

INTRODUCTION TO PART II: JESUS AND THE CHRISTIAN DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

THE SECOND TEMPLE AND THE GOSPEL OF PAUL

Unfortunately, the New Testament is based ideologically upon the Old Testament, which has just been demonstrated to be adulterated through synopsis of rival traditions. Fortunately, the New Testament textual traditions were not synopsized to the degree with which the Old Testament was. Understanding the four different Gospel accounts is as easy as carefully studying them each on their own; however, a fifth gospel first needs to be addressed. To set the historical scene, we must pick up where the introduction to the Old Testament left off – in Babylon.

Just as the ancient ancestors of the famed Israelites sojourned in Egypt, the southern Judahite captives found themselves in Babylon in the 6th century B.C.E.. The former residents of Judah soon became known simply as “*Jews*” יהודי {*Yehudi*} by those nations around them, in particular Persia, which conquered Babylon. These Jews, performing the same textual corruption as their Judahite predecessors a century earlier concerning *Josiah* in the book of Kings, appended pseudo-prophetic references to *Cyrus* the Great (King of Persia) directly onto the book of Isaiah (known to scholars as *Deutero-Isaiah*):ⁱ

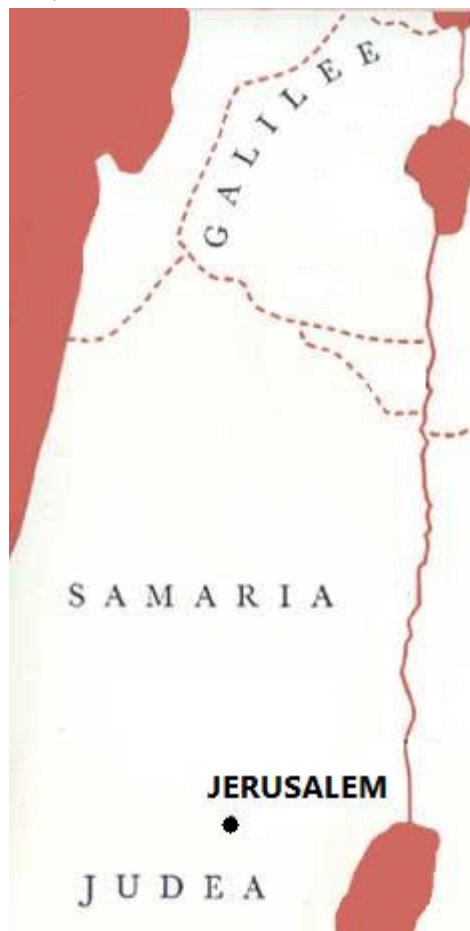
Thus says Yahweh, “[It is] I who says of Cyrus, ‘[He is] My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’” Thus says Yahweh to Cyrus His Messiah: “I will give you treasures so that you may know that it is I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. For the sake of Israel My chosen, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me. I am Yahweh, though you have not known Me;”ⁱⁱ

The Jews identified this foreign king as Yahweh’s “Messiah” in a self-fulfilling prophecy, for it was written this Cyrus sent out a proclamation in writing, saying in part:

*“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘Yahweh has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever among all His people, let him go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the **House of Yahweh**, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. Every survivor ... support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle...’”ⁱⁱⁱ*

So the *Second Temple* of Jerusalem was built (replacing the one the Babylonians razed), and with it, *Second Temple Judaism* was established. Many Edomites (Idumeans) comingled once again with the returning and original residents of Judah (Judaea), adopting their reorganized Jewish religion. By the 1st century B.C.E., major temple expansions were made by Herod the Great, an Edomite-Jew appointed King of Judaea (i.e. “*King of the Jews*”) by the Romans who ruled over the whole Near Eastern region.^{iv} These Edomite-Jews became so influential in both Jewish and

Christian circles that the Temple itself became known as Herod's Temple, and the majority of books in the New Testament were written by or attributed to one particular Herodian, namely *Saul* (i.e. "*Saint Paul the Apostle*").^v



The Lord Jesus lived in the Northern Israelite region of Galilee throughout the early part of the 1st century C.E. and died in Jerusalem around 30 C.E.. Thereafter, his original disciples were severely persecuted by the Jews in and outside Galilee and Judaea, particularly by Paul, who admitted in the 1st century:

You have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my race, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.^{vi}

After which time Paul changed his tactics, deciding instead to preach a version of Jesus among the nations abroad (i.e. "*the Gentiles*") which he styled, "*my Gospel*".^{vii} Rather than addressing the *life and teaching of Jesus*, the focus of Paul's Gospel was on the salvific significance of the *death and resurrection of Christ*, while against a strict observance of the Law (i.e. the Judeo-Israelite Torah) and other Jewish customs he had adopted from the Pharisees.^{viii} (This latter teaching is often called *antinomian* theology, and its antithesis is known as *legalistic* or *legalism*.) Curiously despite converting to "*God's Son*", Paul continued to bitterly oppose those

original disciples whom he had persecuted, inciting his new Gentile audience to be wary of the teaching of the “Jews” which he deemed, “another gospel” and “another Jesus”.^{ix} For example concerning the Apostles James, Peter, and John, Paul wrote the Galatians:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ... I went up to Jerusalem and submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but what they were makes no difference to me, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, just as Peter [had been] of the circumcision, James and {Peter} and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me the right hand of fellowship, so that we [might go] to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. But when {Peter} came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he [began] to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.^x

