

Betrayer and Betrayed: The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot:

A Distinguished Scholar Seminar
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Note: The following are notes transcribed by Martha Rogers (Martha Junia+) during lectures of Dr. Ehrman. I do not guarantee them to be *verbatim* or totally accurate, but they probably capture the material fairly closely. Where you see "... " this means that I lost words, so something is missing. The reader is referred to the bibliography at the end of the notes in order to verify particulars. In order to keep up with the pace of the lectures as they were taking place, certain abbreviations were used:

Abbreviations used in this document:

4G = 4th Gospel or 4 Gs, the four Gospels
DSS = Dead Sea Scrolls
GJI = Gospel of Judas Iscariot
GM = Gospel of Mary Magdalene
JC = Jesus
JI = Judas Iscariot
MM = Mary Magdalene
NG = National Geographic
NH = Nag Hammadi
NT = New Testament
OT = Old Testament or Hebrew Bible
PP = Pontius Pilate

Introduction

On April 6th 2006 a big National Geographic media blitz about the newly discovered Judas document. It made headlines, on the news, TV shows and so forth. There was a 2 hour special.

I am on academic sabbatical this year. Last year when teaching my NT class of 350 students, I started off by asking them, 'How many would agree that the Bible is the inspired word of God?' The entire room raises their hands. How many have read Da Vinci? I am not telling you God wrote the Bible. I can see why you might read Dan Brown, but if God wrote a book, don't you wanna know what He said?

An outline of my talk to keep me on track.

I Introduction: The newly discovered gospel of Judas Iscariot: These 4 lectures are not just about the lost document, but how he is portrayed in other ancient documents, and what we can say about him historically. A good part will be on this newly discovered Gospel, I think it is reasonably classified as the most important discovery in the past 60 years in early Christianity. Sometimes manuscripts show up on the desert, and on occasion other places. April 6th is the date the world at large became aware of this Gospel about JI. News of this discovery made public under a year ago now.

There was a bit of a media blitz. National Geographic purchased rights to put on a press conference with an English translation, you can buy this. NG had been in preparation for several months for this media blitz and press conference in Washington DC. It was a carefully crafted conference with a number of scholars in a variety of areas. They gave little talks about the discovery and its significance. I gave one of the talks. They primed us for it and left nothing to chance. That same day the NG released a 2 hour film documentary on TV.

They released their magazine, in which it was the cover story. So a lot of people heard about this newly discovered Gospel. There

was predictable reaction at the release. Some people misunderstood what it was. Many thought it was written by JI which it is not and does not claim to be. Some people involved made some insupportable claims for it. But it is significant and we will talk about this. We will ask what is it exactly? Who wrote it? When? Where did it come from? Where has it been 'til now? What does it do to rethink the relationship between JC and JI? Why is JI portrayed as such a bad guy? If JC had to be arrested, turned over and crucified, wasn't JI doing what he was supposed to do – why is he the bad guy? In this Gospel, he is the hero. How plausible is that historically? Who actually was he? What do we know? Why did he portray Jesus and what exactly did he portray?

I am going to have four lectures. This first lecture will talk about what we knew or thought we knew prior to this discovery. What is said about him in other sources outside this gospel, NT and others not as familiar to most people.

In the next lecture, the discovery, when it was discovered and how it finally turned up.

In the 3rd lecture what does it tell us, what is in it? How does it distinctively portray him?

In the 4th and last lecture we will have some historical reflections about JI himself. Why did he do what he did and what is it he did? My plan is to give these lectures with plenty of time for questions. Hold on to your questions to the end of each lecture. For each of these, my goal is to leave 15-20 minutes for questions.

II Overview: Judas in the Gospels

The NT is not arranged chronologically. The letters of Apostle Paul, the 13 letters claiming to be written by him, although there is much debate as to whether he wrote all of them – he probably didn't. Written 10-15 years before the Gospels. Mark was written around 65-70 CE. Paul was writing his letters in the 50's, 10-15 years before Mark. So a natural question – did Paul refer to the betrayal of JI?

One of the strange things reading his letters, he says very little about the life of the historical Jesus. It seems weird to a lot of people. My students find this to be one of the many things they have trouble believing. As an assignment, I tell them to read through all the Pauline letters and make a list of everything he says about JC from birth to death. They are surprised to realize they do not need more than a 3X5 card. There are reasons but he is not writing a gospel. He is writing letters, actual letters. You are reading somebody else's mail, not written for you, but sent to other people. He did not talk about JI very much in his letters. But one passage MIGHT be a reference, so since there is sparse reference, let's talk about this one reference.

I Corinthians 11, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, he says "Remember what happened on the night on which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread..." The key phrase is the night on which he was betrayed, sounds like a reference to JI. We start off with a real complexity – why is this a problem? The night in which he was betrayed, *paradidime* is not normally translated as meaning 'betrayed,' which he uses at other times. When in reference to Jesus he is referring to God handing Jesus over to his death. "Handed over" or "given over." Literally "in which he was handed over he took bread." I Corinthians does not show that Paul knew about the betrayal – how do you know? It is in the Gospel, but that was written 15 years later. Is there evidence that Paul knew about JI? It was frequently quoted but probably he is talking about God handing Jesus over. The Gospels are the only place and one other book by a Gospel writer (Acts).

He does not show us that much even in the Gospels. He was a big player, so you'd think he would show up a lot. This happens with the figures that people are most interested in, frequently they are talked about the least. The most recent is Mary Magdalene, she has become hot property, not just because of Da Vinci Code. She was an insider and in fact they were married with children? There is no evidence for this. She is mentioned once during his entire public ministry in passing, in the company of a group of women. All these books about MM, and she's never talked about. A very easy answer, so why do

scholars write books on something there is no evidence? Answer: Tenure. You write books. Nothing written for hundreds of years. And so it goes.

We do not know much about JI either. MM is very significant for what happened after his life and so is JI. Matthew - Judas name turns up 5 times, 3 times in Mark, 4 times in Luke, and 8 times in John. You have him showing up in about 4 passages. What do we learn? He has 2 roles in the gospel accounts, one minor and one major:

The minor role: JI is called to be one of the twelve. The way it works is this. Jesus begins an itinerant preaching ministry and picks 12 people to be his disciples, men, to be the insiders, people who get private instruction and spend the most time with him. Why does he choose 12? So you can have Apostle of the Month club? Or is there something else? Why not 7 or 14? Most scholars think because he wanted to make a symbolic statement about his followers were the true representatives of Israel, the 12 tribes. He was delivering his interpretation and picked 12 to be symbolic of those following the true teachings of God. JI chosen one of the 12, at least at the beginning he did not have JI in some other category among the others. One of the closest to Jesus, spent time on the inside, his private teaching, commissions to the 12, fully functioned as one of the 12, his "minor" role.

The major role he is known for – he agreed with the authorities to alert them as to JC's whereabouts. That is the betrayal, he agreed with the Jewish authorities to hand him over, show him where he is when the crowds not around. You find that in all the accounts.

We will be talking later about historicity of the betrayal, why is he called JI? 'Iscariot' is significant. What does it mean? What is it he actually did and are the gospels right in how he is betrayed? He is referred to several times in the 4G, the one who betrays him to the authorities.

I do not mean to say the 4G agree on what he did. Some consistencies,

III The Variations in the accounts:

A. Consistencies: 1. Jewish Leaders, 2. The task, 3. The overall tenor of the portrayal.

The authorities agree they want him arrested, the people running the show are in Jerusalem, the central place for Jewish life and worship, in the capital city, and they arranged to do it. Not the Romans. The task is betrayal -- JI was to portray his whereabouts when the crowd was not around, because they wanted no riots. The overall betrayal similar across the 4Gs, all agree he betrayed Jesus' trust. They don't explain why he is a villain.

B. The differences: 1. Reason for betrayal. 2. The aftermath.

Reason for the betrayal – why did he do it? Read the Gospel accounts and see what they say. The hardest thing with students is to get them to see each Gospel as a separate portrayal of Jesus. Reading Mark, you should read without assuming it is the same as what Luke said. There are discrepancies in our Gospels. Most people do not see them. I think the way people normally read them, they start with Matthew at the top and read to the bottom. Read through, then read Mark, to the bottom. Then people think, 'It sounds a lot like Matthew.' Then Luke, sounds like Matthew and Mark. John a little different but they all seem basically like if you read vertically, top to bottom.

It is better to read them horizontally. You will see the problems. Read the story in Matthew, then Mark, Luke and you will find differences, some of which look impossible to reconcile.

I tell students to read the accounts of the resurrection to see if they are the same or different and if irreconcilable differences. Who goes to the tomb on 3rd day? Mary Magdalene with herself or with other women? Is the stone already rolled away or does it roll away. Do

they see a man, 2 men, or an angel? Does he tell them to go to Galilee or to Jerusalem? If the angels tell them anything? It all depends on which account. Since you have differences, it is only fair to let each author have their say.

When somebody reads one of my books about the NT and then they try to compare it to Jerry Falwell? Don't read him to understand me! If you are reading Mark, let him tell the story. The Gospel of Mark does not give a reason for JI doing it, simply that he did it and then they gave him some money. It doesn't say he did it for the money.

Gospel of Matthew is clear – JI did it for the cash. Mark 14, Matthew 26. He wanted silver --- turn him over we will give you 30 pieces of Silver. Luke said nothing. Luke 22, Judas did it because Satan entered into it. In John he is the devil, that is why he did it – 4 different understandings, so it is not legitimate to smash them together. You would be making one big gospel -- your own Gospel. You are not letting them have their say.

