After Jesus Before Christianity

A Group Discussion & Slide presentations on understanding what we know Of the early followers of a man called Jesus, and the movements in the first 250 years after Jesus.

Fall 2023 Forever Learning Institute

Hi, I'm Richard

The *Challenge of information* in every age begs the question, "*How should we live our journey in life?*" The one question that we all must grapple with, no matter our background, is how we *observe, discern, judge, and act* in a manner that brings about the *greater good* for the *common good of everyone on this planet.*

As a *Cultural Historian of society and technology,….*

I focus on those moments, *patterns*, and events that changed how civilization evolved and *will touch* our lives and hopefully present *"AHA"* moments: *Society, Culture, Religions, Theology, Philosophy, Policy/Government, and Emerging Technology have altered how we live and, most importantly, how we behave as human beings.*

I would tell my comparative religion classes: The KEY to remember is that Religion is always in the room, even when the room is full of agnostics and atheists.

ܟܡܠܟ ܟܘܬܗ ܟܝ ܟܬܘ ...ܒܥܘ ܟܘ

דרשו ותמצאו, ובקשו את ממלכת ה' תחילה

Ζητεῖτε, καὶ εὑρήσετε... ζητεῖτε πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ψάξτε, και θα βρείτε... Αναζητήστε πρώτα τη Βασιλεία του Θεού.

Quaerite et invenietis ... Quaerite primum regnum Dei—

Suchet und ir werdent finden... Suchet iu êrst daz Rich Got

Suchet, und ihr werdet finden... Suchet zuerst das Reich Gottes

Seek, and ye shall find... Seek ye first the Kingdom of God… (Luke 12:22).

Format

10 to 15 minutes of background to the material we are discussing, mostly slides

The rest of the time will be a discussion of the sections. It is through discussions that we discover discernment.

Occasionally, I will provide additional reading material or videos for your leisure. I call those “*bedtime reading*.”

13 Sept 2023: *Background: How This Book Came Into Being, authors and the sitz im leben.*

20 Sept 2023: *If Not Christian, What? Engine of Empire: Violence, Gospel of Empire, Gospel of Jesus*

27 Sept 2023: *Violence in Stone, The Death of Heroes, Testing Gender, Testing Boundaries*

04 Oct 2023: *Forming New Identities through Gender, Belonging to Israel, Epertimental Families*

11 Oct 2023: *Join the Club, Feasting and Bathing, Inventing Orthodoxy through Heresy*

18 Oct 2023: *Demolishing Gnosticism, Paul Obscured,*

25 Oct 2023: *Paul Obscured continued, Jesus by many other names*

01 Nov 2023: *Hiding in plain sight, romancing the Martyr*

08 Nov 2023: *Better than the New Testament, what other scholars or discovering, Conclusion,*

15 Nov 2023: *Related issues and what is coming down the pike.*

I suggest doing something practically every theology and history professor I have had asked of us on the first day of class. Which was the following:

1. Leave your convictions, beliefs, creeds, and past educational experiences at the side table when you enter the room.

2. Take a line from West Side Story to heart:

“Dear kindly Sergeant Krupke, Ya gotta understand it’s just bringin’ upke that gets us out of hand.”

3. **Discernment** is the key, especially regarding those data points and historical events that are not obvious or as straightforward as we would like. ***It is the ability to grasp and comprehend what is obscure.***

We will use as our primary source the book "***After Jesus Before Christianity***." For our discussions.

In the slides, from *time to time,* we will supplement key data points for our discussion from the following books/sources:

- *"The Story of Christianity"* by David Bentley Hart
- "*Jewish-Christian Dialogues on Scripture in Late Antiquity*" By Michal Bar-Asher Siegal
- "*Jesus Before Christianity*" by Albert Nolan OP
- "*Christ Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City"* by John S Kloppenborg
- "*Resurrecting Easter"* by Dominic Crossan
- "I*n the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity"* by Oskar Skarsaune
- *"In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins"* (1983) Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza
- "*Christian Origins in Ephesus and Asia Minor"* by Mark R. Fairchild,

.

Recent books covering this critical time period (and sometimes other periods) include:

Rodney Stark, *The Triumph Christianity* (2011);

Larry Hurtado's *Destroyer of the Gods* (2016);

Michael J. Kruger's *Christianity at the Crossroads* (2017);

Bart Ehrman, *The Triumph of Christianity* (2018);

and James Edwards, *From Christ to Christianity* (2021).

Related Scholars

Begun in 2013 and completed in 2020, the research aimed to rewrite early Christianity's history based on current data, findings, and the use of technology. The seminar scholars have broken through to new understandings of many disparate movements in the first four centuries of the Common Era. ***In 2021, three scholars were chosen, Bernard Brandon Scott, Erin Vearncombe, and Hal Taussig, as the historians to be listed as the authors of After Jesus before Christianity.***

Mark Bilby, Jason BeDuhn, Richard Carrier, David Congdon, Arthur Dewey, Paul Dilley, Susan M. (Elli) Elliott, Mary Foskett, David Galston, Guillermo Garcia, Sakari Hakkinen, Perry Kea, John Kelly, Robert Jones,

Lillian Larsen, Margaret E. Lee, Celene Lillie, Nina E. Livesey, Jodi Magness, Lane C. McGaughy, Robert Miller, Andrew Oberg, David Odell-Scott, Stephen Patterson, Shirley Paulson, Hannu K. Saloranta,

Deborah Niederer Saxon, Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, Bernard Brandon Scott, Christine Shea, J. Samuel Subramanian, Jarmo Tarkki, Hal Taussig, Chad Venters, Steve Wiggins, William O. Walker.

Annual Meetings 2023

November 18–21 San Antonio, Texas

SBL

ANCIENT FICTION AND EARLY CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH NARRATIVE

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY AND THE BIBLE

ARCHAEOLOGY OF RELIGION IN THE ROMAN WORLD

ART AND RELIGIONS OF ANTIQUITY

BIBLE, MYTH, AND MYTH THEORY

BIBLICAL GREEK LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

CORPUS HELLENISTICUM NOVI TESTAMENT

DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

DIGITAL HUMANITIES IN BIBLICAL, EARLY JEWISH, AND CHRISTIAN STUDIE

By “***early Christianity***,” Or if you wish, think of it as “***Phase I Christianity,***” I don’t mean the Christianity represented by the major figures in the fourth and fifth centuries when the church had risen to power—for example, Athanasius, Constantine, and Augustine. Rather, I’m referring to the period immediately after the apostles, mainly the second and third centuries, when “*Christianity*” was still in its infancy, struggling to find its way in a hostile Roman world.

All the scholarly work being done shows a radical gap between the two, so we might conclude that the *Christianity* that arose to dominance is not the “*real*” or “*intended*” Christianity after all. Rather, do we have a man-made construction that is out of sync with the earlier (*and maybe more authentic*) version? Today, do we have a “Christianity” born of politics, empire, power, or just random chance?

As we go through this book, keep in the back of your mind the Sermon on The Mount. Go back from time to time and re-read MT 5-6-7 & 25.

The book presents questions to further our discussion and inquiry into the origins of Christianity: *What it means for us today.*

The book's strength is in ***YOUR*** questioning. It offers a thoughtful reconsideration of the first two centuries of the Jesus movement before the empire and church merged. The next ten weeks will highlight the most important discoveries and findings from the scholars who worked on this with research assistants globally and within the universities and colleges where most teach along with retired and other professionals over an eight-year period. New discoveries in archeology, new artifacts, and writings regarding the followers of Jesus in the first two centuries C.E. have and will continue to be uncovered over time.

These breakthroughs in understanding have implications for our thinking and practice today. ***To be forewarned,*** some of these realizations challenge traditional views, but they also liberate us from outgrown practices that probably never even started with Jesus or his apostles.

We begin by recognizing assumptions of those earliest years after Jesus and which ones we should question. Hopefully, you will think about various topics the books present to us, including examples of women in leadership roles, ancient understandings of gender, the painful reality of living with Roman violence, diverse ideas regarding self-identity, suffering, and death among Jesus's followers; **wide-ranging views of Jesus, Paul, and *Mary, the Magdalene***; the variety of texts available before there was any such thing as a *New Testament* and new perspectives on so-called "Gnosticism" and "heresy."

Understanding what Oral Tradition is all about is KEY to understand what was happening during this period.

Capernaum is important in the early development because it was the home of Jesus after he left Nazareth(400). Jesus lived in Capernaum(1500) for most of his three years of teaching life. He chose his disciples and other followers in this area on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee..

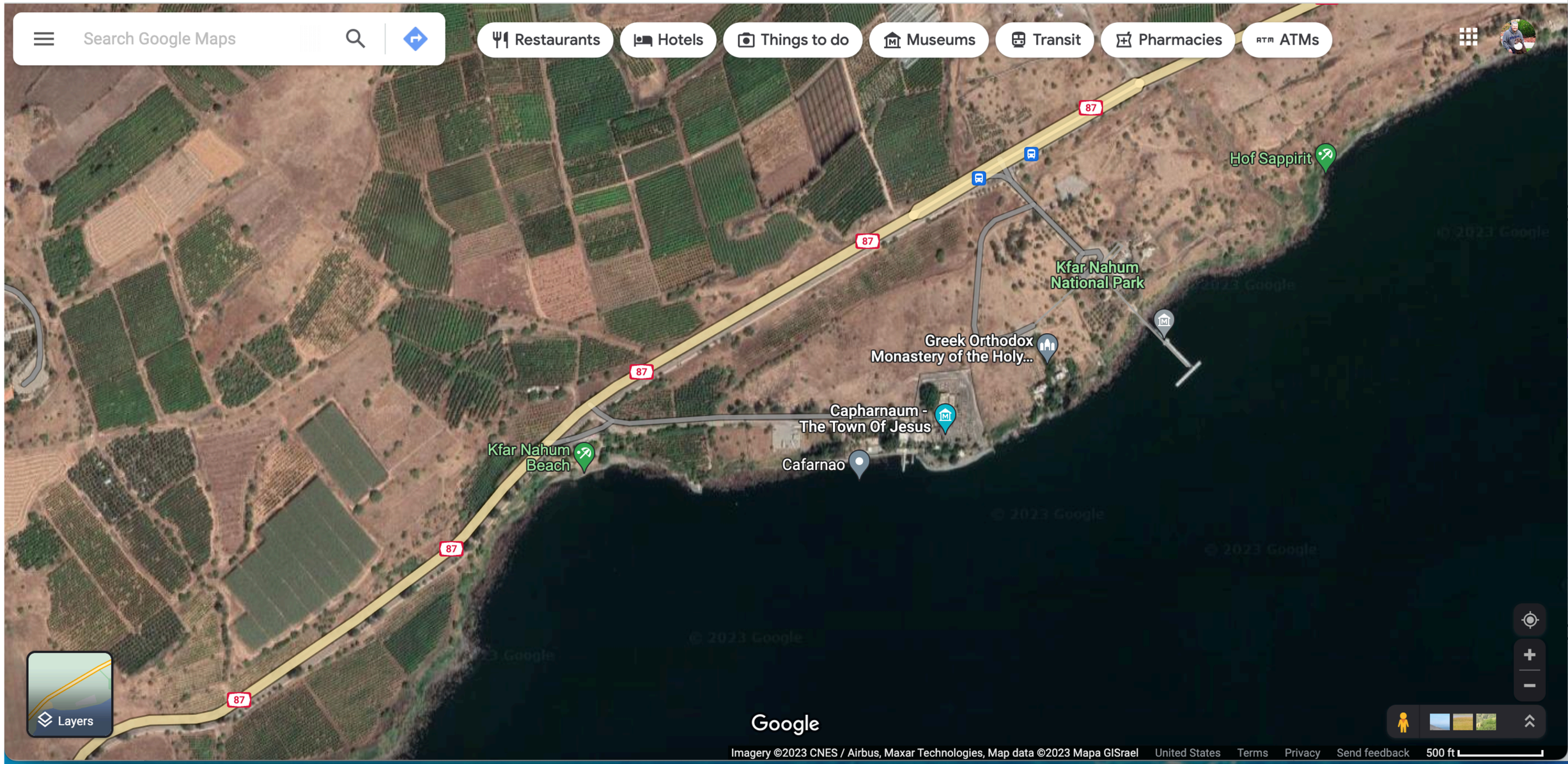
Capernaum was also a garrison town, an administrative center, and a customs station. It was located along the Via Maris, the main trade route between Damascus and Egypt. Many travelers, caravans, and traders passed through Capernaum.

Jerusalem's population in Jesus' time averaged around 25,000 people. From Capernaum, it is a 4-day walk.

Capernaum is located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. But never mentioned in the Tanakh or Old Testament. The village was thought to have prospered from the 2nd century BC to the 13th century AD when it reverted to a simple fishing village until the 1800s.

Capernaum means Nahum’s town ~ Nahum Means: *Consolation*

Archaeological evidence indicates the town did not begin until the 2nd century B.C., which explains why it is only mentioned in the New Testament, not the Old. It is located below sea level and is 10 miles (16 kilometers) from Tiberias. Simon Peter and his family lived in Capernaum. The Via Maris was one of three major trade routes used in ancient Israel, along with the Ridge Route and the King's Highway. Within ancient Israel, it ran from Galilee (in the north) to Samaria (in the south) and passed through the Jezreel Valley.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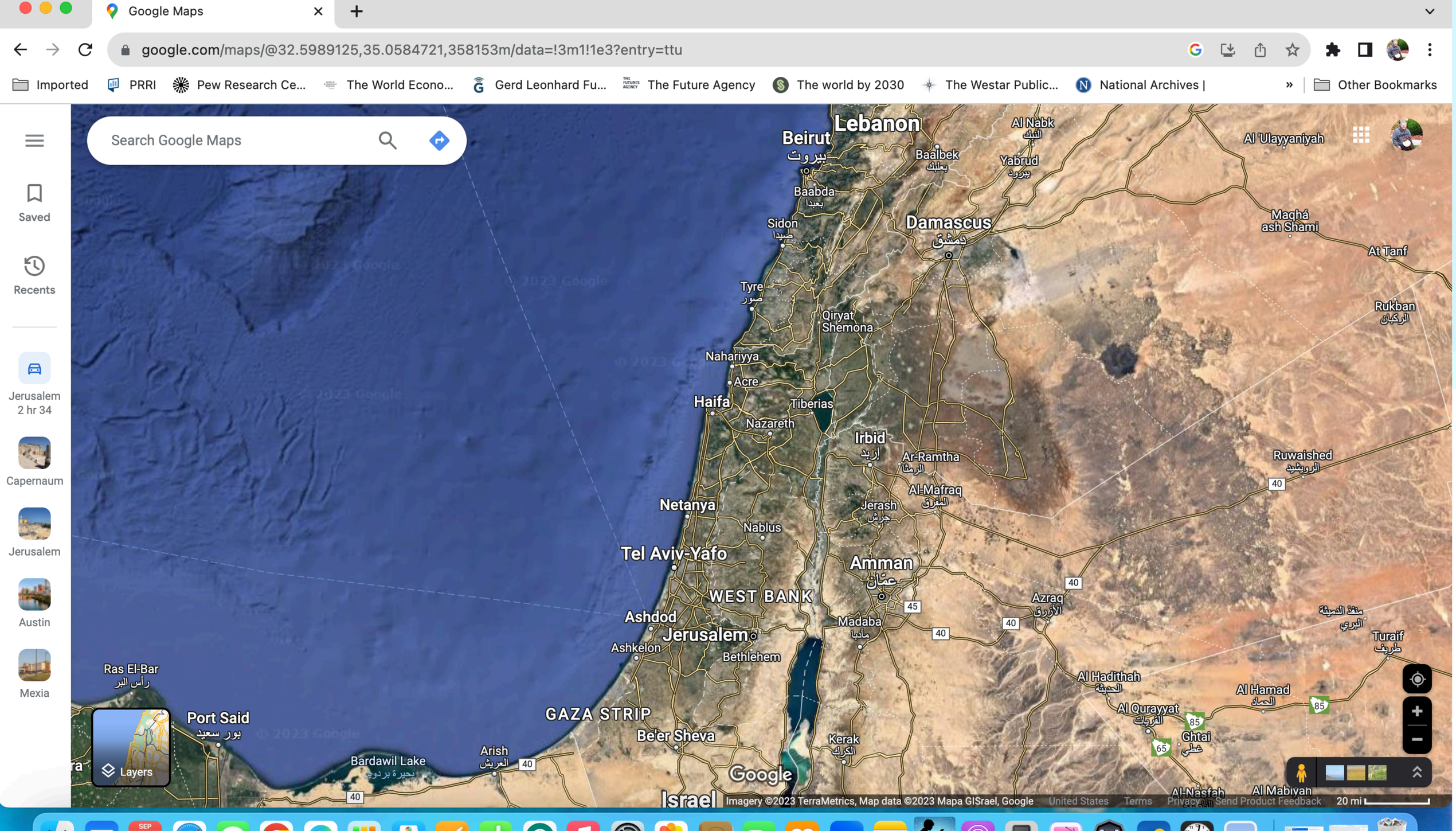
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This is the synagogue where Jesus frequently taught (John 6:59; Mark 1:21; Luke 4:33). Here, Jesus cured a demon-possessed man (Mark 1:21-28) and delivered the sermon on the bread of life (John 6:25-59). He even restored the life of the daughter of one ruler of this synagogue (Mark 5:22; Luke 8:41).

The synagogue is near the lake and was built so that when the Jews prayed here, they faced Jerusalem. I

The Jewish Bible is called the Tanakh, which is an acronym for the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible:

- Torah: "Instructions" or "the law.”
- Neviim: “Prophets"
- Ketuvim: “Writings," including Psalms and Proverbs

The Jewish Bible is also called Miqra, meaning "Scripture". In modern spoken Hebrew, Tanakh and Miqra are basically interchangeable.

The Jewish Bible differs from the Christian Bible because it contains different books and is arranged differently.

There is a different "canon" listing the biblical books in the collections that Jews call Tanakh and Christians call the Old Testament.

In my Comparative Religion Classes

The three major themes woven throughout our journey through the world's religions are (1) that definitions matter, (2) original diversity, and (3) that our responses matter.

Definitions matter. Who decides what "Christianity" means? Who controls which parts of the tradition are emphasized, neglected, or suppressed? And crucially, who benefits (and loses out) due to these decisions? I would tell my classes about ancient history and religion, in particular.

"*If you are not at the table, you might end up on the menu.*"

Original diversity. When we study religion, an important consideration is to notice the diversity within each of the world's religions. For instance, there has never been one monolithic "Christianity"; rather, there have always been "*Christianities*" —plural.

If we look around the world today, consider the many differences between a Roman Catholic mass at the Vatican, an evangelical megachurch in Texas, a simple Amish Sunday Service in Pennsylvania, a progressive Christian congregation in Manhattan, a snake-handling church in Appalachia, A Community in Brazil that is grounded in Latin American Liberation Theology. The point is that the more you zoom out to consider all the different types of "*Christianities*" in the world today, the more you might wonder to what extent it even makes sense to call these diverse examples parts of a single religion.

One can similarly break down all the competing Hinduism(s)

And this is what we will see in the first two hundred and fifty years after Jesus before Christianity becomes officially recognized.

Responses matter. Given the diversity we see in religions today, there are consequential personal choices to be made, and the reason I suggested we leave our convictions and beliefs at the table at the door is found in the words of the interfaith activist Eboo Patel from his memoir *Acts of Faith"*

"*we are personally accountable for whether our individual religious choices help create "bubbles," "barriers," "bombs," or "bridges."*

Sitz im Leben

#1 The crucifixion of Jesus is the most obvious example of the violence at the heart of Roman rule. Romans crucified hundreds of thousands of those they conquered, and such government crucifixions were intentionally undertaken as public torture and terrorism. It is why the Romans believed they brought “peace” to the land.

#2 The city of Rome’s domination began and ended with military conquest. Roman generals regularly raped enemy soldiers who survived their battles, and Roman citizens were not tortured, but no legal protections prevented conquered peoples from being tortured.

#3 The Roman Empire was built on and grew by enslaving more and more people. Slavery was everywhere in Roman society, from the government to private individuals.

#4 The Romans were a conquering empire that pillaged the art of Greece, the ancient treasures of Egypt, the silver mines in Spain, and the countryside from North Africa to Britain. But they were never satisfied. They always took tribute from conquered nations.

Week two: *If Not Christian, What? Engine of Empire: Violence, Gospel of Empire, Gospel of Jesus*

This provocative and eye-opening book gives us a look at the roots of Christianity and offers a thoughtful reconsideration of the first two centuries of the Jesus movement, transforming our understanding of the religion and its early dissemination.

