

THEO 206 - Lesson 1

Friday, September 4, 2015 11:55 AM

Christianity is the faith based on Jesus Christ's

- Life
- Teaching
- Death
- Resurrection and ascension into heaven

He lived about 2000 years ago

The bible contains the Old Testament (OT) and the apocrypha/deuterocanonical books whilst the New Testament (NT) contains 27 books as well as 4 Gospels (a.k.a Good News). These gospels were written 40 to 50 years after the death of Jesus.

Methods of Bible Interpretation

1. **Historical Critical Method**
2. **Literal Method**
3. **Allegorical Method**
4. **Mystical Method**
5. **Moral Method**

The most commonly method used today is the historical critical method. It uses the historical context, has an intended audience (that are not familiar with the hebrew bible) and there is a desired effect of the author (conversion).

The first 3 gospels are the synoptic gospels. They are seen together.

- **These are the gospels of Matthew (Mt), Mark (Mk) and Luke (Lk).** Using the historical critical method scholars were able to pinpoint things about these gospels. They found that they are very similar in contents.
- They established that the gospel of Matthew and Luke were based on the Gospel of Mark which was earlier and a particular source that they refer to as "**Q or Quelle**" which is the german word for source.
- *Thus Matthew and Luke have used the earlier gospel which is the gospel of Mark and Q but no one really knows if it exists. Some believe that it was a notebook of the apostles.*

The historical critical method also was able to established that :

1. The Gospel of Matthew targets a Jewish-Christian audience because Jesus is promoted as the second Moses and as the Messiah.
2. However Gospel of Luke targets a non-Jewish audience or a Gentile audience because it speaks in universal terms. *Also because Luke is trying to explain who Moses was since the audience was unfamiliar with him.*

The Gospel of John (Jn) - The fourth Gospel was somehow established using the same method.

- The fourth Gospel is explaining that Jesus is the Son of God and the Logos of God. He is the incarnate Logos of God (Reason or **the Word of God**).
- *This is a philosophical concept brought on by John to talk about Jesus thus he is different from the other 3 writers of Gospels.*
- There are also apocryphal gospels, they write in secret. They are the Gospel of Peter, Mary Magdalene, Philip, Thomas and Judas. - Most of them come from **Gnostic** circles and are later.

The evangelists along with their symbols in iconography from the "Book of Kells" are

- Matthew the Evangelist, symbolized by a man to represent the human nature of Christ
- Mark the Evangelist, symbolized by a lion to represent Christ as King.
- Luke the Evangelist, symbolized by a bull or a calf, to represent Christ as sacrifice and as priest.
- John the Evangelist, symbolized by an eagle to represent Christ as God.

The Biblical Prophecies

- Jesus was born in the year 0 of the Common Era: CE. (this is the secular alternative to AD, Anno Domini).
- Jesus Parents : Mary and Joseph
- There are Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah being born in Bethlehem.
- The gospels tell us about Jesus's birth, then an episode at age 12 and his life in his 30's.

John the Baptist

- An important Character, was Jesus's forerunner and he baptized people for the forgiveness of their sins.
 - **Jesus's baptism by John has been seen as:**
 - Consecration to God as the Messiah
 - John Publicly announcing that the Messiah has arrive
 - Jesus identifies himself with sinful humanity
 - **After the baptism**
 - Jesus goes on a 40 day retreat in the desert before starting his ministry.
 - Jesus then begins to gather his first disciples - **Simon, Peter, Andrew, James and John.**
 - The emphasis of Jesus's ministry is on spiritual life.

Jesus's Ministry

- **Miracles are seen as signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God ;** There are many miracles in the bible. Miracles suspend natural laws. How does the bible understand that ?
 - Examples.
 - Turning water into wine
 - Healing the sick
 - Restoring life to the dead
 - Casting devils out of the possessed
 - Multiplication of bread.
- **The kingdom is here but not yet realized.**
- *During his ministry. Jesus has performed some miracles. The authors, the audience tries to understand the miracles and are quite reflective as how Jesus understood them. Miracles are signs of the presence of the kingdom God. It's a new reality that Jesus introduced. He talks about it as if it gives us a glimpse of a better world in which there is little suffering and more healing because we live in a world that has a lot of cruelty and suffering.*
- *Jesus refers to these miracles as the signs of the presence of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of god is a new reality, In which there is no or little suffering, in which there is justice and equality and all similar ideals that humanity is striving for.*
- *Scholars looking at what Jesus said have come to understand the message of Jesus an interesting tension between the already here and the not yet fully realized. By "already here" they mean that the kingdom of god is present in what Jesus is doing, healing the blind, raising people from the dead. However these people will continue to die after a while, they will continue to become sick again. There are miracles in which Jesus shows justice and there is still injustice around.*
- *This tension is between the fact is that we have a foretaste of this reality but not a full taste. It is not fully realized. The message of Jesus is that this full realization of the Kingdom of God will not come right now. This tension helps us understand miracles in a way that are not due to the*

suspension of natural laws. Believers continue to hope for a lot of things that we do not see today.

- An exemplification of this kingdom of heaven there are several texts that will give us an idea of how the already view is being presented and the not yet realized view is being presented.
 - In the prayer " Our Father, Matthew Chapter 6 Verses 9 to 13" Our father in our name thy kingdom come. It's an example of the not yet realized view. The kingdom isn't here. The view is sometimes present. Jesus's encounter with John the baptists disciples, they are expecting the Messiah and he does not say yes or no. He says look at my miracles. Regular reality is being suspended and then the new reality is being present when he heals people, forgives people and provides them with justice. The message of Jesus is about the presence of the Kingdom of God, and the connection between miracles and the kingdom of God.

Texts supporting the already view

List	Verses
Matthew (Mt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12.28• 11.5-7• 13.44-46• 22.1-14
Luke (Lk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.16-21• 17.20-21
Mark (Mk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.26-29

- **Matthew 12.28**
 - But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- **Matthew 11:5-7**
 - 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."
 - 7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind?"
- **Matthew 13:44-46**
 - The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl
 - 44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.
 - 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.
- **Matthew 22:1-14**
 - The Parable of the Wedding Banquet
 - 22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.
 - 4 "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is

ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

- 5 "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.
- 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.
- 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless.
- 13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- 14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."
- **Luke 4:16-21**
 - 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:
 - 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,
 - 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." [a]
 - 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."
- **Luke 17:20-21**
 - The Coming of the Kingdom of God
 - 20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst." [a]
- **Mark 4:26-29**
 - The Parable of the Growing Seed
 - 26 He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28 All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29 As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

Texts supporting the "Not Yet View

List	Verses
Matthew (Mt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.9-13 ("Our Father" or "The Lord's Prayer") • 5.3-12 (The Beatitudes) • 8. 11-12

- **Matthew 6:9-13**
 - 9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 - 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 - 11 Give us today our daily bread.
 - 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 - 13 And lead us not into temptation,[a] but deliver us from the evil one.[b]'

- **Matthew 5:3-12 New International Version (NIV)**
 - 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
 - 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
 - 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
 - 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
 - 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
 - 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
 - 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- **Matthew 8:11-12 New International Version (NIV)**
 - 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

An Important Question : Is Jesus the Messiah ?

- Jesus reluctantly applies his title to himself because of misunderstandings
- At the transfiguration (witnessed by three disciples) Moses and Elijah appear to seal the fact that Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus's Ethics and Teachings

- Touched lepers and a bleeding woman to heal them
- Welcomed women as disciples
- Extended the command against adultery to adultery in one's heart
- Preached turn over the cheek as opposed to an eye for an eye
- Taught to love your enemies
- Proposed love is for God and for one's neighbor
- Offered forgiveness to those who repented
- Challenged the interpretation of the Masaiic law (generally not the law itself)
- Challenged Jewish authorities.