Four reasons for betrayal. What about after the betrayal? As it turns out, JI's death is not narrated in Mark, Luke, or John. Once he betrays Jesus, he does not show up again. Matthew said he committed suicide. Person who wrote Luke ..Luke and Acts are 2 volumes of one book. In Acts an account of JI dying. Compare what it says after his death. He was given the silver, felt remorse, wants to return the money. They said keep it, but he threw it down and went out to hang himself. Priests think the money cannot be put to use because it was blood money. It was used to buy a field, called the potter's field in Matthew.

In Acts, what happened, he took the money and purchased the field. His intestines spilled and he died. Try to make Matthew. JI hanged, but fell, and his intestines spilled out. He hung himself and was cut down. You can't reconcile how it was reconciled. It is called Field of Blood because JI spilled his blood.

Four instances of portrayal outside the NT: Some people look like they are not believing me when I say 'read them separately.'

When I was in college, as an evangelical, everything was focused in reconciling everything to make sense. I bought a book called The Life of Christ in Stereo, by somebody who wanted to show you are impoverished if you read only one, so you put them together to make the Real Gospel. This led to very interesting results. In Mark, JC tells Peter before the cock crows 2 times you will deny me 3 times. In Matthew he says before it crows 3 times, you will deny me 3 times. He denies Jesus to different people. The Life of Christ in Stereo puts it together, Peter denied JC 6 times, 3 times before the cock crows and 3 times before the cock crows twice. You have formulated your own gospel text, to support the authority, and you are editing the text. I think that is a problem.

Later Judas Traditions:

A: The bloated JI

A. The Judas the roasting chicken

B. Judas as Oedipus

C. Judas the prototypical Jew.

Writings of church father, Papias, 30 years afterward, are unlike any other. He started swelling up, a divine punishment. He got so enormous he cannot fit. His head would not go where a wagon could go. So fat that an eye doctor could not see his eye. JI's genitals so large and disgusting, if he urinated it was pus and worms. Then he blew up.

2nd one, in one of the gospels that didn't make it into the NT. There are quite a few that didn't, such as Thomas, Philip, MM, Judas, something like 40 complete or in part gospels. One is Gospel of ...all in one manuscript of Nicodemus.

Judas goes home. Wife cooking it over the fire. What he has been crucified No, JC cannot

3rd, the later story of Oedipus, would murder father and marry mother, seems improbable but it does in the volume. In a book called the Golden Legend written in 1265 by Jacob; heroes of the Christian faith. Prior to printing, this was the most popular book from 13th

century to the next couple of centuries. Jacob tells the story in a remarkable way. A righteous Jewish man, Ruben, and wife Seboria, an upright couple. She dreamed their son would be born and the downfall of many people. JI born to them, they decided to put him in a basket thinking he would die of exposure, but he washed up on island of Scariot, hence, his name, Iscariot. [Note the similarity to the Moses story.] The queen sees the basket, she sees her solution due to not getting pregnant. She produces the child as her newborn son. Then she became pregnant, the 2 are raised together. After they grow up he learns from his mother he is not her actual son, in jealousy kills his stepbrother. He takes flight into Jerusalem. Meets the governor. One day PP sees an apple tree next door, sends his right hand man, Judas, who breaks in when the owner comes, his father, Ruben, which he does not know. He killed Ruben. Awards him the new widow, Judas and Seboria. She has a little ...realizes he killed his father. He goes to become....

The woman pours the oil on him. (S)He betrays him and goes on ...Oedipus as one who kills father and joins his father.

There was increasing anti-Semitism. Jews they were parallel with acts of JC. A god hating, money grubbing, Christ killer. The prototypical Jew. The discovery is so significant because he is not prototypical, the good guy.

Questions:

It seems to me JI in the middle ages, you can make a case that the NT is anti-semitic.

In Matthew it is only here that Pilate washes his hands. I am innocent of his blood, the Jewish crowd says his blood be upon us and our children. It is read as anti-Jewish, and the verse was used for many hateful purposes.

I do not remember where it was in the OT a story there about somebody taking 30 pieces of silver and being hanged.

Yes, a reference to 30 pieces [Exodus 21:32, Zechariah 11:12-13, (see also Amos 2:6)], the business of 30 pieces found only in Matthew who then quotes Zachariah. Matthew sees this as fulfillment of the prophecies, which makes it historically suspect. He tries to show everything coming from OT. Born in Bethlehem, born of a virgin, Judas betrays and Zachariah...Jesus fulfills constantly so how much historicity or is Matthew shaping the story?

The words in Greek, betrayal: in English letters:

Paradidomi – Paul uses on the night in which Jesus was handed over

Prodidomi – it does mean betray, JI is only called betrayer in the Gospel of Luke

Questions:

Was 30 pieces of silver good pay?

Depends which monetary unit. If Danarius, a denarius was minimum wage, now it is \$7.25? It was about \$60. It would be \$1800 bucks.

A number of gospels did not make into the gospel. Who decided which would get in?

The Da Vinci code is not to be trusted, in any one of 4,000 places such as: The Roman Emperor Constantine voted which was to be included. There was an Emperor, he did call the council of Nicea that is all that is true. In 325 they did not discuss the books, and Constantine had nothing to do with the decision. A church council that voted would be clean, but the early Christians wrote literature, gospels, revelations, letters. One allegedly by Thomas, Mary, Gospel of Truth, you could go on and on, they are floating around. Early Christians were trying to decide which were authoritative. Christians were into authority, what you believe matters. How you behaved mattered. So Christians gathered books together for authority. The

process started as soon as they were written, in order to make a decision as to do you want it read in church or not? Went on for many decades. There were arguments that went on for centuries.

The first time anybody came up with our list of 27 books was 357 AD, 300 years after they were written. The person who said that was Bishop of Alexandria Egypt, Athanasius. He said only these 27. No council ratified it until 16th century, so it was done more by acclamation than a vote. The decision was made based on several criteria. The 2nd and 3rd centuries looking at it:

Was it an ancient book? As you know people still write gospels today. Reynolds Price recently published one, he is from Duke, are you gonna include it? You have to decide.

Does it go back to JC?

Was it written by an Apostle?

Is it widely used among Christians or just a local one?

Is it orthodox? Does it teach the right teachings? Orthodoxy comes from Greek "right teaching" vs. "heterodoxy" another teaching, one that is not right.

The problem in orthodox is based on your perspective, 'mydoxy' or 'yourdoxy'? If you believe it is wrong, you change, so by definition everyone thinks they are orthodox. Nonetheless, Christians fighting over correct belief. All that together led to formation of canon. Certain books conveyed those beliefs and therefore were accepted.

Jesus spoke Aramaic. Why are none of the gospels in Aramaic?

Jesus did speak native Aramaic, the language in Palestine. Scholars debate if he spoke in Greek or Latin, my own answer is not. He was a lower class peasant. Why are NT books not in Aramaic? Christianity soon after his death spread around the Mediterranean world, the *lingua franca* was Greek among educated. In Europe you do not have to speak German, they speak English. They were written outside of Palestine written 30-50 years later in Greek.

Any chance any gospel had multiple authors?

Depends on what you look like, not like today with a ghost writer. You do have probably in all of our gospels a situation where gospel writers were using older sources and editing for his own account. We are pretty sure that happened. Another thing I have trouble convincing students, if it is word for word the same, somebody is copying somebody else. Matthew, Mark, Luke give the same sequence and words in places. In class, I come in late, take off my jacket, say something and do other things for a few minutes. I want everyone to pull out a pen and paper write down everything I did in 3 minutes. Then do a comparison of what you wrote down: do you have a sentence exactly like this guy next to you? No, there are never 2 the same. I ask the class does anybody have the same sentence? What if I pick up 2 exactly alike? Somebody cheated!

Suppose I wait 30-40 years, instead of asking you I ask somebody who knew somebody, the brother of somebody who once knew you, if it is worded the same, some wise guy says "it is a miracle"! It is or somebody is copying somebody and it is a miracle.

The way scholars see it, Mark was the first, Matthew and Luke copied Mark. Matthew has stories not found in Mark, the Lord's prayer, Beatitudes, must have gotten from another source. A German labeled the source, Quelle, Q, that is the hypothetical source for Matthew /Luke not found in Mark. Matthew wrote down stuff from Q and Mark, so in some sense all are multiple sources.

How he died in the gospel, if you leave a body around in the sun, it will blow up. This isn't afterward but how he died. Reconciling, hanging self, blowing up. It looks like he dies that way.

When you see a video from the Teaching Company it looks like a class but that is bogus. The first time I did one, NT 24 lectures 30 minutes in length. They have this TV studio, it is empty! Two cameramen and a red digital clock. Starts at 30:00 and the idea is

when it hits zero you are supposed to be finished. Looks like people there, he is talking, gesticulating but nobody in there. I've had nightmares about this clock. If you are 5 minutes short of material, there's nobody there to ask questions! Part of this is humor – you do not know when you are funny or not. You are laughing but nobody else is. If you have seen them, it looks like a crowd, you give 24 lectures over a week, then the last lecture, they bring everybody in the building to sit there and pan the camera, then everybody changes places and then they pan -- they pan the crowd again. I commend them to you, to learn things you never had time to learn in college. I have a few of them so now I get an audience, at least 5 people to look at the eye, rather than a teleprompter.

A number of gospels were discovered in modern times. In rare occasions an archeologist goes out and tries to and actually finds something – it is very rare. Most have been discovered in Egypt, something left in a cave or buried in the sand and because of the constant lack of humidity, it will stay there. Go into the wilderness and ask yourself how am I gonna find a book out here? Miles of wilderness! As it turns out, the more common way is to discover by serendipity, complete accident.