“Christianity” Two Worlds

1. The first 250 years after the death of Jesus
2. And basically, from 381 AD to our current time

No Christians in the First Two Centuries

The study highlights the history:

1. Persisting oral tradition
2. Linking a non-Judea to Paul, who was a Jew
3. A different kind of social order from what we are told in later history

Christian as Default

1. “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” 2:14 NRSV Galatians

2. By changing back to the observance of Jewish custom and law, the Jewish “Christians” have only reversed their emancipation from Judaism. When they gave up the observance of the Torah, they also admitted that as “christians” one can be saved without the Torah. Returning to the Torah cannot simply eliminate the first step of denying the existence of Torah observance. Hans Dieter Betz *Galatians*, Hermenea 112

Most of the scrolls were written in *Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek*. Aramaic and Greek were the languages of the people. *Hebrew was the language of Jewish scholars.*

Letters were written on papyrus and “books” parchment.

Typically, a letter would fit on one papyrus sheet—or roughly the size of a piece of paper in a modern notebook. By comparison, Paul's letters average around 1,300 words.

In the early movements, we see how the followers of Jesus understood that ***Creating Situations*** where the vulnerable and unwanted can say "***I feel safe because you are here,***" is the only evangelization the Church was doing.

The **Six Biggest Discoveries**

- Resistance and Creativity.
- New Gender Identities.
- No Christianity as a “ruling body.”
- The centrality of Israel.
- Life was not exactly like it was described in the New Testament

Translation is converting the meaning of words or text from one language to another.

Transliteration is the process of converting text from one script to another. Transliteration does not convey meaning, but it helps with pronunciation.

For example, the Greek word “apostlos” is ***transliterated*** into the English word Apostle. The word "apostle" comes from the Greek apostolos, meaning ***“it is sent off.”*** The word comprises the Greek words ***apo and Stello***, which mean "from" and "to send". In its earliest uses, ***apostolos*** was a maritime term referring to a cargo ship, or naval fleet sent out.

The word “Gospel” is probably the “cleanest” translation. Meaning “Good News”.

What does christianos mean?

- "-jan-" -lav-
- Latin Suffix
- "belongs to the party of"
- "adherent of”
- Χριστός (Christos) becomes "Christus"
- Latin Transliteration
- In English, “Christ" is Not a translation (Anointed or Jewish Messiah)
- ***But a transliteration***

What does ‘christianos’ really mean? The importance of Culture and the Sitz im Leben

"christ-" Xolot-

A Greek word meaning "anointed" or "oiled"

In Greek Culture, it is used for….

- After a bath
- Before an athletic contest

In Jewish Culture, it is used for…

- King, Priests, Prophets
- In Greek/Roman culture, kings are crowned

The word "church" appears only twice in the gospel accounts of Jesus. In the first instance, Jesus was probably not referring to the New Testament church. Instead, he emphasized the “kingdom" or his rule from heaven. Ekklesia was used before the time of Christ. The word is used nearly 50 times in the Septuagint, translated around 250 BC.

The word "*church*" may have come from the Greek translation of the Old Testament. In the Greek translation, "church" referred to Israel's sacred assemblies, which were called together to worship or conduct business.

The English word "church" comes from the Old English word "cirice". "Cirice" comes from the West Germanic word "kirika", which comes from the Greek word "kuriakē". "Kuriakē" means "of the Lord".

In our modern times, we equate the first “church,” which began 50 days after Jesus was resurrected. This day is called Pentecost, and it's celebrated as the birthday of the “Christian Church.”

Gemma Augustea (Latin: “Gem of Augustus”)
sardonyx cameo depicting the apotheosis of Augustus. He is seated next to the goddess Roma, and both are trampling the armor of defeated enemies. It is one of the most impressive carved cameos of a series of Roman gems representing imperial persons.

The Gemma Augustea (now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) was probably carved during the reign of Caligula (AD 37–41). Others in the series include the Grand Camée de France and the Blacas onyx cameo in the British Museum, London.

PERSECUTING THE “*CHURCH*”

We begin by trying to understand what Paul is writing, which raises the translation problem. Here are five representative translations of Gal 1:13:

KJ, how that, beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it.

NIV, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.

NRSV, I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it.

NAB, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.

SV, how aggressively I harassed God’s new community, trying to wipe it out.

COLOR KEY:

- **red:** Jesus undoubtedly said this or something very like it
- **pink:** Jesus probably said something like this, but we can't find evidence, and more than likely it has been altered over time.
- **gray:** Jesus did not say this, from what we know of translations and time, but the ideas contained in it are close to his own
- **black:** Jesus did not say this; it represents the perspective or content of a later or different tradition

Matthew 6:9-13

Instead, you should pray like this: Our Father in the heavens, your name be revered. Impose your imperial rule, enact your will on earth as you have in heaven. Provide us with the bread we need for today. Forgive our debts to the extent that we have forgiven those in debt to us. And please don't subject us to test after test, but rescue us from the evil one.

The translation itself, which has been named the "Scholars Version" (SV) by the editors, employs inclusive language, of course, and is generally done according to the method of "dynamic equivalence." The style is very colloquial and sometimes crude. In the preface, they explain that they have "shunned pious terms," preferring instead "the average American's working vocabulary." A

Considering these questions—bringing together the many archaeological and textual discoveries over the last twenty years—they have found:

- There were multiple Jesus movements, not a singular one, before the fourth century
- There was nothing called Christianity until the third century
- There was much more flexibility and diversity within Jesus's movement before it became centralized in Rome, regarding the Bible and religious doctrine and understandings of gender, sexuality, and morality.

Discussion

The Greek word usually translated as “Christian”—christianos—has a very particular meaning in the first two centuries, which we lose when we transliterate rather than translate.

What are your thoughts?

Do we really have a different meaning today?

What do you think really changed from then to now?

The word christianos never appears in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Why do you think this is so?

In ACTS, the Antioch followers were first called “those of the party of the Anointed.” What picture does that draw for you visually?

Discussion

Acts of the Apostles 26:27–29

Paul said, “King Agrippa, do you trust the prophets? I know that you have trust.” Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become one who belongs to the party of the Anointed?”

Agrippa questions Paul, “Are you asking me, a client of the emperor Augustus, to join the party of the Anointed King of Israel?”

Israel’s kings were known as Anointed Ones; the word has clear political implications. How much do you think Jesus considered himself political but not partisan?

Page 35. Violence was part of a larger Roman strategy that aimed to coerce conquered nations to think of themselves as half-human “barbarians.”

Discussion

“Their lives centered around regular meals together and public bathing in smaller groups. Most of them had an ongoing relationship with Jesus after his death, many of them focusing on Jesus as the Anointed King of Israel.” Pg 54

What insights do you gather from this statement?

What key points of data strike you?

If you try to put yourself into that situation what thoughts are running through you mind?

Discussion

“Much of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the New Testament, as well as the Gospels of Mary and Thomas, depict Jesus and his students teaching in marketplaces, at community meals, on roads, at seasides, and in fields. Their teaching was directed mostly to people at work, on the way someplace, or in their neighborhoods. The teaching and learning occurred in groups with lots of discussion.” Pg 61

Week Three: Violence in Stone, The Death of Heroes, Testing Gender, Testing Boundaries

“It is quite possible to be an Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Evangelical, Anglican, Coptic, Chaldean, Ethiopian Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, or Malankaran Christian (to name a few of the many possibilities), perfectly aware of the tenets of one’s own tradition, and still know very little indeed of the larger scope of Christian thought and piety.”

~ David Bentley Hart ~The Story of Christianity

Oral tradition is the practice of sharing information orally rather than writing it down. It is a form of human communication where knowledge, ***art,*** ideas, and ***cultural material*** is received, preserved, and transmitted from one generation to another.

Oral tradition can take many forms, including speech or song. It can encompass myths, legends, fables, religious stories, prayers, proverbs, and instructions. Oral tradition provides us with a sense of cultural cohesion.

Modern Day Oral tradition can be documented using technologies such as slides, filmstrips, motion pictures, television, charts, illustrations, and tape recordings.

Jesus used his wand to multiply bread in baskets (left)
and to change jugs of water into wine (right).

How can I identify Jesus in early art?

- Jesus was often depicted using a wand during his miracles.
- Before the last two decades of the 4th century, Jesus was often depicted beardless.

Beardless Jesus healed the lame man, who then picked up and carried his bed on his back.

How can I identify Jesus in early art?

- Jesus was often depicted using a wand for during his miracles.
- Before the last two decades of the 4th century, Jesus was often depicted beardless.
- Jesus was usually depicted with longer hair than the men around him.

Long-haired Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate

When early Christians were not showing Jesus as a “heavenly ruler”, they showed Jesus as an actual man like any other: beardless and short-haired.

Otherwise, in the 1st Century Graeco-Roman world, being clean-shaven and short-haired was considered absolutely essential. A great mane of luxuriant hair and a beard was a godly feature, not replicated in male fashion. Even a philosopher kept his hair fairly short.

A beard was not distinctive of being a Jew in antiquity. In fact, one of the problems for oppressors of Jews at different times was identifying them when they looked like everyone else (a point made in the book of Maccabees). However, images of Jewish men on Judaea Capta coins, issued by Rome after the capture of Jerusalem in 70AD, indicate captive men who are bearded.

IVDEA CAPTA
S C

The Essenes were a Jewish sect that existed from the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE. They lived a communal, monastic lifestyle at Qumram, near the Dead Sea. The Essenes were a semi-ascetic group who practiced ritual baptism. They believed in a heavenly Messiah who would bring a heavenly kingdom. They hoped the Messiah would find people who would re-establish the priesthood and kingship of David.

THE LORDS PRAYER FROM ORIGINAL ARAMAIC

Beloved Father, who fills all realms,
May You be honored in me.
Let your divine rule come now
Let Your will come true in all the universe,
in the heavens, and on earth.

Give us all that we need for each day, and
Untangle the knots of unforgiveness that bind us within,
As we also let go of the guilt of others.

Let us not be lost in unimportant things,
But let us be free from that what keeps us from our true purpose
From You comes all rule, the strength to act, and the song that beautifies
all From Age to Age.
Amen.

After Jesus Before Christianity concludes that early Jesus communities engaged in much experimentation, most of which failed. From this conclusion, we have a great deal to learn.

When we examine various groups of followers of Jesus Anointed in the first two centuries, we find vast diversity, not a unified picture. They referred to Jesus using a variety of titles.

Some groups organized themselves as associations, others as supper clubs, families, or schools. Groups typically comprised ten to fifteen people.

No single name identifies the various groups associated with Jesus lord and master. Some were called brothers and sisters, some slaves, some holy ones, some students or wise ones, some immigrants.

Despite their diversity, the various names did not include “Adherents of the Anointed (*christianos*)” in the first century and only rarely during the second century

Some groups encouraged experimenting in gender roles and breaking gender boundaries.

All this diversity indicates experimentation, pushing at established boundaries. While not systematic or organized experimentation, they were exploring what it meant to live into a new perspective on the god of Israel's activity.

They were discovering their footing as they went along. Those familiar with experimentation expect failure; such was the experience of these Jesus groups.

The tradition stemming from Paul exhibits over a hundred-year period of both experimentation and the reaction to it. Paul proclaimed, *"You are no longer Jew or Greek, no longer slave or freeborn, no longer 'male and female'"* (Gal 3:28).

Paul supported experimentation in boundary-breaking as he witnessed his encouraging the unmarried to remain so against a culture that virtually required marriage or his treatment of married partners in reciprocal terms. But things went too far. One man was having sex with his father's wife.

- 1 Corinthians 5:5 In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 5:5 Or *of his body*

- 1 Corinthians 5:11 The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in 8:11, 13.

- 1 Corinthians 5:13 Deut. 13:5; 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21,24; 24:7

Later, when Paul’s letters were edited, a scribe inserted a comment forbidding women to speak in community meetings (I Cor 14:33b–38)In the mid-second century, the Pauline communities still experimented with gender roles. Despite its title, in *Acts of Paul and Thecla,* the real hero is Thecla.

Initially, her traditional gender roles are emphasized: *daughter, virgin, engaged*. As the story develops, she goes on to break all of them, to the point of even dressing in male clothes. First Timothy, which belongs to the same Pauline tradition, rails against all this experimentation (1 Tim 2:9–15).

A literate person in the second century of the Greco-Roman world who came across a New Testament gospel we have today would probably think the document was a biography of Jesus.

They probably would not regard these gospels as particularly well-written examples of the genre of their day and oral tradition. Nevertheless, the similarity to the Greek and Roman biographical tradition would have been apparent.

A reader or listener who was part of the Jesus movement might have been puzzled by the unusual content of the gospels. Concepts of messiahs and resurrection and the Jewish law would not have been familiar fare. Yet a story of a person's public career.

Greco-Roman “lives” what we call a biography, usually focused on r*ulers, military leaders, and teachers.*

Today, many biographers approach their task as journalists who research and try to establish facts as they write the story of a famous person’s life. When we read a biography, we expect to learn about the life experiences that shaped the person’s identity, including their mistakes and ups and downs.

Ancient readers had different expectations when they read a “life.” The purpose of an ancient *bios* or “life” was not focused on a factual narrative but on praise for the person. A “life” usually formed an image of the person as a model of the virtuous ideals important to the author. Sometimes a “life” did the opposite and presented the person as the opposite of the ideal.

Gospel traditions stressed the new authority of Jesus' teaching (Mark 1:27–28; Matt. 7:28–29). Portraying Jesus as an authoritative teacher enhanced the credibility of his teachings. Like other “lives” of teachers, gospel accounts of Jesus present him as the founder and the embodiment of the values and ideals of the “school” that succeeds him.

Like the other “lives,” gospels persuaded readers of the legitimacy of the teacher Jesus and his teachings. The gospel writers’ communities, like the schools of the other teachers, carry on the teacher’s tradition as the legitimate voice of that tradition.

The gospels, therefore, are about the life and teachings of Jesus, but at the same time, they function to promote the interests and values of their authors and their communities.

Discussion

How did the promulgation of Caesar Augustus's good news prompt the various movements of the Anointed Jesus to claim their own good news?

"*according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised "on the third day" according to the scriptures. (1 Cor. 15:1–4)3"*

This "good news" involved being **saved,** but its signs differ from the Roman Empire's. How was this identified with the Anointed who was defeated and whom God vindicated, and how do we think of this as Christians today?

Do you think there was discussion about sex, gender, roles, and lifestyle among the Christians? Among the Roman Empire? And especially around Capernaum?

Conquered nations all told stories of their heroes who died for the cause. Do you see this story-telling as part of the communities that gathered together, and what do you think it meant for them to have these stories?

Discussion

What role and influence did Socrates have on the movements, especially around Capernaum?

Socrates did not die at the hands of an empire such as what we see with the Romans but died at the hands of a democratic government.

Why did the ancients admire Socrates's death and think it so important? What was in your opinion the influence of Socrates on the early movements?

What did you think of the explanations of "noble deaths?" Is this something innate in the nature of humans?

Week Four: Forming New Identities through Gender, Belonging to Israel, Epertimental Families

“Christianity” has endured for over two millennia and is practiced by billions worldwide today.

Yet that longevity has created difficulties for scholars tracing the religion’s roots, distorting much of the historical investigation into the first two centuries of the Jesus movement.

But what if Christianity died in the fourth or fifth centuries after it began? How would that change how historians see and understand its first two hundred years?

Christianity is not merely the story of a religion indigenous to Western civilization; in a very real sense, it is the story of that civilization itself.

Richard Rohr OFM often quotes Richard Halverson, chaplain of the U.S. Senate, back in the 1950s

“In the beginning, the church was a fellowship of men and women centering on the living Christ. Then, the church moved to Greece, where it became a philosophy. Then it moved to Rome, where it became an institution. Next, it moved to Europe, where it became a Culture. And, finally, it moved to America, where it became an enterprise.”

"*Jesus called for nonviolent resistance to Rome and just distribution of land and food. He was crucified because he threatened Roman stability -- not as a sacrifice to God for humanity's sins.*" ~John Dominic Crossan

- Substitutionary atonement: The theory suggests that Jesus' death and resurrection paid to God for wrongdoing against him. The primary purpose of the atonement was to satisfy God's justice.
- Ransom theory: This theory states that sin bears the consequence of death. To remain consistent with himself, God must have Jesus die as Man's perfect prototype.
- Limited atonement: This doctrine is associated with the Reformed tradition and is one of the five points of Calvinism.
- The ancient view: This view states that Christ is a ransom.
- The medieval view: This view states that Christ is a substitute.
- The Reformed view: This view states that Christ receives your punishment.
- The ethical view: This view states that Christ is an example.
- The three aspects of Christ's atonement: These aspects include vicarious atonement, the escatological defeat of Satan, and the imitation of Christ.
-

Franciscans do not believe that atonement is necessary for God to love us. Instead, they believe that salvation should replace atonement, which is the restoration of fallen human nature.

Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans agreed with Anselm's (by then mainline) view that a debt had to be paid for human salvation. But Franciscan John Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) said that Jesus wasn't solving any problems by coming to earth and dying. God did not need Jesus to die on the cross to decide to love humanity. God's love was infinite from the first moment of creation; the cross was Love's dramatic portrayal in space and time. That, in a word, was the Franciscan nonviolent at-one-ment theory.

Duns Scotus built his argument on the pre-existent Cosmic Christ described in Colossians and Ephesians. Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) who came forward in a moment of time

Along the same lines, the Apostle Paul talks of Jesus' dying this way: “*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again*” (2 Cor.)

On 16 January 27 BC, C. Julius Caesar Octavianus became Imperator Caesar Augustus. The title Augustus, "***the exalted one,***" was a word that rang with ***religious*** (augur) and ***social*** (auctoritas) meanings. How does Octavian become "*Master of the World*," and what is the significance of the title "*Augustus*" for the people of the Roman world? There is only one inscription on every coin. All it says is, "***CAESAR DIVI F[ILIUS]***" in Latin. "*Caesar, Son of God.*"

Crossan says, "I*f you do not know Roman Imperial Theology, you will not be able to understand Christian theology or Pauline theology or New Testament theology.*"

Each of these theologies is set against Roman Imperial Theology.

Each gospel story and early writing of the first 250 years AJBC was set against Roman Imperial Theology.

Biblical Scholars believe Jesus and John the Baptist were forming a team, preparing for God's intervention as an awakening for the people. But instead, Antipas' cavalry came, resulting in John's arrest and execution.

Scholars believe that what happened to John led Jesus to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was already here. He pointed to what critics said of John and Jesus: ***that John fasted in preparation for what was to come, while Jesus feasted in celebration of what was currently at hand.***

Did the early followers of Jesus believe/think Jesus was talking about God's style, not a place in time?

When Jesus used the term "*Kingdom of God*" the early followers imagined, what would this world be like if God sat on Caesar's throne.

Despite years of oppression, the Jewish people believed that someday, in days to come, God was going to clean up the mess of the world. That eschatological view wasn't about the world ending but about the final state of the world when God acts.

The authors of AJBC imagine Jesus as he worked to bring about a world of peace and justice, saying something like, "*Don't you see, you have been waiting for God to do it for you, and God has been waiting for you to do it with God.*"

Many scholars of biblical history and those of comparative religions describe humanity as a “*great evolutionary experiment,*”, What the early text of the various movements wrote about is similar to what we find in other religions of the time.

There’s going to be first heaven and hell, not as locations in the next life, but as options in this life. And at the end, there will be a great final judgment on the human race and a continuation of that life thereafter:

Did we or did we not blow it?

Now think about this as we evolve through this class “Was Crucifixion and Resurrection separated?”

Did the early followers believe Jesus Died for our sins?

How much “Proof of Jesus' divinity” do we find in the early periods?

What about the Immortality of the Soul? Did the early followers believe in it?

Did Immortality of the Soul Replace Resurrection as time evolved?

Why did Jesus' death become so important?

What about Resurrection? Was it Political?

What "problem" for the early followers did Resurrection solve?

Was Resurrection for the early followers a solution to martyrdom or something else? Or is there not enough evidence so far to draw a conclusion?

Women

Week Five

The future is not something that happens to us – it is something we create every day, by action or inaction, based on our culture, history, and current circumstances. Even with synchronicity, our condition allows us to see or not see what is presented.

Whether the future is good or bad is entirely up to us.

The same was true for the early followers of Jesus. Most importantly, we must learn from this period how to understand our current circumstances and see the future path so we can act, and as we work, we become!

A wide range of Christ Associates used gender to test and negotiate boundaries.

What are your thoughts on why this was a norm?
Do we see the same today?

Holy Spirit as female and Mother.