Jesus's Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection

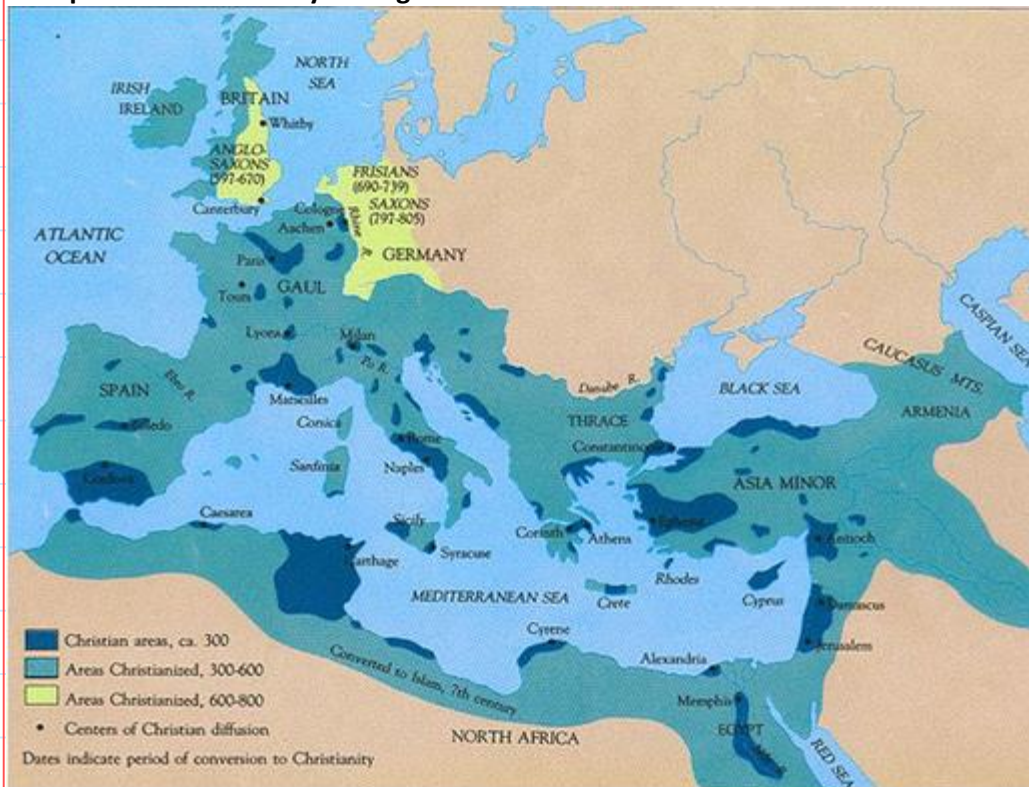
- **Sequence of events**

- i. Jesus returns to Jerusalem. Has his last supper with his disciples.
- ii. Judas betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of Silver, Jesus is arrested.
- iii. At the trial Caiaphas, the high priest asks Jesus if he is Christ (or the Messiah) and Jesus answers " You have said so" thus answering in the affirmative.
- iv. Caiaphas and the other priests see this declaration as blasphemy against God.
- v. Roman authorities are asked to crucify Jesus.
- vi. The crucifixion occurs some time between 27- 33 CE apparent end of the story.
- vii. Resurrection: Women visit the tomb, Jesus's appearances, women's presence witnesses to the historical truth in claims of his resurrection.

After Jesus's Death and Resurrection

- Acts of the apostles (author Luke), Paul's letters, the other letters of the new testament.
- Jesus's ascension to heaven is followed by the descent of the holy spirit at the Pentecost
- Paul's attempts to convert both Jews and Gentiles to Christianity
- Anti-Christian feelings among jews which led to anti-jewish feelings among the early christians.
- The new message Christianity proposes: Salvation is by faith, not by circumcision says Paul.

The spread of Christianity through time



THEO 206 - Lesson 2

Thursday, October 8, 2015 2:09 PM

Introduction

Christianity was a religion that became persecuted in Roman society. This empire was so well organized that it lasted 1000 years. Very organized in terms of organization, administration, justice, currency and welfare it was able to provide to its citizens. We will also look at the role of religion and roman religion (paganism) and what is the encounter between christianity and paganism. Roman religion in the beginning persecutes christianity but then eventually gets legalized and by the end of the 4th century christianity is the only legal religion and judaism is only tolerated.

- Paganism is a religion in which people believed in many gods. And you are to understand that this is very different from christianity and judaism believe. There is a clash between these 2 views.
- This important role of pacification of being good with the god's was important in roman religion
- Christians were seen as trouble makers because they did not want to show devotion to the roman gods. This is why the christian religion was persecuted.

The Roman World

- Christianity was born in the Roman Empire. Roman colonization was militaristic and administrative. **Culturally and religiously the East colonized the empire.**
 - Important transition dates. Roman control lasted from 510 BC until 1453 AD

Roman Republic	510 BC - 27 BC
Roman Empire	27 BC - 476 AD until 1453 AD
▪ Western Roman Empire	286 AD - 476 AD
Eastern Roman Empire	330 AD - 1453 AD
Byzantine Empire	330 AD - 1453 AD

Roman Society

- All of the following provided a certain security and relative prosperity known as **pax Romana (Romani peace)** for the populations around the Mediterranean basin.
 - I. **Administration**
 - Roman citizenship was possessed by entire cities but it was bestowed on others as recompense for services rendered to Rome.
 - Local administration was quite effective.
 - II. **System of Justice**
 - While respecting local customs it applied the principles of Roman law and it enabled citizens to take their case to the emperor himself.
 - III. **Currency**
 - Unified throughout the empire.

Roman Religion

- **Astrology - Horoscopes were avidly compiled.**
 - Not Zeus, but rather **chance or fate or fortune (tyche |τυχη) was the most important god.**
- **Paul dismisses paganism when writing**
 - "Now that you have come to know God...how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again?" (Gal 4:9)
 - Elemental spirits are demonic beings or forces to whom Paul believed humans had been enslaved before their conversion to Christianity.
- **Older view of the Roman Empire** : An unprogressive society ruled by impersonal forces whose nature was not understood and which was morally degenerate.

- **Newer Scholarship** : With some exceptions, this was not the case. For example, grave memorials testify to the affection of family life, and surviving papyrus letters testify to its decency and sobriety.
 - *Ceres - Goddess of Agriculture.*
- **Religion ensured the existing world order and the prosperity of the Roman people, while the emperor was the supreme priest (pontifex maximus)**
- Fear of chaos if the empire fell was shared by all.
- Roman religion was a series of religious acts performed by professionals (the priests) and there were no scriptures.
- **Religion was meant to achieve the right relationship between the gods and humans.**
- Roman citizens were expected to revere, and serve the Roman gods and not practice any alien religion. In practice, however, any religion was allowed as long as it did not offend the laws and practices of Roman life.

Opposition to New Religious movements

- *Given the fact that Christianity was a NRM. Christianity was new 2000 years ago.*
 - **Why is there opposition ?**
 - *When we talk about a new religion today we refer to it as a cult. People think about money laundering, brain washing, mass suicides, subjugations by the members of the cult. However, when we talk about a new religion, we prefer to use a more neutral term. NRM - New religious movement. Sociology of religion tells us why the opposition comes with NRM.*
 - **Firstly there is the opposition of already well established existing religion.**
 - *The Roman religion was already there in many forms. And it perceived Christianity as a threat to snatch its members. Judaism as well did not like Christianity because they viewed them as a mere sect of Judaism. But with time Christianity inherited its own identity.*
 - *However, why were the Romans not opposed to Judaism so much despite it being monotheistic and resembling Christianity. It was perceived as an established religion for a very long time.*
 - *On the other hand, Romans saw Christianity as a superstitious religion.*
 - **Governments also oppose NRM to balance religious freedom and public safety.**
 - *They are concerned to not expose its citizens to religious practices that involve health risks or safety risks. e.g Polygamy.*
 - *However, governments also have to provide room to religions usually through legislation.*
 - *At the time in Christianity there are state authorities that are opposed to Christianity, thus during the first century of Christianity they were persecuted especially during the regime of Emperor Nero right before the 4th century before Christianity was legalized.*
 - **Governments are really concerned about illegal business and money extortionists. Neofacists disguised as medieval cults but really promoting white supremacy and hatred of immigrants.**
 - **Concern that NRMS may cause to psychological damage especially to vulnerable young people.**
 - ◆ *This might have been a concern back then with Christianity. Taking communion was seen as cannibalism at the time. This was really one of the concerns Roman authorities had at the time. However there is the novelty factor as well. Any new religious movement is the new kid on the block. It takes a while before it becomes a legitimate religion.*
 - **Loneliness and alienation from mainstream culture.**
 - *Christians believe that their God is Jesus Christ. Unusual like in the Roman religion where people worship statues and where they would also worship statues of emperors*

where they were considered to be of divine descent. They were proclaimed even during their lifetime as God's. Christians and Jews did not want to embark on this practice because they only have 1 God. This did not go unnoticed. They were seen as being not being law abiding citizens of the Roman empire.

- They were accused of really damaging the balance that was established between the Gods and Humans especially when natural disasters happened. The roman religion tried to maintain the balance whereas they were blamed for the unnatural disasters and thus scapegoated. They were also seen as revolutionaries.
- They were perceived as having some ideals that went beyond and against the roman society. This is a very interesting way to see early christianity through the lens of modern sociology.

Opposition to New Religious Movements- Condensed

Opposition from:

- previously organized and established religions
- governments struggling to balance religious freedom with public safety

Examples from the contemporary era:

- illegal businesses or money extortionists posing as religious groups
- neo-fascists disguised as medieval cults but promoting white supremacy and hatred of immigrants
- concern that NRMs may cause psychological damage, especially to vulnerable young people
- loneliness and alienation from mainstream culture

Opposition To christianity

- **The romans were open to enlarging the pantheon of the Gods.**
 - At what stage did foreign worship become evil worship, that was abominable to the roman Gods.
 - In Rome 186 BC, Livy (historian) describes the case of Bacchanals (dionysius's feast) that degenerated into a conspirational orgy and had to be repressed.
 - In Christians in the time of nero were another foreign religion, sometimes understood as supersition.

• Christians (like Jews and Muslims) are monotheistic, that is, they believe in only one God – Christians claimed their God was Jesus Christ.

• Christians refused to worship foreign gods, especially emperors who claimed divine descent. That refusal led to persecution and martyrdom.

• Christians were also seen as revolutionaries by the state (because they did not behave like the rest of the population).

The result was the scapegoating of Jews and Christians with false accusations.

THEO 206 - Lesson 3

Thursday, October 8, 2015 6:46 PM

History of the Jewish people

- Judaism is the diverse tradition associated with the Jewish people.
- Jews- history experienced as a continuing dialogue with God.

Meanings of Israel

- The semi-nomadic tribes who answered God's call to use the divine law.
- Those who answer the call and strive to obey the law through the Torah.

Jewish history starts with the stories recounted in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh or Old testament for Christians)

- **Stories such as**
 - Creation of the world by a supreme deity or God.
 - Patriarchs and matriarchs
 - Moses, who spoke with God and led the people according to God's commandments.
 - Prophets who heard God's warnings for sinners.
- **Post biblical evolving teachings and practices are collected in the Talmud - A great compendium of Jewish law and Lore**
- **Year 70 AD** : Romans destroy the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and disperse the Jews throughout the world.