In 1868 in Cairo they were digging in a cemetery, uncovered remains of a Christian monk from about the 8th century CE. He had been buried with a book, a small anthology of 4 texts including a couple of texts we did not previously have. One was not a gospel, an Apocalypse of Peter. Very interesting and significant discovery. It almost made it into the NT. Some argued it should be scriptural and canonical. First instance of a Christian text where one is given a guided tour of hell -- Dante didn't come up with that idea on his own. It turns out Simon Peter gives the tour and JC who takes him to realms of blessed and damned. You might think the realms of the blessed were not so interesting, only so many ways you can describe happiness, happy are they, oh they are so blessed! Realms of the damned on the other hand they are being tormented. You can come up with many torments -- far more interesting. According to this book, the people in realm of the damned are being eternally punished for their habitual sin. Habitual liars are hung by their

tongues. Women who have braided their hair to seduce men, are hanged by their hair; men who have seduced are hanged by a different body part! We didn't know it would come to this! A very interesting book. A small anthology with a gospel allegedly written by Simon Peter in the first person, different from NT gospels because they do not claim to be written by the disciples, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Somebody else wrote the book. If Matthew had written it...it is gospel according to Matthew. Not one day Jesus and I did this, always in the 3rd person. Gospel of Peter is in the 1st person. Whoever wrote it forged it, discovered by archeologists looking for stuff.

Early Christian books discovered accidentally. The most famous was Nag Hammadi in 1945, one and a half years before the Dead Sea Scrolls which were discovered by accident as well. One piece of information that is completely wrong in Da Vinci, that Dead Sea Scrolls had gospels of Jesus. Jesus is never mentioned, his followers are never mentioned; they are Jewish books, nothing Christian at all.

The DSS are important because written by Jews at the time of early Christians when Jesus is making his proclamations. A different thing with NH, seven field hands 200 miles south of Cairo digging for fertilizer by this cliff face, goes on for a mile. Digging by a boulder and accidentally hit something hard, it was a skeleton and next to it an earthenware jar. It was sealed shut. They were afraid to open it for fear of an open genie. Upon further reflection they thought about gold, so they smashed it, but alas, there were only old books. One of their mothers used it to start the evening fire. There were 13 books, anthologies, 52 sets, Gospel of Thomas, Phillip, of Truth, found by pure accident in mid-1940's.

Gospel of Judas was also found by pure accident by peasants who did not know what they found. I will tell you about the discovery before talking about what is actually in the Gospel in my first lecture in the AM. Let me tell you my involvement. The way it started for me was let me see, would have been fall of 2005. I was teaching that term in Chapel Hill. I was in my office talking with a grad student supposedly writing a dissertation. I was grousing about his not

getting much done. The phone rang. A friend of mine Sheila Bishop, actually from NG but has sponsored archeological digs in Egypt over the years. Sheila ask me 'What do you know about a Gospel of Judas?' 'Well, church fathers mention it but I do not think we have it.' OK, short call. We hung up. I thought, you know, I ought to look that up. I remembered a church father, Irenaeus, a very important church father around 180 AD, about 150 years after JC's death. He wrote a 5 volume work against the Gnostics. All you need to know is Gnostic Christians did not think you are saved by death and resurrection of JC. That was the standard orthodox view but they did not think so. They thought by having secret knowledge that JC conveyed secret knowledge, salvation not by faith. Greek word is gnosis, people who knew the truth, knowers that could bring salvation. They came to think this world we live in is not the creation of the One True Good God.

Look around you, do you want to pin the blame on God? Famine, blight, epidemics, war, hurricanes, tsunamis. No, this is not the True God, who is above the creating god of this world. It was created by a lower deity. The point of salvation is to escape the trappings of this world. They had a very different view than what became the predominant view. In this 5 volumes I remembered he mentioned Gospel of Judas. He says a group of Gnostics were followers of Cain in the OT.

You would not think you'd want to be a follower, Adam and Eve had 2 sons, Cain and Abel, who was murdered by Cain. Why would you follow Cain, the first murderer? Abel was righteous in the eyes of the god in this world. They celebrated the bad boys as the heroes, Sodom and Gomorrah, the good guys. A twist to their understanding of religion. Since the Jewish god created this world, the same god that gave the law of Moses, that is not the god to worship, so you show that by breaking his law. If you should not eat pork, commit adultery, the way to show you are on the side of the True God is to do those things. I imagine they had their share of converts!

I looked it up. Two weeks later another call, from somebody named Susan from NG. She introduced herself, what do you know about a

Gospel of Judas? I told her about Irenaeus and the Cainites. Do you think it would be significant if we found it? Right. Ok, play this game. It would depend. Depends on what kind of book it is. Hypothetically, if you found it was a Gnostic gospel like those at NH, depicting a higher realm, spirits trapped in this world, the Gnostic myth it would be highly significant for scholars of Gnosticism and early Christianity. On the other hand if it is a book that describes the relationship of Jesus and Judas and paints a different picture and conversations between them where Judas understands, that could be big and interesting to a lot of people. 'Oh, OK, what do you have?' 'Well, we think we have it.'

What do you think you have? An ancient Coptic manuscript. We would like you to help us authenticate this manuscript. This was the first clue that I knew NG had no clue what they are doing because I'm no expert in Coptic. I said I am expert in Greek, you need a Coptologist. Oh, great, who are they? They will read it and tell you what is in it. Really, we want somebody to establish when it was written, is it a modern forgery, or help us date it. I then said, 'You need a paleographer.' Oh, great, what is a paleographer, the way you date is based on the handwriting. The way it worked before printing everything written by hand, styles of handwriting shifted slowly over the decades. People who are experts in paleography have studied the writing and can date it within 50 years. You need a 50 year period because a scribe in the ancient world if 70 years old they will write the same way as when he was trained at age 20. We need a paleographer to date the thing. OK, we want carbon 14 dating. I said every Friday night I carbon date manuscripts – I don't know anything. Tell ya what, get a scientist to date it and I'll get you a Coptologist. We need a historian to tell us the significance. Well I can do that. My interest is in gospels that did not make it into the NT. We want you involved. OK, fine. I'll make phone calls for you. I called a guy I know in Germany, Steven Emmel, teaches at U. of Muenster a world-class Coptologist and Paleographer. 'Steve, there is a rumor the Gospel of Judas has turned up.' 'I saw that gospel 20 years ago. Yeah!' 'Wanna see it again? Yeah!'

Great! Let's go to Geneva! The manuscript was kept there. Steven Emmel, Timothy Joel who does carbon 14 out of U. of AZ, had dated Dead Sea Scrolls, and me. We flew to Geneva. The day before in fact the day before I was doing one of Wayne Poole's seminars [at UNC Chapel Hill] on Saturday. I did an overnight to Geneva. Before I could unpack they whisked us off to look at this manuscript. What I learned in the meantime, NG had this document and they had sought it for 3 years. NG did not have it. They wanted to know if it was gonna invest money in publicizing and releasing it, but they wanted to make sure it was the real thing and not a hoax, which is why they wanted experts to go there. Manuscripts had been in Geneva in the hands of a Coptic scholar, Rudolph Kasser.

He is a senior scholar. If they had told me he was involved in the beginning I would have said 'You don't need any of us.' But they wanted independent verification. He had worked for 3 years trying to preserve this manuscript because it was in pieces. He and an expert restorationist, Florence Darbre, a Swiss whose specialty is putting back together fragmented manuscripts. They had been trying for 3 years to put it back together. When I knew those 2 were working on it, it made the trip pointless but they wanted us there so we went. Whisked us off in a van.

There was Steven Emil, Joel, a NG film crew, VP of NG, a representative of the family with the foundation of Gateways Computers thinking about dropping a lot of money into this, a guy Herb Krosney an investigative reporter. He tracked it down, alerted to NG so he was along.

We drove to outside Geneva to Lyon, on Lake Geneva, pulled up next to a pizza parlor. The restoration studio was on the 2nd floor of this pizza parlor. It did not look very auspicious, we walked up there. We go into this large room with windows and a restoration team. It was nowhere in sight. Met Frieda Nussberger allegedly the owner, and her lawyer Mario Roberty, a suave debonair lawyer working with European art dealers on issues of antiquity. Rudolph Kasser an older man with Parkinson's Disease. They go around. NG is filming it all. We are asking introductions. They start getting real twitchy, like a

springer spaniel wanting to get the squirrel, when do we get the manuscript? They open the safe brings out several pages under glass, set them on the table we start looking at them. I can read Coptic, I can't read that well. At bottom of one sheet said the Gospel of Judas. Yeah, but is this JI? They turn to Kasser, yep, there it is, JI. So they want to know, NG wants to ask questions of Emil, me and Kasser. Could this be a forgery? Are you kidding? This is an ancient manuscript! Looks like about 4th century to me, my guess at the time.

Emil, could this be a forgery? No, this is an ancient manuscript. How many people could forge something like this? Probably 4 people in the world and 2 of them are in this room. We look at more pages. They interview about the character of the manuscript. They wanted to interview me with Kasser. I start talking to him on film, what is in this thing? How did Judas and Jesus relate? What do they say, how does it end, where does it end? His native language is French and English not very good but better than my French. Frieda stops it because she did not want NG to hear everything because then they might have no interest. Wants them to buy it and not spill the beans.

Timothy did carbon 14, cutting off small pieces, what you take back to the lab you destroy, so you have to be careful what you cut off, not where writing is. They cut 7 bits to take back to his lab. We break for lunch – pizza, of course – try not to get the pepperoni on the manuscript. We were together over dinner. When would the carbon 14, they thought it was 4th century, I thought maybe early 4th, a couple months later the carbon was earlier than anyone thought +/- 60 years, they dated it at 286 CE, earlier than anything in the NH library if the dating is reliable.

Next day, NG wants to interview me about the significance and I do not know. Who was JI, why did he do what he did, why is he portrayed as a hero vs villain. So I did an interview with them and that was the end of the story until months later.