“*In Hebrew, the Spirit of God was feminine gendered, just like women were feminine gendered, and this was not mere grammatical serendipity. A study of the Hebrew language in the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrates that in Hebrew, the grammatical gendering of “spirit”—ruah—and the gender of any associated adjective and verb depended upon context. Thus, when ‘spirit’ referred to the spirit of Belial, a demon, it was usually masculine-gendered.* When it literally meant ‘**breath,**’ *it was sometimes masculine and sometimes feminine. However, when it referred to the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the people, it was almost always feminine gendered.”*

Ally Kateusz PhD

Much information about women in priestly roles is beginning to emerge from ***early Christian texts and art.***

The mosaics in the Chapel of Zeno in the Church of Saint Praxides in Rome provide another example of the religious roles open to women. Women bishops were not unknown by any means; for example, according to the late fourth-century Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, the popular Christian School or Christ Associaton known as "*New Prophecy*" had female priests and bishops, and other writers described how this early Christian faith had expanded around the Mediterranean by the turn of the third century.

These mosaics are often dated to the ninth century, but archeologists have discovered they were removed from an older site and installed in the current site in the ninth century.

Liturgical scene: second
Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

Episcopa Theodora is the Greek inscription on a 9th-century Christian mosaic in the Chapel of Bishop Zeno of Verona located within the Church of Saint Praxedis the Martyr in Rome.

Episcopa Theodora is the historical mother of Pope Paschal I, who built the chapel for her while she was still alive; Theodora was widely known to be a devout Christian in the early Church and was notable for her acts of piety and sanctity.

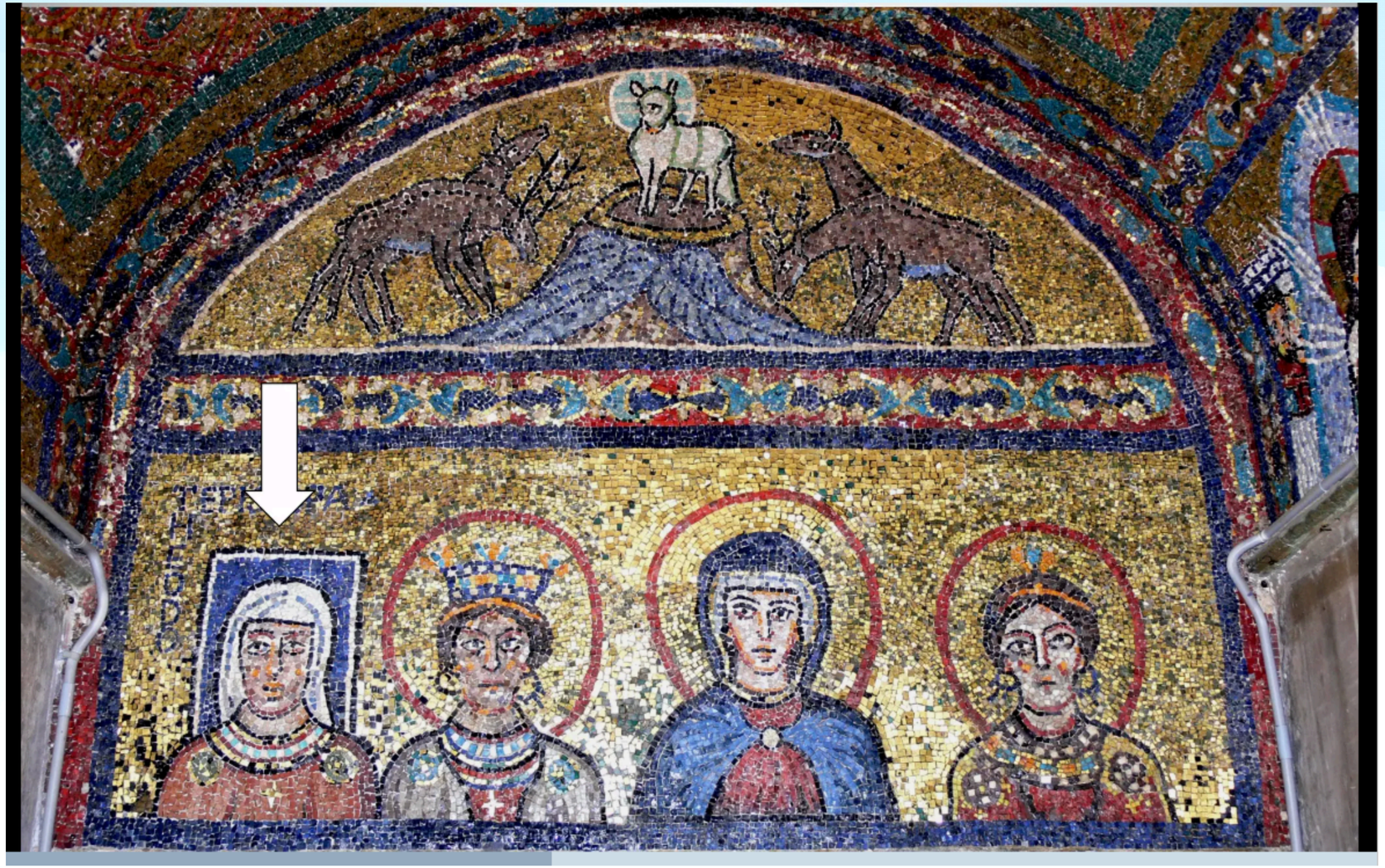
Theodora holds the chalice. Altar apse mosaic, Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna

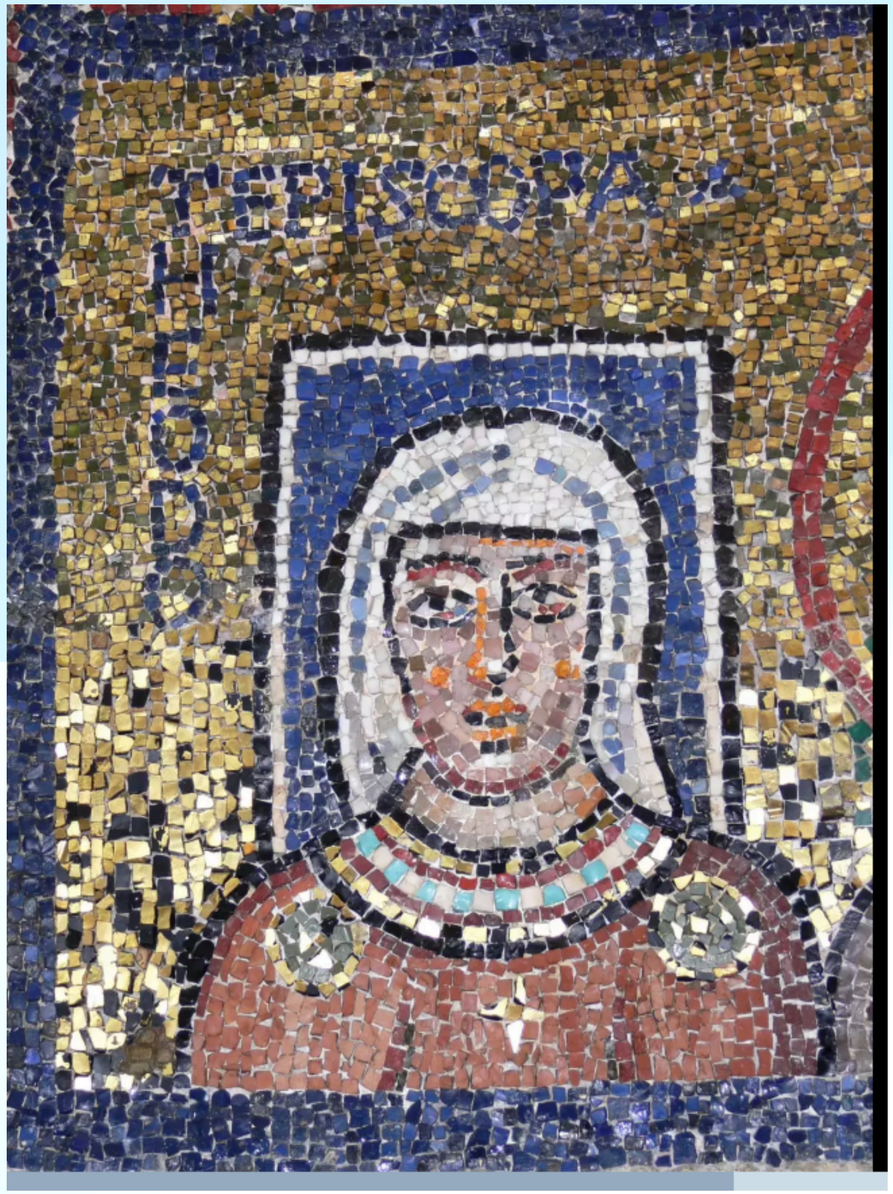
Making Bishop Theodora Male

8th Century mosaic in St Zeno’s Chapel in Rome

Notice the Four women

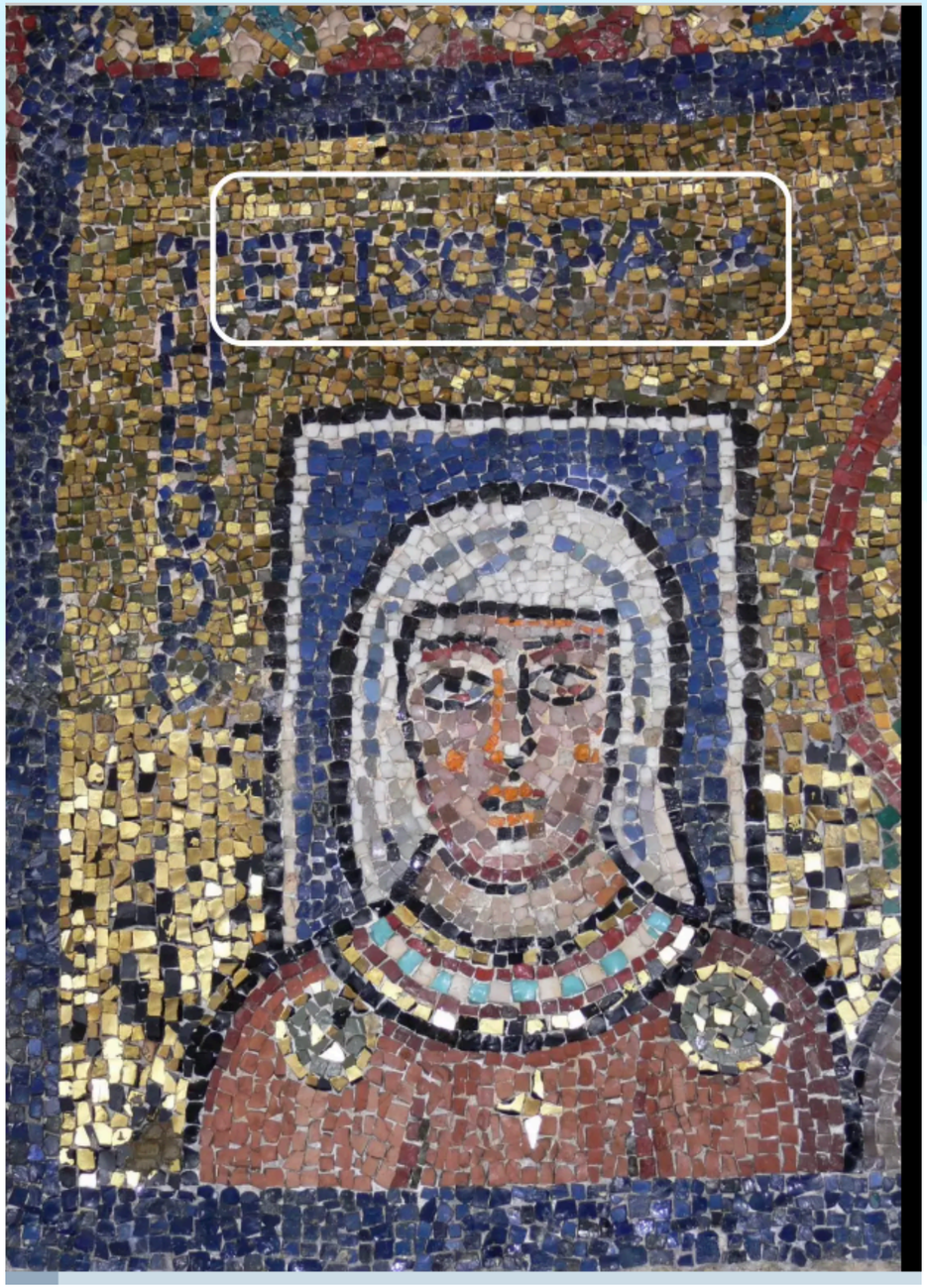
Notice the difference in the halo?
It means she was still alive



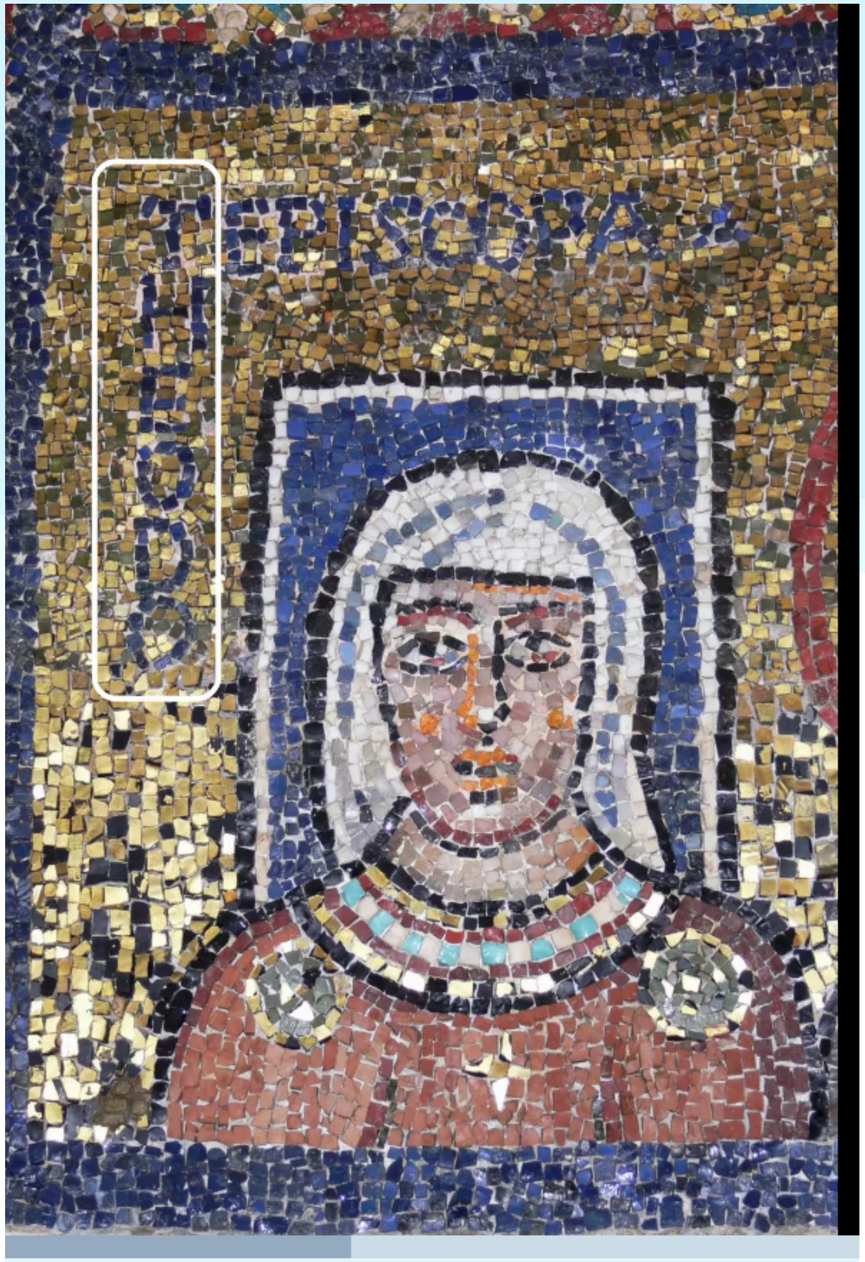


“Episcopa Theodora”
Bishop Theodora

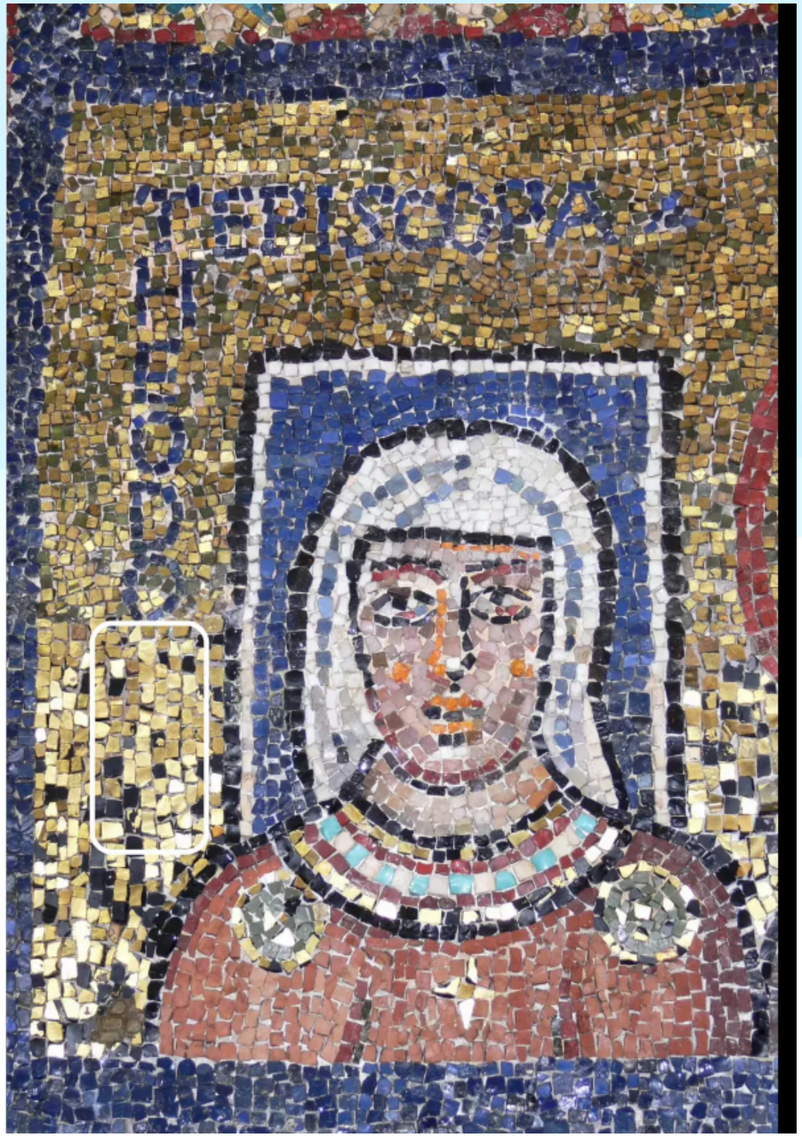
In Latin, EPISCOPA is the feminine form of the masculine EPISCOPUS or Bishop



“THEODO” is masculine-gendered when using Latin…but it is not a man’s name in Latin by any means.



Scholars believe the name “Theodore” is most definitely a woman’s name. Later new gold tesserae were used to cover up the “RA”
This then made the email bishop’s name masculine.



I will send this video to you since it is roughly an hour long and very good.

Creeds?
Were they about Jesus or the Followers?

A *creed* can be a formal doctrine or system of beliefs for a church or religious group or a philosophy or personal set of beliefs. The word's origins are in the Latin *crēdō,* "I believe," once specific to the Christian faith, but by the 17th century, it was used for many different faiths.

Companies, societies, and disciplines also adopt a creed — as in a political creed, a national creed, or a management creed — that lays out a particular belief system or way of doing things.

A doctrine is a set of teachings or instructions that are taught or advocated. It can also mean:

- A principle or position in a branch of knowledge or belief system
- A statement of fundamental government policy, especially in international relations
- A principle of law established through past decisions
- A military principle or set of strategies

The word "doctrine" comes from the Latin word doctrina, which means "teaching, instruction". In the Bible, the word always refers to spiritually related fields of study.

In the broadest sense, doctrine could be any teaching or belief taught by anyone.

The Creed of Eusebius of Caesarea:

We believe in one only God, Father almighty, creator of things visible and invisible;

And in the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the Word of God, God of God, light of light, life of life, his only Son, the first-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father before all time, by whom also everything was created, who became flesh for our redemption, who lived and suffered among men, rose again the third day, returned to the Father, and will come again one day in his glory to judge the quick and the dead.

We believe also in the Holy Ghost.

We believe that each of these three is and subsists; the Father truly as Father, the Son truly as Son, the Holy Ghost truly as Holy Ghost; as our Lord also said, when he sent his disciples to preach: 'Go and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

The Nicene Creed:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (ὁμοούσιον) with the Father, by whom all things were made, both which be in heaven and in earth, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit.