Biblical stories

- **Problem of Historicity**: Scholars are uncertain about the historical accuracy of the early biblical stories because no other evidence exists about certain events and people genealogies mentioned in the Bible.
 - **Tradition Holds** : Torah (five books of Moses) were revealed by God Directly to Moses who wrote them down.
 - **Scholars hold** : Torah was an oral tradition reworked and redacted by later authors.
- **Final form of the Torah Around 430 BCE**: Created by Ezra the scribe and priest and his editorial team
- **Intent of later authors** : Interpreting the formation of Israel from a religious point of view as the results of God's actions in human history.
- **Similarities of biblical stories with Mesopotamian legends** : Creation, the garden of Eden, the great flood, the tower of babel.
- **Despite concerns about accuracy, biblical stories are religiously significant for both Christians and Muslims.**

From Creation to the God of Abraham

Genesis 1.1-2.4

- Priestly source (God referred to as Elohim) dates from after 586 BCE
 - Creation of Heaven and Earth by God in six days
 - Creation of material universe
 - Creation of man and woman in the divine image
 - Humans placed as masters of earth

Genesis 2.4 - The Yahwist source (God referred to as Yahweh) is thought to be an earlier account than Genesis 1.1-2.4.

- God is a transcendent creator, without origin, gender, or form, a being utterly different from the created world.

The adam in eave story

- Theme of exile from Paradise is present throughout Jewish history

- Either punishment or straightening the world through Jews.

Noah's story and the flood

- **Ten generations after Noah**
 - **The Patriarchs** - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
 - **The Matriarchs** - Their wives, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel
- **Abraham**
 - Born in Chaldean city of Ur, Mesopotamia, immigrated to Haran and then called by god to Canaan. Shows an example of obedience to God's commandments through :
 - **Circumcision - sign of the covenant with God**
 - **Ready to sacrifice his son Isaac (from Sarah) upon request from God.**
 - Abraham's son Ishmael and his mother (slave Hagar) are driven into the desert. Ishmael is an ancestor of the Arabs.
 - Abraham is taught by God to be Monotheistic.
- **God was perceived as a ruler in relation to the people like a parent to a child or a sovereign to vassals, like a husband to a wife.**

Birth of Israel

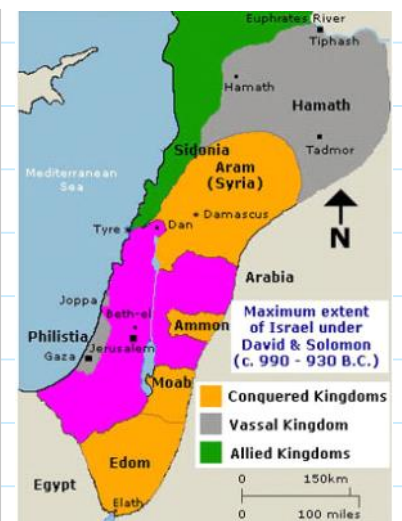
- Jacob, Isaac's second son receives the new name " Israel " after wrestling for the whole night with an angel of God.
- **Israel - the one who struggled with God**
 - Names are indicative of a person's character
 - A new name means a new character. In this case of one reborn at a higher level of spirituality.
- Jacob is given the promise that many nations will be born from him.

Egypt and Exodus

- **The Twelve Tribes of Israel**
 - Jabon/Israel had 12 sons and one daughter from his 2 wives.
 - The 12 sons become heads of the twelve tribes of Israel
- **Biblical stories**
 - Joseph and the Egyptian Pharaoh
 - Moses and the burning bush
 - Exit from Egypt: signs, plagues, passover, redemption from bondage, crossing of the Red Sea.
 - God's presence as a pillar of cloud/fire; then, Ark of the covenant.
 - The ten commandments

The first Temple of Jerusalem

1010 - 970 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King David establishes Jerusalem as the capital
961 - 931 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Solomon builds a great Temple in Jerusalem • Burnt offerings of animals, grain and oil were made to God in the temple • Solomon ended up an idol worshipper and womanizer • Division of Israel follows into the northern and southern kingdom (Israel and Judah).
722 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel is conquered by Assyria - most Jews are sent into exile in Assyria
586 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judah is conquered by Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and the temple is destroyed. • The destruction of the Temple is interpreted as divine punishment for Israel's infidelity toward God.



Return to Jerusalem

530 BCE	King Cyrus of Persia allows the Jews to return to the land of Israel He allowed the hebrew exiles to resettle and rebuild Jerusalem earning him an honored place in Judaism.
515 BCE	The temple is built
430 BCE	Ezra, a priest and scribe coordinates the redaction of the Torah

Judaism becomes Contaminated with foreign influences (Persian, Greek, Parthian, Roman)

175 - 164 BCE	Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Hellenistic ruler of Syria forces Greek ways upon the Jews
164 BCE	The Maccabean revolt rejects Antiochus IV's rule and manages to re-establish a Jewish independent Kingdom
64 BCE	Roman General Pompey conquers Israel

Jewish Groups around the year 0

Sadduces	Pharisees	Essenes	Zealots
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priests and wealthy businessmen • Conservatives who provided a literal interpretation of the bible • Rejected oral law and traditions • Denial of an afterlife and coming of the Messiah. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More liberal citizens of all classes. • Studied the applications of Torah to everyday life. • 1st Century BCE - there is a civil war between Sadducees and pharisees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monastic community disgusted with what they considered a corrupted priesthood. • Apocalyptic group who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls (discovered in 1947) • Some retreated to Qumran on the shore of the Dead Sea. • <i>Authors of the Dead sea scrolls</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Militias who in 66 CE revolted against the romans. • Roman general (later Emperor) Vepasian and his son Titus suppressed the revolt and destroyed the second temple in years 70CE.

Sadduces, pharisees are mentioned in the New Testament (Gospels). One important group that existed at the time was Sadduces. It is interesting because they denied the coming of an After Life and the Messiah. This shows that Judaism was actually a decentralized or ununified belief. Belief in afterlife took a while to develop in Judaism and even later the hope of resurrection.

Pharisees. Presented in the new testament as hypocritical. But, the fact is that they were not hypocritical, they were just interested in a lot of things. How to Apply to Torah in many situations. They see Jesus and ask him many questions. They agree on some things with him and disagree on others. They were more liberal and belonged to all classes. War between sadducees and pharisees due to interpretation of various issues.

Essenes - Monastic community made of men. Wanted to become monks and live a celibate life. They thought that the priesthood was corrupted so they went to Qumran and isolated themselves from the world. They

thought they were the chosen one's. To be glorious at the end of time. They thought about the end of the war. They refer to themselves as the son's of light and the rest of the world as the son's of darkness. They wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. These writings are generally apocalyptic (wars at the end of the world). This community was destroyed when there was a Jewish rebellion against the romans in the year 66. It was started by the Zealots.

Zealots - Jewish Militias upset by the Roman occupation. They try to get Jesus to join their cause to liberate themselves from the romans. After Jesus died, they started a major revolt against the Romans in the year 66. They tried to stop the revolt. Vespasian and Titus became involved in crushing this revolt which ends in the year 70. That's when Jerusalem got destroyed by the Roman armies and the temple itself was destroyed by them. Interestingly enough the Essenes joined with the Zealots against the Roman. Considering their pretentiousness it was significant that they joined forces. But they were wiped out by the Romans.

Rabbinic Judaism

- Destruction of the Temple by the Romans brought some revisions
 - Synagogues replaced temple
 - Rabbis replaced priests
 - Prayers replaced sacrifices
- Emphases on the book and literacy (not for women)
- Revelation was closed with the completion of the Bible, but interpretation (midrash) of the bible has been encouraged in legal decisions (halakhah) non-legal teachings (haggadah) - folklore, historical knowledge, theological arguments, sermons and mystical teachings.
- **2 Messianic (JEWISH) movements survived the destruction of the temple**
 - **Rabbis - inheritors of the pharisee tradition; they are teachers, religious decision makers, creators of liturgical prayer**
 - **Jesus of Nazareth's followers - Christianity.**

2 Jewish movements that survived. Year 70 was a crucial time for Jews. Jewish life was centered around the temple. They were expected to go to temple once a year and bring offerings. But in the year 70 and 586 CE, it has been destroyed for good in the year 70. It is difficult to be rebuilt because for it to be in the same place because there is an important islamic place of prayer (dome of the rock). You would have to take it down. But it has been unsuccessful. The temple is no longer there. So what happened after the destruction of temple. A lot of change. Jewish people had to rethink their religion. Synagogues replace temple, however, you cannot sacrifice animals here to forgive your sins. Synagogues are ran by rabbi's they are not priests. They are not entitled to make any sacrifices. They can guide people through prayer. Therefore the second transformation is that rabbi's replaced the priests. Moreover, people have to adapt, they use prayer instead of sacrifices. It is interesting because it is a religion that had it's major place of worship since year 70 and it has been transformed a lot because of the use of rabbi's. The bible was left to them, they started placing an emphasis on knowing the book. So to know it you have to read it. Traditionally literacy has been emphasized for men instead of women. The destruction of the temple has lead to the conclusion that the Revelation ahs came to an end. The rabbi's had to establish wish books are really biblical or a cannon (established list of books to be included in the bible). The revelation was closed but it's interpretation was still open. Rabbi's helped people to interpret the bible to be encouraged in many different aspects of life. Rabbinic judaism is still present today.