Let me tell you how the manuscript ended up in restoration studio in Geneva in 2004. What happened to it? It was discovered years before in 1978, in a province of Egypt, the Al Minya Province 120

miles south of Cairo. Peasants found a cave nobody had known about, they dug around hoping for trinkets to sell. They found human remains, with 2 limestone boxes. They opened them, there were 4 manuscripts.

There was -- they did not know this – illiterate peasants – only years later was it realized what they were: A Greek mathematical treatise. A copy of the book of exodus written in Greek, Paul's letters in Coptic, and 4th manuscript the gospel of Judas, 4 fragments or books within it. It has gospel of Judas, letter of Peter to Phillip where we have another copy in NH, secret book of James also in NH library. A book that will be called *Allogenes*, the Stranger, a book we did not have before, all in Coptic ancient Egyptian language. Peasants find them, they do not know what they are and do not care, just want money. They sell to a local dealer in antiquities who thinks they may be worth money. He sells them to Hanna in Cairo. He is a local fellow but somebody tells him they are really old, might be worth a lot. He talked with somebody who was a western scholar might be worth millions. He tried to sell them for millions. In 1983, a team of American scholars went to Cairo. Steven Emil was a grad student at time and was sent. Emil saw them as a grad student at Yale, very bright who could read Coptic well already at the time. The American sent to buy them was thinking \$50,000 so the deal did not happen. The fuller version of all this in my book on JI. I devote a chapter to it, a summary of an entire book Herbert Krosney, who wrote the full version. This is the Reader's Digest of the Reader's Digest version. He did not know what was in them but brought them to NY, could not unload them. He decided it was not gonna happen, he had a friend who worked at a city bank in Long Island. He rented a safe deposit box and put the manuscript in a safe deposit box and went back to Egypt.

These pages had been in dry climate in Egypt for 1600 years, now in a humid NY in a box for 16 years. Frieda Nussberger comes on the scene. She knew 16 years ago Hanna was trying to unload them, thought maybe he will accept a decent price now. He was ready to unload. She buys it from him because she thinks she knows somebody who will purchase it. She knows of Bruce Ferrini, a high

level antiquities dealer, who sells to Bill Gates and others. Ferrini agrees to buy it for 2.5 million, one check for 1.5 million and one for a million and postdates the checks for January and February. She takes the checks and leaves the manuscript with him, a stupid thing to do. She started realizing these checks might bounce. It was in a safe deposit box, then open it and realize it was rotting in the humidity. She takes them to Ferrini then became nervous about checks bouncing. Got her lawyer Mario who applied some pressure on Ferrini to give the manuscripts back. Mario and Frieda fly to Ohio to collect the manuscripts. Ferrini claims he gave them everything back, they fly to Geneva.

They found out about Kasser and Darbre so they get it in their hands. When he had it, he was told to freeze it to kill parasites so he puts it in his deep freezer. The sap in papyrus froze making the pages very brittle. Now humidity brought to the surface and the ink with it, blackening some of the pages. Another thing even worse, probably him doing it, the manuscript had a kind of a fold a third way down. Ferrini or somebody ripped it in half, the reason because they wanted the top page to look fantastic so they needed to rearrange the pages, so the top looks great and the bottom as well. In the process of ripping, hundreds of little pieces came off. When Frieda goes back a thousand little pieces – it looks hopeless.

Kasser takes several months realizing the top had page numbers and the top and bottom do not match, they start reshuffling, but all these little pieces. It is a jigsaw puzzle. You do not know what the final picture is and many pieces missing. Fragments writing on it, you see the writing that connects, but it is on both sides? - has to work on both sides as well. After awhile about jigsaw puzzle of the ocean and everything is blue, sometimes have to match by the fibers in the papyrus. It takes 3 years by the time I saw it. They think 80-85% restored and translated and 15% lost permanently.

I see it in Geneva, do not know if worth NG money, they were thinking of 1-2 million plus rights of the story. I read something on the internet that gives me pause. A blogger that claims to have published a translation of Judas. Bruce Ferrini gave him pages

illegally. He was to give all the photos back to Frieda but he didn't. I read the pages on the internet, and thought there was nothing to it, most of it did not make much sense. This is a waste of time. This is nothing.

Right after this I had lunch with Herbert at the Harvard Club. I told him I had seen this thing on the internet, if this is it, nothing there. He says do not believe everything you see on the internet. That is what I tell my students every week. He said hang on for awhile. I found out what happened later. The guy who took the photos, since the pages were rearranged he did not know what he was photographing – it was Allogenes, he was thinking it was Gospel of Judas, but he had the wrong text. So it goes.

NG decided to purchase this thing. They got a group of scholars to do press conference in April. We all signed non-disclosure agreements, not allowed to tell anyone until the Press Conference. In exchange they gave us the Coptic text typed out, a tentative English translation, so we had access before it was made public and could comment on it. We agreed not to publish popular book or scholarly book for 6 months after NG release. My book came out October 6, six months later. It includes kind of an analysis of what is in the Gospel. The NG book, 4 essays + the translation of the GJI.

Questions

What was the legality of all that?

Some question about Hanna, looks like it was smuggled out of Egypt but they did not pass a law 'til 1983. Before NG agreed to invest, they struck a deal with Egyptian government, they would allow them to do the documentary, publish them, do exhibition for several years for exchange to return them to Egypt to be stored in the Coptic museum in Cairo.

Two or 3 months ago now I was going to Ohio, my brother is a professor in Classics at Kent State. I get a call from a banker in Akron

who tells me Bruce Ferreni who ripped open this manuscript had defaulted on the loan, had his collateral including fragments of GJI he had not turned them over to Frieda. How much are they worth? Wanted to know if I wanted to take a look. We go to the vault, probably 35-40 fragments that I looked at. I could not analyze there but they looked a lot like the manuscript I had seen, but I was a little confused on this legal question. Frieda had a contract with Ferrini he would give the entire manuscript back to her, so rightfully belong to her. If Hannah smuggled them, they belonged to Egyptian government. If I buy a stolen car...now controversy do they belong to Hannah, Ferrini, NG?

What did they look like?

There are photos in this book, including a nice cover shot of a close up. Gospel of Judas 66 pages long in papyrus, fibers going thru it made out of reed, vertical and horizontally. Pages are smaller than 8 1/2 by 11, maybe 6X8, written in black ink. Most was carbon based, had different ways, oak gall was most common. Pulverize those and add water. As far as I know, no there was a cover, a leather cover as well, partially preserved.

They are bound inside the cover, codices, not a scroll, you write on both sides. So 33 sheets making 66 pages.

Pieces of fiber from size of a dime, up to half a page.

Maecenas Foundation? The foundation founded by Mario Roberty, this lawyer, dedicated to conserving and returning them to their homes of origin. I think it was created to deal with GJI, do not know what else they have going Frieda Nussberger unclear if she is the owner or Micines foundation, I don't know.

Other manuscripts that were found?

The other manuscripts are not available. The one with GJI has 3 texts all in Geneva being published. I do not know where the others

are, not common knowledge. I am very interested in Paul's writings and Herb tells me he knows where it is but I do not.

Did Irenaeus have all those things destroyed?

He did not sponsor book burnings. Reason I think there are no copies, people just stopped copying them. You can only produce by copying a letter at a time. It just disappeared, seems to be what happened. The GJI is a Coptic at end of 3rd or early 4th, originally written in Greek, probably based to 130-140 CE before Irenaeus, a Coptic translation.

How has your experience affected your view of international law and antiquity?

The big debate among archeologists is it ever legitimate to get anything off the black market? Many feel no, you are encouraging them to do it illegally. Others say get what you can as quick as you can. My thought about GJI, so much driven by the bottom line of big bucks and that was a big problem. A lot of high-minded and high handed, and nearly everybody's hands are dirty. Yale had the opportunity to buy it after being identified by a Yale coptologist who discovered the GJI, the library had the chance to purchase before Ferrini. They declined because they thought Egypt would demand it back and lose their 2 million dollars. It is money being driving it rather than concern for antiquity. Ferrini's mishandling...OK, that will do it until AM.

Saturday Morning

It is an honor to do these programs. I very much enjoy doing them in front of a live audience rather than the Teaching Company. As Wayne mentioned, I am a brand new grandfather. Just came back from visiting my two week old granddaughter who is the most perfect being on the planet. I am way too young for this. You start having flashbacks of your children being young. I was thinking this morning about my daughter who just gave birth. She was in 2nd grade and her brother Derrick was 1 1/2 years younger than Kelly. Kelly came home

and said her teacher talking about mammals. Her teacher pointed out all the things that make a mammal a mammal, they drink milk when they are born, born live, not from eggs, they do not lay eggs. She said, 'I raised my hand and said there was an exception of mammals being born from eggs.' The duckbill platypus lays eggs. Kelly, how do you know that? Derrick told me! [His then preschooler!] They are now grown and gone, good thing too!

Today we are moving on to the Gospel of Judas what is in this text, what makes it distinctive and interesting. The next lecture is the historical Judas. This is on the newly discovered Gospel. There is an English translation. You can easily buy these on line or here.

The Alternative Vision of the Gospel of Judas:

- I. Basic Layout and Narrative:** 66 pages 25 taken up with GJI in the Codex. It is 25 pages and does not take long to read but parts of it very dense and hard to understand, so I will try to unpack some of it for you. It is kind of mind-boggling.

The first line the secret account of the revelation that JC spoke in conversation with JI 3 days during the week of Passover. Most of the book deals with conversations JC has, not only with JI but with other disciples. One of the interesting things, the days before the crucifixion but that is not narrated in the GJI. We think of things leading up to his betrayal, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection. But this one ends with the betrayal of JI. That is the key moment. Unlike the other NT 4Gs it is the resurrection. What matters here is the secret revelation that JC gives for salvation. Other books that did not make it into the NT, other books that emphasize the importance of secret teachings were Gnostic.

