

Class 10a

## HOW JESUS BECAME GOD TRAJECTORIES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Questions

- What is the “scope” of your gospel – that is, where does it focus the story of Jesus?
- How is your gospel’s picture of Jesus similar to and different from the historical Jesus, and the Jesus of the canonical gospels?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Outline

- Old Testament models for the New Testament Christ
- The Gospel Spectrum: from low to high Christologies
- A canon shaped by theological debate
- Where do the apocryphal gospels fit?
  - Gnostic gospels: Thomas, Mary
  - An apocryphal passion gospel: Peter

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## OLD TESTAMENT MODELS FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRIST

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Old Testament Figures

Fused to Christ

- Adamic *Romans 5:12-21*
- Davidic (king) *Matthew 1:1-17; 27:27-37*
- Melchizedek (priest) *Hebrews 4:14-5:10*
- Moses (prophet) *Matthew 1:18-5*
- Danielic (heavenly agent) *Mark 15:53-65*
- Logos *John 1:1-8*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Adamic Christology

Romans 5:12-21

*Jesus is the antithesis of Adam*

- |                                                 |                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ Adam is the first human of the old creation   | ▪ Jesus is the first human of the new creation |
| ▪ One trespass caused judgment and condemnation | ▪ One free gift brings grace and justification |
| ▪ Sin and death enter through one man           | ▪ Righteousness and life enter through Christ  |

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Davidic Christology

Matthew 1:1-17; 27:27-37

*Jesus is messiah  
promised to David*

- Connects to earlier Jewish paradigm of kingly messiah
- Genealogy
  - David is mentioned in v. 1
  - David is one of the pivot points in the 3 groupings (v. 17)
  - David's name is hidden in the number "14" (D=4, V=6, D=4)
- Trial and Crucifixion
  - Mocked as king
  - Charged as pretender "King of the Jews"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Melchizedek Christology

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

*Jesus is priest  
AND sacrifice*

- Connects to earlier paradigm of priestly messiah
- He exceeds Melchizedek/regular high priest
  - He has passed through the heavens (v. 14)
  - He is without sin (4:15)
  - God appointed him (5:5-6)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Moses Christology

Matthew 1:18-5

*Jesus is not only prophet  
but son of God;  
not law receiver but lawgiver*

- Connects to earlier Jewish paradigm of prophetic messiah
- Jesus' early life is modeled on Moses
  - both survive a pogrom against male children (Matt 2:16-18; see Exod 2:1-10)
  - both are raised in Egypt (Matt 2:13-15; see Exod 2:5-10)
  - both undergo an exodus from Egypt (Matt 2:19-23; see Exod 11-13)
- Jesus is a lawgiver
  - goes up a mountain
  - delivers law

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Danielic Christology

Mark 15:53-65

*Jesus is identified AS the heavenly agent, though at present only HE is judged*

- Connects to earlier Jewish paradigm of "heavenly agent" who would judge humanity
- Jesus claims to BE the Son of Man who will come on the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7:13-14)
  - Jesus is "son of man" (human)
  - But will also come as judge in the future (heavenly agent)
  - This claim is read as blasphemy
    - taking the name of God in vain
    - claiming to be God

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Logos Christology

John 1:1-8

*Jesus is God incarnate—a preexistent figure integrally tied to the world in which we live*

- Connects not to Jewish messianic paradigms but to Platonic philosophy
- Jesus is the WORD (= Logos, in Greek) through whom God created the world (Genesis 1:1–2:4a)
  - he becomes flesh, but is before matter and therefore above/ before the material world
  - the wisdom of God that dwells among humans and mediates between them
    - the world rejects that wisdom because it does not know God
    - but some befriend wisdom and become friends of God

---

---

---

---

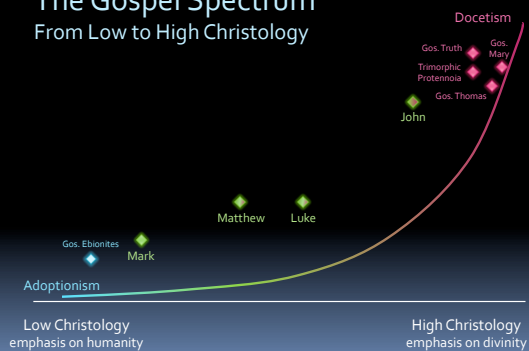
---

---

---

---

## The Gospel Spectrum From Low to High Christology



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## A Canon Shaped by Theological Debate

