also predicts their death (Mk 10:35-40). This was fulfilled in the killing of Jacob and the escape of Peter, evidently second on the hit list (Ac 12:1-3). Herod died in 44.⁶ Then the ruling itself was in early 44. Herod's action was meant to please the Jews (Ac 12:3); they were outraged by the ruling, which negated Judaism as they knew it. The Jewish leadership had tolerated the Jesus movement, but only so far. Jacob Zebedee had overstepped that limit.

³For a survey of opinions about this crux, see Talbert **Again** 26 n3. Knox **Fourteen** (1936) notes efforts to reconcile Acts 15 with Galatians 2 (perhaps accomplished by Parker 1967). Knox **Chronology** (1939) 18 lists three datable events in Paul's life: his conversion, trial before Gallio, and imprisonment at Caesarea. I here suggest that the Jerusalem decree is also datable by the death of Jacob Zebedee, followed by that of Herod Antipas I, both in the year 44.

⁴As in the healing of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:22-43) and the Transfiguration (Mk 9:2-9a).

⁵Suggested with becoming modesty in Beare **Sequence** 305f.

⁶Josephus Ant 19:343-351; Ac 12:19-20.

We are fortunate to have a view of the crisis from the Jewish side. b.Sanhedrin 43a lists five Jesus disciples who deserve to die. Klausner's decoding of the distorted names has been improved by Hirschberg and others; the best reading seems to be:

Mattai = Matthew
 Naqai = [Simon] the Zealot, by transposition of letters within Hebrew
 Netser = Andrew (following Klausner)
 Buni = Boanerges = John, the one surviving Zebedee (following Klausner)
 Todah = Thaddaeus

That is, *the five original disciples of Jesus*, with Matthew having earlier replaced Levi, and Simon the Zealot and Thaddaeus now replacing the dead Jacob Zebedee and the escaped Peter. Then at some earlier point, the First Five had moved from Capernaum to Jerusalem,⁷ where they continued as the leaders of the Jesus movement in that city. Sanhedrin 43a tells us that pursuit of the Christian leadership continued after the death of Jacob Zebedee; it reached to his (and Peter's) replacements in the First Five.

Exodus. The situation being thus untenable for the leaders, and presumably also for other liberals, there followed an exodus from Jerusalem (so Acts 8:1b implies), leaving Jesus' conservative Brother, who was acceptable to the Temple authorities, to fill the resulting leadership gap. If, as was argued above, the move of the leadership to Jerusalem was in 32, and the great scattering began in 44, then the term of the leading movement figures in Jerusalem *will have been twelve years*. This agrees with a tradition quoted by Clement of Alexandria as from the Preaching of Peter,⁸ and later by Eusebius as from Apollonius,⁹ that Jesus himself had commanded the apostles, "after twelve years, go ye out into the world, lest any say, We did not hear."¹⁰

The notion that Christian missionarizing began "from Jerusalem" is ridiculous. Christian missionarizing began with Jesus. Already in his lifetime, with converts making other converts,¹¹ it probably reached Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, not to mention Saul's Tarsus. What seems to have happened in 44 was a later explosion, leading to an effort which in part went beyond the previous geographical limits.

In 44, Jacob Zebedee was killed; Peter escaped. Peter soon appeared in Antioch, there to be faulted by Paul for retreating from the liberal position on food. Later on, there was a Cephas Party at Corinth, another Paul complaint (1 Cor 1:12). Peter's apocrypha center on Rome.¹² His brother Andrew is credited with deeds in Achaia and Macedonia;¹³ Jacob Zebedee's brother John, with works in Ephesus and thereabouts.¹⁴ All this is within the probable geographical zone of previous mission expansion.

⁷Thus began the Jerusalemizing trend in early Christian history; see Brooks **Four** 28.

⁸Stromateis 6/6:4; ANL v12 p328.

⁹Eusebius 5/18:14.

¹⁰Translation from James **Apocryphal** 17. For "all must hear," see Mk 13:10.

¹¹For the extent of this early "contact missionarizing," the earliest phases of which are apparently unknown to later Apostolic tradition, see Brooks **Kingdom** 90.

¹²The Acts of Peter, James 300f.