- II. Gnostic Underpinnings: A. The Major Tenets. B. The Gnostic Myths.**

The term has been in dispute in recent years as scholars question whether it is appropriate to use the term any more. Very prominent

Gnostic scholars who doubt we should use the term, one being Elaine Pagels who has written several books, 1979 Gnostic Gospels, still a very important book, widely read still. More recently, Beyond Belief, has been on NYT best sellers. She has one coming out with Karen King on the GJI. The irony is she does not believe the term is appropriate any more. She made her millions on the Gnostics and now on to other things. Elaine Pagels says it has been applied to such a wide range of religious points of views that it is so big it is no longer useful. They decided to stop using it because the umbrella is too large. I actually disagree. I think it continues to be a useful term.

The problem is we should not put so many things under the umbrella. They continue to use big terms like "Christian," which covers a lot of territory, or the term "Jew" can mean a lot of things. They continue to use the word, "religion." I was Chair of Department of Religious Studies and you can't get 2 scholars to agree on what religion is. What is a religion? We teach at Chapel Hill Intro to Religion basically trying to figure out what religion is, but we continue to use the term. The key is to know what you are talking about when you use the term.

The point is to define it in a way that continues to make sense. I use it to refer to **a group of religions that all emphasize the importance of gnosis and knowledge for salvation from this material world. The underlying notion is that this material world is not the creation of the one true god, but of several lower, inferior, possibly evil divinities. The goal of salvation is to escape from this world and return to your heavenly home, a spiritual world. And the way to do that is through proper knowledge.** I use it in relation to a group of religions. There were several, there are also Gnostic Christian religions.

Students think Christianity is what they believe and if you believe something else is not Christian. Appalachian snake handlers, Mormons, SDA, all consider themselves Christian. If you say they're not because they do not agree with me. You're not a North Carolinian if you root for Duke.

The way many Gnostics tried to explain their religion was to generate myths that floated around in the early centuries. If JC died in 30, we know of Gnostics from about 130 CE, and going on for a couple of centuries. The attempt to explain how we got this material world if the ultimate divinity is spiritual. If the ultimate God is purely spiritual, how do you get matter from spirit?

In the beginning that was the Great Invisible Spirit, the ultimate, invisible divine spirit. In eternity this being already existed, not called just unknown but also unknowable. Why unknowable? Because we only know through our senses. You might think deep thoughts that are separate from sight, hearing, but if you didn't have your senses, you would not be thinking anything. This divine being cannot be perceived by senses, there is no material or matter involved.

So what happens in Gnosticism is what happened to me in fundamentalism. They said, 'God is far greater than we can imagine, but here is what he is like!' No point in saying what he is like because you can't imagine. He is unknowable -- then they tell you what he is like. He had certain characteristics which at some point became their own divine essences. This is the great invisible spirit who had thoughts, a thinking being, so thought itself kind of separated off and became its own divine essence. Thought came from divine being, so life became its own divine essence. It was light, with no darkness, so light became another divine being. This was spirit, became a divine essence. It generated divine beings called Aeons. They came out in pairs. They generated other divine beings. In some Gnostic circles there's a set number like twelve, in some 36, in one group we know of, there are 365 divine beings – one-a-day Aeons.

In some of these systems one of the early ones Barbelo is the Mother of all that there is, foreknowledge and forethought. In the Gnostic myth they explain the material world like this: One Aeon, who is sometimes called Sophia, the Greek word meaning wisdom. In some myths trying to understand the entire divine realm, she was not able to do so, and overreached herself and fell from the divine realm. According to these myths she generated another aeon outside the divine realm. This aeon she generated was Ialdabaoth, outside the

divine realm, an inferior divine being. He didn't realize there were other divinities above him so he thought he was the only one. I am the only God, no other beside me.

Does that sound familiar from the Hebrew Bible? The creator of the world, he generates other divine essences that create the material world in order to capture his mother, Sophia, traps her in human bodies. The world is created as a place for humans to live who have a spark of the divine trapped within us. Not everybody has the spark. Different Gnostics said there were different kinds of humans, some pure animals, like my next door neighbors for example. They are like snakes, aardvarks, mosquitoes, if you hit it, it is dead, end of story.

But others have an eternal divine element 'til it escapes by learning the secret of who it really is. Those trapped with Sophia within need to learn self-knowledge, who you are, where you came from, how you can return. Your spirit will return to its heavenly home. I explain to my students using psychological terms. People who feel they lead an alienated existence – they feel they do not belong here, this world is not my home. It does not make sense to me. I felt this way 'til the last election. I looked around, the world does not make sense to me, the people who thought it was perfect sense, were actually the animals. Why does the world feel like I do not belong? I need to escape from this world.

What you need is secret knowledge to escape, not by looking around and having deep thoughts. All you can know is what you experience. Material world is a lower level of existence. You need someone from spiritual world, an aeon comes down and reveals the secret knowledge. Christ is a divine being, one of the aeons to reveal the truth necessary for salvation.

Different Gnostic systems had various ways to understand him. Son of God and Son of Man in some systems, but with most Gnostics a man JC was flesh and blood like the rest of us. When he was baptized he had a unique experience, comes out of the water, spirit descends and comes into him. That was the time the divine Aeon came into JC to empower him for his ministry, so he could do

miracles and teach his secret teachings. At the end he was hanging on the cross the divine left him, so that is why he said 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Because the divine left him. Then in some systems he was raised from the dead and went up to his heavenly home. In some systems, the physical element died, then he returned to his heavenly home. Those who received the secret will live forever.

In a very small nutshell, that is what is going on with the Gnostic system. Their myths explain how the world came into being and how we receive gnosis and escape this world.

III. Judas as a Gnostic Gospel.

Yesterday I said we have 80-85% of this work, some lost by mishandling. We don't have the whole thing but we have the beginning and end, some parts destroyed. The beginning is the introduction I have said, the secret account of revelation that Jesus spoke, a revelation. He speaks this with his disciples, with JI, several days before his crucifixion. The crucifixion does not really matter in Gnosticism but in proto-orthodox groups it did matter. Not like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. After this introduction there is a brief summary of Jesus' life, in 4 sentences in the English translation.

We are told he performed many miracles while living, called 12 people to be his disciples. He spoke with his disciples about the mysteries beyond the world and what would take place at the end. He appeared not in his own bodily form but sometimes as a child. After that summary, we get into the main part of the Gospel, a series of encounters and conversations, especially with JI, the only disciple named by name in this Gospel.

In this first encounter Jesus finds his disciples at a ritual meal, the Eucharist. The word "Eucharist" is a Greek word which means thanksgiving. It means giving thanks. They are having a religious meal thanking God for their bread. JC, to their chagrin starts laughing. They get upset, and he responds they do not understand their god is different than his God. They have misunderstood. They

think he is the son of the creator god of the material world. He laughs because he is from the Greater God – they get angry. JI stands up and confesses the truth, says he is from another realm, from Barbelo. This is a Gnostic gospel, the aeon the mother of all beings, the realm from which JC had come, far above the creator god of this world. When JI makes this confession, JC takes him off for sudden revelation.

Next day he returns to his disciples who ask where he has been, he has been in another realm and mere mortals can't go there, and he leaves again. He comes back and disciples want him to explain a vision. The Jewish priests offering animal sacrifices in the Temple and want him to interpret this. They are the priests who are sacrificing animals because they are misleading their followers. JI asks about different kinds of human beings, those who are misled...we are missing some manuscript there.

When it picks up, JI says he too has a vision he needs interpreted. Sees himself being stoned by the other disciples and a great house and he wants to get into that house. JC says being stoned they hate JI for what he is, will be persecuted and unable to enter that house which is reserved for the holy, and mortals cannot go there. JC launches into a description how the divine realm and world came into being, which is bizarre and difficult to understand, a version of Gnostic myth, explaining how the divine realm and the world came into being. The world is not the creation of the One True God, but an inferior divine being.

One of these divine beings is Nebro and another is Sakla. Nebro is a term that means rebel, stained with blood. Sakla helps Nebro create the world. Sakla is an Aramaic word meaning fool. A bloodthirsty rebel and a fool created this world. JI in particular is going to be prominent among those who are saved because he understands and does what is required. JC tells him you will exceed all of them because you will sacrifice the man that clothes me. In other words, his act of betrayal is his faithful obedience to his will. JC needs to die to escape and return to the divine realm and JI will make it happen, the hero not the villain. JI has a vision of his own exhaltation and

glorification. It ends with the betrayal, then the conclusion, the GJI. In the ancient world, titles were given at the end of a book.

So that is the Gospel of Judas.

What about its significance? As a variety of early Christianity? Probably the most important article is Marvin Meyer's essay in this book. One that I didn't include is Marvin Meyer's which is the most important piece of scholarship thus far. Everything I am telling you is preliminary. In 30 years people may think differently – that is how scholarship goes. There are already differences of opinions from those who have studied in Coptic, but Meyer argues this Gospel is best understood as a form of Gnosticism representing Sethian Gnosticism.

IV Judas and Varieties of Early Christianity.

A. Sethian Gnosticism: we know about these from NH, Sethian Gnostic books. They revered Seth. Some revered Cain. You got Cain and Abel, Abel is murdered, and a 3rd son named Seth who is not just a righteous human being born to Adam and Eve, but a preexistent divine being, the first Gnostic on the planet. The Sethians told various myths and Meyer argues very similar. The divine names given in other Gnostic texts. Barbelo, Autogenes, Sakla, and Nebro, are similar to Sethian Gnosticism. My own opinion he has gone too far that it is Sethian and all you need to say.