Rabbinic Judaism Continued

- Interpretation led to the Mishnah (oral Torah) - completed about 200 CE.
- Mishnah is divided into six sections. Seeds, festivals, women, damages, holy things and purities.
- Subordination of women to men but also directions for responsibilities.
- Mishna + rabbinic commentaries on it = The talmud
- The Jerusalem Talmud completed in 400 CE, emphasizes continual study of the Torah and spiritual practice.
- The babylonian Talmud completed in 50- CE is the dominant version in Theology and Law
- The talmud continues to grow still today.

Perceptions of God

- In early biblical narratives, God is perceived as a
 - Burning Bush
 - Pillar of cloud / fire
 - Smoking mountain
- In the prophets, God is presented through
 - Angelic Messengers
 - Inner voices
- Rabbinical tradition
 - God's presence in the world is called Shekinah
 - Shekinah is a feminine quality representing God's nurturing and motherly aspect
 - This is non-anthropomorphic, transcendent presence
 - Sometimes shekinah is depicted as a radiant winged presence.

Israel Today



THEO 206 - Lesson 4

Sunday, October 18, 2015 4:08 PM

Maccabean revolt 164 bce.

Hellenism

- **Hellenism is the blend of Greece and the Orient that arose in the wake of Alexander's conquests and Embraced all aspects of life.**

Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BCE)

- King of Macedonia (South Eastern Europe - 336 - 323)
- Overthrew the Persian Empire, carried Macedonian arms to India and laid the foundations of the Hellenistic world of territorial kingdoms
- Educated by Aristotle

The Generals

- Some of Alexander's Generals founded the dynasties of the
 - i. **Antigonids - Ruled over Macedonia**
 - ii. **Ptolemies - Ruled over Egypt**
 - iii. **Seleucids - Ruled over Babylonia, Syria and Palestine**
- They all contributed to the spread of Greek Culture

The Spread of Hellenism

- **Hellenism included Greek Education, ideals of administration, warfare, trade, commerce, sport, rhetoric, literature and philosophy.**
- Hellenism was effectively spread by Roman emperor Augustus, who made Romans the patrons of Hellenism.
- There was a mixture of Roman and Greek unity after Augustus.

Hellenism and Judaism

- In Palestine, Hellenism was introduced as early as 332 BCE, when Alexander conquered the territory.
- Palestinian Judaism was faced with either accepting or rejecting the Hellenistic way of life.
- Antiochus IV Epiphanes Hellenized Judaism to the point of placing a statue of Zeus in the temple of Jerusalem.
- The Maccabean Revolt(168 - 164 BCE) ensued and attempted to re-establish the Jewish way.
- Jerusalem was a highly Hellenized city, with many of its inhabitants being conversant in Greek.
- Actual rejection of Hellenism in Palestine took place after 50 BCE and was completed in the Jewish wars of 66 and 135 CE.
- In diaspora however, Hellenism was not rejected by the Jews.
- Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE - 50 CE) is an example of a Hellenized Jew who did not speak Hebrew but he did speak Greek, lived in Egypt and was an admirer of Hellenism.

Christianity and Hellenism

- Unlike Palestinian Judaism, the first Christians (with some exceptions) did not reject Hellenism.
- Many early Christian converts made by Apostle Paul were Greek-speaking Jews from the diaspora.
- The Koine dialect of Greek was the natural vehicle for Christian proclamation
- The New Testament (NT) books were written in Greek
- Paul was not adequately prepared philosophically to engage in dialogue with the real Gentiles (non-Jews)

Greek Philosophy

- Unlike Greek and Roman Religions, Greek philosophy promoted ethical teachings. It was similar to

the teachings of Judaism and Christianity in this regard. It promoted virtue and happiness and spoke of dissatisfaction with the actual human condition.

Justin Martyr (100 - 165 CE)

- **3 Main Arguments Regarding Greek Philosophy**

1. **The Loan / theft theory** - The philosophers read or borrowed from Moses - hence the similarities between Christianity and philosophy
2. **The Demon theory** - Distortions of the truth in Greek mythology are the works of Demons
3. **The Logos Theory (Logos Spermatikos)** - The whole of the logos (word/reason of God) is present in Jesus Christ, but portions (or seeds) of it are found among Jews and Greeks as well.

Professor's Commentary on Greek Philosophy and Justin Martyr

- *Justin Martyr - Lived in the second century, about 100 years after Jesus. And he was originally a philosopher who embraced Christianity and appreciated it to the point of defending it in front of the Roman authorities who were persecuting Christianity from time to time. And he was eventually killed for his Christian beliefs.*
- *He is important because he is a representative of early Christianity who represented Hellenism. He was not afraid to talk about Greek philosophy and harmonize it with Christianity. He wanted to show that it is not a superstition and equal to what Aristotle or Plato have said.*
- *It is important to understand Justin in the context of where all of this was happening. Christianity embraced Greek at the time (lingua franca) because they wanted to convey a message, a message about Jesus and salvation to a larger audience. Christians faced a rejection from Jewish people and very few converted from Judaism.*
- *How are you going to export your message to a larger audience? The best way is to put the message in Greek. Because of that, it led to a major encounter between Christianity and Greek culture.*
- *People like Justin Martyr was proud of both Christian and Greek legacies that were in him. He tried to work out this with Greek Philosophy.*
 1. **Loan or theft theory** - *Plato or the stoics, read or borrowed from Moses and had access to the Hebrew bible (Pentateuch / first 5 books). And that's why you have similarities between Greek philosophy and Christianity. This argument was used early by Philo of Alexandria who tried to harmonize Greek philosophy with Judaism. You can see how someone like Justin was borrowing the arguments of Philo. However, this is very unlikely. The writings of Moses were barely put together at the time.*
 2. **Demon Theory** - *There is some truths in Greek mythology or Greek religion and that truth will be somehow seen in Judaism in Christianity. The distortions in Greek mythology are due to demons. These spiritual beings are smarter and more capable of cheating and who are interested in distorting the truth.*
 3. **The Logos Theory** - *This is a philosophical concept. The concept of the logos is very important in philosophy. This theory allows for the presence of fragments of truth to exist in religions other than Christianity. However, the logos was fully present in Jesus Christ. And the fullness of the logos is present in Jesus Christ. This is a way to say that Christianity and Greek philosophy do have similarities but in the end they are quite different.*

THEO 206 - Lesson 5

Sunday, October 18, 2015 7:44 PM

Common Traits of Gnosticism

- Esoteric religious movement that flourished during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD and presented a major challenge to Christianity.

The World	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The physical world itself is inherently evil, in opposition to the world of spirit which is good.
The Divine Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The good God generated other divine offspring• These offspring in pairs reproduced• An accident occurred when one divine being (Sophia a feminine deity) separated from the rest and spontaneously generated another being.• The latter, born outside the divine realm was evil• The latter being created the evil world



The circular, harmonic cross, was an emblem used most notably by the Cathars, a medieval group that was associated with Gnosticism.

Common Traits of Gnosticism (Cont'd)

- **For Humanity**
 - Sophia was captured and imprisoned in the material world in the bodies of humans
 - Many humans (though not all) have this spark of divinity in them
- **For Salvation**
 - The divine spark within humans can escape only by learning through knowledge (gnosis), where it came from and how it can return.
- **For the Church**
 - Gnostics admit that Christians who have faith in Christ and do good can experience some salvation. But the real afterlife is only available to the gnostics
 - Gnostics come to the full knowledge of the secrets of salvation.

Common Traits of Gnosticism (Cont'd)

- **The Divine Redeemer for Christian Gnostics**
 - The salvific knowledge comes from outside the world.
 - It is brought by a divine redeemer
 - Christ is the one who brings knowledge from above.
 - Some Gnostics (docetists, doleo - to seem to appear), thought that Christ came to earth seemingly as human
 - He did not suffer because he was not flesh and blood
 - Other gnostics believed that the divine Christ entered the body of a man named Jesus when he was baptized
 - Christ then left Jesus prior to his death (hence Jesus' cry on the cross reported by Mt 27:46, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ?)

Gnosticism

- The Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi website is the only critical edition and French translation of the Coptic manuscript collection discovered in 1945 near the town of Nag

Hammadi in Egypt.

Proto-Orthodox Christianity

- Proto-orthodox" refers to those commonly known as the early "church fathers" (for example, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyon), who ended up defining what exactly should be "orthodox" (or correct) belief.
 - Orthodox Christianity - non-dualistic, salvation through faith, non-elitistic, yet open to all.
 - Irenaeus of Lyons, 2nd-century author of, Against all the Heresies.

Against the Gnostics, Irenaeus emphasizes:

- Apostolic succession (the fact that the bishops of proto-orthodox Christianity can trace their appointments back to the apostles)
- Rule of faith (proto-orthodox Christians hold certain basic beliefs that differ from Gnostic beliefs)
- Unity of belief (all proto-orthodox Christians hold the same beliefs, unlike the Gnostics, who hold a multitude of competing beliefs).

Criteria for Scriptural Canonicity

Ancient	A sacred authority had to date back to near the time of Jesus.
Apostolic	An authority had to be written by an apostle or at least by a companion of the apostles
Catholic (Universal)	Books had to have widespread acceptance among established churches (e.g the Gospel of Peter in Muratorian canon)
Orthodox	The most important criterion - the views set forth in a book had to conform with the views in already accepted books e.g docetic Christology is unacceptable
Inspiration	Books accepted as canonical ended up being regarded as inspired by God.

I consider this to be very important especially since the Da Vinci Code made the case that a lot of the books made in early Christianity was suppressed by the church and that they contained the "truth". According to Dan Brown the truth was that the Goddess mentioned by some of these books, was replaced by a male God and this was something that the church wanted to high.