Unlike the original disciples, Paul never knew Jesus. This explains why he didn't have much to write about his *life and teaching*. Curiously in fact, almost nothing in the lengthy epistles of Paul is revealed about an historical Jesus, except that he was “born of a seed of David according to the flesh”,^{xi} instituted Communion on the night he was betrayed “in remembrance of Me”, died (for our sins according to the Scriptures), was buried and raised (on the third day according to the Scriptures), and appeared to Peter, then the Twelve Apostles, a group of five hundred brethren, James, and all the apostles, and lastly (according to Paul) to Paul himself.^{xii}

The epistles actually written by Paul are the oldest documents (i.e. the first to be written) in the New Testament. Canonical narratives on the biography of Jesus were written years later, beginning with Mark around the destruction of Herod's Temple in 70 C.E.^{xiii} The **Gospel of Mark** presents Jesus as an Israelite from Galilee in the northernmost part of Israel, calling his disciples and beginning his ministry there also. Contrary to Paul's portrait of the historical Jesus, Mark offers no genealogical record (or nativity), and more pointedly, Jesus is depicted as questioning how the scribes say that Christ (i.e. *the Messiah*) is the son of David.^{xiv} Likewise concerning the Pharisees (from which Paul hailed), Jesus says, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”^{xv} This Gospel's details on Jesus' teachings are limited, and depictions of events in his life are unelaborated and theologically simplistic. Finally, there was originally no account in Mark of Jesus appearing to anyone (let alone, Paul) after his resurrection; however the Gospel was appended to at a later date to include one.^{xvi} All these and other peculiarities will be shown to be reminiscent of the ancient **Elohists (“E”)** narrative tradition of Northern Israel.

JESUS BECOMES JEWISH AND THE RISE OF MARCION

At some point after the destruction of Herod's Temple, still within the 1st century C.E., believers in Jesus of a decidedly more Jewish persuasion began circulating a Gospel narrative of their own (ideologically paralleling the **Yahwists (“J”)** material) which has become known as the **Gospel**

of Matthew. In this Gospel version, Jesus is the ultimate Davidic Messiah, a descendant of Josiah and all the other Kings of Judah. Sometimes styled the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, this text would be edited to eventually include a genealogy, entitled: *The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David.*^{xvii} A nativity yet mysteriously identifies Jesus as the “Emmanuel” of Isaiah, connecting him with the House of David on an entirely new prophetic level. Furthermore, emphasized within his pedigree are various Canaanite/Moabite, and other admixtures, thoroughly presenting Jesus as ethnically Jewish. Finally, the Galilean Jesus (from the north) was now depicted as being born in the city of Bethlehem – in *Judea*.

Expanding upon the Markan narrative, Matthew rearranges and rewrites numerous accounts of Jesus’ ministry. Now Jesus answers the scribes and Pharisees: “*An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;*”^{xviii} Such elaborations in detail on top of Mark are common, including layers of more advanced theology addressing subjects such as Canaanites, the patriarch Cain, the scribes’ teaching concerning Moses, and righteousness. For example, Matthew collects many of Jesus’ sayings and presents them in the lengthy “*Sermon on the Mount*”, portraying Jesus as issuing commandments reminiscent of Moses from Mount Sinai. More pointedly in this sermon, Jesus upholds the teaching of the Mosaic Law:

*“**Do not think that I came to abolish the Law** or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Unless **your righteousness surpasses [that] of the scribes and Pharisees**, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”^{xix}*

These and other sayings of Jesus found in Matthew appear to be directly *in response to the Pharisee Paul’s preexisting antinomian doctrine*, ever-growing in popularity among the non-Jewish “Gentiles” abroad. By way of contrast, consider some statements made by Paul to the Romans & Galatians:

*“**Christ is the end of the law** for righteousness to everyone who believes. ... **A man is not justified by the works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be **justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law**; ... If righteousness [comes] through the Law, then Christ died needlessly. ... The **Law has become our tutor [to lead us] to Christ**, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor**.”^{xx}*

Regarding not being under the tutelage of the Mosaic Law, such statements are diametrically opposed in Matthew, where Jesus is depicted as saying: “*The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe.*”^{xxi} Likewise concerning Paul’s repeated teaching of faith in Christ as the only means to justify (i.e. “*We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*”),^{xxii} consider such opposing teachings from the epistle called James:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? A man is justified by works and not by faith alone.^{xxiii}

Curiously, Paul's teaching specifically on Abraham's justification reads quite the opposite in Romans and Galatians,^{xxiv} but what is most important to note here is that this epistle attributed to James bears some striking literary similarities to none other than the Gospel of Matthew – in particular, the Sermon on the Mount!^{xxv} With careful study, an historical picture begins to come into focus in which it can be discerned that the community responsible for the Gospel of Matthew's authorship appears to be some of the very same people whom Paul had persecuted and subsequently argued against theologically amongst the Gentiles. Numerous examples (from Jesus' birth narrative to his resurrection account) will demonstrate that in Matthew exists a pro-Jewish version of Jesus with a pro-Torah teaching ministry by way of literary response to the rising Pauline doctrinal understanding of the Risen Christ.

