

Jesus & the Ten Gospels

**Lecture 2 –
What Ten Gospels
say about Jesus the
Jewish Messiah**

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The Mail

ON SUNDAY

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

– The **Gospel of Judas** Iscariot

‘Greatest archaeological discovery of all time’

– **threat to 2000 years of Christian teaching**

(The Mail on Sunday headline, March 12 2006)

INTRODUCTION

Richard Dawkins:

‘The four gospels that made it into the official canon were chosen, more or less arbitrarily, out of a larger sample of at least a dozen including the Gospels of Thomas, Peter, Nicodemus, Philip, Bartholomew and Mary Magdalen.’

(The God Delusion, p. 95)

INTRODUCTION

Ehrman's question:

'All of these gospels (and epistles, apocalypses, etc.) were connected with apostles, they all claimed to represent the true teachings of Jesus, and they were all revered—by one Christian group or another—as sacred scripture. As time went on, more and more started to appear. Given the enormous debates that were being waged over the proper interpretation of the religion, how were people to know which books to accept?'

INTRODUCTION

Ehrman's answer:

'In brief, one of the competing groups in Christianity succeeded in overwhelming all the others. This group gained more converts than its opponents and managed to relegate all its competitors to the margins. This group decided what the Church's organizational structure would be. It decided which creeds Christians would recite. And it decided which books would be accepted as Scripture.'

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- (2) The reason for this is that the content of the four New Testament gospels – unlike that of most others – conformed to a pre-existing apostolic creed or rule of faith or preached gospel.

INTRODUCTION

- (1) the saving death of Christ,
- (2) his resurrection on the third day,
- (3) the identity of Jesus as the 'Christ',
- (4) the work of Christ as fulfilling Scripture.

1. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

(i) Rejection of Jesus' death:

Gos. Judas; Gos. Egyptians

(ii) Jesus' death of limited significance:

Gos. Thomas, Gos. Peter, Gos. Philip

(iii) Jesus' death effective for salvation:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, *Gos. Truth*

2. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

(1) No resurrection:

Gos. Egyptians, Gos. Judas

(2) Uncertain presence:

Gos. Thomas

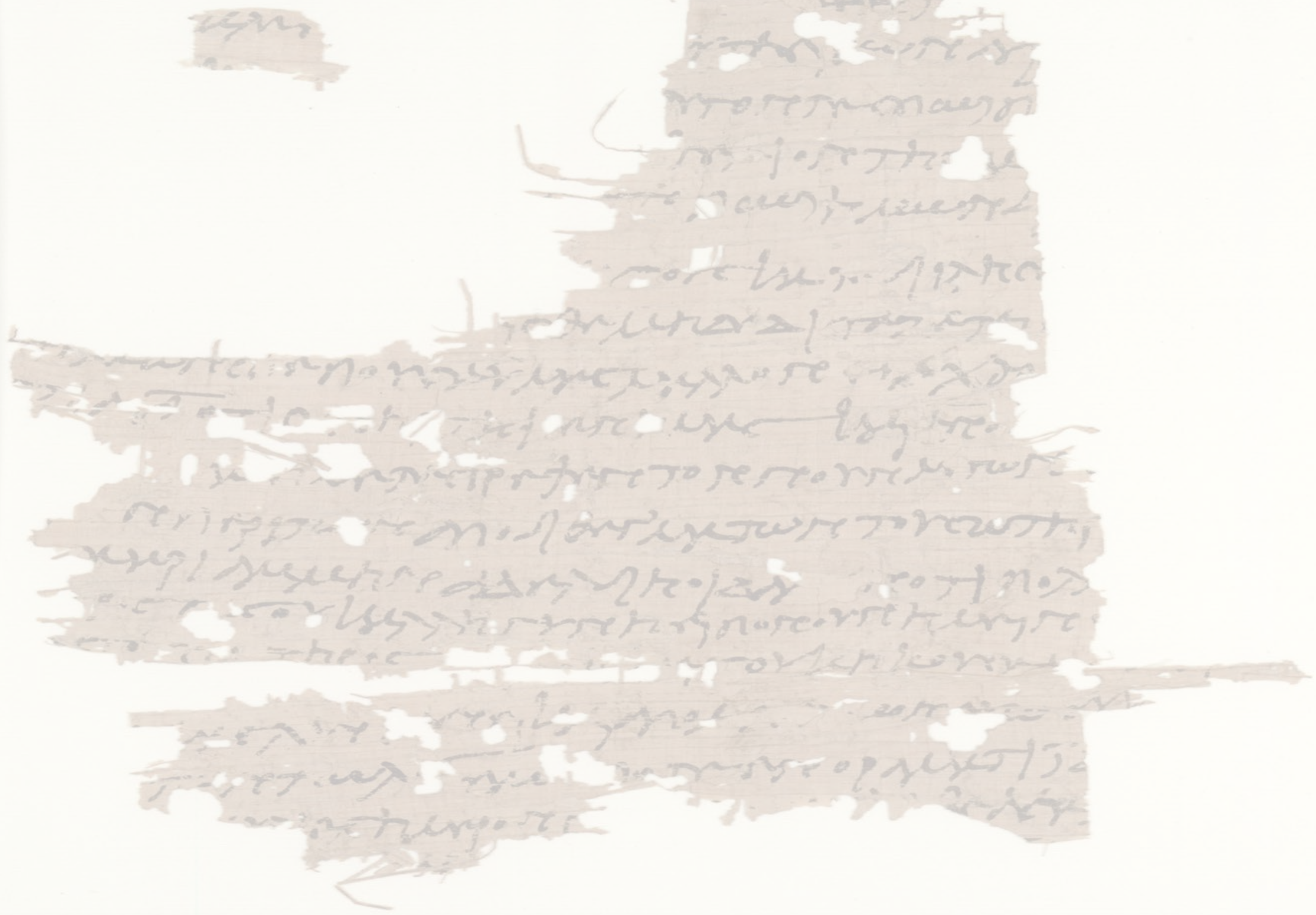
(3) Resurrection imagery:

Gos. Philip, Gos. Truth

(4) Third-day resurrection:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, *Gos. Peter*

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST



3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Mt 1.1: 'This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ...'

Mk. 1.1: 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'

'Christ' throughout Matthew, Mark, Luke, John:

- promised redeemer
- descendant of David
- king of Israel

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Gospel of Judas

‘The first is [...] who is called “Christ”.
The [second] is Harmathoth, who ...
The third is Galila.
The fourth is Yobel.
The fifth is Adonaios.
These are the five who ruled over the
underworld, and formerly over chaos.’

Gos. Jud. 52

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Gospel of Thomas

Jesus =

“leader”

“Son”

“living one”

“lord”

“son of man”

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Gospel of Peter

Jesus =

“Lord”

“Son of God”

“Saviour”

“King of Israel”?

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Gospel of Truth

‘That is why Christ was spoken of in their midst, so that those who were disturbed might receive a bringing-back, and he might anoint them with the ointment. This ointment is the mercy of the Father, who will have mercy on them. But those whom he has anointed are the ones who have become perfect.’

Gos. Truth 36

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Gospel of Philip

‘Chrism is superior to baptism. We are called Christians from the word “chrism,” not from the word “baptism.” Christ also has his name from chrism, for the father anointed the son, the son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us.’

Gos. Phil. 74

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

Gospel of the Egyptians

‘Then the thrice-male child of the great Christ, whom the great invisible Spirit had anointed - he whose power is called ‘Aionon’ - gave praise to the great invisible Spirit and his male virgin Yoel, and the silence of silent silence...’ *Gos. Egy. IV 54*

- the Great Christ = father/ancestor of the Word

3. JESUS AS THE CHRIST

(1) 'Christ' title is rejected:

Gos. Judas

(2) 'Christ' title reinterpreted:

Gos. Egyptians, Gos. Philip, Gos. Truth

(3) Absence of title:

Gos. Thomas, Gos. Peter?

(4) Jesus' identity as Christ:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, *Gos. Peter?*

4. SCRIPTURAL FULFILMENT

[Faded, illegible text from a document, possibly a manuscript or letter, with significant damage and bleed-through. The text is arranged in several lines and is difficult to decipher.]

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‘As Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.’ (Jn)

4. SCRIPTURAL FULFILMENT

Gospel of Peter (Peter narrating)

It is written by them, “The sun is not to set on one who has been put to death.” And one of them said, “Give him gall with vinegar to drink.” And having mixed it they gave it to him to drink. And they fulfilled all things and they accumulated the sins on their heads.

Gos. Pet. 5.15-

4. SCRIPTURAL FULFILMENT

Gospel of Thomas

His disciples said to him, “Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel. And did all of them speak about you?”

He (Jesus) said to them, “You have neglected the living one in front of you, and spoken of the dead.”

Gos. Thom. 52

4. SCRIPTURAL FULFILMENT

Gospel of the Egyptians

‘This is the book which the great Seth wrote, and placed in high mountains on which the sun has not risen, nor can it. And since the days of the prophets and the apostles and the preachers, the name has not at all risen upon their hearts, nor can it. And their ear has not heard it. The great Seth composed this book in writing in one hundred and thirty years.’

4. SCRIPTURAL FULFILMENT

Gospel of Philip

‘Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came in types and images.’

‘The rulers wanted to deceive man, since they saw that he had a kinship with the truly good realities. They took the names of what are good and gave it to what are not good, so that through the names they might deceive him and bind them to what are not good.’

Gos. Phil. 67 /

4. SCRIPTURAL FULFILMENT

(1) Scripture irrelevant/ unnecessary:

Gos. Truth, Gos. Philip, Gos. Judas
(+ *Gos. Peter?*)

(2) Scripture unhelpful:

Gos. Thomas, Gos. Egyptians

(3) Scripture fulfilled in Jesus:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (+ *Gos. Peter?*)

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel...

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.....

(1 Cor. 15.1, 3-4)

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Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

(1 Cor. 15.1, 3-4,