- *This is not the reason why there was 4 gospel that were 4 canonical books. Brown mentioned that there were 80 gospels. There are actually 30 and only 4 made their way through. Why?*
- *There are some criteria that must be respected.*
- *Dan Brown believed that emperor constantine decided what books were supposed to be scripted, which was also not true.*
- *The church decided what is or what is not scripture.*
- *There are books such as the gospel of Thomas, Mary Magdelene, the Gospel of Judas. His transcript was eventually discovered and we actually see him as a good guy now.*
- *The 5 criteria must be met.*
 - *The more ancient a book is, the more likely it is to be included in the list of normative books. The 4 gospels that are in the bible today all date with certainty from the 1st century. The other Gospels are newer and we know with certainty that they come from the 2nd century and even the 5th century. They lose to the canonical gospels because they are not as ancient.*
 - *The gospel had to be written by an apostle or a companion of them. The first 3 gospels are. The early church named them as such. The origin of these books are considered apostolic*
 - *Books have to be widely accepted. If not, the early church would end up rejecting them. The gospel of Peter, he visits another bishop and the Gospel of Peter is used. By the time*

it is used he receives a letter from other bishops and it is not widely used and non canonical. It lacks catholicity.

- *Most important criterion is orthodoxy (right faith and right belief). The views set in a book had to conform with views in the already accepted books. If the books did not conform with that, it was not acceptable. They were able to eliminate books this way in circulation at the time. You cannot have a book that represents Jesus as less as who he is.*
- *Divine inspiration - This is probably also one of the most important criteria. They were inspired by God. However, scholars believe that there is some other criteria. It took the church a long time (350 years) to establish what its new testament is. That's why some of the books that have been mentioned were not included in the list of normative books. If you travel to the british museum you will see a beautiful transcript on display coming from the 4th century. It is one of the earliest complete manuscripts of the entire new testament. Its called the Codex sinaiticus. It was ordered by emperor constantine. He established this city (constantinople) as a christian city and ordered copies of the bible from a bishop who would be able to make them and provide them. This codex has a list of the books that were included there. The bishop that supervised this process. We have 27 books and we have these other ones here just incase if they might be considered scripture in the future. It was an important process in christianity.*

Lesson Highlight: Gnosticism and the Gospel of Judas - Interview with Dr. André Gagné

Gnosticism

1. When people talk about Gnosticism, there is talk of a “secret knowledge” and that’s what fascinates a lot of people today. What kind of knowledge are we talking about and why is it “secret”? (00:45)

- *People have a tendency to focus on secret knowledge because it has an isoteric flavor to it. The greek word for knowledge is gnosis. There is nothing wrong with being knowledgeable. There are mentions to the importance of knowledge in the NT and Clement of Alexandria focuses on gnosis, to be knowledgeable about the kingdom of god (patristic literature).*
- *Here we refer to a special kind of knowledge. It is not empirical. It is an intuition or an insight. In fact, the knowledge that gnostics focus on is a spiritual knowledge of their true spiritual origin.*
- *The fact of talking about secrecy of one true spiritual origin is only accessible to one particular group, the gnostics themselves (the elect), they obtained this knowledge that in some of them they inherited this knowledge from the God. They inherit a divine spark that helps them understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and they have access and better interpretation of scripture and able to discern secret meanings in scripture where christians interpret normal scriptures literally. They interpret scripture trying to find out the mysteries of god or to find who god is.*

2. Why do you think most of the Gnostic writings were lost to the world for at least 1500 years? (04:05)

- *It seems that as we gain more and more knowledge of the early christian period, these writings were progressively suppressed by people who thought they were the bearers of orthodoxy (the right way to think about christianity) Very early on we see individuals establish canonical lists (lists of recognized books). The meriturian Canon 170 elaborates on some good books and bad books. Erraneous of leo also had a list. 325 Ezubeus talks about the recommended readings and the heretical readings.*
- *Those who write, those who are in authority express their views and christians are influenced by the views of the church and thus suppress readings that do not correspond to the orthodox view.*

3. How strong of a competition was there between Gnosticism and proto-orthodox (or ecclesial)

Christianity? (06:10) - becomes the mainstream christianity

- Marcion's list was the first to make a set of books. In reaction to his list, proto orthodox christians made their own selection of books. Marcion's list disregarded the OT, he kept certain epistles from Paul's letters and only the Gospel of Luke which he fashioned in his own way because he had specific problems with the OT God. He believed the OT god was an evil entity. He believed that Jesus presented who real god was the unknowable god.
- Marcion's canonical list is relevant because it instigated a certain reaction on proto orthodox people to produce their own lists. He had his own limited canon of scripture. He really focused on specific 10 letters of Paul and the Gospel of Luke. He thought that the OT god is evil because of all the problems we encounter in the evil material world. Jesus revealed the greater God. Judeo Christians consider the OT being part of their recognized books and they saw themselves as a prolongement of the Jewish faith and the NT as being the accomplishment of old testament prophecies.
- This brings us to the question to how rough was the battle between gnostics and proto christians. When you read gnostic gospel or treatises, it is opposite than orthodox thought. What traditional proto orthodox doctrine is, is opposite to gnostic thought. For gnostics the Christ is someone different than Jesus. When Jesus was crucified the Christ left so Christ did not suffer.
- People saw the gnostics as abnormal (perversion, incests), thus when we read about them we see them through the eyes of the people who did not agree with them.
- From one part the gnostics they see themselves as the true enlightenment. And christians did not appreciate that.
- New testament scholars see in variance of the new testament some variations of new testament scriptures in reaction to gnosticism or views close to the gnostics. So they made corrections in regards to this tension. The most influential leaders had the say.

Gospel of Judas (explains the difference between gnostics and christians)

1. Can you explain why the Gospel of Judas has been such a major discovery in recent years?

(14:08)

- April 2006, 1st edition that we had access to this gospel.
- It's fascinating, because it brings up a different account between the relationship between Jesus of Nazareth and Judas. It's fascinating because it tries to explain the true nature of Judas's betrayal of Jesus.
- Scholars agree that it is not historical, thus it doesn't say much about the relationship between the historical Jesus and Judas but gives us a glimpse of the conflict of gnostic and proto orthodox views.
- Some of the POV's are debated. But what we are realizing is that the brand of gnosticism that we find in this gospel is the a gnosticism that we call Sethian gnosticism. Seth was the third son of Adam. According to the gnostic Sethians, Seth was the a revealer and the savior and that he had inherited from Adam a secret revelation about the revelations of the kingdom of God. The Sethians are those who come from his lineage.
- Seth is a spiritual seed planted in this evil material world in order to save the world. The gospel of Judas seems to reflect an early trend of Sethian gnosticism. The Sethians believe in a primary trinity, where there is a question of the father in which there is the divine spirit, the mother who is Barbelo, and the son, the autogenese or the anthropose. In the gospel of Judas we have a reference to Barbelo. The gospel of Judas is a fascinating discovery because it gives us a glimpse into the world of Sethian gnosticism.

2. Can you explain why there has been such significant controversy surrounding this discovery?

(19:04)

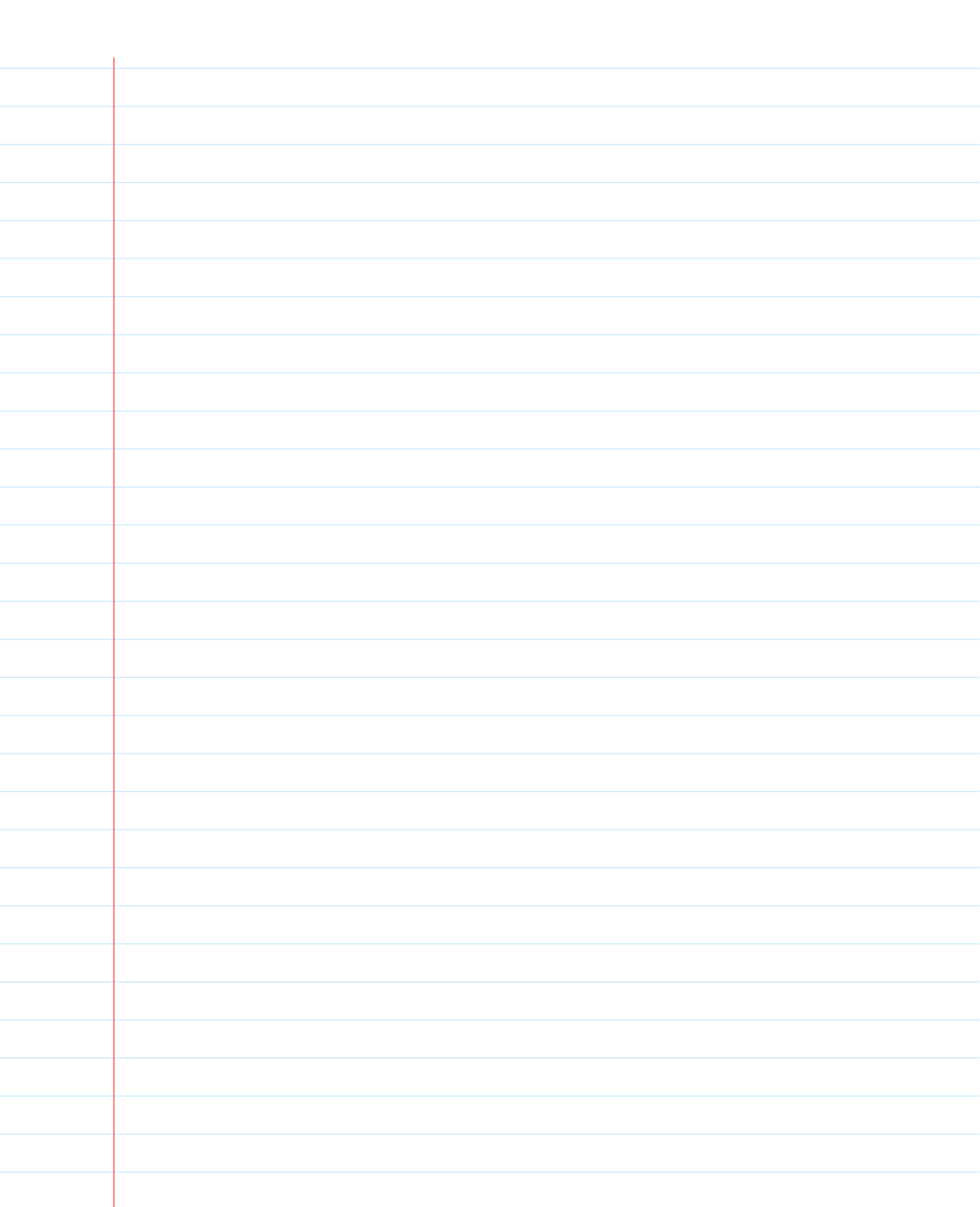
- Basically it started with the frustration of scholars who did not have access to the