And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence from the Father, or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion—all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;

The holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

A few common observations from the study

Of the nine shown here, which one made you think or wonder more about?

- People resisted the Roman Empire
- People practiced gender bending
- People lived in Chosen families
- People claimed they belonged to Israel
- People had diverse organizational structures among the different groups
- People had persisting oral traditions
- People identified in different manners, some schools etc
- They had LOTS of meals
- They met together for long periods of time

Join the Club, Feasting and Bathing, Inventing Orthodoxy through Heresy

Week Six

2000 years from now,
people will not understand
the difference between
"butt dial" and "booty call"

and this is exactly why
the Bible is hard to understand.

The ***“perennial philosophy”*** or ***“perennial tradition”*** recognizes some constant themes, truths, and recurrences in all world religions. Unfortunately, many religions have emphasized differences and claimed their brand is better than others.

But there have been threads of the perennial tradition throughout history acknowledged by the Catholic Church. In ***Nostra Aetate.***, the Second Vatican Council begins by saying,"*All peoples comprise a single community and have a single origin [created by one and the same Creator God]…. And one also is their final goal: God…. The Catholic Church rejects* ***nothing*** *which is true and holy in these religions*” (Vatican II Documents, 1965, #1, 2).

The document praises Native religions, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam as “*reflecting a ray of that truth which enlightens all people.”*

Heresy is a term that originated in the New Testament and was used by the Church to describe a sect or division that threatened the unity of Christians. Christian authors used The term pejoratively in the second century to describe the worst type of religious deviance within Christian communities.

The term "heresy" comes from the Ancient Greek word haíresis, which initially meant "choice" or "thing chosen." It came to mean the "party, or school, of a man's choice."

Some of the major heresies of Church history and when they began include:

- The Circumcisers (1st Century)
- Gnosticism (1st and 2nd Centuries)
- Montanism (Late 2nd Century)
- Sabellianism (Early 3rd Century)
- >>>>

The Circumcisers were a group of men who came from Judea in the 1st century and taught that people could not be saved unless they were circumcised according to the custom of Moses. The Circumcision heresy is described in Acts 15:1.

Circumcision is defined as a covenant between God and all Jewish males and their slaves to undergo on the eighth day of birth. Circumcision is first mentioned in the Book of Genesis 17:9-14. The text reads, "*You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you*" (Genesis 17:11). Circumcision is also part of the traditional conversion process for male converts to Judaism. If the male who is converting has already been circumcised, then a ritual removal of a single drop of blood will take place.

The Circumcisers heresy was a 1st-century heresy that taught that people could not be saved unless they were circumcised according to the custom of Moses. The heresy is described in Acts 15:1

Paul was against circumcision. He said that circumcision was not necessary for salvation. He also said that circumcision was an impediment to salvation.

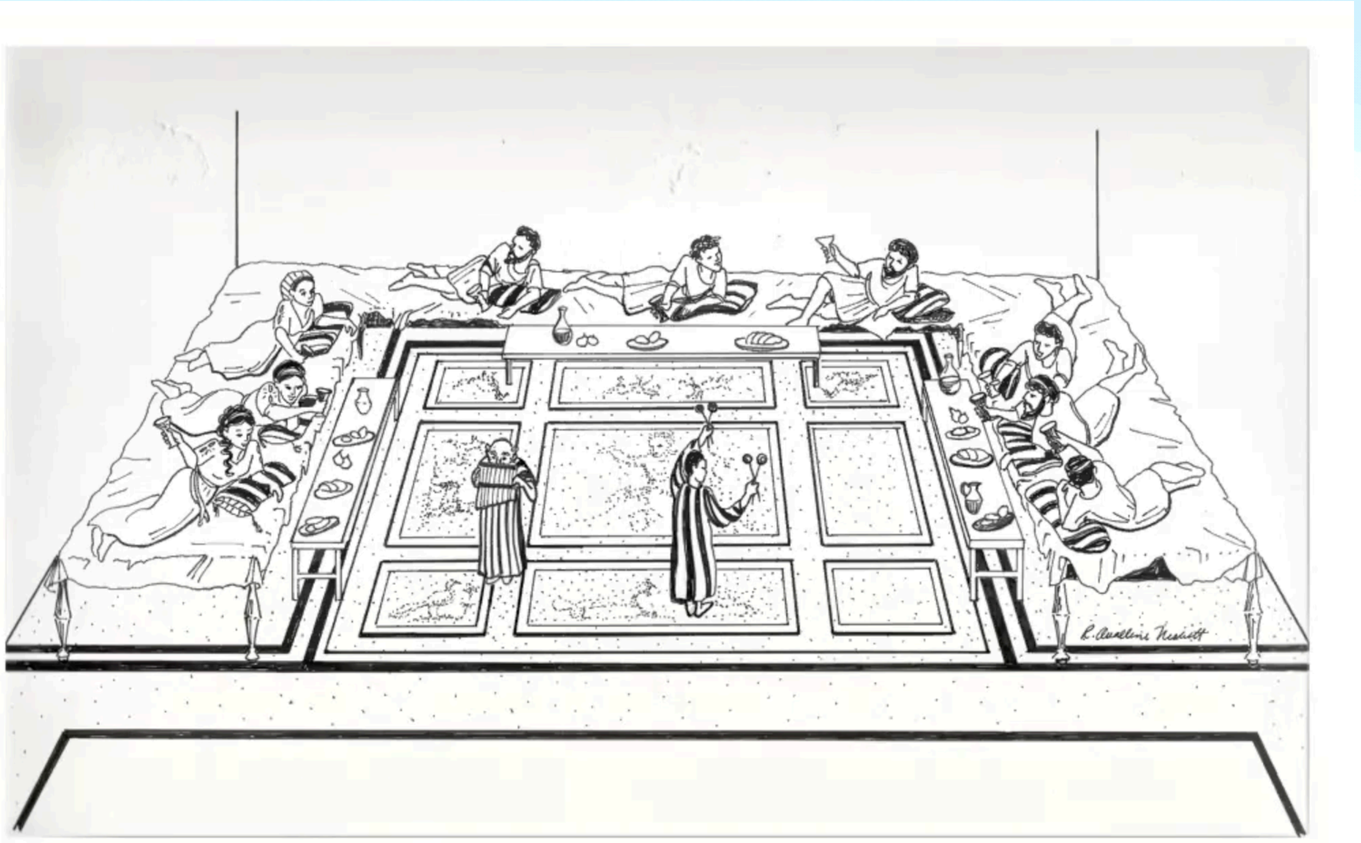
In Galatians 5:2, Paul said, "*I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you*". He also accused circumcision advocates of wanting to make a good showing in the flesh.

In Acts 16, Paul *encouraged Timothy to be circumcised.* However, when they tried to make it a law that he circumcised other people, he refused. He said that if you want to be circumcised, you can, but if you don't want to, you don't have to.

Paul was livid at the perversion of the teachings. He said that they were making salvation a matter of performance instead of a gift of mercy and grace on the basis of faith alone.

The Catholic church celebrated Circumcision Day until 1960. In medieval times, the holy foreskin was worshipped in many European churches.

Meals were important in various communities. What do you think comes close to what they experienced in our culture and society today?



Mealtime was a big deal to Jesus' followers because it was a chance to ***deepen*** friendships, welcome strangers, and serve the poor. Discuss what to believe and not to believe, and tell stories about Jesus.

Imagine everyday ordinary mealtimes today doing the same?

Early Christ Associations ate meals together in the first century, bringing bread and a cup. People would come and bring these two items with them. The "host" or the collective community funds provided the wine, olives, etc. These meals were central to their education, worship, and life together. They sang, shared teachings, prayed, and proclaimed the message of Jesus.

During these meals. Some foods provided by the host or the collective community include:

- Milk and honey
- Lentil stew
- Bread and a cup for first-time guests
- Local fruits and vegetables
- Oil & Salt

however, many groups of the 1st – 2nd centuries refused meat all together. Very often, a fish appeared on the table, considered the most decent food for a Jesus follower due to its repeated mention in the Gospels. This area is really being researched with new documents.

Dining Spaces

Taberna

Cemetery

Mithraeum

Triclinium
(Domus)

The Hypogeum of the Aureli, one of the most important private funerary complexes of the 3rd century AD (probably in 230),

Hypogeum of the Aurelii Rome, III CE
Dining at a Stibadium notice it is C shaped

The frescoes drew academic attention because of their copious use of both traditional Greco-Roman polytheistic imagery — Hermes, Hercules, Prometheus, Penelope's suitors — and early "Christian". iconography — a Latin cross, the Good Shepherd, eleven men in togas (probably apostles), the creation of Adam

There are scholars who believe the Gospel of Matthew was written as early as ten to twelve years after the death of Christ. Those who hold to this earlier dating of Matthew believe he first wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, and then it was later translated into Greek.

One of the evidences of this earlier dating of Matthew's Gospel is that early church leaders such as Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius recorded that Matthew first wrote his Gospel for Jewish believers while he was still in Israel.

In fact, Eusebius (a bishop of Caesarea and known as the father of church history) reported that Matthew wrote his Gospel before he left Israel to preach in other lands, which Eusebius says happened about 12 years after the death of Christ. Some scholars believe this would place Matthew's writing as early as A.D. 40-45 and as late as A.D. 55.

The more traditional dating of the gospels were written in the following order:

- Mark: Written around 70 CE
- Matthew: Written around 80 CE
- Luke: Written around 85-90 CE
- John: Written around 95-100 CE

The **Gospel of Luke i**s the longest book in the New Testament. Luke's Gospel contains 24 chapters. It's important because it focuses on the nature of salvation and how Jesus Christ provides it. Luke's Gospel also emphasizes that God cares for the poor and unimportant.

Luke's Gospel focuses on:

- The nature of salvation & How Jesus ushered in God's Kingdom on Earth
- Christ's focus on the lost and least & How Jesus came to seek and save the lost
- Helping new believers gain a more stable understanding of Jesus' words and actions

It's written in a way that both Jewish and non-Jewish people can understand.

Some themes in Luke's Gospel include:

- Nourishment
- The Holy Spirit
- Joy of salvation
- Forgiveness
- Discipleship
- Prayer
- Miracles

Jesus' followers often used meals to engage with people and teach important lessons. And they continued to call other followers to meals to learn more about Jesus through his teachings. Jesus' example provides an opportunity to invite friends, outcasts, and even enemies to know God's story of love and salvation—the Sermon on the Mount.

In the book of Luke alone, there are ten-plus stories of Jesus dining with various people.

1. Dining with the enemy — Luke 5:27-32 In Jesus' time, the people hated tax collectors.

2. The uninvited guest — Luke 7:36-50 Have you ever hosted a dinner party only to have someone unexpected (and possibly unwanted) show up?

Jesus went to Simon the Pharisee's house for a prestigious dinner, where topics of the day were to be discussed. Since the dining areas in the elite homes were often partially open to the street, the public could listen to the conversations. Enter the "*sinful woman*" (7:37). She crossed the invisible barrier into the invited, elite space and shocked all in attendance with her actions.

Luke, also known as Luke the Evangelist, is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. He is one of the Four Evangelists, the *four traditionally* ascribed authors of the canonical gospels.

According to tradition, Luke was a companion of St. Paul the Apostle and the most literary of the New Testament writers. He was a physician by profession and of Antiochian parentage. *(Antiochians are people from ancient Antioch. They are a mixture of ancient Greek settlers, Macedonians, Roman-era Greeks, Byzantine Greeks, and indigenous Levantines)*

He never met Jesus in person, but in his Gospel, he says that he came to know about Jesus by talking to eyewitnesses to the events of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

EURASIAN PLATE
Black Sea
Fault Lines Around Turkey & Syria
Istanbul
Samsun
Trabzon
Bursa
Ankara
ARMENIA
Erzurum
TURKEY
SECOND QUAKE
7.5 magnitude
Izmir
Kayseri
Van
Denizli
Konya
Diyarbakir
Antalya
Icel (Mersin)
Adana
Gaziantep
FIRST QUAKE
7.8 magnitude
Antioch
Antakya
Aleppo
Mosul
Arbil
Nicosia
CYPRUS
Latakia
SYRIA
Kirkuk
Hims
Beirut
ARABIAN PLATE
Damaskus
Mediterranean Sea
Baghdad
AFRICAN PLATE
IRAQ
Tel Aviv-Yafo
Amman
Alexandria
Port Said
Jerusalem
EGYPT
JORDAN

Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount is called the Sermon on the Plain. It appears in the Gospel of Luke, in 6:17–49. The Sermon on the Plain is similar to the longer Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew

The Sermon on the Plain is shorter but similar to the Sermon on the Mount. Luke describes the setting as being "on the plain.” The two sermons are similar enough that the footnote on **Luke 6:17** suggests that the Sermon on the Plain may be a summary of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Plain occurs at the same moment in Luke's narrative as the Sermon on the Mount. In Luke's narrative, Jesus heads up a mountain but gives the sermon on the way down at a level spot

The Sermon on the Plain includes:

- Jesus heading up a mountain but giving the sermon on the way down at a level spot
- A section sometimes called the Beatitudes
- An exhortation that Jesus' followers should rejoice when they are being persecuted

Luke and Matthew didn't record word-for-word transcripts. They provided summaries and examples of what Jesus said.

The feeding of the 5,000 happened after the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is where Jesus preached his longest recorded sermon.

After the sermon, the disciples were tasked with feeding the hungry multitude.

(Jesus multiplied five loaves of bread and two fish into a feast that fed five thousand.)

The feeding of the 5,000 is recorded in all four gospels:

- Matthew 14:13-21
- Mark 6 :31-44
- Luke 9:12-17
- John 6:1-14

The feeding of the 5,000 happened near Bethsaida , close to the Sea of Galilee. Jesus directed the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. The disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers.

Feeding the hungry — Luke 9:10-17

In Luke’s account, Jesus fed 5,000 people (*not including women and children*) who had come to hear him speak. He didn’t have to feed them. But what does Jesus do?

Jesus knew they also had physical needs. In **Matthew 25,** Jesus reveals that those who truly know him serve others in very real ways, such as feeding the hungry and giving a drink to the thirsty. This becomes a theme within the early followers.

Meeting people's basic physical needs often ministers more than words and ultimately gives you a kind of integrity that can lead to a deeper conversation. This was key in the early movements.

Did Jesus take time to Smell the Roses? — Luke 10:38-42

Just like us, Jesus had friends. Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were dear to him, and he undoubtedly enjoyed getting together with a meal. Martha — the hostess with the most — was working her butt off to prepare a good meal for Jesus and others.

When Martha complained about her sister sitting and listening to Jesus, she was surprised, if not shocked, when Jesus rebuked her. Essentially, he said that Mary's choice to sit and listen to him was better than all her work.

The problem wasn't the work. It was that she was so busy she was going to miss the purpose: ***spending time with Jesus and friends.***

Do you take a shower before every meal? — Luke 11:37-53

Life is messy. In Jesus' time, the roads were dusty, and traveling guaranteed a certain measure of dirt on your person. When invited to dine with a Pharisee, Jesus was criticized for not washing. They weren't talking about washing your hands before dinner. They were judging him because he didn't perform their complex washing ritual. Think of bathing.

Jesus, always perceptive, saw their error wasn't about hygiene but about the heart: "*You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy — full of greed and wickedness! Fools! Didn't God make the inside as well as the outside?*" (Luke 11:39-40).

Let’s talk about what is hot today! — Luke 14:1-24

When Jesus accepted a dinner invitation to the home of a Pharisee, he came prepared to speak on the day's hot topics: working on the Sabbath, places of honor (*at the table*), and who gets to sit where in the kingdom’s banquet table. The early followers discussed hot topics and touchy subjects during their meals. How did they deal with them?

When Jesus had a point to make on a complex subject, he didn’t go into a long, drawn-out monologue. He asked well-thought-out questions that engaged people and told exciting stories (parables) to make a complex subject understandable.

Invite yourself over — Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus was curious about who this Jesus was but only expected to observe him on the sidelines from afar. The “little man” of Sunday school fame couldn’t see over the crowd, so he climbed a tree to catch a glimpse. Picture how surprised he was when Jesus noticed him. Zacchaeus was the ***chief tax collector***, he was even more surprised — and excited — when Jesus wanted to have a meal at his house.

Zacchaeus, a “sinner,” in the mind of the Jewish people, would not reach out to Jesus, by custom because Jesus was a rabbi. Zacchaeus had little hope of acceptance in the community.

Having a Disciple over for dinner? — Luke 24:28-32

After Jesus' resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus. He talked with them about all that had happened and explained the significance through the Scriptures: "*Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*" (Luke 24:27).

What’s for dinner? Serve comfort food — Luke 24:36-43

When the two from Emmaus returned to tell the disciples, Jesus suddenly appeared. They were very afraid — they thought they’d seen a ghost! But Jesus reassured them with a simple gesture; he sat down and ate with them. Then Jesus “*opened their minds to understand the Scripture”* (Luke 24:45).

By eating, Jesus wasn’t just proving that he wasn’t a ghost. He was doing something familiar to put their minds at ease. Jesus was ministering to his disciples’ weary hearts like the ultimate comfort food. Meals worked that way in the early movements, melting away a frazzled workday or soothing an aching heart. How to deal with the fear of the Roman Empire.

Wrapping up Meals,(a short video), then a look at The early followers. Were they bathing for cleanliness or socializing? Or killing two birds with one stone?

But first….

Myth** (Metaphors and parables) **express reality,

and reality is expressed by myth.

The problem is when the myth becomes the reality.

"With the breakdown of religion and in particular, Christianity, we are in search of a whole new vocabulary for what we are trying to describe. We faced this problem in writing After Jesus Before Christianity when we decided there was no Christianity in the first two centuries. We (they) had to invent a new vocabulary to describe the early Jesus movements without using the words Christian or Christianity."

~ B. Brandon Scott

How comfortable were you with some of the terminology?
What if any vocabulary gave you angst?

Myth and metaphor are literary devices that use figurative language to convey meaning. However, they have some key differences.

Myth is a traditional story often considered true by a particular culture or people. Myths often feature supernatural elements and deal with universal human themes such as good vs. evil, life vs. death, and the meaning of existence. Myths are metaphorically and symbolically true. They are not meant to be taken literally. Myths and parables are both short stories that teach a moral lesson. However, there are some key differences between the two.

A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things that are dissimilar. Metaphors are used to create vivid imagery and to convey complex ideas in a more accessible way.

Parables are shorter, more concise stories that are used to illustrate a specific moral or religious lesson. Parables are often used in religious teachings but can also be used in other contexts to teach important life lessons.

Here are a few key aspects of myths in religion:

1. Explaining Origins:

Myths often explain the creation of the world and the origins of different elements of the natural world. For example, many creation myths explain how the universe and humanity existed.

2. Moral and Ethical Lessons:

Myths frequently contain moral and ethical lessons. They illustrate concepts of right and wrong behavior and often depict the consequences of human actions. These stories can serve as guidelines for ethical living within a religious community.

3. Cultural and Social Identity:

Myths contribute to the cultural and social identity of a religious community. They provide a sense of belonging and shared heritage among believers. Myths can also reinforce social norms and values within a community.

4. Ritual and Worship:

Myths are often incorporated into religious rituals and ceremonies. They can be recited, acted out, or celebrated to connect with the divine and reinforce religious beliefs.

5. Symbolism and Allegory:

Myths frequently use symbols and allegorical language to convey deeper spiritual truths. These symbols often have specific meanings within a religious context and can be interpreted by religious leaders and scholars.

6. Evolution and Adaptation:

Myths can evolve over time, adapting to changes in society and culture. New myths or reinterpretations of existing myths may emerge to address a religious community's evolving needs and beliefs.

Born in northern India., Lord Krishna's life marks the passing of the **Myths, which** are traditional stories that are often regarded as true by a particular culture or people. Myths often feature supernatural elements and deal with universal human themes such as good vs. evil, life vs. death, and the meaning of existence.

Krishna's life marked the passing of the Dvapara age and the beginning of the Kal yuga, which is considered the current age. He lived for 125 years, 8 months, and 7 days. And the beginning of the Kal yuga (also considered the current age). References to Lord Krishna can be found in several Hindu mythological books, especially in the epic Hindu book, the Mahabharata.

Lord Krishna was born on 21-07-3227 BCE and died on 18-02-3102 BCE.

According to the Bhagavad-gita, Krishna appears on earth whenever there's a decline in religious principles and a rise of irreligion. Krishna says he will come back at every age. Krishna comes every day in many different forms and shapes.

Krishna says he will take birth again and again to protect Dharm and destroy evil.

The Bhagavad Gita states:

- Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and a rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata, then I manifest Myself.