B. Non-Sethian Gnosticism: To me it shows connection with many kinds of early Christianity, Elaine Pagels and others, early Christianity was extremely diverse. Lots of connections, for example non-Sethian Gnosticism. Here are some of the features:

- 1. Revelation is to an outsider:** For example, the Gospel of MM: became popular and discovered in 1898, been around for a 100 years but not read 'til recently. JI has some connections with GM, both say a secret knowledge

not to an insider but to an outsider. The secret revelation was usually to insiders, to John, or Peter, one of the insiders, but GJI the betrayer gets the revelation, and in GMM, you have this interesting situation where the disciples talk among themselves trying to remember what Jesus taught them. Peter asks MM what she had heard, she launches into revelation given to her and her alone. Another piece missing, right where she starts saying what Jesus revealed, there are 4 pages missing. Then how the soul can ascend to various levels of heaven. The disciples having discussion did JC reveal this to a woman? Not to the men, but to a woman! A big argument well I guess it is possible, so end of the story. GJI another example of JC giving revelation to an outsider.

2. Laughter: cf Basilides and Apocalypse of Peter: In NT, JC does not laugh. In GJI he laughs 4 times, because the disciples are misunderstanding the truth. They think they understand but they don't. JC laughs, not only in this gospel. We have known about a gospel allegedly written by Basilides a Gnostic, not a Sethian, we don't have his gospel but only references in Irenaeus who wrote 150 years after. He tells us what was in this Gospel. One part of it is the crucifixion scene. According to Basilides something strange happened at the crucifixion, they believed he could not suffer. When Jesus is going to be crucified Simon was carrying the cross, so Jesus pulled an identity switch, he looked like Simon and Simon looked like himself, so the Romans crucified the wrong guy. He stood by watching Simon getting crucified and laughing. Presumably Simon did not find it so funny, so JC laughs when others are not understanding. Another one from NH, I mentioned the Apocalypse of Peter, turned up with the same title but unrelated, again Jesus laughs. A very strange scene where Peter is standing on a hill looking down below him talking with JC standing next to him. He sees him down below being arrested. What is it I am seeing? He watches and they crucify him. Simon Peter

sees the Christ above the cross laughing while JC is being crucified. Jesus what am I seeing? Christ says he is seeing the crucifixion but the Christ above the cross is laughing at people who think they can harm him. His exterior body is being crucified but his real being is laughing. Jesus is not the flesh and blood being but a divine being laughing at those who think creation came from the true God. This idea of laughter outside the Sethian Circle.

C. Non-Gnostic features: 1. Ignorant disciples: Marcion 2. Apocalyptic concerns: remnants of apocalyptic thought. Historical conclusions

In Marcion, a 2nd century figure, he thought the creator god is not the true god. Some of my students resonate with the idea that God of OT not the same as God of NT. Well, a God of wrath vs a God of love. Marcion said literally there are 2 different gods. The OT God cannot be the God of Jesus. In the OT God gives children of Israel the promised land. There was already somebody living there. The only way to live there is to kill and drive others out, the Middle East problems seen in Joshua, city of Jericho is occupied. March around 7 days, blow the trumpets and the 7th day slaughter every man, woman and child in the city. Marcion says is this the same god that says love your enemy, turn the cheek? Slaughter everyone? No, does not sound like the same god, there are 2 different gods. The god of the OT is a wrathful vengeful god, and God of JC sent to save people from the god of wrath.

Elijah calls down the wrath of god on some boys, is this the same god that says let the little children come unto me? He thought the disciples never got it. Marcion says they didn't understand that it was not the same god. Why God called Paul, so he can convert the gentiles. Why wasn't it one of the original disciples? Because they never got it, they thought it was the god of the Jews. Only Paul understood according to Marcion.

Finally quickly, how do I do this quickly? There is nothing in the Gnostic system that makes you concerned about how the world will end. They do not worry about end of the world. But a lot of apocalyptic thinkers in early Christianity were concerned about the end. He created and will redeem us. People will be raised bodily from the dead a bodily afterlife, God will redeem bodies which are subject to sin, death, and corruption. A new world will come -- a physical world. Gnostics did not think so. Your spirit escapes the material world. GJI never narrates the resurrection, because there is not gonna be one. His body would come back to life if you have a resurrection but the point is to escape the body. Even though they think the body is a problem there are remnants of apocalyptic thinking in the GJI, what is gonna happen when no need for a sun or moon, like in Revelation, no sun or moon because God is the Light.

Remnants of apocalypticism because it emerges out of an apocalyptic world view. Gnosticism probably arose from Jewish apocalyptic world view. People thought if we are living in the present evil, the kingdom of humans, things are awful but there will be a new time, the kingdom of God, a form of horizontal dualism shifted on its axis to a vertical dualism. What is important is when your soul escapes and returns to its heavenly home. **This vertical dualism became the point of view Christians have today. Horizontal dualism is what Jesus saw.** The apocalyptic view was the world will end soon. This world will not pass away 'til some of you will not taste death, end right away but it never came. You flip the axis so the concern is not the future but what will happen when you die, what you get in GJI, it emerged out of apocalyptic thinking.

For my money a very interesting and important text showing all these connections with early Christianity, and raises questions about who JI was. I do not think it is historically accurate, written about a 100 years, around 130-140 CE embodies a Gnostic view not the view of JC himself. But it does raise the historical question: who was JI, was he a bad guy, or good guy, why did he betray and what did he betray? I will stop there for questions.

Questions:

The fragments you saw in Akron Ohio, do they fill in some of the 80-85%?

The NG photographed them before I saw them and already put them in, they have provided us with some portions we did not have before. Some fragments known to Kasser while this translation was being done, the book going to press, frantically trying to get it as complete. When I say 85% it includes those.

What is an agnostic? A Gnostic knows. An agnostic is somebody who does not know. An Agnostic negates it. A theist is somebody believes in god. Atheist says no god. These are modern terms, an agnostic they do not know if God exists or not.

What would happen to a human being who did have the divine spark and dies without the knowledge? The spark is reincarnated. The Gnostics were widely attacked by church fathers on all sorts of grounds. Typically happens you make up things about them. They made up things about them. One of them probably wrong, accused them of being immoral and licentious. Gnostics don't think the body matters, therefore it does not matter what you do with your body. The church fathers accused them of wild sexual orgies, they didn't think the body mattered. Gnostics had the opposite point of view, since the body is the problem you should not be tied to it, and physical pleasure should be denied. Moreover they carried this into the sexual realm, so you don't engage in procreative sex, because if you do, you are creating more bodies that can be prisons for the spirit, the divine spark. Spirit is reincarnated 'til it escapes.

Why would you not from the moment you receive the secret knowledge commit suicide?

You might as well get out of here once you get the knowledge. We actually do not know. Ancient people as a rule did not condemn suicide per se. Many Christians today think of it as a sin, even

unpardonable. That idea that suicide is a sin is not an originally Christian view. Early Christians didn't think of it as sinful nor did Jews. Some suicides in bible are not seen as sin.

James Tabor the noble death, suicide was not condemned, some instances it is right to take your life and most where it is not. They were parts of ancient civilizations where in some instances suicide was seen as OK. Their secret knowledge had to be conveyed and if you kill yourself you can't liberate other people.

We came across a group in CA -- Rosicrucians an Egyptian thing, are they Gnostic? I do not know if they call themselves Gnostic. One time years ago when I gave one of these talks there was this elderly woman on the back row kept raising her hand and kept correcting me. Afterward she came up... you may have noticed I corrected you. Yeah, I noticed. Because I am a Gnostic, then you would know! It turned out from CA, belonged to a Gnostic church, go to LA or SF they list Gnostic churches, not historically connected. With discovery of NH, people started Gnostic churches. This specific group I do not know.

The portrait John in 4G portrays is it Gnostic also? Large debates among scholars whether John should be seen as Gnostic, or anti-gnostic. It sounds like anti-gnostic, in the beginning was God, the Word became flesh and lived among us, sounds anti-gnostic. On the other hand, some things sound Gnostic. JC is completely divine, comes from divine world to reveal the truth of the divine realm. Matthew, Mark, Luke say nothing about coming from divine world. He comes that you know the truth and the truth will set you free-sounds Gnostic. Gnosticism did not exist when John was written, a later development. But Gnostics loved the 4G, interesting enough the first biblical commentary written by a Christian about 170 a commentary on the 4G, he was a Gnostic.

This last lecture on the historical JI. My interest was literary not historical. In what way does it point out a Gnostic view, but now want to talk about JI the man, what did he stand for? What do we

know about his life, his personality, his association with JC, why did he betray JC and what did he betray?

Let me begin by basic historical criteria one will apply to understand any figure from the past. Most people don't think much about how we know anything from the past. Some people think they are born with an innate knowledge of what happened. They know who JC was, but how do you know about him or Caesar Augustus, or Abraham Lincoln? The reality is you have sources from the period that tell you about the person. They have to go back to the lifetime, or you don't have a source of knowledge. Figures in the past, 2 sources, historically accurate sources and sources that make it up, two options. There are both with JC.

If you're dealing with George Washington, and the cherry tree – it was made up – we know this. The guy who made it up confessed to doing it -- Parson Wien, ironic -- he actually believes his lies. He made it up. The story functions as historical propaganda, national propaganda, trying to say something about the father of this country. An honest man, one time as a kid....

So the story is not told in Tehran, but in the U.S. which is founded on honesty. This country cannot tell a lie, so the story goes. Other bits of information about him are accurate and also about JC. You know things are made up, stuff in the GJI did not happen. JC did not come upon them celebrating Eucharist and laugh at them. Somebody made those stories up. The question is when reading ancient stories, how do you know what is made up? It isn't good enough that your Sunday School teacher or pastor told you. They got it from a book. Where did the author get it? Most who are writing are not historians and do not read the ancient languages. Somebody ultimately read ancient sources. How many stories go back to the man JC and how many were made up? How do you know which is which? Historians have to figure out how to get back to the past because so much of that is not accurate.