Parallel with the collapse of Second Temple Judaism, by the mid-2nd century C.E. Paul's version of Christ and Christian teaching rose to prominence across Messianic communities in the ancient world (the notable exception, discussed below, being certain Jews of Asia Minor). With "Jewish" gospels and epistles such as Matthew and James becoming little more than marginal, additional epistles would be written and attributed to Paul, advancing the Pauline theology and addressing contemporary concerns for the Churches being organized abroad. These canonical documents are often called the *Deutero-Pauline Epistles*.^{xxvi} Alluding to the rivalry and controversy within these early Christian sects, one such "late" epistle depicts Paul remarking, "*You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me.*"^{xxvii}

It was in Asia, however, where a particular disciple of Paul rose to unprecedented influence among the Christian Churches named *Marcion of Sinope*. Unwilling to compromise, Marcion maintained that Paul was the only legitimate interpreter and Apostle of Christ's Gospel, and this hyper-Pauline teaching took on a particularly anti-Jewish/Judaism flavor. Eventually Marcion would be excommunicated by Bishops more friendly to Judaic traditions; however, by the end of his life in the 2nd century A.D., Marcionite churches had spread across the known world. Furthermore, this first widely recognized *heretic* had collected and proposed the first ever canon of Christian Scripture (comprised exclusively of Pauline Epistles), and his churches rivaled in power what would become the orthodox or mainstream version of Christianity, namely the Universal/Catholic Church. It would take a third Evangelist to turn the tide.

LUKE, ACTS, AND THE JUDEO-PAULINE COMPROMISE

It appears controversy in Asia began to brew early, during Paul's active ministry in the 1st century C.E. The opening remarks of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians read:

*We do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of **our affliction which came in Asia**, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; but we ourselves, we had the **sentence of death** within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from **so great a death**.*^{xxviii}

Comparing his troubles to a *sentence of death*, Paul leaves unsaid what befell him and his ministerial companions in Asia, seemingly already known to the Corinthians. Nevertheless the book of Revelation (an apocalyptic text written by the *Jews of Asia*), sheds light on this very subject:

*John to the **seven churches that are in Asia**: ... to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ... “To the **church in Ephesus** write: ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you **put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;**’*^{xxix}

Also important to note, this text in Revelation goes on to address the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia concerning, “*the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan*” and “*the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie.*” It was common for nationalist Jews of the time to consider Herodian Jews (like Paul) to be *false Jews*.^{xxx} These concerns (coupled with a similar address to Ephesus concerning *false apostles*) give a powerful testament concerning anti-Pauline Jewish sentiment in Asia. Among the “*seven churches of Asia*” mentioned in the Revelation, *Ephesus* is the only one having New Testament record of Paul visiting! Indeed, there is a story of Paul being “*put to the test*” and found (i.e. *sentenced*) by the Jews of Ephesus to be false.

So the stories of Luke the Evangelist must be discussed. Like Matthew, the **Gospel of Luke** is a revision of the Markan narrative. Written in the second century C.E. during the rise of Marcionite Churches in Asia and abroad, this text uniquely included a *part two* known as the **Acts of the Apostles**. While the Gospel of Luke follows the general format of Mark and Matthew (in detailing the ministry and death of Jesus Christ), the book of Acts continues the story *after the Resurrection appearances*, to include pseudo-historical accounts of the “early Church”, the Apostles, and especially, Paul. Here is the Lukan account of Paul’s controversy with the Jews of Asia:

***Paul came to Ephesus**, ... And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly **for three months, reasoning and persuading** [them] about the kingdom of God. But when **some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way** before the people, **he withdrew from them** and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*^{xxxi}

As it happens, Acts contains a repeated pattern of Paul reasoning with the Jews concerning his gospel, and (due to some disagreement on the Jews’ part) Paul teaching the Gentiles (i.e. *Greeks*) in their stead.^{xxxii} The Pauline controversy between the teaching of “Jews and Greeks” (i.e. the

circumcision and uncircumcision), is given an entirely new twist by Luke. As previously discussed, in the 1st century C.E., Paul wrote the Galatians concerning a trip he made to Jerusalem, in which he painted Peter as *anti-Gentile* and James as *legalistic*. Here is the 2nd century Lukan revision:

According to Acts, there was a disagreement and debate among the Jews who believed in Jesus as to whether or not a man had to be circumcised “*according to the custom of Moses*” in order to be “*saved*”. Paul and his ministerial companion were then summoned to go “*to Jerusalem to the Apostles and elders*” concerning the matter. Along the way, Paul’s ministry made many Gentile converts in Phoenicia and Samaria, and (once in Jerusalem) some of the Pharisees who believed in Jesus insisted these converts be circumcised and directed to “*observe the Law of Moses*”.^{xxxiii}

Peter said to them, “Brethren, you know that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. He made ***no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.*** Why do you {place} upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are ***saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus,*** in the same way as they also are.”