- For the protection of the good, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness, I am born from age to age.

Dvapara Yuga, also known as Dwapara or Dwapara-yuga, is the ***third and third best of the four yugas (***world ages) in a Yuga Cycle, preceded by Treta Yuga and followed by Kali Yuga.

According to Hindu scriptures, the Dvapara Yuga lasted **864,000 years** ***(2,400 divine years. A day of the gods is equal to four years of human life. One year of the gods is equal to 360 days, or 1,080 years of human life.).*** It is believed that the Dvapara Yuga began after the Treta Yuga ended, which was marked by the death of Rama. The Dvapara Yuga is considered to be an age of spiritual decline, but it is also an age of great spiritual achievements.

The Dvapara Yuga is believed to have ended with the death of Krishna, which is said to have marked the beginning of the Kali Yuga, the current age.

The Dvapara Yuga is often associated with yellow, symbolizing knowledge and wisdom. It is also associated with the bull, which symbolizes morality and dharma.

The Dvapara Yuga is a significant age in Hindu cosmology, and it is believed to be a time when humanity can achieve great spiritual progress.

Each Yuga Cycle lasts for 4,320,000 years (12,000 divine years) with its four yugas and their parts occurring in the following order:

- Krita (Satya) Yuga: 1,728,000 (4,800 divine) years. ...
- Treta Yuga: 1,296,000 (3,600 divine) years. ...
- Dvapara Yuga: 864,000 (2,400 divine) years. ...
- Kali Yuga: 432,000 (1,200 divine) years.

In Hinduism, ***moksha*** is the ultimate goal of life. Think Eudaimonia. Think Sermon on the Mount. These are expressions of the soul's liberation from the cycle of life, death, and rebirth —the kingdom of God.

Moksha is achieved by:

- Ridding oneself of material desires and mortal perspective
- Developing an understanding of the soul and universe
- Overcoming ignorance and desires

The "Sermon on the Mount" is moral teachings

- Doesn't contain the offer of eternal life
- Doesn't suggest that there's more to know about Jesus
- Focuses on God wanting people to be righteous

When I compare the two, I point this out:

1. Jesus's teachings are similar to the teachings of Vedanta.

2. Jesus, Krishna, and Buddha all emphasized a spiritual "gospel" of praxis for oneself and others.

3. Jesus and Krishna are understood to be both human and divine

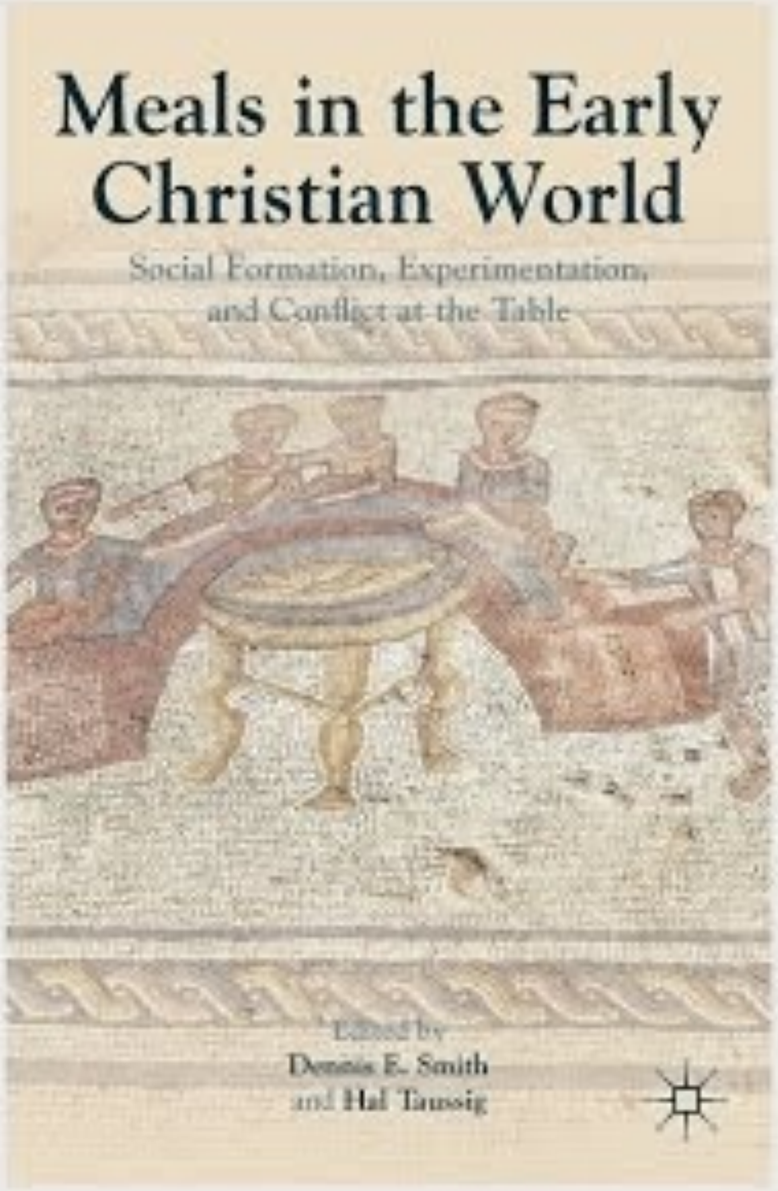
4. Jesus and Buddha both share an understanding of altruism and insist on service to others as the key (I think of Merton here)

5. Jesus and Krishna were called a God and the Son of God in their day and history.

6. Both practices (religions) believe Jesus and Krishna were sent from "heaven" to earth as a human.

Krishna and Moses have many similarities, including.

- **Birth:** Both were born during times of adversity. Krishna was born to save the people of Mathura, India. Moses was born to save the Hebrews who had been slaves in Egypt.
- **Rescue:** Both were saved by being placed in a basket and floating in a river. I tell them what do they think the metaphor is saying here.
- **Prophethood**: Many Muslim scholars consider Krishna to be a Prophet of God, like Moses, Christ, or Mohammad. I ask them to see the pattern.
- **Teachings:** Both Krishna and Moses taught against crimes of humanity. Think of the Ten Commandments, the Code of Hammurabi, and the sermon on the mount.
- **Leadership:** Krishna led the Yadavas to Yisrael, and Moses led the Hebrews to Israel.



MEALS IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORLD

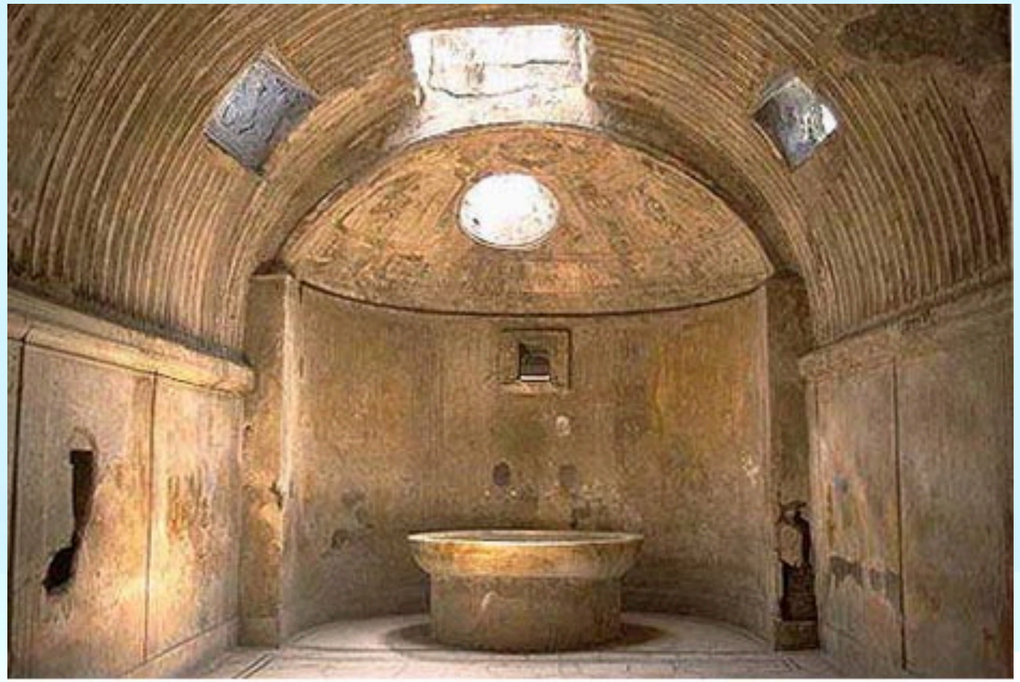
SOCIAL FORMATION, EXPERIMENTATION, AND CONFLICT AT THE TABLE

HAL TAUSSIG

The ancient Romans and empire members enjoyed bathing to relax, socialize, and maintain hygiene.

Baths of Caracalla

Commissioned by Emperor Caracalla in 212 AD, these baths were one of the most luxurious buildings of the time. The Tepidarium, a warm bath in the Baths of Caracalla, had a domed ceiling and mosaic floors.



“Roman emperors always listed baths as one of their great gifts to the people of the empire. By the end of the second century, Rome had more than three hundred baths. Imperial baths were large complexes with three main rooms: a central atrium, a hot bathing room, and a cold one. These were places not only for bathing but also for socializing. Since baths needed lots of water, the emperors built large aqueducts to supply cities with water. The ruins of some of these enormous stone engineering projects dominate landscapes to this date. There was no real practical need for all the stonework; it was part of Roman propaganda. The baths and aqueducts demonstrated concretely Roman ownership, power, and stability. The empire was here to stay. The common meaning of the Greek word baptizo (baptism) is “bathing,” “washing,” “immersing,” or “thoroughly dipping.” It is an ordinary word, used to describe ordinary washing and bathing” ~ page 190

To call these events “baptisms” is inappropriate for two reasons.

First, it is not a translation but a transliteration. Like the word “Christian,” the English word “baptism” imposes a later Christian meaning on the practice of bathing by the communities of Jesus Anointed.

The proper translation for the word in all writings of the Jesus communities of the first two centuries is “bathing” or “washing.”

Tertullian listed the places such bathing could happen as “in a sea or a pool, a stream or a fount, a lake or a trough” (On Baptism 4). Archaeological digs have revealed that many neighborhoods in Israel had small baths next to, and often almost as large as, houses. Pools were often found between houses in neighborhoods. People from various households bathed together (the men and the women at separate times).

Early Christians lived in a Roman culture where public and private bathing was the norm. However, the early Christian Church had some reservations about bathing, particularly as it was practiced in the Roman baths.

One concern was that the Roman baths were often mixed-gender and involved nudity. The early Christians saw this as immoral who believed that modesty was important. Another concern was that the Roman baths were associated with pagan practices, such as idolatry and sexual immorality.

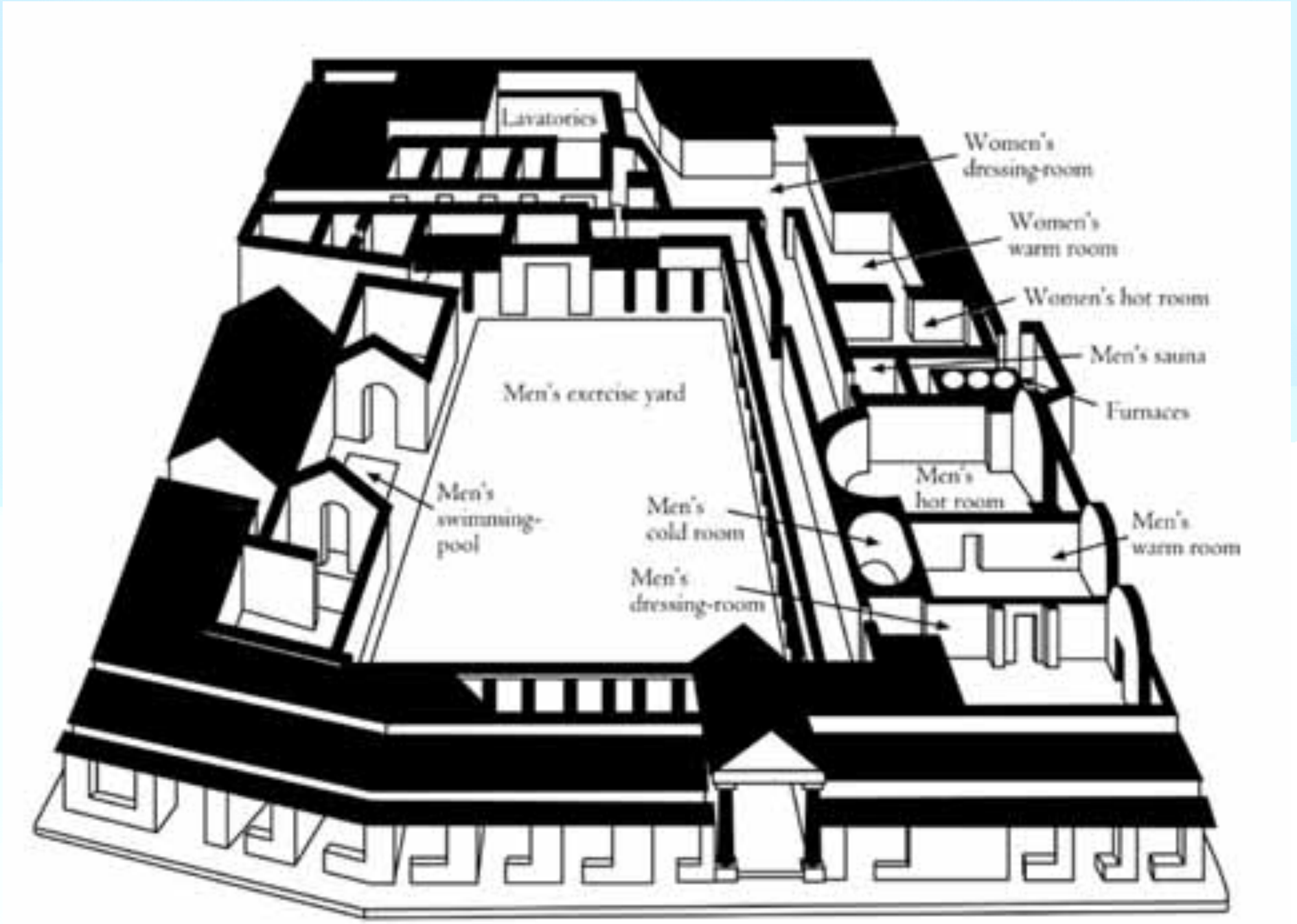
Despite these concerns, many early Christians did bathe. They often used private baths in their homes or baths that were attached to churches. Early Christians also bathed for religious reasons, such as before baptism or before taking communion.

Christian Church had a mixed attitude towards bathing. Some Christians condemned it outright, while others saw it as a necessary and beneficial practice. It is likely that most early Christians bathed for practical and religious reasons, but they took care to avoid the excesses and pagan associations of the Roman baths.

Here are some specific examples of early Christian bathing:

- The Didascalia Apostolorum, an early Christian manual, enjoined believing men and women to go to bathing facilities separated by gender.
- The Church Father Clement of Alexandria wrote that bathing could be beneficial for both the body and the soul, but he warned against the dangers of excessive bathing and vanity.
- The Church Father Tertullian was more critical of bathing, arguing that it was unnecessary and could lead to sin.
- In the late Roman Empire, some churches and monasteries built and maintained baths for the poor and sick.
- Many senior clerics also created splendid bath suites for themselves.

Overall, the early Christian Church seemed to have a mixed attitude towards bathing. Some Christians condemned it outright, while others saw it as a necessary and beneficial practice. It is likely that most early Christians bathed for practical and religious reasons, but they took care to avoid the excesses and pagan associations of the Roman baths.


Lavatories
Women's dressing-room
Women's warm room
Women's hot room
Men's sauna
Furnaces
Men's exercise yard
Men's swimming-pool
Men's cold room
Men's hot room
Men's warm room
Men's dressing-room

Did the early followers think of Jesus as a Wisdom Teacher?

Many people identified with Jesus as a teacher while alive and after his death.

With Jesus as their teacher, these people identified as *“students.”* The primary word for “student” in Greek is translated traditionally as *“disciple.”*

In contemporary English, however, “disciple” does not mean “student.”

“Seminar member Brandon Scott gave “Christian,” a name applied to Jesus followers, a new twenty-first-century clarity. What emerges from his work is a wide set of evocative group names from Jesus’s connections to kingship and prophet.

“King” is especially resonant when one realizes that the Roman Empire destroyed the sovereignty of Jesus’s homeland while Jesus people sparked resistance to Rome.

In other words, naming Jesus “King of Israel” is both silly because Israel was ruled by Rome and dangerous because the title challenged that rule.” Page 191

Sophia (“smart” or “wisdom”) in Greek can mean a wise divine figure, as well as the quality of being wise.

The Greek noun Sophia is also feminine, opening up other ways of imagining Jesus.

Calling Jesus Sophia, a feminine divine term, is very different from the patriarchal vocabulary normally applied to Jesus.

Likewise, the followers of Jesus, the wise teacher, are “the wise ones,” or potentially “the wise women,” given Wisdom’s gendered identity.

The Seminar also found ten names of different groups in specific writings. These group names are especially fascinating in that none of them use the word “Jesus” but most of them seem to allude to activities or values of the various Jesus groups.

Paul refers to a group that gathers under the leadership of a Corinthian woman called Chloe; the name of the group is Chloe’s people (1 Cor. 1:11). In the Acts of the Apostles, a group or movement is called “the Way,” with no other description (9:2). In the Acts of Paul and Thecla, apparently the young woman leader Thecla (and perhaps Paul) belong to a group that is called “the Enslaved of God” (37:3). From the somewhat extended description of Thecla’s activities, these are a group of single women (and perhaps some men) who have left their families. Paul may have been the founder of this group of young women (and men) that Thecla leads.

The Gospel of Matthew, however, cites a particular group of celibate men that it names “the Children” (18:2–7; 19:10–15).

When the Odes of Solomon addresses its group regularly as “Members,” the meaning is a double one: it mostly uses the image of a group as parts of a body, but it also plays on the belonging character of people in close proximity to one another (3:2; 6:2; 8:14).

Ancient Near East
empires from 700-300 BCE
PHRYGIA
CILICIA
CYPRUS
Sidon
Tyre
Jerusalem
MEDIA
Babylon
BABYLONIA
EGYPT
PERSIS

Jesus by what name?

The parables of Jesus, as characteristic of Jesus's teaching style, especially in the gospel writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Thomas, come as close to Jesus's perspective of himself as we can reasonably get.

Although the parables are not generally read in terms of gender, several of these stories raise provocative questions about male and female roles.

In the Parable of the Lost Coin, a woman loses one of ten silver coins and searches her house to find it. Recovering the coin, she throws a neighborhood party. In this story, a woman's role conforms to female expectations.

What is unusual here is casting a woman in a lead role, especially a woman doing an ordinary thing. The lead role in stories of the time should really be played by a king, as indicated in many rabbinic parables.

In that time period, a woman was an inappropriate image for the Empire of God, or any empire for that matter.

The late second-century writing 2 Clement cites “the Lord himself” making a bi-gendered connection explicit:

When “the two are one,” we are speaking truth among ourselves. The “outside of ourselves” is the body, whereas the inside is the soul.

The body is, therefore no longer the basic factor establishing one’s identity.

Rather our soul, then, should be made manifest by our good works. In that way, it makes sense that when a brother sees a sister, he doesn’t think of her as a female and that a sister seeing a brother wouldn’t think of him as a male.

This is what ushers in the Father’s realm. (2 Clem. 12:3, 5, 6)3

Contradictory influences also developed, even while other gender-bending depictions persisted.

When Paul's followers conceived Jesus's body as "*male and female,"* they saw it as a reflection of ideas from Genesis.

This ideal was understood, after all, to be a divine image in Hebrew scriptures.

SECOND-CENTURY PORTRAITS OF JESUS Savior as True Human

The Gospel of Mary, written in the first half of the second century, was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century. It combines the first-century tradition of Jesus as a teacher of wisdom with a strong dose of popular Greek philosophy.

Significantly, the Gospel of Mary does not use the name “Jesus” at all, but only “Savior.”

In the Gospel of Mary—which is presented as a post-death story—the Savior turns the attention of the students from the nature of his resurrected body to the care of the soul and mind, either of men or of women.