We have particular problems with Socrates, Caesar, Simon Peter, MM, you will have problems. Specifically with JC and JI, what you

would like the best if you had a lot of sources that were written during their lifetimes. A lot of sources written in their lifetimes, by people who didn't have biases about the subject matter, who agreed in what they said but did not collaborate with one another. They independently give you the same information.

That is what you would like: contemporary, corroborating, independent but we have nothing in his lifetime. You'd like stuff without a bias, not just Christian sources but non-Christian. We have the 4Gs, and Gospel of Thomas, Philip, Mary. From non-Christian would be useful to know what they would say about JC. The problem is we don't have any non-Christian sources. When you look at Roman, Greek, non-Jewish, non-Christian records, accounts of the trial of JC, or anything among pagan sources, what do you find?

Within the first Christian century, 30 CE up to 100 CE, you find NOTHING. No source that talks about him, his name never occurs in any Roman or Greek writing. We have philosophers, poets, natural scientists, personal correspondence, inscriptions on buildings and JC is never mentioned in any of them. The first pagan source, Roman or Greek, Pliny the Younger, a governor of a Roman province, in 112 CE, 80 years after his death.

There must be reasons why they didn't talk about him, but the point is knowing what they say, they do not say anything 'til later. Jewish source, Josephus, writing 60 years after, says that he lived, a Jew, in Palestine, crucified by Pontius Pilate. It is useful to know a Jewish historian did his homework a 20 volume work and one paragraph so it is not a lot. A lot of other people named Jesus, a common name. So you do not have sources you would say are unbiased. Not that they are worthless but written by Christians and you have to take that into consideration.

The oldest source is Apostle Paul, about 20-25 years after JC's death but he does not tell us much historically. Our earliest extensive information sources are the 4G, but unfortunately 30-50-60 years after by people who did not know him, in a different language in a different country to a different audience. Part of the problem not just

30-60 years later you compare them a lot of discrepancies between them. If they have discrepancies, they both cannot be right, one can be, or neither can be, so treat them somewhat gingerly. How do you deal with no sources in his lifetime, or unbiased sources, and they disagree and there was collaboration between them. The synoptics – they got their source from Mark and elsewhere. Some people say well, we cannot know anything.

It has become a live question people I am getting 2-3 emails a week from people asking me whether I think JC existed which is mind-boggling. Of course he existed! In Sweden, the vast majority do not think JC existed. I am actually quoted in sources there saying he did not exist, which is obviously wrong. Something got misquoted. I certainly think he existed and it is wrong to throw up our hands and saying we cannot know. We need to look at what is trustworthy, vs. what was said to convert people to Jesus, and magnifying what happened.

Let me tell 3 criteria to apply:

First if you have a tradition independent in more than one source, more likely to be historically accurate. No one of them made it up, the others are independent with the same source, they go back to an earlier source, **independent attestation**. All agree a Jew growing up in Palestine, crucified under Pontius Pilate. Jesus associated with John the Baptist, in Mark and in Q. It is in John, 3 sources independent of one another.

Second criterion strikes people as somehow backwards but predicated when Christians told stories about JC they would shape it in light of their own concerns and interests:

If we have a story that does not coincide with their interests that cuts against their interest, not something early Christians would have made up, so probably more historical if dissimilar to what they wanted to say about him. A couple of examples. The idea that he was raised in Nazareth, an unknown place, which was not mentioned in OT or by Josephus. And Nazareth

is not on any ancient map, a hamlet no one knew. If you made up a story about where the Savior of the World was raised, it would be Rome, Bethlehem, so if it says he came from Nazareth, that is more likely accurate.

Who would make up a story that he was baptized by John the Baptist? Especially since John the Baptist baptized for the remission of sin, and it is in all our sources that JC was baptized. Jesus being betrayed by one of his closest followers – maybe an outsider would make that up, but he had no more authority than he got turned in by one of his own? It is independently attested and dissimilar to expectations.

If you can't fit it into first century context it is probably not accurate. Palestinian setting. The stories in GJI portrayed as Gnostic makes sense in 2nd century outside of Palestine but not credible for someone in his era in Palestine.

By applying these criteria we can say some things about Judas to understand what he was all about. So what can we say for certain about JI?

First thing this is his name. Iscariot is not his last name. Peasants did not have last name. Students think Jesus' last name was Christ, but it means Messiah. A lot of people in ancient world had the same name. In the NT what typically happens is people are identified by some distinguishing feature. A lot of Mary's that get confused, Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary of Bethany, Mary of Magdala, what village she grew up in Gallilee. The Aramaic word for tower is Migdal, she comes from the town of the tower, so she is not the same person as Mary from Bethany who had a sister, Martha. MM from Migdal, Mary mother of Joseph, etc.

Judas is called Iscariot because of other people in NT, Jude or Judas. Jesus had a brother, Jude. Another Jude or Judas is one of the disciples, Judas not Iscariot. Why Iscariot? We don't know what Iscariot means. About 30 different ideas floated over the years, here are 6 views:

Hebrew word *Sacare*, to stop up, maybe referring to hanging himself, his throat stopped up. Another Hebrew phrase somebody who makes money out of friendship. Another means liar. Aramaic word *Iscar*, in Aramaic means a ruddy complexion. Through the middle ages he was portrayed as a redneck. More commonly people have heard it comes from the Latin word, meaning dagger. Some Jews at time of Jesus, the *Sicarii*, from *Sica* meaning dagger. Kind of Jewish assassins against Rome assassinated Romans whenever they could. In a crowd come up in a hidden dagger and then escape. They were zealots to force the Romans out of the promised land. Maybe JI was a zealot wanting violent overthrow of the Romans, so that is why he betrayed him. That is one explanation.

The problem with all these explanations in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Latin Iscariot is not related to any of these terms. The best guess it comes from 2 Hebrew words *Ish* (man) from the village of *Karioth*. Maybe identifying where he came from. Two places in Hebrew Bible named *Karioth* but centuries before the days of Jesus, no archeological findings that it existed at that time. Some merit even by the time you get to 4Gs, they no longer knew what the name was. One of the certain pieces of information we have but we do not know what it means.

The other piece of certain information is he betrayed Jesus, virtually certain, independently attested, in later traditions, not the sort of thing anyone would make up. We go to the question, what did he do and why?

III What did he actually do? A. Problems with standard answer. B. Pointers to a solution. C. Solving the mystery, Jesus private instruction.

Standard answer JC came to Jerusalem during Passover Feast, JC from Galilee and last week he went to the south to Jerusalem, the annual festival commemorating Exodus under Moses. In JC's day, the place to celebrate was in Jerusalem, buy a lamb to be sacrificed and go home and eat lamb as part of the ritual meal prescribed in Exodus

by Moses. So many Jews came -- the biggest time -- the size of city would swell, and the Romans knew Passover was a potential incendiary time in Jerusalem. Jews celebrating the Exodus, being delivered from their oppressors in Egypt. An incendiary time because they were looking forward to the future. This time they are under Rome, but God did it before, he will again save us from our oppression, not a politically innocent festival, all hoping God will intervene again. The time Romans were very concerned. The Roman governor lived in Caesarea on the coast but during Passover come in with troops to quell any riots, stationing soldiers around the Temple. We know there were uprisings from the writings of Josephus talked about riots that Romans would quell by killing the leaders as well as innocent people. JC came to Jerusalem this week, and probably gathered a crowd talking about the coming kingdom. He thought God would overthrow evil forces very soon. What is the evil kingdom? It is Rome, they will be overthrown. He preaches this day by day in time leading up to Passover. Romans recognize a problem with this kind of preaching.

So I think it is certain JC went to Passover the last week of his life, arrested, put on trial, and crucified. The standard answer to what JI did, he told the authorities where he was when he was not in front of the crowd. Crowds gather thinking God will do something, he is not inciting rebellion but people are stirred. Jewish authorities have a vested interest in making sure no riots, collaborated with Rome, so their worship, the Temple, a happy compromise we can worship as we should be worshipping. They knew that riots would be against their interests, the Jewish authorities wanted him arrested without a riot.

I have had trouble accepting the standard answer, probably because I have watched too many late night detective novels/spy movies. Why did they have to pay an informer? Why didn't they just follow him? I don't understand why they need JI for this. Is there some other answer to what JI might have done. My research on this book I had this idea before but the more I thought about it, maybe another answer.

One thing about JC virtually certain he was crucified by PP the governor, the Roman authority. PP came with his troops, all our sources agree he was crucified by PP, all the way through Paul, Acts, Josephus, the earliest pagan sources mention this. It turns out the **crucifixion passes criterion of dissimilarity**. Many today think he was supposed to be crucified but prior to Christianity no Jews thought the Messiah would be crucified. In other literature not someone who will suffer and die but the king who rules, a powerful figure of grandeur and might, a General of the Jewish army to drive them out, to be the head of this kingdom. Not supposed to be crucified. When JC was crucified that was the evidence for most Jews he could not be the Messiah, so that is why Paul says the crucifixion is the stumbling block. Christians came up with the idea he was supposed to be crucified, Jesus was crucified, the Messiah had to be crucified, therefore he is the Messiah. To Jews this was non-sense.

I do this every year with my students, making an analogy. If I say David Koresh is the Lord of the universe. DK? Abusing children, stockpiling weapons? You gotta be crazy. You mean that guy that was crucified? He was a criminal! Christians said he is the Messiah, the argument between Jews and Christians. It was such a stumbling block, must be accurate historically. Christians would not make it up it cut against their argument that he was the Messiah. Oh, he was crowned as King and drove out the Romans, could not make that up because it didn't happen.