¹³The Acts of Andrew, James 337f.

¹⁴The Acts of John, James 228f.

Now comes something different. Matthew's field of mission activity is Ethiopia,¹⁵ south of the previous limit, Alexandria. Thaddaeus and Bartholomew are associated with Edessa, in eastern Syria,¹⁶ east of the previous limit, Antioch. Thomas went yet further in that same direction.¹⁷ I suggest that *it is this second, wider missionary push*, not Christian missionarizing as such, that "began from Jerusalem" in 44.¹⁸

Between the Second and Third Visits to Jerusalem

One detail from this period is Paul's missionary journey in Cyprus, Pamphylia, and points north with Barnabas and Barnabas' cousin Mark.¹⁹ This would have been in 46, after Mark had finished his Gospel, adapted it to an expected Gentile audience, and joined Paul in Antioch. Mark's conviction of the importance of the Gentile mission had grown upon him, but ended by being total: Mark has Jesus say in Mk 13:10 that the awaited End would not come until the Gospel had been preached to all nations.²⁰ His own missionary efforts were then meant to contribute toward hastening that end.

They were not successful. Local tradition has it that Mark ended his career as a respected leader in the old Alpha Christian community of Alexandria. So far Acts I.²¹ Acts II adds that Mark's withdrawal from Paul's journey to Cyprus and Pamphylia caused a permanent rift between Paul and Barnabas (who never reappears in Acts II). But this is contradicted by Paul, who speaks of Barnabas as a coworker in 1 Cor 9:6.²²

The Collection and Paul's Third Visit to Jerusalem

The assistance to "the saints" which Paul had promised during his second visit was presumably supplied shortly afterward, "by the hand of Barnabas and Saul," the two envoys to Jerusalem on that occasion.²³ This would still have been in the year 44, and the sender would have been the Antioch church, an old Christian establishment, one which Paul had not founded, and to which at that time he was himself subject.²⁴

¹⁵The Apostolic History of Abdias Book 7 (James 406f).

¹⁶Letters of Christ and Abgarus (James 476f).

¹⁷To Parthia, and to the known Parthian kings of the Indus Valley (Attridge **Acts** 12-13).

¹⁸Simon Zelotes figures as is a child healed by the Child Jesus in the Arabic Infancy Gospel (James 82); he is called from his grave (as is Thaddaeus) to attend the Assumption of the Virgin (Elliott 702). One of two late texts conflated as the Acts of Philip says that Simon was assigned by Jesus to Spain (Bovon 74). An earlier tradition gives this "furthest west" mission to Paul.

¹⁹See Brooks **Perga**.

²⁰For the lateness of this passage in Mark, see Brooks **Time** 74.

²¹Supplemented by Alexandrian tradition, for which see again Brooks **Perga**.

²²Luke in effect portrays Mark's missionary effort as not only ineffectual, but disruptive.

²³The two are separated in our Acts. The doublets in Acts I (noted by many; see Dupont **Sources** 33-50) seem to me to deserve further analytical attention. I must defer discussion of the problem of the "we" passages in Acts II, which, supported by personalia in Phm 1:24 and Deutero-Pauline Col 4:14 and 2 Tim 4:11 (perhaps by Timothy; see Brooks **Editors** 123), imply that Luke accompanied Paul on mission. Such eyewitness claims occur also in Mark and John.

²⁴Ac 13:1-3 shows the Antioch authorities choosing who shall go on a particular mission.

Later, Paul seems to have had the idea of a second gift, gathered from his own churches and probably aiming at reconciliation with Jerusalem. Despite references in 2 Cor 8 and 9 to “Macedonia,” Paul’s letters to Thessalonica and Philippi do not mention it. 1 Cor 16:1 mentions the Galatian churches as involved, but the Epistle to the Galatians does not solicit them. Then the idea for a second collection probably occurred to Paul between Galatians and the Corinthian letters, perhaps c56.