James answered, saying, ... “***It is my judgment that we do not trouble the Gentiles,*** but that we write to them that they abstain from ***[1]things contaminated by idols and from [2]fornication and from [3]what is strangled and from [4]blood.***”^{xxxiv}

By way of contrast while using Paul’s epistle to the Galatians as a source text, Luke presents Peter as showing no partiality between Jews & Greeks^{xxxv} and places words in his mouth reminiscent of none other than the unique Pauline doctrine of the *gospel of grace and faith in Jesus*. Likewise, the notion of James’ legalism is abated, replaced with reference to four obscure concerns relating to the ancient **Priestly (“P”)** document.^{xxxvi} A new portrait emerged (supplementary to Paul’s) portraying the original disciples of Jesus as true pillars of the Church while more friendly toward the Gentiles and Paul – indeed, more like Paul!^{xxxvii} Furthermore, Paul would now be portrayed as more Jewish, concerning the very customs and traditions he rejected and wrote against.

For example, despite boasting his Greek companion was not “*compelled to be circumcised*” during their trip to Jerusalem, Paul is depicted in Acts circumcising the Greek Timothy “*because of the Jews who were in those parts*”.^{xxxviii} Likewise, while Paul wrote he was thankful to have only baptized a few, “*for Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel,*” in Acts he is depicted re-baptizing “*into the name of the Lord Jesus ... about twelve men*” at Ephesus who were formerly disciples of John the Baptist and whose baptism Paul deemed lacking in the Holy Spirit.^{xxxix} Again, when “*James and all the Elders*” in Jerusalem meet with Paul, they convince their “*brother*” Paul to take a seven-day ritual vow of purity in the Temple, in order to demonstrate to the Jews that, “*you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.*”^{xl} Subsequently, none other than the villainous “*Jews from Asia*” incite all of Jerusalem in a violent mob against Paul, dragging him out of the Temple. To their composure, Paul addresses

them in “*the Hebrew dialect*”: “*I am a Jew, brought up in this city, educated according to the strictness of the ancestral law...*”^{xli} Still later, “*Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees...!*”^{xlii}

Therefore with textual familiarity and comparison a wider frame comes into focus, demonstrating Luke’s motivations in pacifying the hyper-Paulinism of the Marcionite churches. Compromising the division between the primary Jewish and non-Jewish forms of Christianity which had emerged in the second century C.E., the pseudo-history of Acts presents Paul as more traditionally Jewish and the original disciples as more theologically Pauline.^{xliii} Featuring numerous parallels with the compromises and peculiarities of the Priestly (“P”) source, the Lukan Gospel narrative likewise makes many related editorial changes from its Markan source text, from its unique nativity and genealogy of Jesus to its own version of the resurrection appearances. Rather than Cain the son of Adam, Luke’s genealogy traces Jesus back to the father Seth the son of Adam, and (paying homage to Paul’s account of the resurrection appearances) makes no mention of Mary Magdalene or the other women’s testimony.

MARY MAGDALENE: THE DISCIPLE JESUS LOVED

This sets the stage for the last of the canonical gospels, known as the *Fourth Gospel* or more commonly, the **Gospel of John**. Originally written with a heavy and overt emphasis on Mary Magdalene’s central roles at the Last Supper, Crucifixion and Resurrection, this gospel would later be edited to replace or supplement Mary’s name and presence with the epitaph and personage of “*the Disciple Jesus Loved*.”^{xliv} This anonymous attribution became traditionally identified as *Saint John the Evangelist* (writing from Ephesus), and those pertaining to this gospel’s authorship have become known among scholars as the *Johannine Community*. Yet with Mary Magdalene as the heroine of this community and her testimony as a central basis within its unique gospel narrative, persecution from other Christian sects was certain. Consider the teaching of Paul from the 1st century C.E.:

*The **women are to keep silent in the churches**; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for **it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church**. ... **Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman**. {A man} is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.*^{xlv}

The same sentiments were emphatically reiterated in the latter Pseudo-Pauline literature:

*A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But **I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet**. For it was Adam who was first formed, [and] then Eve. And [it was] not Adam [who] was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*^{xlvi}

With the prevailing Jewish and rising orthodox Christian views of women as second-class in the community, unpermitted to speak or teach, the testimony of the women who witnessed the Resurrection was completely ignored by Paul & Luke. Likewise in the midst of such growing hostility towards women of authority, the Fourth Gospel's accounts of Mary Magdalene had to be written with the rather ambiguous insertion of an anonymous (male) *disciple Jesus loved*.^{xlvi} Other unique teachings and advanced theologies which set "John's Gospel" apart from the Synoptic narratives were similarly expressed using subtle rhetorical methods. A primary example of this is how Jesus' nativity is addressed, subtly raising the delicate subjects of whether (or not) he was the son of Joseph, the son of David, and born in Bethlehem of Judea.