The ***nongendered soul,*** while it moves toward its complete freedom, explains to the people that “you (those who are learning) mistook the garment I wore for my true self” (Gos. Mary 9:2).4

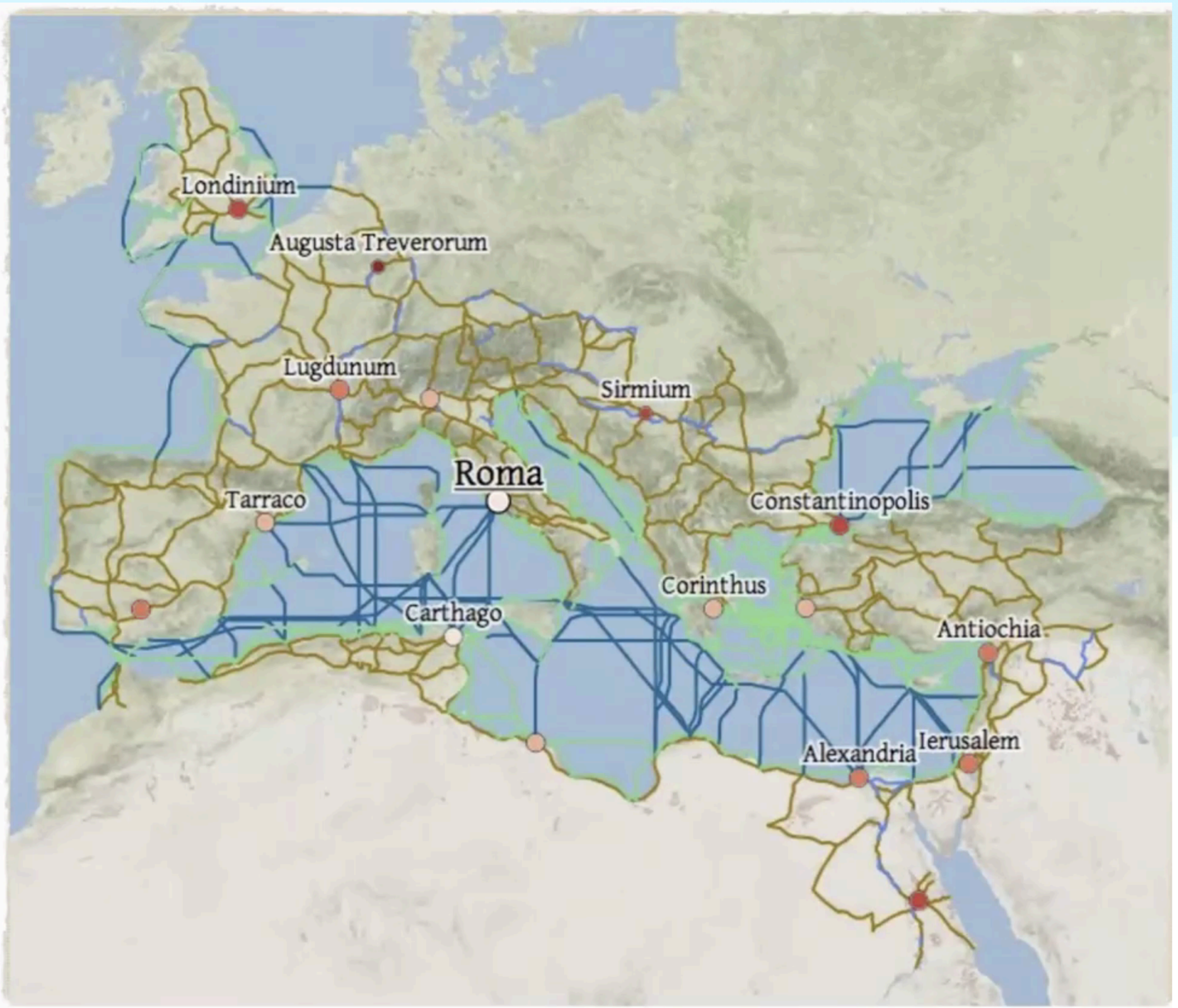
This garment that is shed while the soul is progressing upward appears to present only an outward image of gender and identity.

It is the outer garment that distorts the true image of the soul. When the Savior finishes teaching his students and leaves them, the students “were distressed and wept greatly. ‘*How are we going to go out to the rest of the world to announce the good news about the Realm of the child of true Humanity? . . . ‘If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?’*” (Gos. Mary 5:1, 2).

Then, a woman steps forward to comfort and take a ***leadership role.***

Mary (representing one of the first-century Marys—most likely Mary Magdalene) speaks with the authority of a second-century man, addressing the students' fear of Roman violence: "*Do not weep and be pained, nor doubt . . . But rather let us praise his greatness for he has prepared us and made us Humans*" (Gos. Mary 5:6, 7).

Before there were “Christian writings, what was there?
How do we know?
What about the Didache?



Spread of Christianity within Roman Empire trade and military

Marcion and their followers supporting the role of the military

The shame and humiliation of crucifixion were as intentional and intense as its cruel physical torture.

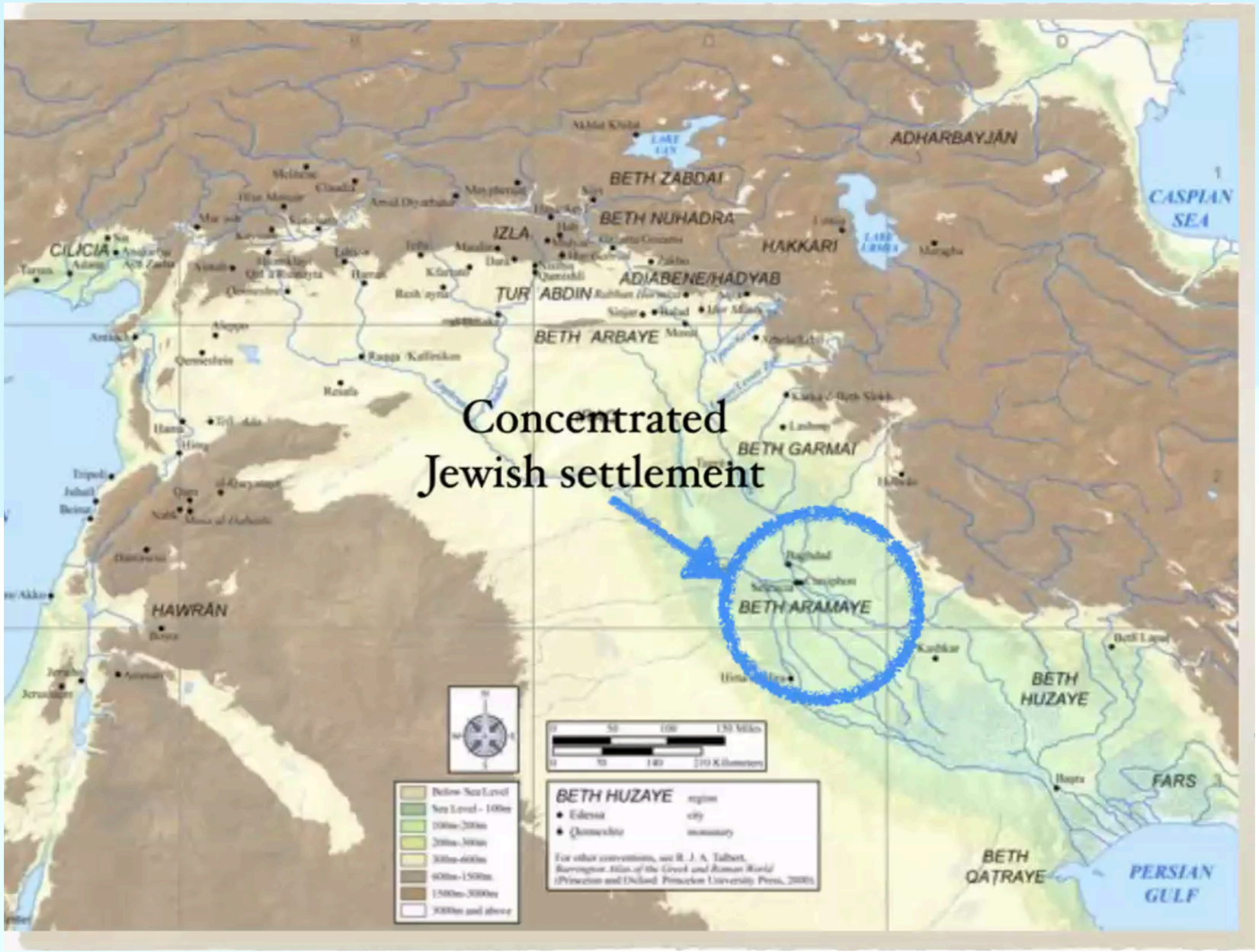
But Jesus's crucifixion ironically triggered the opposite of Roman intentions.

The Romans' anticipated destruction of both the body and memory of Jesus failed. Instead of silencing him, his death resulted in stories and songs of hope, inspiration, and a commitment to remembering him throughout the Mediterranean area.

People who needed an expression of their own devastation found stories of Jesus filling those needs. These stories of Jesus—crucified and resurrected in body and spirit—opened up the possibilities of his divine, saving, guiding, healing, encouraging presence existing and comforting people more than a century after his death.

“I passed on to you as of paramount importance what I also had received: that the Anointed died to free us from the seductive power of corruption
according to the scriptures, and that he was buried,
and that he was raised "on the third day" according to the scriptures;
and that he was seen by Cephas,
then by the twelve;
then he was seen by more than five hundred brothers and sisters at the same time.
(Most of them are still alive today, but some have passed away.)
Then he was seen by James,
then by all the apostles.
Last of all, as to one in whose birth God's purpose seemed to have miscarried, he was seen by me as well.”

1 Cor 15



Acts 2

Pilgrims at Jerusalem for Pentecost/Shavuot

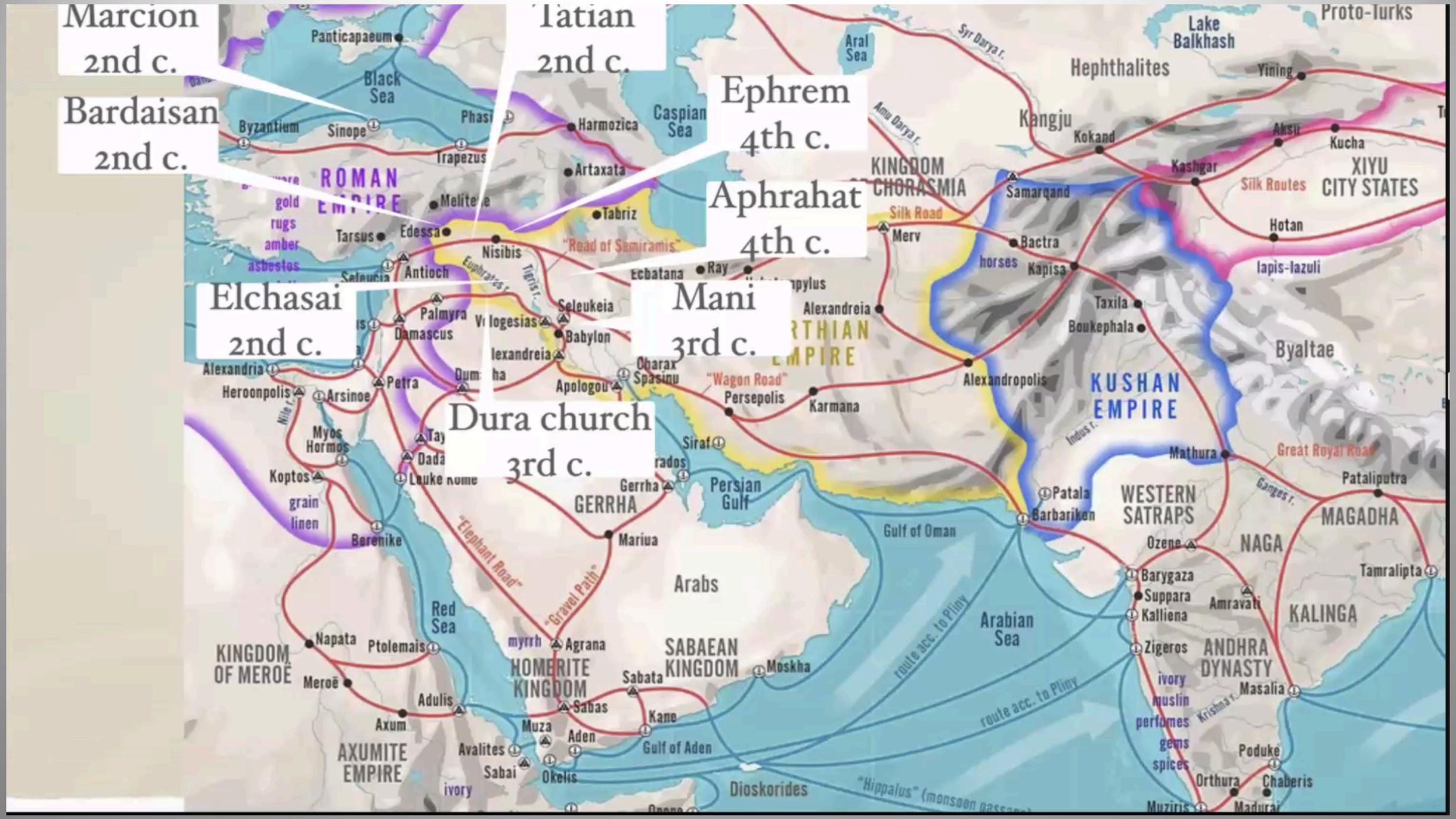
“Both Jews and proselytes” from Parthia, Media, Elam, and Mesopotamia

Spiritual Body **Marcion** of Sinope (90–160 CE), one of the most important second-century writers, is known now only through the voice of his opponents.

He was a teacher and an excellent organizational leader with a large following.

His ideas represent a unique overlap between such writers as Ignatius and the author of The Secret Revelation of John.

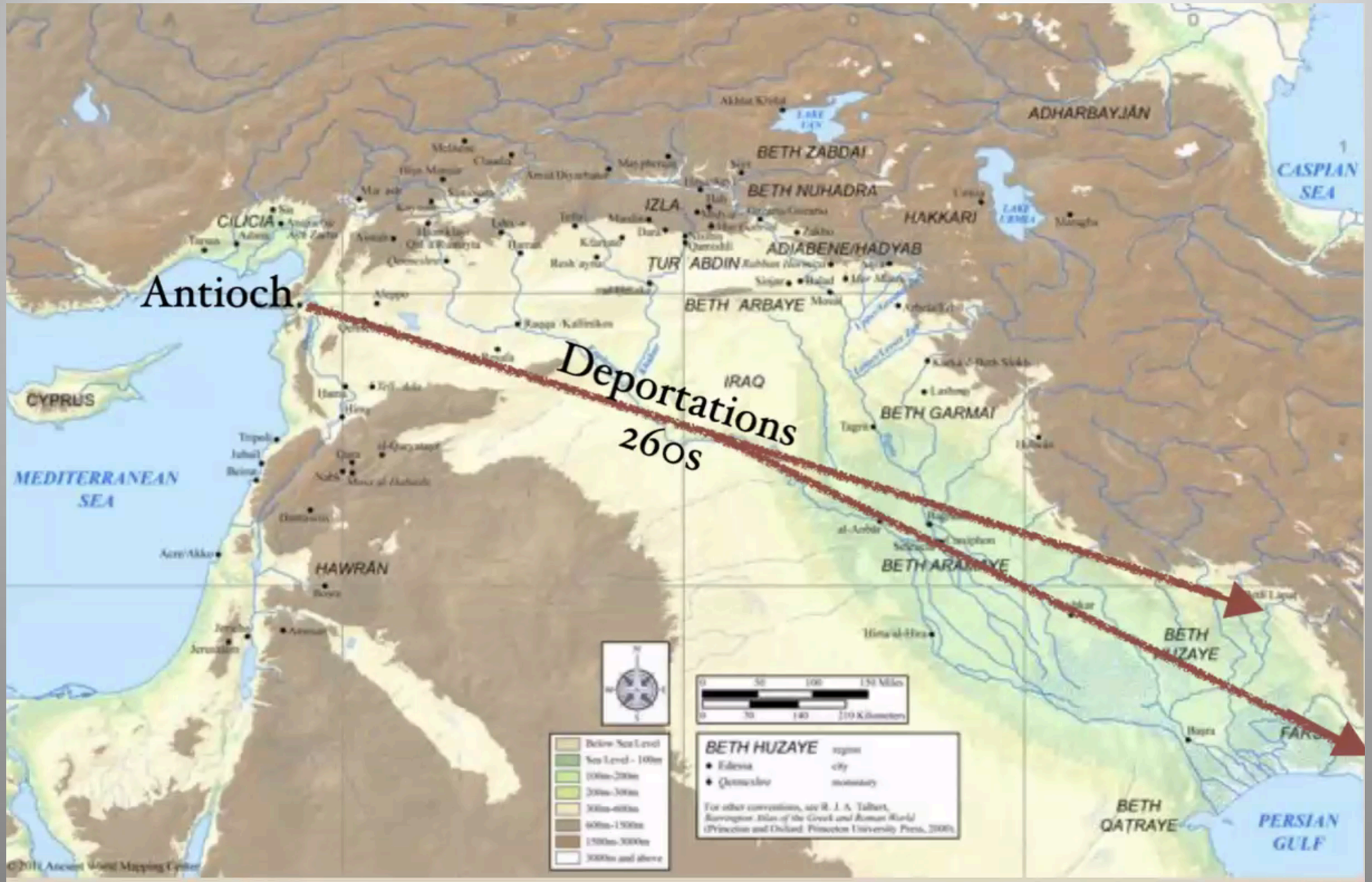
Marcion came from Pontus on the Black Sea, a Roman Empire backwater far from the main religious scene. Relatively few Judeans lived in Pontus, so he had little access to Judaism or Israel’s scriptures. But Jesus’s crucifixion left a deep impression on him—as it had for Ignatius.


Marcion
2nd c.
Tatian
2nd c.
Bardaisan
2nd c.
Ephrem
4th c.
Aphrahat
4th c.
Elchasai
2nd c.
Mani
3rd c.
Dura church
3rd c.
Panticapaeum
Black Sea
Byzantium
Sinope
Trapezus
Phasis
Caspian Sea
Harmozica
Artaxata
Tabriz
ROMAN EMPIRE
gold
rugs
amber
asbestos
Tarsus
Edessa
Nisibis
Antioch
"Road of Samiramis"
Euphrates r.
Tigris r.
Ecbatana
Ray
Seleukeia
Palmyra
Damascus
Babylon
Alexandria
Petra
Arsinoe
Heroonpolis
Nile r.
Myos Hormos
Koptos
grain
linen
Berenike
Charax Spasinu
Apologou
"Wagon Road"
Persepolis
Karmana
Siraf
Gerrha
GERRHA
Persian Gulf
Mariua
"Elephant Road"
"Gravel Path"
Arabs
Red Sea
Gulf of Oman
Napata
Ptolemais
KINGDOM OF MEROE
Meroë
myrrh
Agrana
HOMERITE KINGDOM
SABAEAN KINGDOM
Moskha
Sabata
Sabas
Kane
Adulis
Axum
Muza
Aden
Gulf of Aden
Avalites
Sabai
Okelis
AXUMITE EMPIRE
ivory
Dioskorides
"Hippalus" (monsoon passage)
route acc. to Pliny
Arabian Sea
Aral Sea
Syr Darya r.
Amu Darya r.
Hephthalites
Lake Balkhash
Proto-Turks
Yining
Kangju
Kokand
Aksu
Kucha
Kashgar
XIYU CITY STATES
Silk Routes
KINGDOM CHORASMIA
Silk Road
Merv
Samarqand
Bactra
horses
Kapisa
Hotan
lapis-lazuli
Alexandreia
Taxila
Boukephala
PARTHIAN EMPIRE
Alexandropolis
KUSHAN EMPIRE
Byaltae
Indus r.
Mathura
Great Royal Road
Patala
Barbariken
WESTERN SATRAPS
Ganges r.
Pataliputra
MAGADHA
Ozene
NAGA
Barygaza
Suppara
Kalliena
Amravati
KALINGA
Tamralipta
Zigeros
ANDHRA DYNASTY
ivory
muslin
perfumes
gems
spices
Masalia
Krishna r.
Poduke
Orthura
Chaberis
Muziris
Madurai

According to Marcion, Jesus was the God who descended into the world and was a stranger sent to save those trapped in this imperfect world, similarly as he appeared in The Secret Revelation of John.

Jesus was crucified and arose from the dead, and in his new spiritual body, he exercised the power to save all who believed in him.

Even more important for Marcion, Jesus was not the same as the God of the Hebrew prophets. That “God” had nothing to do with Jesus’s new gospel of God as Love.