A piece of certain historical knowledge that JC was crucified. Only Romans crucified, Jewish authorities did not have power over executions. He was not stoned to death, it was a Roman form of execution. There had to be charges against him. They did not crucify him for no reason at all. Reading books about historical Jesus.

Roman governors did not say we want you to hate us, so we are gonna kill this person who loved. People today some well known scholars Crossan, has argued best understood as cynic philosopher of the first century. Cynic philosophers in Greco-Roman world, insisted for you to be happy should not be attached to anything in this world. Suppose what really makes you happy is a fantastic job. What if you

get fired? Then you are unhappy. You can't always hold on to your job, by not being attached to your job or your possessions. A fantastic house burns down, do not be attached to anything that can be taken away from you, your possessions, family, job, your house. Things over which you have no control. Cynics said you shouldn't be attached to your yacht. You shouldn't have a yacht, if you give up on everything that can be taken away, that is why they were called cynic. Like like a dog, without any possessions. Crossan says JC was like that, should not be attached to anything.

Look at the birds of the air, they do not reap or sow, God feeds and cloths you, sounds like a cynic philosopher. Why did they kill him? What is the logic of that? Must be some other explanation, something about him that makes sense of his death. What was his public proclamation?

When you ask this in relation to his death, we know what the charge against him was; he was calling himself King of the Jews. That is independently attested in our sources; that was a good reason to kill him. Who is really the king? Not an itinerant preacher, but the Romans appoint the King, and people under to rule the provinces. You are claiming to usurp authority of Rome. He was killed on political causes, it passes criterion of dissimilarity.

Christians never used the phrase king of the Jews, never except at the trial, it is the only place in the NT it appears -- Not used by his followers. They would not have made it up at his trial, not a term they used, but instead they used references to the Lord, the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Son of God. So it must be historical. Pilate killed him for claiming being King of Jews but he did not call himself King of the Jews, never recorded calling himself King of the Jews.

How to explain this? Crucified for calling himself King of the Jews but he did not. A mystery I want to solve, I think JI is the solution. JC certainly preached a kingdom coming to earth, the heart of his teaching throughout Mark, Q, only in Matthew or Luke, the coming kingdom. He was talking actual kingdom on earth that God would

rule. It would come very soon. People would enter if they followed his teaching, first thing he said in Mark, the kingdom is at hand, repent and believe the good news. This age is almost over, time has been fulfilled, it is almost here. Repent and believe, that is how you enter into the kingdom when it comes and it will soon arrive. He taught about coming kingdom.

Second, they would be rulers of the kingdom. He chose 12, because they represent the 12 tribes of Israel, the disciples will be 12 rulers over the 12 tribes in the kingdom of God. **Q source passes flying colors of criterion of dissimilarity**, JC says when the kingdom arrives you 12 will be seated on 12 thrones ruling in the kingdom of God. It passes criterion of dissimilarity, anybody living after Jesus' death would not make up this saying, because all 12 will be rulers and JI was one of the 12. They would not make up that JI would be a ruler, but JC says all 12 will be rules.

This raises a question, who is the Messiah gonna be in this kingdom? Comes from Greek word meaning anointed one. The kingdom of Israel anointed by God to be the ruler, the Messiah the future one who would rule, who would be the king? He taught them they would rule over the 12 tribes, he chose them, leads them now, in the future kingdom it will be JC my hypothesis.

My hypothesis he taught the disciples not only they would be rulers he would be the Messiah, but he did not make it part of his public proclamation or tell other people. For good reason, he would find himself arrested. He didn't teach it publicly but in private.

What did JI betray? It does not make sense he told them where he could be found because they could have found him by other means. I think he told them he said he'd be king of the coming kingdom.

What did JI betray? The insider information available to the 12, only then is JC calling himself the future king of the kingdom. It makes sense why he was called King of the Jews, which he never said publicly. JI actually betrayed insider information, which is the kind of information they needed to turn him

over for execution. It makes sense of the crucifixion so I think he betrayed the insider information.

Why did the Jews do it? Various explanations. Matthew for cash, Luke, the devil made him do it. All of these may be right, but 3 other possibilities.

First one occurred to me doing research, a couple things struck me in Mark, when the authorities arrest him, JI said take him off securely. Usually take him off under arms so he cannot escape but can also means take him off so no harm comes to him. In the gospel of Matthew, after JC is condemned JI feels remorse and returns the silver. It doesn't make sense unless he did not expect him to be condemned to death. If Mark means take him off make sure no harm comes to him, isn't it possible he betrayed him –

Jesus been teaching in Galilee, crowds are excited but trouble on the horizon, people getting upset and afraid of a riot, JI afraid something bad is gonna happen wants him taken out of the way so they can go back home. Find out nothing to these charges release him after Passover. But they arrest him put him on trial for being King of the Jews. It is possible JI thought he was protecting him. Not sure I believe that, but a possibility.

Second possibility JI a zealot wanting to drive the Romans out by force, wanted JC to force his hand, the Romans had to be driven out but he is not calling out Jewish forces and doing what he needs to do. Maybe betrayed him hoping the crowd would help, there would be a riot and JC would be king of the kingdom.

I am not sure JI would be a zealot.

3rd I find most attractive but not weeded to it, most plausible, betrayed him out of frustration, the tragic all out appearance of the end. JC proclaiming the end is coming soon, overthrow the forces of evil and it will happen imminently, soon. Time goes on it does not happen, the end does not come. They go to Jerusalem JI thinks it will come now and realizes it is not gonna happen. Out of frustration and

anger turns on his teacher and hands him over to the authorities. Out of frustration the end never came. To me this is the most plausible but I leave it open.

I am reasonably convinced that the idea of what he betrayed. JC was calling himself the future king of Jews, the authorities wanted something to hand him over, they found a disciple who told them he was calling himself a king, all they needed. Pontius put him on trial, and asked him are you the king of the Jews? He got insider information from JI, what he betrayed.

Questions:

Did Judas think if he is the Son of God, God will intervene, and if not I do not want to be a part? Yeah, could be.

Are there other copies? ...the copy we now have, 150 years later in Coptic, we know Irenaeus knew about it, and 4th century fathers knew, more copies might turn up.

Why was he arrested by Jewish authorities? The way I understand it one of the things we know with relative certainty of that last week, the week began by going into the Temple causing a ruckus. The Gospels indicate he shut down the entire temple, but that does not work because it is enormous. If you've ever been there – it is like 40 football fields, very large. One man turning over a few tables would not make sense, but does make sense he caused a minor disturbance, because it is multiply attested. My hunch is JC thought the end was coming and God would intervene and other prophets before him when God overthrows it will include the Jewish leaders. Jeremiah and others also. Upset the temple authorities who were also civil authorities of the Jews, Sadducees the aristocrats, the high priest a Sadducee. The temple authorities subject him to judgment -- they decide to get him out of the way, they could not execute but then he was turned over to PP. PP has the power of life and death. Almost every day PP probably ordered other people to die, 2 others died on that same day. Three of them crucified for

probably similar concerns which is why I think Jewish authorities did it -- not the Romans -- beside what happened in the temple.

Were other uprisings dealt with by crucifixion? They sometimes just killed them on the spot. The 2 with Jesus may have been involved in some government activity. In John, the word used and Josephus also uses the word – it is not 'robber.' It implies people engaging in political activities. In 70 CE a Jewish uprising they crucified the entire uprising. They ran out of lumber, lining the streets.

Historical evidence of Barabbas. Pilate wants JC off the hook has the custom of releasing one during Passover, Barabbas vs. JC, we want B, crucify JC, it is multiply attested, but I can't imagine that it is historically accurate. What we know about PP, is he was so fierce that the Romans got fed up with him 7-8 years later. There's no record of him releasing political criminals on behalf of a crowd. It does not seem plausible. If the name B is interesting -- Bar Abba, son of father, so ironic -- which son of god do you want? A son of father a political rebellion or Son of God JC teaching about the future kingdom? They choose the zealot, voted for violence overthrowing Rome not the coming kingdom.

In some accounts JC comes to Jerusalem in the name of the Lord and future kingdom, it is independently attested in Mark and John but strikes me as implausible. If he went a week ahead of time while they were waving palms declaring him Son of God, they would have arrested him right away, but he was in the Temple for days. There may be parts of it that are accurate, maybe rode in on a donkey, but later Christians might have blown it up a bit.

At the last supper, there are accounts of him predicting Judas would betray him. Is that historically accurate? In my opinion it does not pass the test of dissimilarity. Christians later on were trying to explain to themselves and one another: Surely he would have known because he was Son of God, so they say he predicted, rather than interpreting it later. He knew it all along, but not sure that is historically accurate.

Does JC not say My kingdom not of this world, in John. No longer talking about future kingdom but the world above.

What about the other manuscripts found at the same time?

One of the 3 manuscripts missing -- a Greek mathematical text how math worked in the ancient world, using roman numerals, what is XV times C? 2nd a Greek Exodus, one of the earliest Greek OT, the 3rd Coptic of letters of Paul would be the earliest in the Coptic language. It would be of equal importance to JI.

Bibliography

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Kasser, Rodolphe, Meyer, Marvin, Wurst, Gregor (with additional commentary by Bart D. Ehrman) (2006). **The Gospel of Judas**. Washington, DC: National Geographic.

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Pagels, Elaine & King, Karen L. (2007). **Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity**. NY: Viking.

This book is written by two scholars who are true specialists in the Gnostic writings. They provide their own translation of GJI, with a verse-by-verse commentary. They integrate the GJI with the 4th Gospel as well as various other Gnostic sources. This book was much more satisfying to me than the foregoing books because it provides much more context and help in making sense of GJI in light of the four canonical gospels and other Gnostic books. Since it includes a

translation of GJI, it stands on its own without need for the other books. It ties the GJI to doctrinal controversies that were raging in the 2nd century CE.