This understated means of communicating unorthodox views amidst the rising universalized churches carries over in a most unusual resurrection account. Here, in contrast with Peter, it is Mary Magdalene who witnesses the Risen Jesus, and the Disciple Jesus Loved who "believes". Up until this point, Peter's prominence had been upheld in varying ways by Paul, Mark, Matthew and Luke-Acts.^{xlviii} Furthermore, epistles were written in later years and attributed to Peter ("*deutero-Petrine Epistles*"), creating another false layer of compromise and culminating in a depiction of Peter giving a full endorsement of Paul:

...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all [his] letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as [they do] also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.^{xliv}

With both Matthew and Luke drawing their unique Gospel narratives from Mark, and with Luke having established the growing compromise between Paul (represented by the earliest New Testament writings) and the Jewish Christians (represented primarily by Matthew), the Gospel called John literarily and ideologically stood alone. Various textual revisions would be performed on this gospel, from the addition of a Prologue beginning chapter 1, to the appended ending of chapter 21 containing subtly unfavorable references to Peter, once again contrasting him to the Disciple Jesus Loved. Echoing the **Deuteronomist ("D")**, this unique fourth narrative also bears the marks of its authorship having been falsely attributed to this anonymous male Disciple. Just as Deuteronomy ends concerning the strange circumstances surrounding the death of Moses (its claimed author), the final chapter 21 of John concludes concerning strange circumstances surrounding the death of "the Disciple":

Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but [only], "If I want him to remain until I come, what [is that] to you?"¹

In the face of opposing teachings of a rising orthodoxy, forged by a false sense of brotherhood among the early sects that emerged out of the first century C.E., and in the wake of three other distinct gospel accounts, the custodians of the Fourth Gospel narrative made a concluding and bold claim:

This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.^{li}

Uniquely, in the shadow of so much rival tradition and pseudo-history, the Gospel of John claims to be an *eye-witness testimony* concerning the life of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, is this testimony true, and will its subtle messages be enough to overcome the tangled theological and historical contrivances, echoing the contradictory literary traditions of ages passed?

EMPEROR CONSTANTINE AND THE RISE OF JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY

With the emergence of orthodoxy in the 2nd through 4th centuries C.E., it was Peter who would be traditionally remembered as the head of the Church and first *Bishop of Rome* (i.e. the first “Pope”). What became the organized Universal (“Catholic”) Church began to claim an unbroken line of male authorities (priests), tracing themselves back to the original Apostles (most notably, to Peter). This retroactive claim on authority became known as *apostolic succession*, and helped garner the growing perception of a unified Church from what were formerly distinct communities and rival sects. As for the textual succession of the separate gospel narratives which were borne out of the varying Messianic & Christological views of these people, much knowledge can be gleaned by way of comparison:

The original **Gospel of Mark**, traditionally considered to be Peter’s memoir,^{lii} is the oldest and first of the four canonical gospels, appearing around the collapse of Second Temple Judaism. Also written after Paul’s genuine epistles, which were saturated with Christological theology while lacking in many historical references to Jesus, the Markan narrative would present *a Jesus of history without advanced theological details*. The actual teachings of Jesus are presented with little detail or shrouded in the form of *parables*, while details like his divine Nativity, Messianic Genealogy and post-resurrection appearances are completely absent. The particular brevity of this narrative, coupled with its more original and simplistic historical concerns, call to remembrance the similar nature and literary influence of the ancient North Israelite (“E”) material, scattered throughout Genesis, Exodus and Numbers.

Alternatively, the **Gospel of Matthew**, due to its heavier emphasis on Jewish concerns, traditionally became thought to be penned in “Hebrew” and therefore called the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.^{liii} In fact a Greek revision of the Gospel of Mark, this narrative would ultimately include a Genealogy and Nativity of Jesus, focusing on his role as prophetic fulfillment of the *Judahite Messiah* (i.e. *David’s successor*). With antinomian concepts of Christ growing in popularity due to their early persecutor Paul’s ministerial influences and epistles circulating among the Gentiles, this gospel responds by presenting Jesus as *teacher of righteousness* and the ideal fulfillment of the *Law of Moses* (i.e. *Moses’ successor*). Often mimicking the rhetorical concerns and linguistic style of another source scattered in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers (and

continued in parts of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings), Matthew is the ideological projection of the ancient Judahite (“J”) scribal tradition in the Old Testament.

Contrariwise, the **Gospel of Luke** with its supplementary **Acts of the Apostles**, while friendly to Paul’s ministry and teachings pertaining to the Gentiles, found it necessary to respond to the increasingly hyper-Pauline, anti-Jewish sentiment of the Marcionite Churches in the 2nd century C.E. Reminiscent of the Priestly (“P”) author’s attempt at reconciling and historically framing the combined (“J”) and (“E”) material scattered throughout Genesis, Exodus, Numbers (along with its supplementary book of Leviticus), the Lukan narrative’s underlying motivation appears also to be one of building a compromise. Having been familiar with both Paul’s teachings and those traditions which became more closely associated with what the original disciples of Jesus believed, Luke composed an *alternative revision of Mark* more positively responsive to Paul’s teachings, complete with its own unique Nativity, Genealogy and Resurrection accounts. Furthermore, the book of Acts would promote a *pseudo-historical framework of the Early Church*, pacifying Paul’s antinomian rhetoric while presenting him as more Jewish and the Apostles as more favorable to Paul’s ministry and teachings pertaining to the Gentiles.

Finally, amidst increased universalization and the rise of a majority orthodox version of Christian tradition, the fourth **Gospel of John** was finished. It contained a heavy emphasis on the testimony of Mary Magdalene (the heroine of its community), while contrasting her with the figurehead of Peter. Subsequently, Mary’s name would be replaced or coincided with an anonymous male epitaph, which became identified as the author of the Gospel. Likewise, many other eloquently minimalist references were employed, *hinting at uniquely controversial teachings* borne out of the so-called Johannine Community, which were beginning to be widely regarded as unorthodox and heretical. This pseudo-authorship, along with its independent literary elements, bears a striking semblance to Deuteronomy (“D”).