- manuscript itself. The manuscript was made public and those who had access was a selected team of editors who had access to the manuscript.*
- *What has been noticed when scholars didn't have the original coptic text, national geographic put it online so that other scholars can do translations. What we observed was that there were problems with how many terms were translated*
 - *It wasn't accessible, problems with translation and this affected the interpretation of the gospel of judas. The initial understanding was that Judas was Jesus's favorite disciple. And that Jesus gave a priveleged revelation to Judas about the kingdom in order to save him. Judas was doing jesus a service by liberating the christ from his body so he can go back to heaven.*
 - *However, when we focus more on this Gospel is that the picture is not that simple. It's probably not as positive as we think. Many editors are holding on the positive characterization of Judas. And others come to different conclusions.*

3. What side of the debate are you on and what are your arguments? (22:32)

- *I am on the side of the people who say that Judas is not a good guy. It's a traditional point of view. Shown in the Gospel of John, Jesus calls Judas a demon.*
- *There are issues of course. I've written an article on the opening phrase of that states, this is the secret word upon revelation or declaration that Jesus spoke to Judas Iscariot. The greco coptic word "Apophasis" declaration.*
- *Depending on where you situate yourself, those who think apophasis is a revelation comes from apophanai which is display or reveal*
- *And others believe apophasis means apophainy which means to refute or deny. There are many different types of uses for this word.*
- *I translate it as the secret word of the denial that Jesus spoke to Judah, he will in fact not be saved. He is a puppet of the dimiurge (the evil god). Jesus shows him a revelation, but he will not be part of the holy generation. There are other translational issues with the national geographic version.*
- *Some issues are that in one of the texts are in translation. "Why have you separated me for that whole generation" it should be " Why have you separated me from that generation ". Judas is called a 13 daimon "spirit" but in christian circles daimon is "demon". If you have seprated me from that separation and calls him a demon, I cannot be positive.*
- *Another positive chracterization of Jesus, is that people said that he helped jesus liberate himself from his physical body. Jesus says to Judas, " but you will exceed them all because you sacrifice the man that bears me". However right before that there is a reference to sarclass which refers to the demiurge. But a few lines before that there is a reference to saclass which is the demiurge or the evil God. IT is mentioned that sacrifice is made to saclass. Jesus will tell his disciples to stop making sacrifices. It is a reaction to the proto orthodox view in which it is an honor to die for your faith. The sethians do not believe that this is necessary. And jesus says you don't have to sacrifice. When jesus tells judas you will exceed them all because you will exceed the others by giving the biggest sacrifice to saclass. You will sacrifice the man who bears me this will bring a reaction on proto orthodox christians who will try to imitate the sacrifice of Jesus. He says basically he will do more evil.*
- *If you look at it a little closer, we see that he is not a priveleged disciple. He is actually quite demonic. It is not good news for Judas in this gospel.*

Take note of Dr. Gagnés article in the book.



THEO 206 - Lesson 6

Tuesday, November 3, 2015 12:54 AM

Introduction

- This lesson overlaps somewhat with, but also complements, the lesson on Christianity in the Roman World. In Christianity in the Roman World, you learned about the Roman Empire. In this lesson, we return to the social and historical context of the Roman Empire in order to understand how Christianity grew to eventually become the official Roman religion by the end of the 4th century. Therefore, this lesson complements Christianity in the Roman World in at least two significant ways:
 1. First, this lesson focuses on the persecutions of Christianity in a way in which Christianity in the Roman World did not. Christianity in the Roman World introduced some theory from the sociology of religion to explain the persecutions. Lesson 6 applies that theory to the actual persecutions and provides details about the major persecutions
 2. Second, this lesson takes you to the 4th century and beyond, when Christianity was legalized and then became the official religion of the empire

Roman Religion

- The Roman Empire was the object of the manifested care of the gods such as Jupiter.
- In order to satisfy the gods, cultic intentions developed. This aimed to keep the PAX DEORUM “the peace of the gods”.
- The Roman religion was complex for it included borrowing traditions and elements - including Oriental Cults.
- This suggests tolerance for other religions that have ancient roots.

Religious Tolerance

Roman Rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ was more than secular. It included mandatory participation in public ceremonies and securing the gods’ protection for the emperor.
Roman Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ had no particular interest in binding doctrines.▪ Nonetheless, observance was mandatory for everyone.
Judaism and the Jews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ were tolerated for they were a sect with old roots.

Disloyal to the State

- The name Christian evoked an inherited disloyalty to the state.
- Christians were considered a sect that sprung out of Judaism.
 - **According to Porphyry:**
 - Christians were denounced as having turned away from the recognized god. They were accused of being atheists, to which they responded by saying they were “atheist to all those [pagan] gods”.
 - Christians were considered dangerous not only because of “their crude practices” (ritual murder, cannibalism, incest and magic were some of the false accusations brought against them), but also because they belonged to an antisocial organization that neglected the gods and the ceremonies.

PLINY THE YOUNGER - (112 AD emperor's personal legate)

He observed that Christians were accused of:

- Riots
- Subversion of public order

- Neglecting temple worship
- Non-compliance with traditional religious ceremonies

Therefore, in his eyes, and according to the mob, the application of capital punishment was justified. The victims of this oppression were seen as “martyrs” (witnesses) by fellow co-religionists.

Intense persecution took place under emperors:

- Decius 250- 251 AD
- Valerian 257- 259 AD

This targeted bishops to demoralize the community and was a setback for the Church

260-302 AD - complete tolerance:

- This was a crucial time of growth for the Church

Then came the “Great Persecution” of 303-313 AD

- The need for pagan revival
- This persecution involved:
 - Destruction of churches and scriptures
 - Confiscation of property
 - Prohibition of worship
 - Cancellation of legal and civil rights
 - Arrests of clergy, torture, execution
 - Orders to sacrifice to the gods on pain of death

Yet the unflinching courage of the Christians influenced the future course of events !!!!!

Eusebius

- Born 265, died 340
- Was the first church historian
- He enthusiastically celebrated Constantine and his conversion after the battle at the Milvian Bridge.

Constantine

- Was very sympathetic to Christians after claiming to have had a vision of a cross superimposed against the sun
- He was raised a monotheist (Sun God worshipper), but after his conversion introduced and mixed Christian monotheism with Sun cult worship.
- In 313, Constantine and his co-emperor of the East, Licinius, granted universal religious freedom by the Edict of Milan