That this third visit was perilous, Acts 21-22 makes clear. Its failure, and Paul’s arrest and transfer to Rome for final judgement, are known only from Acts, but are probably factual. Luke in Acts II (c88) has little interest in relations between Paul and Jacob’s Jerusalem; he wishes to dramatize the rejection of Christians by the later Pharisaic leadership, expressed in the Birkat ha-Minim, and emblemized in Paul’s final Rome interview in Ac 28:23-28 and its two precedents in Corinth (Ac 18:5-11) and in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13:45-49).²⁵

Jacob the Brother

Of candidates for the authorship of the Epistle of Jacob, Jacob the Brother is the best known, but this is not a decisive reason for choosing him.²⁶ Against it is the good Greek of the Epistle, plus its focus on the “Law of Liberty” (Ja 2:12), whose six injunctions²⁷ can be observed by anyone, in contrast with the law of the Pharisees, whose hundreds of minute prescriptions all have power to damn.

Probably Jesus and his brother Jacob were educated by Pharisees. Consistent with that background is Jesus’ opposition to divorce (recalling the Galilean rabbi Shammai) and his joining John the Baptist’s hyperpuristic movement. Jesus later abandoned that approach, but in so doing distanced himself from his family, including his brothers.²⁸ The claim of Jesus’ resurrection must have convinced Jacob, who became a movement member in that sense, but without other change in his views; his early legendary image is of a more-than-priestly purity.²⁹ He was then just the man to lead the Jerusalem Jesus movement back in a conservative direction. His death in 62³⁰ seems to show that there were hazards from which even that conservatism did not always protect him.

The puristic Jacob had a second life in Gnosticism. The Gospel of Thomas core (gTh 1-12) never mentions Thomas; it ends with Jacob as leader.³¹ His presence in the Nag Hammadi texts offers important material for understanding this development.³²

²⁵For these passages, see further Brooks **Acts-Luke** 147.

²⁶For Jacob of Alphaeus as a likelier candidate, see Brooks **Jacob**.

²⁷See again Mk 10:19, where Jesus lists the six. Ja 2:11-12 mentions two of them.

²⁸Mk 3:21, 31-35; compare Mk 10:29-30 on the convert’s distancing from worldly family.

²⁹For a description due to Hegesippus (late 2c), see Eusebius 2/23:4-6.

³⁰Josephus Ant 20:200f; the context in Josephus gives the date 62.

³¹Later, Jacob, the mere *brother*, was superseded in that text by Thomas, the *twin brother*, of the Lord. See Brooks **Apostolic** and **Thomas A**.

³²For a convenient survey of the Nag Hammadi material, see Painter **James** 159-181.

Chronology

30. Crucifixion of Jesus; Paul persecutes the Jesus movement
32. Move of the Jesus movement leadership from Galilee to Jerusalem
32. Appearance of the Resurrection doctrine in Jerusalem, and its dissemination
33. Conversion of Paul; he sees a vision of Jesus in Heaven (2 Cor 12:2-4)
33. Paul visits Jerusalem to compare notes with Peter
34. Paul preaches under the direction of Antioch; proves successful with Gentiles
44. Paul visits Jerusalem to ask ritual latitude for Gentiles; Jacob Zebedee grants it
44. Paul and Barnabas deliver a thank-offering from Antioch to Jerusalem
44. Herod Antipas I, offended by Jacob Zebedee's decision, kills him
44. Peter leaves Jerusalem for Antioch; Matthew briefly succeeds Jacob Zebedee
44. Herod Antipas I dies; Jewish opposition to liberal Jesus followers continues
- 44-45. Exodus of liberal Jesus movement figures from Jerusalem
45. Mark adapts his Gospel for preaching to Gentiles; goes to Antioch
45. Jacob the Lord's conservative Brother becomes the leader at Jerusalem
46. Jacob the Brother sends envoys to Antioch to countermand liberal ruling
46. Peter, in Antioch, is cowed by Jacob the Brother's envoys; this offends Paul
46. Paul, having lost at Antioch, sets out to preach in Cyprus and beyond
46. Mark accompanies Paul on that mission; gets as far as Perga and returns
56. Paul conceives the idea of a second gift to Jerusalem; begins a collection
57. Paul writes anticipatory letter to Rome; sets out to deliver collection to Jerusalem
58. Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and detained at Caesarea
- 59-60. Paul is sent under guard from Caesarea to Rome, and executed there
62. Jacob the Brother is killed by the Temple authorities at Jerusalem

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