By the 4th century C.E. with these and other documents circulating the known world and Christian factions in bitter dispute with one another concerning the person of Jesus, the nature of Christian theology, and which texts were authoritatively “Scripture”, Emperor Constantine the Great of Rome convened the historic *Nicean Council*. With the goal of political and religious unification, Bishops and other church leaders were summoned to Nicea to work out their differences. This great compromise resulted in an official *canon of scripture*, comprising these four Evangelists’ gospels (and Acts), Marcion’s collection of Paul’s epistles along with other deuterio-Pauline epistles, a few token non-Pauline “*General Epistles*”,^{liv} and the cryptic book of Revelation.

In a stupendous historical parallel, just as King Josiah enforced the new laws of Deuteronomy, causing the priests from all the various high places of Judah to perform their craft at the Temple in the capital Jerusalem, Emperor Constantine had caused the Christian priests of the known

world to gather and settle on an official set of church laws (i.e. “*dogma*”). Both sovereigns had the motivation of unifying their domain, and both politically authorized the prevailing religion of their day which had been forged from varying and parallel literary traditions. Though King Josiah marched north into Israel, desecrating its graves and religious sites and slaying the priests who would oppose him, neither he nor any of his Davidic successors would impose the new Judeo-Israelite order upon the people of the north. It was Emperor Constantine who fulfilled the Messianic fantasies of Judah in a way David never had, Josiah never could, and Cyrus the Great wouldn’t have imagined.

Judeo-Christianity, the *compromise built on a synopsis of different documented traditions*, would soon be enforced across the Roman Empire. Just as the Israelite priests were slain in Josiah’s day, those who would oppose this orthodox version of Christianity were branded heretical and persecuted into extinction. The distorted memory of Jesus, force-fit into the common Messianic aspirations of Judah, had finally become thrust upon the People of the North who were scattered across the known world. In the wake of Second Temple Judaism, the seat of religious authority strategically shifted from Jerusalem to the political epicenter of the world – Rome. Christendom was born as the Messianic hopefulness of the Jews was realized under a new name – Jesus Christ.

What follows is a literary analysis of the four distinct biographies of Jesus found in the New Testament Bible, with special attention given to the deserving peculiarities. Should the *historical Jesus* be found anywhere within these documents, they must be studied as they historically and divinely are. The unique character of these four gospels will be revealed not only as a product of their immediate historical contexts, but also as an ideologically divine reflection of each of their four respective Old Testament textual traditions. Jesus, as it turns out, really is the key with which to unlock the hidden Mysteries of our Biblical Heritage (i.e. “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*”).

ⁱ As previously outlined, the ancient Judahite scribe’s “J” material was extended in the books of I-II Kings by later generations of royal scribes, primarily during the reigns of kings Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Josiah of Judah. Noteworthy is the Messianic hopeful Josiah, whose very name was inserted into 1 Kings 13 as a pseudo-prophetic justification for his murderous acts on the northern cities of Israel.

Similarly attached onto the prophetic book of Isaiah (whose original contents in chapters 1-39 were written primarily during the reign of King Hezekiah), are additions of later generations composed after the Babylonian Captivity of Judah. Once again within these post-Babylonian chapters 40-66, pseudo-prophetic references are made, invoking the name of Cyrus (Hebrew “Kores”) the king of Persia who conquered Babylon, and identifying him as Yahweh’s Messiah.

While would-be Messianic figures arose and fell over the course of generations, the Judahite scribal method of textually appending political and religious propaganda onto their pre-existing scripture continued unabashed.

ⁱⁱ Taken from Isaiah 44:24,28; 45:1-5

ⁱⁱⁱ Taken from Ezra 1:2-4

^{iv} Titus Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 14.

^v Of the New Testament's 27 books, 14 are genuinely or traditionally attributed to Paul (also known as Saul): *Romans, I-II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I-II Thessalonians, I-II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews*. All these epistles, with the exception of the anonymous book of Hebrews, explicitly claim "Paul" as author.

To reference Paul's Herodian (and therefore Idumean/Edomite) background one need look no further than the canonically first and most celebrated of the genuine Pauline epistles, which in its closing statements reads:

"Greet Herodion, my kinsman." {Romans 16:11a}

For details on this subject, consult Eisenman, Robert, *Paul as Herodian*, (Journal of Higher Criticism 3/1 Spring, 1996). Also for further analysis by the same author, *James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Penguin Books, 1997); *The New Testament Code: The Cup of the Lord, the Damascus Covenant, and the Blood of Christ*, (London: Watkins Publishing, 2006).

^{vi} Galatians 1:13,14

^{vii} Paul writes in Romans 2:16, "According to **my gospel**, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus." Similarly in Romans 16:25-26a, "Him who is able to establish you according to **my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and ... has been made known to all the nations." Likewise it is reiterated in the pseudo-Pauline 2 Timothy 2:8, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to **my gospel**."