Council of Nicaea, 325 AD

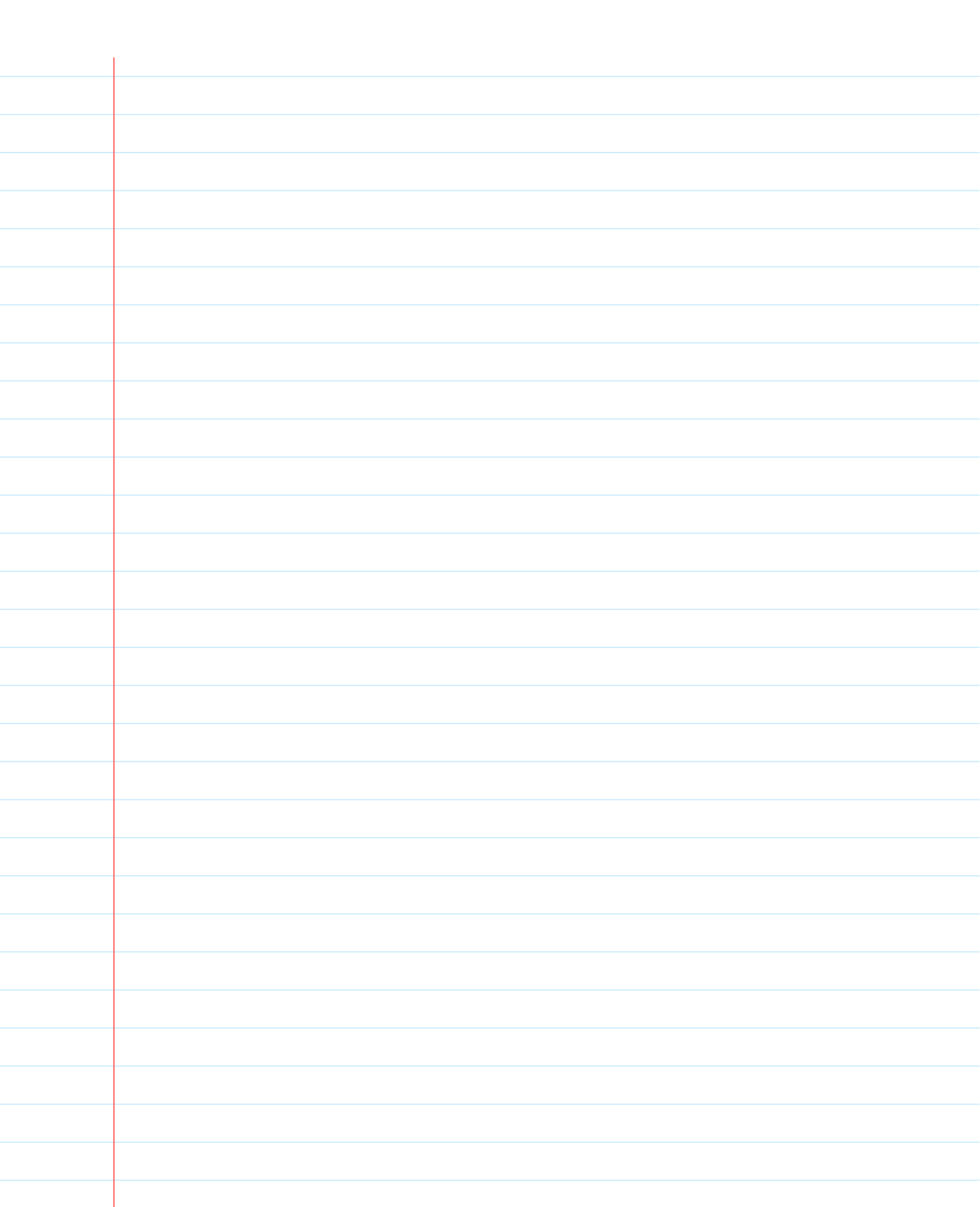
- Important step in establishing orthodoxy within the Church.
- Christianity experienced an almost steady progress throughout the fourth century.

324 AD

- Constantine founded Constantinople, “the New Rome”, on the site of ancient Byzantium.
- This conquered the hearts of the Eastern provinces and brought Christianity, which was in many ways still pagan, into Asia Minor.

391-392 AD

- Under the pressure of the Church and in order to enforce imperial unity through religious uniformity and orthodoxy, Emperor Theodosius I declares paganism illegal.
- Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman Empire and Judaism is only tolerated.
- Paganism is banned.



THEO 206 - Reading 1

Sunday, October 11, 2015 7:49 PM

The patristic period

- It has become usual to call the first centuries of the Christian tradition the "patristic period". It is indeed the period of the founders of the church, of the fathers (patres) who did pioneering work in turning the Christian movement into a self-assured religious, social and intellectual force. In the course of various feats of self-presentation and self-defense, the church leaders not all were men gave shape to the essential contours of what became a well circumscribed entity. Christian life and thought.
- The time span covered by the Patristic Period is variously delimited. It is generally agreed that its beginning follows on the life and work of Jesus' immediate followers and thus starts with the so called postapostolic times, roughly 100 of the common era. And for its end there is no general agreement.
- The formative Christian period, traditionally called the age of fathers, designates a certain segment in time but also a certain kind of literary production. Allowing for flexibility in determining the limits of the period is quite apropos. One encounters the same flexibility for instance, in setting the parameters to the medieval or modern periods.

Christianity

- Writers were interested in the emergence of a mainstream institution, the church, study the period in the frame work of "church history". Those concerned with the gradual construction of normative tenets talk about history of dogma. Similarly we can explore those centuries with an interest for instance, in the history of doctrine, the history of christian thought, the history of theology and the history of christian practice.
- The study of christianity and its early history is aimed to respond to a 20th century detached interest in development of christianity as a social, and religious movement, coupled with the desire to understand how and why that development took the directions it did.
- As early as the second century the term khristianismos itself, which became in translation christianity, referred first to all the concrete way of life of the Christians in opposition ot that of the Jews and the Greeks; that usage is significant for its empirical connotations, akin to this book's perspective.
- The development of christianity can be explored through the usual scholarly means without the assumption of a faith commitment on the part of the explorers.

Patristics as a field of research and study

- As a scholarly enterprise, patristic cannot be defined with any satisfactory precision.
- As a field of research and study, patristics is essentially interdisciplinary. While this fact makes the field more attractive, it also makes it fragile or tenuous definition of its territory and method.

Sources and Tools

- The last century and a half have witnessed a massive influx of fresh material to study classical antiquity and the Patristic Period. Ancient sources of all kinds, including Christian sources, are more readily accessible through new collections and editions. Previous centuries often satisfied with written testimonies and built their reconstructions of the past almost exclusively on textual remains.
- The situation is different today, we have many tools
 - Textual approach: archeology, epigraphy, papyrology, iconography and artistic representations are some of the main ways unpublished or fresh information is put at our disposal.
 - Anthropology and sociology help us understand the historical and intellectual processes.

Topicality of Patristic Studies

- Rise in patristic studies in the past 2 centuries because, the spirit of criticism that characterized the 18th century (enlightenment)
 - G.E. Lessing and A. Von Harnack mark two important moments in the enterprise of dogma
- Second, is the emergence of historical consciousness signaled by
 - G.W.F. Hegel and F.C. Bauer, provided the definitive driving force in the development of patristic studies. It became clear that the historical perspective was now essential to an understanding of the present.
- Obviously the interest in beginnings has ecumenical implications. By looking together at ancient witnesses, scholars of all confessional backgrounds take a firm step toward overcoming Christian divisions. The discovery of the lush diversity that characterized the early centuries is conducive to greater tolerance and mutual understanding.

Trends in Recent Research

- The wider horizon to which I have just pointed characterizes much of the recent work in the study of Christianity in late antiquity. Increasingly this work is carried out in the context of European and World history whose past traditions it wishes to recover.
- A second trend characterizes the recent work in patristics, that work is performed in the broader context of the history of religions. For a long time the investigation of Patristic Period was conducted exclusively in connection with the study of Christian origins and Judaism.
 - Patristic literature is seen to incorporate or reflect more elements coming from indigenous. Near Eastern and Mediterranean origins that have to be taken into consideration, these are likely to yield a better understanding of Europe's birth place in the culture of the Late Roman empire
- This wider context for the study of patristic literature is aided by a third trend, one that might claim the place of honor in the eyes of an outside observer. Current work is characterized by a direct, resolute and extensive dealing with sources.
 - The current expansion of sources and instruments makes the use of sources more desirable and more exact.
- Finally, present day patrologists are generally not inclined to pursue apologetic interests. Increasingly their work is carried out within secular institutions. Their contributions are judged by the value of their scholarship
 - Since WW2 there has been an accelerated interest similar to the previous interest in things medieval and paralleled only by biblical studies.

THEO 206 - Reading 2

Sunday, October 11, 2015 7:49 PM

Christianity is born along the Mediterranean Sea and it took place in the early decades of the Roman Empire. These are 2 important factors to consider.

The Mediterranean Region (Mare Nostrum)

- The lands were blessed with a friendly climate and clear skies
- Circulation from shore to shore is relatively easy
- Resources from land and sea are easily exploitable
- Geographic, Climatic and Human features combined gave an impetus to some of humankind's greatest achievements.
- Egyptians, Greeks and Romans took turns in promoting civilization.

Advent of the Roman Empire

- When Rome took over Athens it became bilingual
 - Latin in the West and Greek in the East.
- Rome developed its own literature over time but at the same time transmitting Greek culture to future generations.
- 100 years past conquering Italy, Rome reaches stability. However 2 civil wars break out shortly after.
- The assassination of Caesar led to further troubles leaving Octavian to pick up the pieces of the republic. He was declared Augustus (he who rules by divine approval) by the senate and assumed the status of Princeps (first citizen), which made him the emperor or supreme chief of the military and the entire state.

The Roman Peace

- Pax Romana - Comprehensive administrative reform that led to stability security and peace. Army and senate were brought under control.
- Frontiers were rectified and made easily defensible.
- Existing seaways and an extended network of paved roads over land brought the empire together.
- The Roman Empire left its marks on culture and civilization. Particularly in terms of administration, jurists (justice) and engineers.

Society and People in the Second Century

- The Roman practice of regular census for fiscal and military uses along with literary, epigraphic, and archeological evidence (mainly limited, though, to upper classes in cities) can help us figure out the demography of the empire. The most serious bets have been able to estimate the population of the empire at 54 million at the death of Augustus in 14 C.E
- Other estimate it to be between 60 to 70 million.
- Cities were generally overcrowded within their precincts and insalubrious offering a welcoming ground to recurrent epidemics. It has been noted that 90 percent of Roman society lived in the countryside, and that 2 percent were wealthy and 8 percent middle-class, while the rest lived in poverty and, in cities, counted on the free distribution of grain and meat, the food banks of the time.
- The slave society was so big in this time that patronage and clientage was crucial for protection and well being in which plebians worked in order to live.
- Material wealth amongst patricians increased and thanks to the mobility of the population, especially at frontiers made the diffusion of Greco Roman culture in the provinces possible.
- The population reaches a plateau of 95 million and begins to decrease due to a lower birth rate and a marked waning in the recruitment of slaves. Also, the military was too big, anarchy, pestilence, soil abandonment under excessive fiscal burden and general economic regression. The decline of the empire started and the presence of the barbarians did not help.
- Lowest population 45 million.

