

Class 3

WHAT JESUS DID & WHAT IT SIGNIFIED IN ROMAN PALESTINE

Outline

- What was the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist?
- How popular was Jesus?
- What did Jesus really say?
- Did Jesus really perform miracles?
- What did Jesus mean by the "kingdom of God"?

Question 11

WHAT WAS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS & JOHN THE BAPTIST?

Jesus and John the Baptist

Analyzing the Developing Tradition: The Baptism

Matthew 3:13-16a

Mark 1:9

Luke 3:21

John 1:29-31

Then Jesus arrived from the Galilee to the Jordan, to John to be baptized by him. But John prevented him saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you would come to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted him. And when Jesus was baptized	And it was in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of the Galilee	Now it was when all the people had been baptized	The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."
	and was baptized in the Jordan by John.	and Jesus had been baptized, and was praying,	

Jesus and John the Baptist

Analyzing the Developing Tradition: The Baptism

- Tendencies in the gospels
 - John becomes MORE subordinate
 - Jesus becomes MORE important
 - Jesus' "need" for baptism is explained
 - "adoption" by God shifts to incarnation of God by John's gospel
- Additional sources: Acts of the Apostles and Josephus
- Applying the criteria of historicity

Question 12

HOW POPULAR WAS JESUS?



-
-
-
-
-
-

3

Jesus' Teaching Style

- Conventions of oral preaching
 - short, pithy sayings
 - rhythm and rhyme
 - images and metaphors from daily life
- Typical oral teaching "forms"
 - aphorisms
 - parables

How to Determine What Jesus Taught

Criteria of Historicity

early/eyewitness

embarrassing

multiply attested

discontinuous with Jewish or Christian ideas

oral character or form

Luke 11:17-20

Every government divided against itself is devastated, and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan is divided against himself -- since you claim that I drive out demons in Beelzebub's name -- how will his domain endure? If I drive out demons in Beelzebub's name, in whose name do your own people drive (them) out? In that case, they will be your judges. But if by God's finger I drive out demons, then for you God's imperial rule has arrived.

parallels in Mark 3:24-26, Matt 12:25-28

How to Determine What Jesus Taught

Criteria of Historicity

early/eyewitness

embarrassing

multiply attested

discontinuous with Jewish or Christian ideas

oral character or form

Luke 16:13

No man can be a slave to two masters. No doubt that slave will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and disdain the other. You can't be enslaved to both God and a bank account!

parallels in Matt 6:24; Gos. Thomas 47:1-2

How to Determine What Jesus Taught

Criteria of History

~~early eyewitness~~

~~embarrassing~~

~~multiply attested~~

~~discontinuous with
Jewish or Christian ideas~~

oral character or form

Luke 14:28-30

[Jesus addressing disciples] "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.'"

Jesus' Message: The Rule of God

- Why we think that message is historical
 - It's early (Q, Mark)
 - It's embarrassing (did God's rule arrive?)
 - It's multiply attested
 - in various sources (Q 13x, Mark 13x, John 2x, M and L occurrences as well)
 - in various "forms" or types of material (parables, beatitudes, aphorisms, passion narrative)
 - It's therefore expressed in those early oral forms
 - It would explain why Jesus was crucified

Question 15

**WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THE
"KINGDOM OF GOD"?**

Jesus' Message:

The Rule of God

- This rule is based on earlier Jewish visions of God's rule
 - though it expands table fellowship to include others
 - tax collectors
 - sinners
 - and is not as "fire and brimstone" as JBap's message
- But it's also articulated against Rome's political theology
 - *Abba* ("father") counters *pater patriae*
 - *Soter* (savior) used of Jesus counters emperor's title
 - *Euangelion* (gospel) was emperor's term for his announcements
 - *Basilea tou theou* (kingdom of God) counters kingdom of Rome
 - Twelve: judges for Israel

Question 14

DID JESUS REALLY PERFORM MIRACLES?

Archaeological Evidence for the Belief in Signs

We have plenty of archaeological and literary evidence that people of Jesus' time believed in forces that could be swayed or cajoled by wonder-workers and by more home-grown technologies.