- **Definition** CANON is a Greek word for a tool of measurement; in scripture studies a list or catalogue of books that "measure up" to the standards of the church as authoritative texts
- **Time-Frame** 4-gospel limit was in place in some communities by 180 CE; earliest canon that matches our NT is in 367 CE (Athanasius' *Easter Letter*)
- **Criteria**
  - **apostolic**, or traceable to one of the apostles
  - **in traditional use**, or in use from an early period in many churches
  - **catholic**, or universal in appeal
  - **orthodox**, or in conformity with emerging mainstream teaching

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## A Canon Shaped by Theological Debate

Canonical Gospels



Gospels

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## A Canon Shaped by Theological Debate

Canonical Gospels



Apocryphal Gospels

Gospels

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

## A Canon Shaped by Theological Debate

In fancy gospels



Adoptionist gospels

Gospels

Other gospels

Docetic & Gnostic gospels

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

## The Debate over Gnosticism



The end of the *Apocryphon of John* and the beginning of the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Gnostic Texts


19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century Discoveries Changed Our Views

**Oxyrhynchus**  
1895-1930

50,000+ fragmentary Greek mss, some of them Christian

**Nag Hammadi**  
1945

13 books with 52 separate "tractates" — 4<sup>th</sup> century copies of earlier gnostic works



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

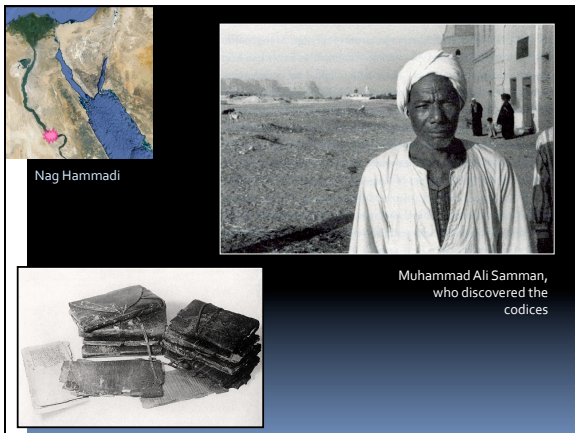
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

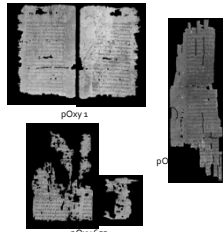
---

## Gospel of Thomas

### Manuscript Evidence

This gospel survives in 4 witnesses

❖ 3 Greek fragments from separate mss found at Oxyrhynchus (100–200s CE)



❖ A Coptic translation found complete in Codex II from the Nag Hammadi corpus (+ XIII 2; 400 CE)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Gospel of Thomas

- **Date** Mid-100s CE, Syria, though some sayings may go back to the first century
- **Genre** Sayings gospel, like Q; almost no narrative material
- **Gospel comparison** Some sayings are very similar to Q, but there are also unusual sayings
- **Content** Jesus reveals the secret of the disciples' origin; the world and human body are viewed negatively; the kingdom is the divine self of the disciple



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Gospel of Thomas

### Logion 56

Jesus said, "Whoever has come to know the world has discovered a carcass, and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy."



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Gospel of Thomas

Logion 114



Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life."

Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the domain of heaven."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## A Problem that Gnosticism Addresses

How do you account for the presence of evil in the world?

Basic Platonic Idea	Gnostic Adaptation	Orthodox Adaptation
Supreme God ↓ Demiurge a lesser god who creates this world  ↓ this world is but a shadow of what is in the mind of the supreme God	For gnostics, creation occurs without the permission of the Supreme God ( <i>demiurge = OT God</i> )  So God does a workaround, implanting humans with a spirit / soul / spark of gnosis (= knowledge of their true nature)  Salvation = return to true root; return of spark to light	For orthodox Christians, the "demiurge" is Christ  While "lesser" than the Father, he is of the same nature, so evil does not derive from him  Nor is the world God creates evil. "Sin" is introduced by humans (or Satan) and is redeemed by Christ