Antioch.
Deportations
260s
CILICIA
CYPRUS
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
HAWRĀN
IZLA
BETH ZABDAI
BETH NUHADRA
ADIABENE/HADYAB
TUR ABDIN
BETH ARBAYE
HAKKARI
ADHARBAYJĀN
CASPIAN SEA
IRAQ
BETH GARMAI
BETH HUZAYE
BETH QATRAYE
PERSIAN GULF
BETH HUZAYE

A decade or so after Marcion had been in Rome, Justin Martyr (100–165 CE) rose to prominence with yet another, radically different image of Jesus.

His picture builds upon the opening of the Gospel of John, announcing that the “Word [Logos] was with God, and the Word [Logos] was God” (John 1:1). For Justin, Jesus was the embodiment of this Word. Since Jesus “*was in the beginning with God,”* and *“All things came into being through him”* (John 1:2, 3), for Justin, logically, Jesus would be this God, or “the Lord.”

People from different cultures and communities within the Roman Empire picked up on different and sometimes conflicting parts of the story of Jesus.

While Justin differed with Marcion over the “right” way to understand Jesus in light of the Hebrew scriptures, others turned their attention to the meaning of Jesus’s teachings and/or death to find meaning in their own lives.

And for different reasons, both Justin and Marcion encouraged the separation between the people of Israel who were followers of Jesus the Anointed and those who were not followers of Jesus the Anointed.

1. They resisted the Roman Empire by invoking the compassion and mercy of God, while contrasting God's perfect kingdom with the cruelty and domination of Rome despite having relatively little power themselves.

How does this challenge the prevailing theories,

2. They were remarkably egalitarian with gender roles, with women taking a more active leadership role in many of the groups (some even cutting their hair and dressing like men).

3. They lived in "spiritual" families or communities centered around their beliefs and practices, often disregarding blood-family ties.

4. They were aligned with Israel in nearly everything that they did, regardless of where they were, frequently picking out the traditions of the local Jewish communities and adding to them

5. They had a variety of organization structures, with little to no central control … which translates to a very diverse set of beliefs, many of which would become heretical and lose out to the coming orthodoxy (This is the best part)

6. Their tradition was mostly transmitted orally; however, they slowly developed what became canon alongside the same process where the Jewish canon was created. (

Think about what the book AJBC discovered. Does it draw a Theological Hermeneutical Conclusion?

- The empire is suppressing the people?
- The oppressed rise up?
- God’s role in the cry of the people

Alans
Panticapaeum
Danube r.
Black Sea
Byzantium
Sinope
Phasis
Trapezus
Harmozica
Artaxata
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
Syr Darya r.
Lake Balkhash
Hephthalites
Yining
Khwarazm
Amu Darya r.
Kangju
Kokand
Aksu
Kucha
Kashgar
XIYU CITY STATES
Silk Routes
glassware
gold
rugs
amber
asbestos
cloth
sea silk
woolen products
ROMAN EMPIRE
Melitene
Tarsus
Edessa
Tabriz
KINGDOM OF CHORASMIA
Samarqand
Silk Road
Merv
Gurgan
Bactra
horses
Kapisa
Hotan
lapis-lazuli
Nisibis
"Road of Semiramis"
Euphrates r.
Tigris r.
Seleucia
Antioch
Ecbatana
Ray
Hekatompylus
Alexandreia
Taxila
Boukephala
Palmyra
Vologesias
Seleukeia
"Road of Memnon"
PARTHIAN EMPIRE
Tyrus
Damascus
Babylon
Susa
Byaltae
Gaza
Alexandria
Alexandreia
Charax Spasinu
Dumatha
Petra
Apologou
"Wagon Road"
Alexandropolis
KUSHAN EMPIRE
Heroonpolis
Arsinoe
Persepolis
Karmana
Nile r.
Myos Hormos
Tayma
KINGDOM OF NABATEA
Siraf
Mathura
Great Royal Road
Dadan
Leuke Kome
Arados
Pataliputra
Koptos
grain
linen
Gerrha
Persian Gulf
Patala
WESTERN SATRAPS
Barbariken
Indus r.
Ganges r.
MAGADHA
GERRHA
Gulf of Oman
Ozene
NAGA
Berenike
Mariua
"Elephant Road"
"Gravel Path"
Barygaza
Tamralipta
Suppara
Amravati
Kalliena
Arabs
Red Sea
Arabian Sea
KALINGA
Napata
Ptolemais
myrrh
Agrana
SABAEAN KINGDOM
Zigeros
ANDHRA DYNASTY
KINGDOM OF MEROË
HOMERITE KINGDOM
Moskha
Sabata
route acc. to Pliny
route acc. to Pliny
ivory
muslin
perfumes
gems
spices
Meroë
Adulis
Sabas
Kane
Masalia
Krishna r.
Axum
Muza
Aden
Gulf of Aden
Poduke
AXUMITE EMPIRE
Avalites
Sabai
Okelis
Orthura
Chaberis

- What is the Jewish understanding of nations?
- What is the Jewish understanding of ethics? Israel's law provides high standards for ethics and morality.
- Israel has a single god who rules the world in goodness. Was this a conflict in the early movement?.
- Israel's writings are ancient and command the people to treat the nations justly. How did this concept unfold in the early movements?
- Does Paul describe a situation for a distinction between those who believe the message of Paul (nations) and those who do not (Israel)?
- How does the Book of Acts unfold?
- How do the movements understand various oppositions to Paul's missionary effort?
- The centrality of Israel is apparent in these three texts: Paul, the Gospel of Matthew, and Acts. But
- Do Paul and Matthew view the inclusion of the nations from a different perspective than Israel?
- How does this play with the understanding that God's promises to Israel are being extended to the nations?
- But for Acts, does incorporating the nations into the ‘Way’ open up a fissure in Israel?

“There is a considerable lag in the awareness of the Church as the People of God," ~ **Louis J Putz CSC** 1958

“The Church needs all of its lay-folk, not the clergy, to bring the kingdom of God into the present day world.”

“God is using us; God needs us to accomplish the work; this is a great joy. Without our help, God cannot bring about the miracle that God intends to affect each one of us; through us but not without us."

Culture in the formation of Religion.

What role do you think art played in developing the thinking of the early followers? And followers throughout the ages up to the printing press?

Art is a large component of culture, which is a society's shared characteristics. Art can be a powerful medium for expressing, preserving, and celebrating diverse cultures worldwide. Art can reflect a society's cultural ideas, values, concerns, belief systems, and personal experiences.

Societal values, beliefs, traditions, and customs

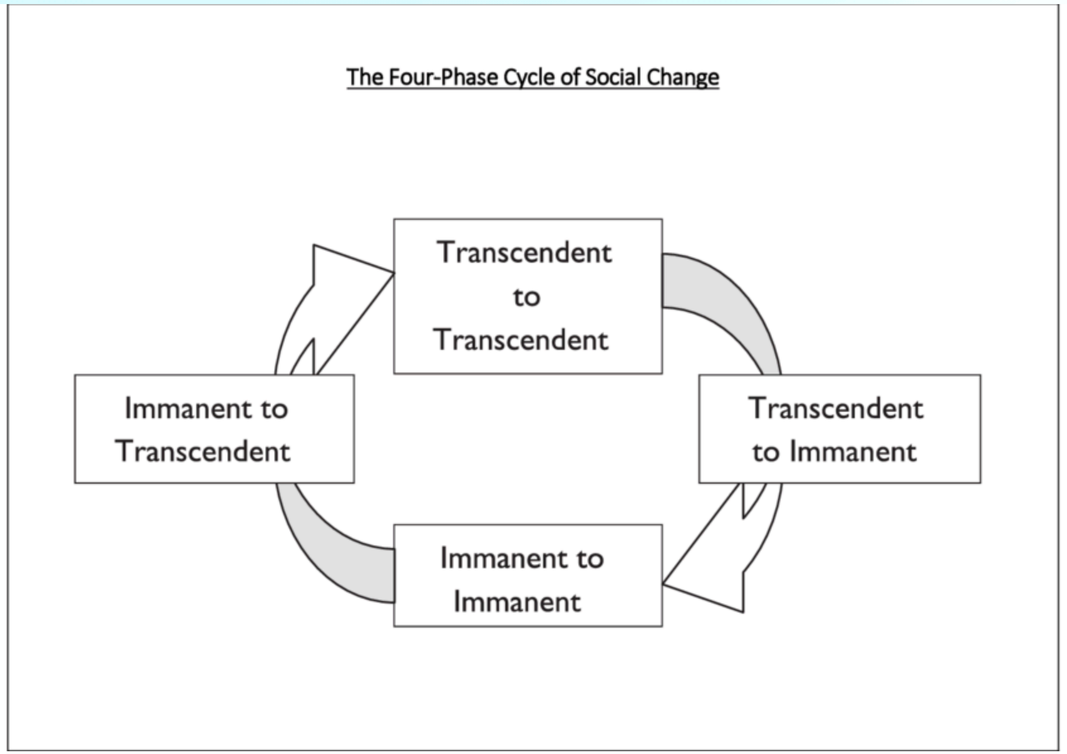
History, religion, and social structure

Worldviews, religious beliefs, political ideas, social values, kinship structures, economic relations, and historical memory

Societal Phase Change

Begins around 250 AD

*Societal phase change is **a moment of radical change in society**. These moments occur when institutions struggle as society transitions from one phase to another.*



The Early Church
Rome
Paul under house arrest
Three Taverns
Forum on the Appian Way
Puteoli
Rhegium
Syracuse
MALTA
Shipwreck/
Paul survives snake bite
Adriatic Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Aegean Sea
THRACE
MACEDONIA
GREECE
ACHAIA
SICILY
Lydia, fortune-teller
and jailer converted
Philippi
Neapolis
Amphipolis
Apollonia
Thessalonica
Beroea
SAMOTHRACE
Troas
Assos
Man of Macedonia vision
Eutychus resurrected
LESBOS
Pergamos
Mitylene
Thyatira
CHIOS
Sardis
Smyrna
Philadelphia
Antioch
Corinth
Cenchreae
Athens
Mars Hill
sermon
Ephesus
Laodicea
Silversmiths'
riot
Colosse
Iconium
SAMOS
Miletus
Tearful meeting with
Ephesian elders
PATMOS
John imprisoned
Lystra
Cripple healed/
Paul stoned
Derbe
Tarsus
Attalia
Perga
John Mark
leaves
COS
Cnidus
RHODES
Patara
Myra
Seleucia
Antioch
Disciples first
called Christians
Missionary
journeys begin
Barnabas and John Mark minister
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphas
Governor converted/
Bar-Jesus blinded
Phoenix
Fair Havens
CRETE
Lasea
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
TURKEY
MYSIA
PHRYGIA
GALATIA
LYCAONIA
CAPPADOCIA
ASIA
PISIDIA
PAMPHYLIA
CILICIA
SYRIA
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Paul converted
Ptolemais
GALILEE
Caesarea
Samaria
Miracle and
conversions
through Philip
JUDEA
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
Early church
headquarters
Paul arrested,
tried before
Jewish Council
Gaza
Cornelius converted
Spirit descends on Gentiles
Agabus predicts Paul's
arrest
Paul tried by Felix, Festus,
and Agrippa
Peter raises Dorcas from dead/
Peter's vision
Aeneas healed of palsy
Ethiopian
converted
Paul trained 2 years
= Modern boundary
= Disputed boundary
0 200 400 Miles
0 200 400 Kilometers
NORTH

The Early Church
Rome
Paul under house arrest
Three Taverns
Forum on the Appian Way
Puteoli
Rhegium
Syracuse
MALTA
Shipwreck/
Paul survives snake bite
Adriatic Sea
Mediterranean Sea
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THRACE
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ACHAIA
SICILY
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SYRIA
GALILEE
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TURKEY
PHRYGIA
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Lydia, fortune-teller and jailer converted
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Thessalonica
Beroea
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Man of Macedonia vision
Eutychus resurrected
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Mitylene
Thyatira
Sardis
Smyrna
Philadelphia
Antioch
Iconium
Corinth
Cenchreae
Athens
Mars Hill sermon
Ephesus
Silversmiths riot
Laodicea
Colosse
Lystra
Cripple healed/
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Lasea
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Governor converted/
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Tyre
Damascus
Paul converted
Ptolemais
Caesarea
Samaria
Miracle and conversions through Philip
Joppa
Lydda
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Spirit descends on Gentiles
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Paul tried by Felix, Festus, and Agrippa
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Aeneas healed of palsy
Ethiopian converted
Paul trained 2 years
Modern boundary
Disputed boundary
0 200 400 Miles
0 200 400 Kilometers
NORTH

Early Christian Meaning Systems ~ The Church is planted as a paradise in the world.

Bishop Irenaeus of Lyon (130-200) was a martyred bishop who wrote about the World of First-Century Palestine world.

1. Systems of Imperial power, Rome's wars on the frontiers, imperial surrogates, and how the Romans wanted to control any uprisings.

2. Physical and psychological threats were used, such as malnutrition, disease, cycles of plagues, etc.

3. Short life expectancy around 22-35 years of age, child mortality of 50%, Adult mortality of 50% by age 50

4. Competing religious systems as old deities went into decline, such as the Deities of Rome, Greece, Egypt, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and new "Mystery religions" such as Mithras, Osiris, Dionysius, etc came about

5. Suffering of the land from war, salted fields, over-irrigation, and desertification, and deforestation were all part of the empire-building

6. Episodes of persecution and martyrdom

7. Leveling of Jerusalem rebuilt as a pagan city.

Irenaeus's rationale for having four gospels

"For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and enlivening people afresh."

(Against Heresies 3.11.18)

By 367 CE. (*Think about the date and what is to come soon)*

Athanasius is the bishop of one specific place:
Alexandria, Egypt. Important or not?

He writes a letter (mostly about which date Easter should be celebrated) that lists the 27 books we currently have in our NT.

However, this letter was written only for those in Alexandria and was not the result of an official, universal church council decision. *Why? Is there any significance to this?*

Later regional councils in antiquity affirmed the list but not a universal council of the whole church. *So what does this mean?*

Meaning Crumbles

1. Onwards and upwards forever!

2. Technology can solve any problem?

3. Humans are the masters of the earth?

4. This world will end and God will create a new heaven and a new earth?

San Vitale, Ravenna mosaic 5th century. Trinity

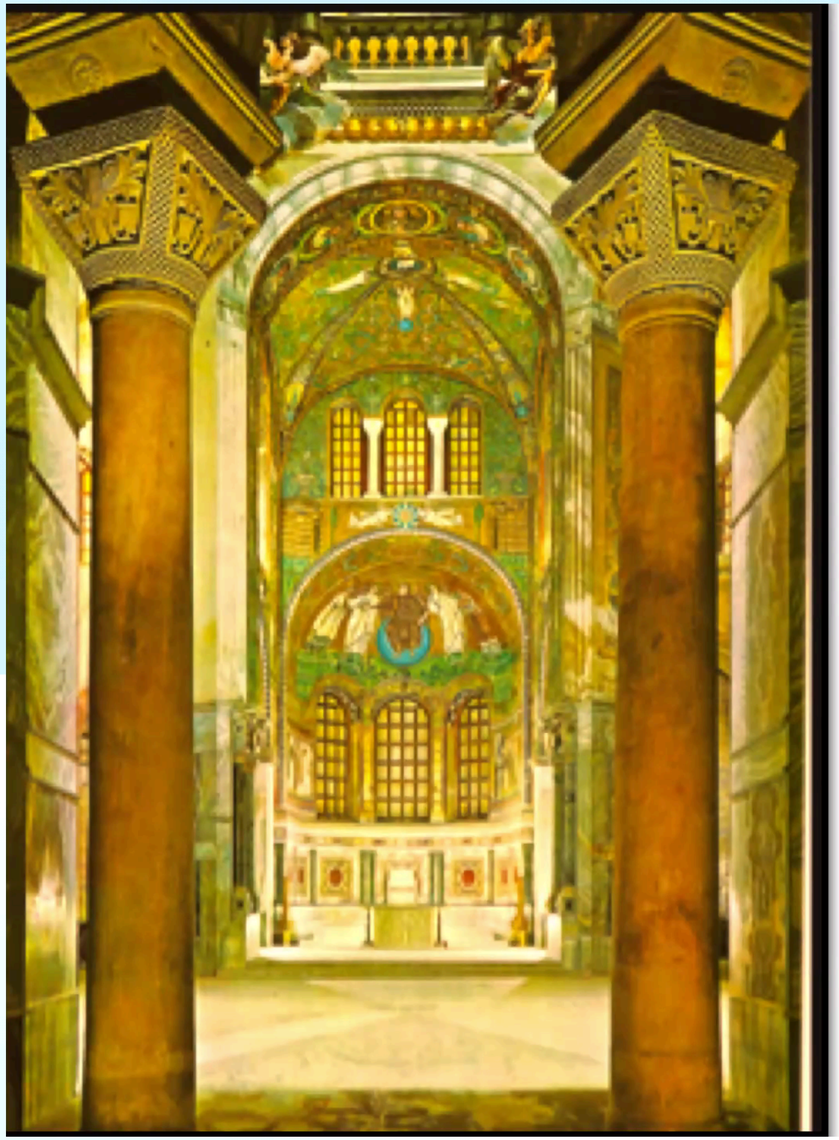
The **Basilica of San Vitale** is a late antique church in Ravenna, Italy. The 19th-century church is an important surviving example of early Christian Byzantine art and architecture; its mosaics, in particular, are some of the most-studied works in Byzantine art.. It is one of eight structures in Ravenna inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its foundational inscription describes the church as a basilica, though its centrally-planned design is not typical of the basilica form. Within the Roman Catholic Church, it holds the honorific title of basilica for its historic and ecclesial importance.

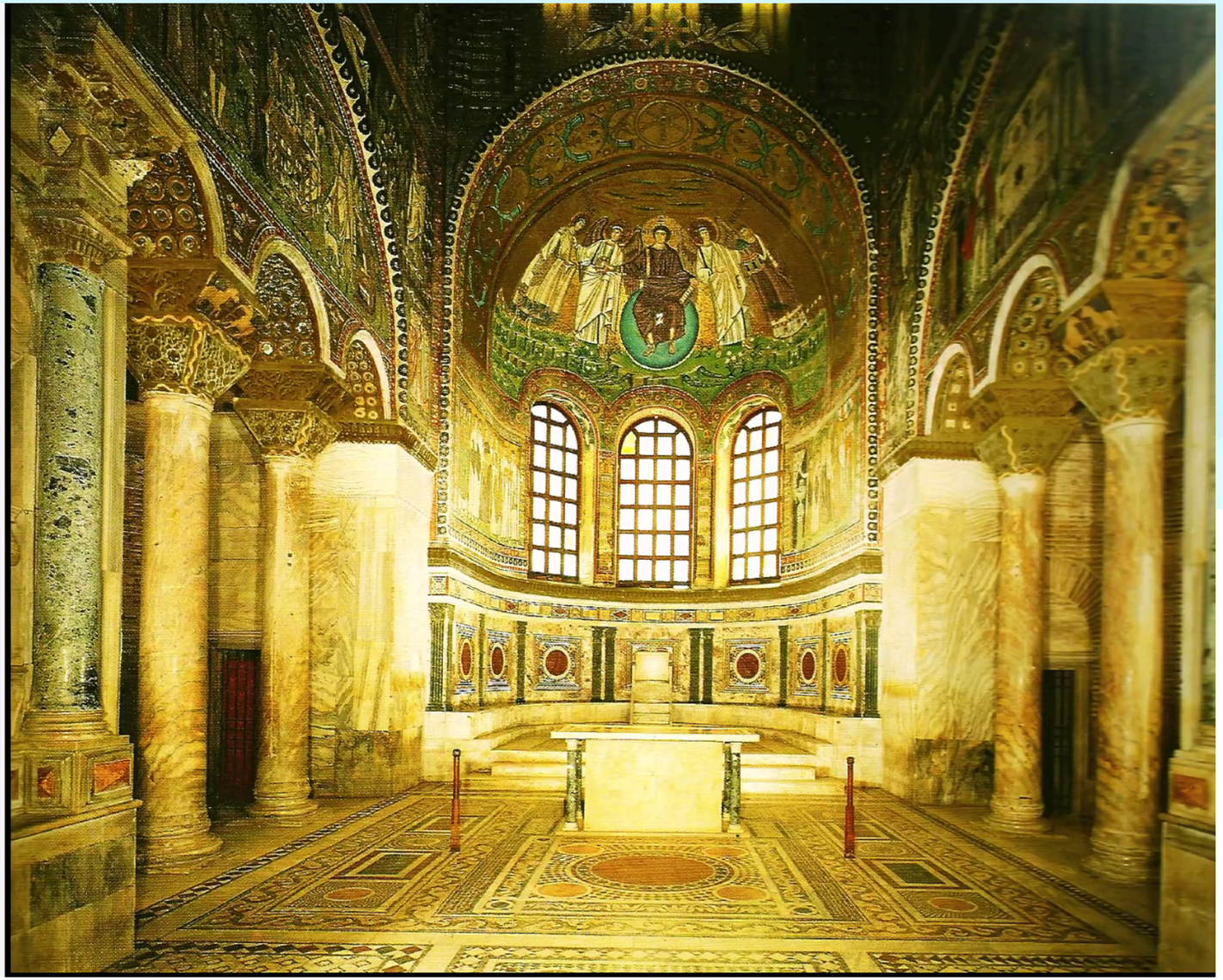
This mosaic establishes the central position of the Emperor between the power of the church and the power of the imperial administration and military. Justinian allowed Theodora to have religious, administrative, and military authority like the Roman Emperors of the past.