Of the many passages where Paul elaborates on his gospel message, particularly striking is the statement regarding his motivations for delivering it as such to the nations (i.e. "Gentiles"):

*I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as **I am an apostle of Gentiles**, I magnify my ministry, if somehow **I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen** {lit. "my flesh"} **and save some of them**. {Romans 11:13-14}*

^{viii} In Philippians 3:5b-6 Paul described himself: "**as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.**"

^{ix} Whereas Paul first overtly persecuted those who believed in Jesus, he then set out as an "Apostle of Gentiles" in continued opposition to those who had claimed Jesus before him, distinguishing certain of their teaching as a "different" or "contrary" gospel:

*I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ, for a **different gospel**; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should **preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you**, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is **preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received**, he is to be accursed! {Galatians 1:6-9}*

Here, Paul's emphatic condemnation of those preaching another gospel is especially significant considering he then draws this evangelical distinction in the next chapter: "I had been entrusted with **the gospel of the uncircumcision**, just as Peter [had been] **of the circumcision**." Paul goes on to inform his Galatian audience concerning Peter's suggestively anti-Gentile behavior: "I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." Furthermore, Paul traces this so-called Jewish and legalistic sentiment as having ultimately come "from James." Peter and James are both presented as primary disciples (i.e. "apostles") of Jesus' ministry in all four canonical Gospels.

In like fashion, Paul warns the Corinthians about "false apostles" teaching a "different" or "contrary" Jesus:

*I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity to Christ. For if the one who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. ... For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ... Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they seed of Abraham? So am I. **Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so.** {2 Corinthians 11:2-4,13-14,22-23}*

Note how Paul also identifies those whom he is opposed to as *Israelite servants of Christ* and presented as “apostles of Christ”. These examples from the genuine Pauline epistles reveal Paul (an admitted persecutor of the disciples of Jesus) did not want his new Gentile audience listening to any other message concerning Jesus – regardless if that preaching was coming from “*an angel from heaven*” or the original disciples whom he had persecuted!

^x Taken from Galatians 1:8; 2:1-12

^{xi} Romans 1:3

^{xii} 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; 15:3-8

Paul’s scarce list of references to an *historical Jesus* given to the Corinthians is outlined and studied in White, L. Michael, *Scripting Jesus: The Gospels in Rewrite*, (HarperOne, 2010), pp. 108-114.

^{xiii} Amidst a Jewish rebellion against the Roman Empire in the province of Judaea, the city of Jerusalem was ultimately besieged and conquered by the Roman army in 70 C.E.. With the sacking of the city, Herod’s Temple was also destroyed signifying a pivotal moment in Jewish history. Without Yahweh’s house of worship and sacrifice, Second Temple Judaism collapsed, conveniently making room for the rise of both Judeo-Pauline Christianity in Rome and reorganized Pharisaic (i.e. Talmudic) Judaism in Babylon.

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is depicted prophesying the destruction of the Temple buildings:

As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, behold how great stones and how great buildings!” And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.” {Mark 13:1-2; see also Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6}

^{xiv} Mark 12:35-37

^{xv} Mark 8:12

^{xvi} The passage of Mark 16:9-20 (which comprises an account of the resurrection appearances of Jesus) appears to be appended to the original Gospel narrative by an alternate hand (i.e. the “*Markan Appendix*”). Aside from the different stylistic peculiarities contained within this ending of Mark, some of the oldest New Testament manuscripts do not contain these last 12 verses, and their absence has been reported by ancient authors.

^{xvii} Matthew 1:1 (Suspected genealogy and nativity insertions are detailed in chapters 6 & 7.)

^{xviii} Matthew 12:39

^{xix} Matthew 5:17-18,20

^{xx} Romans 10:4; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 2:21; Galatians 3:24,25

^{xxi} Matthew 23:2-3a

^{xxii} Romans 3:28

^{xxiii} James 2:21,24

^{xxiv} See Romans 4 and Galatians 3.

^{xxv} For research on this subject consult Brown, Raymond E., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (Doubleday, 1997), pp. 734-736.

^{xxvi} In discussing the person, ministry, and motivations of the historical Paul, care has been properly taken to reference only those epistles which are believed for many different reasons to have actually been written by Paul. The generally “undisputed” or “genuine” Pauline epistles are as follows: *Romans, I-II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians and Philemon*.

Those epistles often believed to be pseudepigraphal (i.e. the “*pseudo*” or “*deutero*”-Pauline epistles) are as follows: *Ephesians, Colossians, II Thessalonians, I-II Timothy, and Titus*. The last three, known as Pastoral Epistles, are most often regarded as having been written by a later hand. Despite all containing the emphatic claim of being written by “Paul”, these six epistles are regarded thusly on account of various stylistic and historical attributes.

For example, the verbiage throughout Colossians 1-2 reads peculiarly “Gnostic”, as several related concepts are opposed, using terminology that would be recognized by those familiar with what scholars now call “Gnosticism”. As Marcionites and other non-Pauline Gnostic-type philosophies concerning Christ continued to spread, particularly into the 2nd century C.E., the author’s concern comes into focus: “*As you have received Christ Jesus ... as you were instructed ... see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy.*” {Colossians 2:6-8} Note likewise the explicitly anti-Gnostic conclusion of the first Pastoral epistle:

*Guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly [and] empty chatter [and] **the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”** {γνώσεως “Gnoseos”} — which some have professed and thus gone astray concerning the faith. {1 Timothy 6:20-21}*

^{xxvii} 2 Timothy 1:15a

^{xxviii} From 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

^{xxix} From Revelation 1:4,11; 2:2

^{xxx} From Revelation 2:9 and 3:9; note the full text of the latter: *Behold, I will cause [those] of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and [make them] **know that I have loved you.***

This being, in part, a veiled reference to those recognized as Edomites/Idumeans, alluding to Malachi 1:2b-3a: “***I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau.***” Alternatively, note Paul’s curious treatment of this subject in Romans 9:6-12.