---

---

---

---

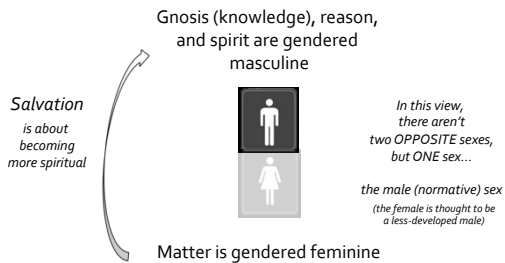
---

---

---

---

## Why Mary Must Become Male to Become a Spirit



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Gospel of Mary

## Manuscript Evidence

This gospel survives in 3 witnesses, none of them found at Nag Hammadi (but all of them from Egypt)

❖ Papyrus No. 463 in the John Rylands collection at the University of Manchester (from Oxyrhynchus, Greek, early 200s CE)

❖ POxy 3525 (Greek, 200s CE)

❖ a Coptic translation at the beginning of the Berlin Papyrus 8502 (a.k.a. the Akhmim Codex, 400s CE)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Gospel of Mary



- **Date** 100s CE, Egypt (or Syria?)
- **Genre** Revelatory dialogue / secret instruction
- **Gospel comparison** Entirely set after the resurrection; Q & A and commissioning of disciples; but content of conversation is gnostic
- **Content** Post-resurrection dialogues with disciples about the destiny of matter and the nature of sin (which the Savior says "does not exist"); Mary then shares the special revelation

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

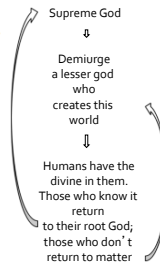
# Gospel of Mary

7.1-9



[The disciples ask] "Will matter then be utterly [destroyed] or not?"

The Savior replied, "Every nature, every modeled form, every creature exists in and with each other. They will dissolve again into their own proper root. For the nature of matter is dissolved into what belongs to its nature. Whoever has ears to hear should hear."



---

---

---

---

---

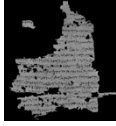
---

---

---

## Gospel of Mary

7.10-20



Then Peter said to him, "You have been explaining every topic to us; tell us one other thing. What is the sin of the world?"

The Savior replied, "There is no such thing as sin; rather, you yourselves are what produces sin when you act in accordance with the nature of adultery, which is called 'sin.' For this reason, the Good came among you, pursuing the good that belongs to every nature. It will set it within its root."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Gospel of Mary

17.10-19.5



Andrew responded, addressing the brothers and sisters, "Say what you will about the things she has said, but I do not believe that the Savior said these things, for indeed these teachings are strange ideas."

Peter responded, bringing up similar concerns. He questioned them about the Savior, "Did he, then, speak with a woman in private without our knowing about it? Are we to turn around and listen to her? Did he choose her over us?"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Gospel of Mary

17.10-19.5



Then Mary wept and said to Peter, "My brother Peter, what are you imagining? Do you think that I have thought up these things by myself in my heart or that I am telling lies about the Savior?"

Levi answered, speaking to Peter, "Peter, you have always been a wrathful person. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. For if the Savior made her worthy, who are you then for your part to reject her? Assuredly the Savior's knowledge is completely reliable. That is why he loved her more than us."

---

---

---

---

---

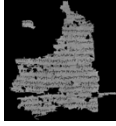
---

---

---

## Gospel of Mary

17.10–19.5



"Rather, we should be ashamed. We should clothe ourselves with the perfect human, acquire it for ourselves as he commanded us, and announce the good news, not laying down any other rule or law that differs from what the Savior said."

After [he said these] things, they started going out [to] teach and to preach.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Gospel of Peter



- **Date** mid-100s CE, Syria?  
Could parts of the passion narrative trace to the first century?
- **Genre** Like the gospels but limited (?) to the passion and resurrection
- **Gospel comparison** Incorporates quotes from the four NT gospels, but Peter character speaks in first person, and there's greater emphasis on the miraculous and thus on the resurrection
- **Content** Pilate washes hands, Jews bear greater responsibility for Jesus' death; resurrection narrated (the cross emerges from the tomb and confirms that Jesus has preached to the dead)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Gospel of Peter

10.38-42



*[When the soldiers at the tomb saw two men come down from heaven in "great brightness" and the tomb stone of itself start to roll away by itself], they awakened the centurion and the elders—for they also were there to assist at the watch. And whilst they were relating what they had seen, they saw again three men come out from the sepulcher, and two of them sustaining the other, and a cross following them, and the heads of the two reaching to heaven, but that of him who was led of them by the hand overpassing the heavens. And they heard a voice out of the heavens crying, "Hast thou preached to them that sleep?" and from the cross there was heard the answer, "Yea."*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---