A Greek Magical Papyrus, Translated (sort of)



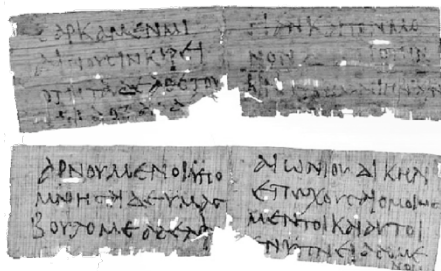
PGM VII 335-47
 "Charm for a direct vision: If you want to see yourself, take a fly and Coptic
 oycupair, grind them, and uncar them on your eyes. Take a feather of an ibis 14
 fingers long, smear it with perfume of roses or lilies, wind around it a linen cloth,
 and hold it with your hands as a scroll. Then say this, while looking to the side
 with the left eye:
 Formula: "MOUCHI SPOUSI EU PHTIA NONTIHI" THIS SEMI KOSCHI NETHI"
 CHRECHERO SINENORPS MOUCH GRÖOU ENTERHINI" SÖE MOUDNACH NEDÖI
 MOUDNÖCHI MOUSSEI ENDE CHREMOU KENINE SON SNEI ÖS MOUCHORÖOU
 ENTERHINI ANSEK SÖS TERACHÖO INTERMOUDTÖCHINE CHREMOU TEBAS
 PHTTE" KETHIOCH EAM HERÖCHNÉS TCHENE PHMOU CHSOU NTOCHÖÖÖS
 SEONENÖMOI INÖNKE"
 "Tr. W. C. Greig.

Another Greek magical papyrus

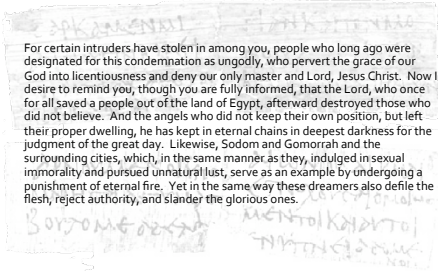
An Incantation Bowl



POxy 2684: An Amulet of the Epistle of Jude?



POxy 2684: An Amulet of the Epistle of Jude?



For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day. Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones.

Sign Terminology

Four Terms

Our English terms obscure the original meanings

miracle (from Latin *miraculum*)

- *dunamis* power, act of power
Mark 10x, Matthew 12x, 15x *focuses on power of agent*
- *semeion* sign
Mark 5x, Matthew 13x, Luke 11x, John 17x *focuses on what the sign points to*

wonder

- *teras* wonder, marvel, portent
Mark 2x, Matthew 2x, John 1x *focuses on people's reactions*
- *thauma* wonder, marvel, amazing thing
not used in the gospels

Limits of Historical Inquiry

- Historians can't prove such events
- Judging that something is a "miracle" or act of God is more a matter of faith than evidence
- But we can ask how historical Jesus' reputation as a wonder-worker is
 - Applying criteria of historicity to texts
 - To prove not that Jesus *did* these things, but that people *thought* he did

Types of Signs Stories

- Healings
 - exorcisms
 - healings
 - raising the dead
- Power over/through nature
 - providing for people
 - controlling nature
 - revealing Jesus' identity

Types of Signs Stories

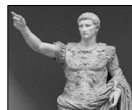
Applying the criteria of historicity

- Healings
 - exorcisms
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 - raising the dead
 - Power over/through nature
 - providing for people
 - controlling nature
 - revealing Jesus' identity
1. **Early testimony**
 2. **Multiple attestation** in independent witnesses
 3. **Embarrassment**
 4. **Discontinuous** with known Jewish parallels or early Christian teaching about Jesus

Tying Signs to the Kingdom of God

- Healings
 - exorcisms
 - healings
 - raising the dead
- Power over/through nature
 - providing for people
 - controlling nature
 - revealing Jesus' identity

MIRACLES
DEMONSTRATE
POWER



And so challenge others
who claim it
and whose rule *creates*
the disease and dystopia
