

Class

MANIFESTING THE NEW AGE: JESUS' MIRACLES

Outline

- Dig Team: Galilee
- Preaching the Rule of God
 - Jesus' Core Message: The Rule of God
 - Why we think it's historical
 - Political significance
- Manifesting the New Age: Jesus' Miracles
 - Archaeological evidence for the belief in signs
 - Sign terminology in the texts
 - Historical appraisal of sign stories
 - How the signs matter

Jesus' Core Message: The Rule of God

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

Jesus' Core Message:

The Rule of God

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

Jesus vs. Rome's King

Delegates sent out

^{6-9b} send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Jesus vs. Rome's King

The King hears of it

¹⁴King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

Jesus vs. Rome's King

We hear how this King treats his people

²⁷For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. ²⁸For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ²⁹And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ³⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ³¹But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ³²When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." ³³And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ³⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." ³⁵Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ³⁶The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ³⁷Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ³⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ³⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Jesus vs. Rome's King

We hear how Jesus (the true King) treats his people

³⁹The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ⁴¹And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ⁴²Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ⁴³As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. ⁴⁴When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; ⁴⁵send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." ⁴⁶But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" ⁴⁷And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." ⁴⁸Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁹So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. ⁵⁰Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. ⁵¹And all ate and were filled; ⁵²and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁵³Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

Signs that Perform the Kingdom of God

Luke 4:16-21

¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." [Isaiah 61:1-2]

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Archaeological Evidence for the Belief in Signs

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

A Greek Magical Papyrus, Translated (sort of)



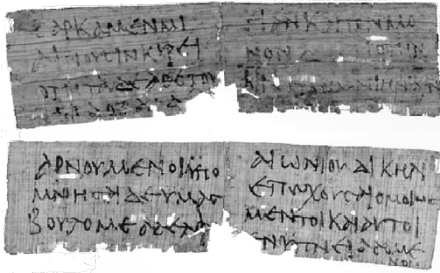
PGM VII. 335-47
*Charm for a direct vision: If you want to see yourself, take a fly and Coptic cyprus, grind them, and smear them on your eyes. Take a feather of an ibis 14 fingers long, smear it with perfume of roses or lilies, wind around it a linen cloth, and hold it with your hands as a scroll. Then say this, while looking to the side with the left eye.
Formula: "MOON EIPORIS EU PHETRA NOUTHI" THIS SENE SIOCHI NETHI"
CHRECHERO SINDONEN MOUCHI OROUO ENTHERINI" JOE MOUCHACHI NEMO
MOUCHOCHI MOUNEI ENIME CHREMOU KENENE SON SNEI OS MOUCHOROGO
ENTHERINI / ANOR SOS ERMAIHO ENTHESMOUTOCHNE CHREMOU TEBAS
PETH" KETHOCHI EAM TEROCHNE SCHENE PHMOO CHNOO NTHOCHON
SOUNEUMOI INONRE."
*E. W. G. OSG.

Another Greek magical papyrus

An Incantation Bowl



POxy 2684: An Amulet of the Epistle of Jude?



SIGN TERMINOLOGY IN THE TEXTS

Sign Terminology

Four Terms

Our English terms obscure the original meanings

miracle (from Latin *miraculum*)

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

wonder

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

HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF SIGNS STORIES

Historical Appraisal of Signs Stories

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

Historical Appraisal of Signs Stories

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

How the Signs Matter NOT as wonders

Matthew 12:38-42

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!"

Mark 8:11-12

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation."

Luke 11:29-32

When the crowds were increasing, he began to say,

"This generation is an evil generation; it asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here! The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!"

How the Signs Matter Pointing to the Reign of God

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

How do these stories demonstrate or reinforce the rule of God?