^{xxxi} From Acts 19:1,8-10

^{xxxii} For example, see Acts 13:44-52; a discussion on this subject, as it also relates to Paul’s ministry and the canonical gospels, is detailed in chapter 7.

^{xxxiii} See Acts 15:1-5

^{xxxiv} From Acts 15:7,9-11,13,19-20

^{xxxv} See also Acts 10:34; a discussion on the context of this subject, as it also relates to the P material, is detailed in chapter 7.

^{xxxvi} See Acts 15:19-29; 21:25; a discussion on the context of this subject as it also relates to the P material is detailed in chapter 7.

^{xxxvii} For example, immediately after stating reputation “*makes no difference*” to him {Galatians 2:6}, Paul boasts:

*“I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, just as **Peter [had been] of the circumcision** (for He who effectually worked for **Peter in his apostleship of the circumcision** effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), ... James and {Peter} and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, so that **we [might go] to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**” {Galatians 2:7-9}*

Nevertheless, with foreknowledge of Paul's epistle to the Galatians, Luke supplements by placing these alternative words into Peter's mouth:

*“Brethren, you know that **from days of old God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.**” {Acts 15:7}*

Similarly, while Paul complained about the legalism of “*false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage*” {Galatians 2:4} and, while at Antioch, about Peter's anti-Gentile sentiments stemming from “*the coming of certain men from James*” {Galatians 2:12}, Luke supplements again by depicting James in a leadership role issuing this sentence and letter to the Gentiles:

*It is my judgment that **we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,** but that we write to them that they abstain from the pollutions of idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. {Acts 15:19-20}*

“The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.”

*“Since **we have heard that some from us to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words,** unsettling your souls, it seemed good to us, having met together, **to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,** men who have given over their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to **lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:** that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; from which keeping yourselves free, you will do well. Farewell.” {Acts 15:23b-29}*

Curiously, Paul's version of this encounter with James, Peter, and John concludes simply, “[They] only [asked] us to remember the poor.” {Galatians 2:10a}

^{xxxviii} From Acts 16:3 (contrast: Galatians 2:3)

^{xxxix} From Acts 19:1-7 (contrast: 1 Corinthians 1:14-17)

^{xl} From Acts 21:17-26

^{xli} From Acts 22:3 (and context)

^{xlii} Acts 23:6

^{xliii} For a detailed study on this subject consult Tyson, Joseph B., *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

^{xliv} For a detailed study on this subject consult Jusino, Ramon K., *Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?* (Internet article, 1998).

^{xlv} From 1 Corinthians 14:34,35; 11:3,7-9

^{xlvi} 1 Timothy 2:11-14

^{xlvii} While the identity of the *Disciple Jesus Loved* is carefully veiled in the Fourth Gospel, the “Gnostics” in their writings exhibited primary knowledge that this person (who had become known only as an anonymous male “Disciple”) was Mary Magdalene. Within the *Nag Hammadi Texts*, are found revealing references such as:

Simon Peter said to him, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males.” {Gospel of Thomas, Logion 114}

Peter said to Mary, “Sister we know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of woman.” ... Levi said ... “He loved her more than us.” {taken from the Gospel of Mary}

There were three who always walked with the Lord: Mary, his mother, and her sister, and Magdalene, the one who was called his companion. ... And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples [...] They said to him “Why do you love her more than all of us?” {taken from the Gospel of Philip, fragmentary}

^{xlviii} Examples where Peter is distinguished in various authoritative ways include: Galatians 2:7-8; 1 Corinthians 15:5; Mark 16:7; Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 15:7. A discussion on the context of this subject, as it also contrasts the Fourth Gospel’s comparative treatment of Peter and Mary Magdalene, is detailed in chapters 5 and 8.

^{xlix} 2 Peter 3:15b-16

¹ John 21:23

ⁱⁱ John 21:24

ⁱⁱⁱ Early traditional examples include **Papias**: “Mark became Peter’s interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered.” **Irenaeus**: “Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed on his preaching to us in written form.” **Justin Martyr**: “It is written in {Peter’s} memoirs ... Boanerges, which means ‘sons of thunder’...” {Note this reference only appears in Mark.}

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Early traditional examples include **Papias**: “Matthew composed the words in the Hebrew dialect, and each translated as he was able.” **Irenaeus**: “Matthew composed his gospel among the Hebrews in their own language.” **Jerome**: claimed to receive a Hebrew variation of the Gospel of Matthew, which certain Nazarenes and Ebionites (Jewish Christians) claimed was the authentic Matthew (i.e. the *Gospel of the Hebrews*).

^{lv} So-called for not appearing to address any specific Christian community, the seven “General” (i.e. “Catholic”) Epistles are as follows: *James, I-II Peter, I-III John, and Jude*. These token canonical representations of Peter, James and other original disciples are sometimes ironically branded the “Jewish Epistles”, in contrast with those of Paul.