The Procession of Justinian and Theodora in the Basilica of San Vitale

While it's common in the Western world to have your ring finger on your left hand, that tradition doesn't hold true throughout the world. Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Serbia, Russia, Belgium, Portugal, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Austria, Poland, Spain, Denmark, Cuba, Norway, Peru, Colombia, Jordan, and Venezuela, among other countries, have ***cultural traditions*** that dictate you wear your wedding ring on the right.

The right hand is a symbol of trust, loyalty, and honor. All characters you want in a marriage.





The blue throne of Christ is the earth in Paradise

Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran 111 to 114 cross was added in the 13th century

S. IGNATII Q; INSVPRA SCRIP

PIVS VIII
PIVS VIII
PIVS VIII
PIVS VIII

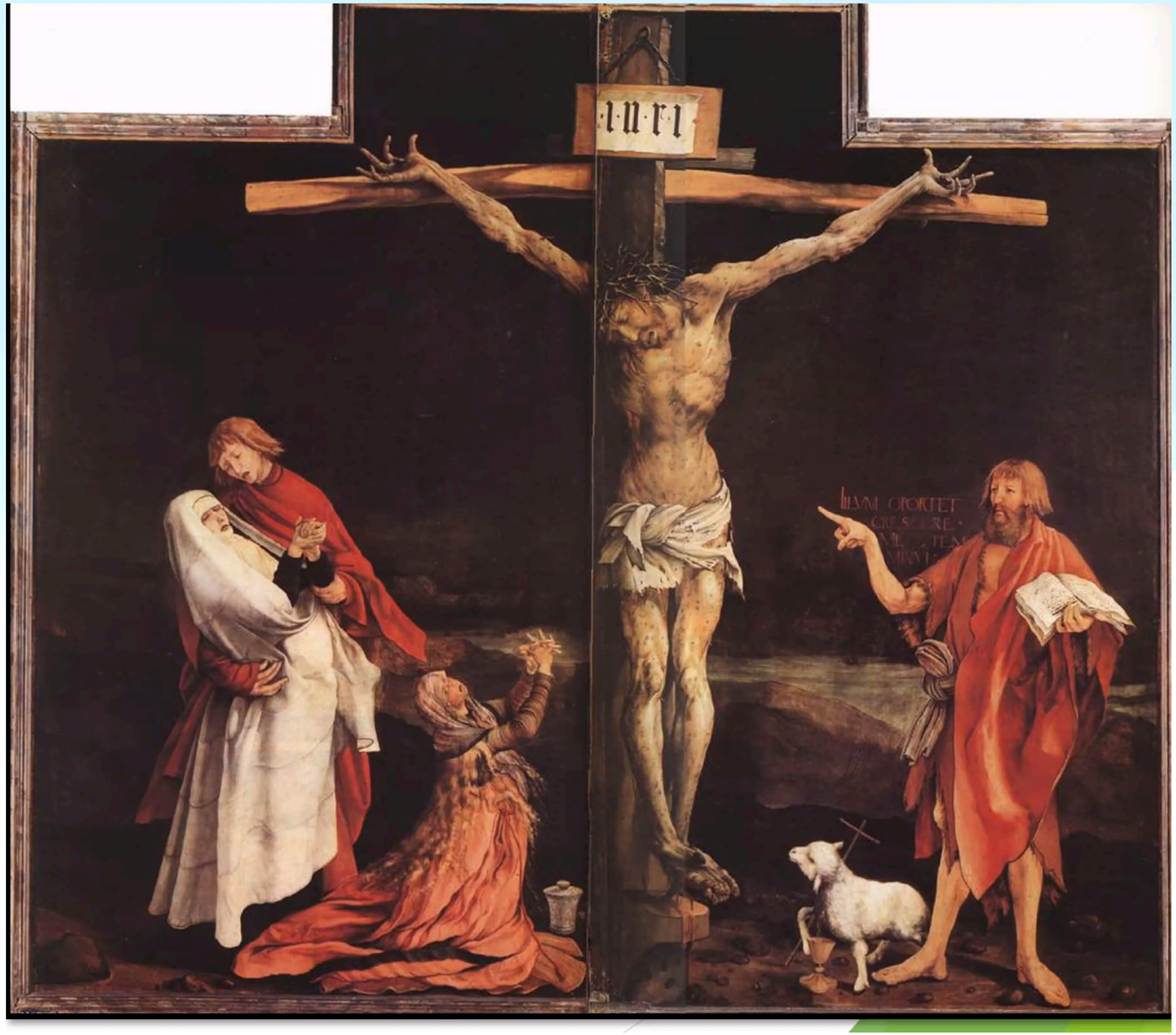
“*Most Holy Lateran Church, of all the churches in the city and the world, the mother and head.*" Inscription on the façade of the Basilica of St. John Lateran (Rome).

The sarcophagus of Helena is **a red porphyry coffin that is believed to have held the remains of Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great**. Helena died around 335 A.D. and was buried in the Imperial mausoleum at Tor Pignattara outside Rome. The sarcophagus is now on display at the Pio-Clementine Vatican Museum. The sarcophagus depicts victorious Roman cavalry riding above captured barbarians. The decoration is a semi-pagan depiction of cupids in Dionysic harvesting of grapes to make wine. This has been interpreted as an early Christian reference to the eucharist.

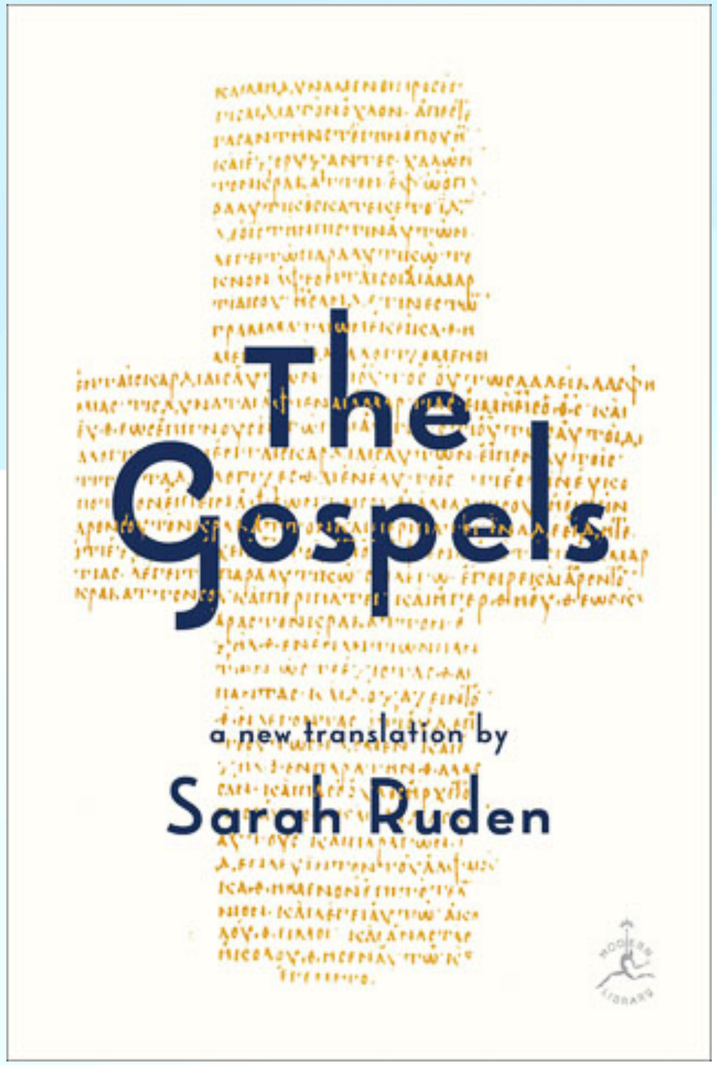
Lateran baptistery, entrance

Rome, Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, Saint John the Baptist

The Isenheim Altarpiece was **created between 1512 and 1516 for the hospital chapel of Saint Anthony's Monastery in Isenheim, Alsace**. The hospital was run by the Order of Hospitallers of St. Anthony and treated diseases like ergotism and the plague.



The Gospels: a new translation by Sarah Ruden

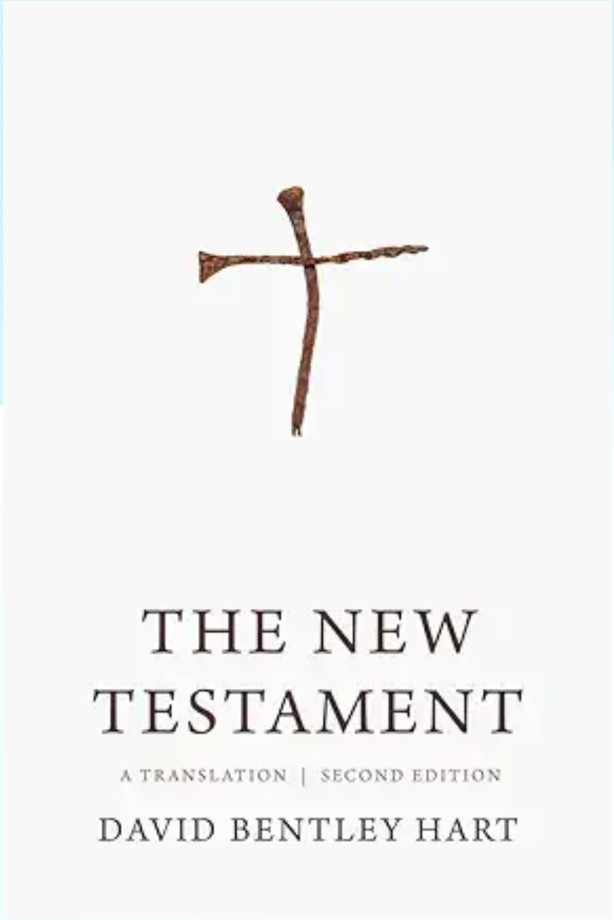


I think it is worth the time to look at the very good independent translations of the Gospels; take a look at Sarah Ruden's *The Gospels: A New Translation* (2021).

She is an excellent translator. Her translation of Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* is inspired. Ruden is especially good at catching the ***social location of composition.***

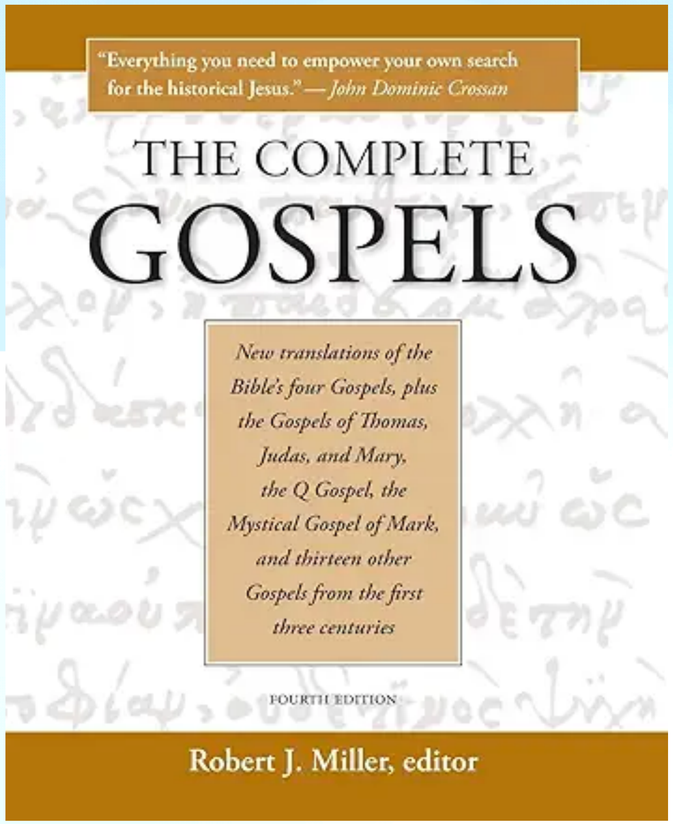
Most translations make everything sound the same--a real problem with the King James, NRSV, and the NIV.

The Gospels: a new translation by David Bentley Hart

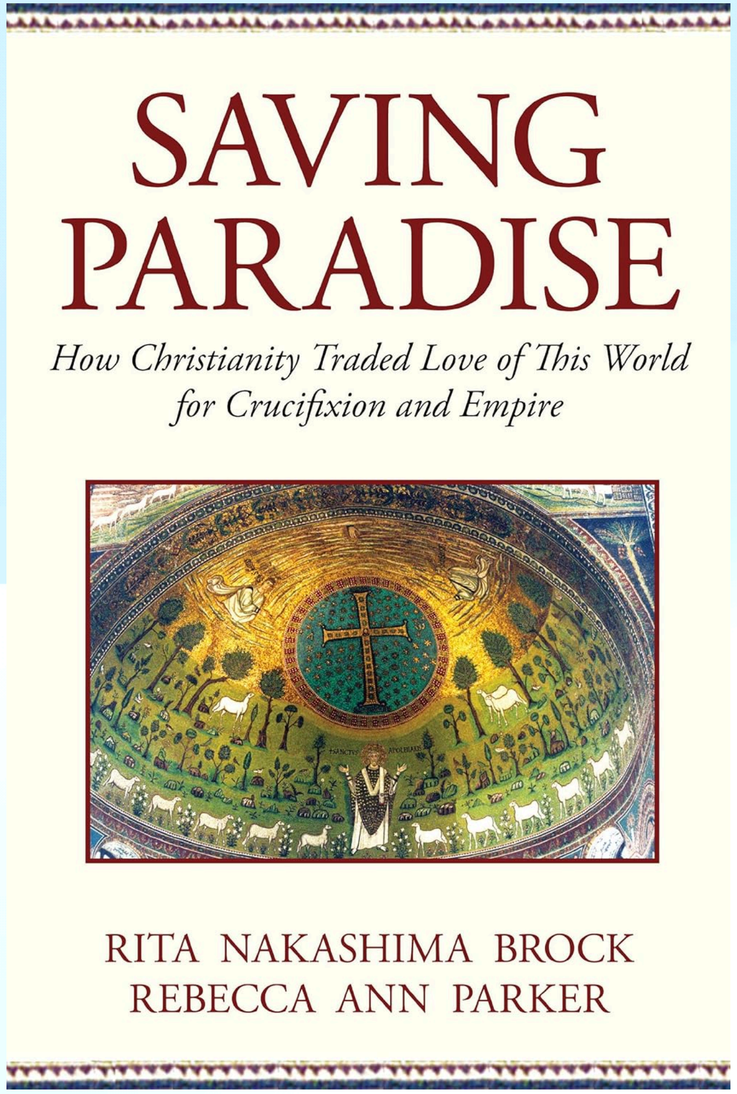


“Through his startling translation, with its raw, unfinished quality, Hart reveals a world conceptually quite unlike our own. “It was a world,” he writes, “in which the heavens above were occupied by celestial spiritual potentates of questionable character, in which angels ruled the nations of the earth as local gods, in which demons prowled the empty places, . . . and in which the entire cosmos was for many an eternal divine order and for many others a darkened prison house.” He challenges readers to imagine it anew: a God who reigned on high, appearing in the form of a slave and dying as a criminal, only then to be raised up and revealed as the Lord of all things.”

The Gospels: a new translation by Robert J Miller



"Each gospel begins with an introduction that sets the text in its ancient and historical contexts and discusses the overall structure and central themes. Cross references point out the numerous parallel passages, intratextual indicators, and thematic parallels so the reader can see how the individual passages of a gospel fit into the rich tapestry of Jewish and early Christian texts. Notes explain important translation issues, supply necessary background information, offer guidance to difficult passages, and honestly indicate problems in the text or in our understanding of them. This volume is the premier publication of the Scholars Version translation of the gospels a fresh translation from the original languages into living American English that is entirely free of ecclesiastical control. The Scholars Version intentionally drops the pretense that academics have all the answers. It strives to avoid both talking down and over the heads of readers. The goal is to make these fascinating texts intelligible and inviting to all who want to study them."



When you read the book *"Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire"* you see this aspect talked about —Rita was a Baptist from Birth, and when they had their book published, they found themselves on talk shows and talk radio which was the Christian fundamentalist stations, they both have interesting stories about their experiences and were surprised at how many of the audiences bought their book…

Lessons learned from the early church for us today:

A lot of what you will discover in reading history and studying the period of time is discovering the thinking of the early followers of Jesus and what the Synod today is trying to accomplish have similar patterns.

The opposition to all this is grounded in the thinking that a medieval church was the culmination of what Jesus started. Go figure, BUT the Protestant Reformation got it correct, at least for 5 to 10 years, and then became just like what they rebelled against.

The Catholic Church created its own reform called the Council of Trent, and it is that council that what you see today in people who say is “true church” a return to the good ole days they say…What we see in the current friction in the Church are two camps, one that thinks 26 January 1564 was the solidification of Catholicism and the other camp which is focused on resurrection Vatican II.

Lessons learned from the early church for us today:

*"**Consider this:** there is not a single word in [the Sermon on the Mount] about what to believe, only words about what to do. It is a behavioral manifesto, not a propositional one. Yet three centuries later, when the Nicene Creed became the official oath of Christendom, there was not a single word in it about what to do, only words about what to believe!" ~ Robin Meyers*

"*Ultimately, there can be no disagreement between history, science, philosophy, art and theology. Where there is disagreement, there is either ignorance or error.*" ~ Mortimer J. Adler

NOW…In a wrap-up and takeaway.

As you read other writings of the early “church” and even of other religions, TRY to *Notice* how the language fits with themes in *Societal Phase Change.*

Focus on the cultural aspects that influence the change

Focus on the resistance to change

Focus on the dawn of a new era or rebirth

Focus on Order ~ Disorder ~ Reorder

As you continue discovering who the people of God are in time and culture, Remember to study the ART. Art Theology is revealing, but remember, stay true to the art.

"On the Day of judgment, Christ's sentence will not bear on your assistance at Mass, reception of Holy Communion, your Fasts, and Abstinence, nor will good intentions be of any avail; these are a means to an end, but it will call for your concrete acts of love." ~ **Lous J Putz CSC**

Thank You

Ayurveda, jyotisha, and arthashastra are three of the six major darshanas, or schools of thought, in Hinduism. They are all ancient disciplines that have profoundly impacted Indian culture and society.

Ayurveda is the traditional Indian system of medicine. It is based on the belief that the human body comprises five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. These elements are constantly in flux, and health is maintained when they are in balance. Ayurveda uses a variety of therapies to restore balance to the body, including herbs, diet, yoga, and meditation.

Jyotisha is the traditional Indian system of astrology. It is based on the belief that the position of the stars and planets at the time of a person's birth can influence their personality and destiny. Jyotisha is used for various purposes, including predicting the future, choosing auspicious dates and times for events, and providing guidance on personal matters.

Arthashastra is the traditional Indian treatise on economics and political science. It is attributed to the ancient sage Kautilya, who is also known as Chanakya. Arthashastra provides a comprehensive guide to the administration of a state, including topics such as taxation, trade, warfare, and diplomacy.

Who are they?

In a literal sense, Ayurveda, jyotisha, and arthashastra are not people. They are disciplines or systems of thought. However, they are often personified in Hindu mythology. For example, Ayurveda is often associated with the god Dhanvantari, who is the divine physician. Jyotisha is often associated with the god Brihaspati, who is the guru of the gods. Arthashastra is often associated with the sage Kautilya, who is considered the father of Indian political science.

Importance

Ayurveda, jyotisha, and arthashastra are all important aspects of Indian culture and society. They have had a profound impact on the way Indians think about health, well-being, and governance. These disciplines continue to be practiced and studied today and provide valuable insights into the human condition.

Some of the key events that are said to have taken place during the Dvapara Yuga include:

- Ayurveda, jyotisha, and arthashastra were created
- Hatred, jealousy, and warfare originated
- Individuals began to marry outside of their own classes
- Technology boomed
- New religions, philosophies, and scientific discoveries emerged
- People learned that matter and energy are interchangeable
- People learned to transcend space and distance
- The divine intellect ceased to exist
- Ailments, diseases, and various types of desires plagued people