The religious menu of the Romans

- Believed in astrology, magic, gods (old and new). Rituals and ceremonies were performed with precision by appointed personnel (priests, augurs, vestals) in sanctuaries temples and homes.
- Festivals and sacrifices were also important for the soothing effect they produce.
- Romans had a double impact
 - They introduce their trinity - Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, but
 - They also brought back cults to their home.
- Slow trend towards monotheism is perceived. More and more local deities were seen as a mere manifestation of a single power.
- Educated Romans believed in Providence

Prophetic Religions of the book

- Greek and Roman religions had oracles, providing a much sought-after orientation to life (a function first of all discharged by philosophy)
- Judaism, Christianity and Islam were to have prophets and scriptures, the latter an innovation in the Greco-Roman world
- Prophets received a message from God to the people to remind them of their commitment to a personal God, insist that moral codes flowing from faith be adhered to and act as social critics.
- The situations of the Jews in the Roman empire had special features. They were allowed to live according to their laws and enjoyed certain privileges. But under Roman control they were prospering mostly towards the eastern and western areas and formed important colonies in Alexandria and Rome where they had synagogues and schools. However, their monotheism, features of certain practices and reluctance to participate in public life seemed incomprehensible.
- Alas, they had a clear identity and listened to their prophets and present teachers.
- Early Christian communities had an ambivalent view of the Jews, despite being treated like them.
- Christians had turned to the Mediterranean world, had opted for the Greek language and were soon found in major centers of the empire. Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus. They opened the doors to the Gentiles, mainly thanks to the influence of Paul, a former Pharisee with Roman citizenship.
- Christians had recruited the lower class of society and the higher strata joined with time.

Religious Faith

- Christians wanted to align themselves with the pagans because of their high standards for morality.
- Christians did not only believe in the obedience and the commands of God but they also added the personal devotion to their founder.

Christianity around 100 C.E

- 100 years after the death of Jesus, Christianity only appealed to a minority but this minority was diverse and dynamic.
- They made themselves less apocalyptic and progressively taught the ways of virtuous life and appropriate to callings in a civilized society.
- Even though most people lived in rural areas, Christians mostly recruited in cities, recruiting artisans, tradesmen and their households. They adopted the language (Latin or Greek) depending on the area.
- In the second half of the century, we saw the first writers of the New Testament appear in canonical form and Christian apocryphal literature. They were to be called fathers in the present case apostolic fathers, because they were in a position to have known personally some of the apostles. Ignatius of Antioch was one of them.
- An important role of the apostolic fathers, traditionally 7 in number. They reflect the first developments beyond the New Testament writings in matters of church order, life practices, language and theology. Beyond insisting on obedience to the leaders of the community and warning against heresies and schisms, they offer initial delimitation of normative Christianity as regards to its faith and literature.
- Other writings of the first centuries such as gospels, letters, stories and legends, secret revelations, which though received by groups as authoritative and apostolic yet were denied inclusion in the canon and were said to be apocryphal.

- They helped understand the faith of early Christians.
- Apocryphal writings, and the first patristic works are our main sources of information on the manifold diversity of early Christian piety and thought

The Roman Perspective on Christians

- Christians were a puzzle to the Roman world. They were generally rejected by the population. They seemed like an alternative society that posed a threat. They were also feared for their vague power.
- They were perceived as scorning respect for ancestral customs.

The Jewish Perspective on Christians

- Having started as a Jewish sect, they eventually followed their own course. They were brothers who had gone astray by believing in Jesus, they were estranged relatives.
- Bitterness arose concerning Jesus and the apostles. They saw Christianity as a rival twin, but also as renegades and heretics.
- The claims of Jesus have already been seen as blasphemous.

An ambiguous Start

- Christians had a lot of bad press and was a weird flock. Some of their beliefs (resurrection) and their practices (cannibalistic) and some of their attitudes (exaltation of virginity and continence) inspired repulsion and verged on the scandalous.
- There is a double challenge. On the one hand, its relation to Judaism, which it was gradually abandoning, remained still largely unreflected on and had to be explicitly worked out. On the other hand, its relation to Hellenistic culture and especially to the more or less popular moral philosophy, which seemed to offer it support and expression, still had to be clarified.

Professors Commentary

- *For the roman religions, morality was not an important matter. Rituals were more important, to make the balance between themselves and the Gods. And the balancing of this relationship was not necessarily done with Religion*
- *Christianity seemed odd because of their emphasis on morality. (Similar to some Greek philosophies at the time).*
- *Judaism emphasized morality as well (christianity came from judaism) and emphasized issues of equality, poor vs rich, and women vs men.*
- *Christians were against abortion and the abandonment of malformed children at the time. This seemed weird.*
- *Normative / proto orthodox christianity - Starts to talk about canonical writings. Christians started to talk about books to be normatives such as the 4 gospels.*
- *The thing is that roman religion, which was paganism, didn't have scriptures, unlike the Jews and the Christians.*
- *Ambiguous relationship between jews and christians.*
 - *Christians do not have a clear identity for the first 100 years. They try to distinguish themselves from Judaism by making anti jewish sentiments in order to realize their identities.*
 - *This was seen as bitter on behalf of the jews.*

THEO 206 - Reading 3

Monday, October 12, 2015 3:02 PM

The Jewish Legacy

Professors commentary

Messianism - Is a movement of a messiah and an expectation of a messiah. Jesus is referred as a Messiah in Christianity. In Judaism Messiah and in Christianity Xristos, he is an anointed King.

- *At the time of Jesus it referred to this expectation of someone who would liberate the Jewish people. Political saviors are the zealots. But the spiritual savior is the Messiah. Jesus rejects the call to be a political savior.*

There is a lot of apocalypticism, it takes place in times of crisis. People begin to expect something to soothe their suffering. They expect an imminent change or coming (second coming of Jesus)

Besides the Judaism that existed in Palestine and rabbinic Judaism, we have large Jewish communities outside the land of Palestine or Judaea.

- *Alexandria had a lot of Jews, Philo of Alexandria knew Greek and wrote in Greek even though he promotes Judaism. He injects Greek philosophical interpretation. He was using the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible).*
- *He was revered by the church even though he was not Christian. His interpretations were so helpful that they saw him in high regards.*

Reading

- Christianity is closely linked to Judaism. They have the same roots (Israel) and share the Old Testament.

Biblical and Jewish History

- Israel had seen many divine manifestations that belong to the historical period
 - Call of Abraham 1850 B.C.E
 - Moses and the Exodus from Egypt 1250 B.C.E
 - Yahweh's manifestation in Sinai
 - Migration through the desert
 - Solomon builds the First Jewish Temple 950 - 596 B.C.E
 - Fall of Israel (north) to Assyria in 722
 - Fall of Judah (south) in 597 - 587
 - Destruction of the temple in 586
 - Deportation to Babylonia and Egypt - Diaspora
 - Cyrus lets the Jews return to their home land in 538
 - Temple rededicated in 515, acted as a bank for projects, employment and improvements of the capital.
 - Mosaic law is restored by Ezra 450
 - Second temple of Judaism is given to the religious and national entity, lasts from 520/515 B.C.E to 70 C.E
 - Persian period 520-332
 - Hellenistic Period 332-363
 - Roman Rule 63 B.C.E to 395 C.E
 - Second temple Judaism is the soil out of which both rabbinic Judaism and Christianity grew in the first century C.E
 - Second temple (second commonwealth era) saw the domination of Jewish people by a succession of foreign powers except for 80 years of independence 141 - 63 at the time of

- the Hasmonean dynasty 512 -37
- Balance between temple priests and foreign rule is finished with the ruler Antiochus IV epiphanes. Hellenization campaign and makes it the Temple seat of Zeus Olympios or Baal Shamen.
- Jews are eventually exempted from duties of the imperial cult in ca. 20.
- King Herod rebuilds the temple of only which the west wall still lives today 37 B.C.E to 4 C.E.
- Unrest culminated in the first Jewish revolt 66-70 C.E, in Alexandria and above all throughout Palestine.
- Qumran is wiped out in 86 and Jerusalem burned in 70, repression, deportations and executions followed.
- Most revolutionaries skipped out on the resistance to Roman rule which persisted in nationalist Jews in the Diaspora 115-117 and in Palestine.
- Emperor Hadrian rebuilds Jerusalem but calls it Aelia Capitolina and the temple is now dedicated to Jupiter (130).
- Bar Kokhba and Rabbi Akiba led to what has become the second Jewish Rebellion in 132-135. Christians refused to help the Jews out and this is what changed how they both viewed each other.
- Rabbinic Judaism rose out of not having a temple as a powerful sign of God's presence and rule, and without the possibility of sacrificial ritual, religious life and leadership, patterns had to be readjusted. The synagogue came to replace the temple. It was the house of study, the house of prayer, meeting house and guest house.

Biblical and Jewish literature

- Christianity started as a Jewish splinter group and marginal sect during that period of history when Judaism was experiencing the just mentioned transition from the Judaism of the Hebrew Bible to what became known as Rabbinic or Talmudic Judaism. Hence the transition to that form of Judaism serves as a backdrop for understanding Christianity.
- Early Christians had more in common with the Jews than the pagans on the basis of sacred writings.
- Septuagint - Hebrew Bible in Greek format. Latin for seventy referring to the 70 translators who produced it LXX.
- Pentateuch - the first five books of the Bible 500 B.C.E
- Both Jews and Christians used the apocrypha, works found in the LXX but not the Hebrew Bible and the pseudepigrapha, works attributed to biblical figures and not found in the LXX, many of which included apocalyptic writings.
- The scrolls found at Qumran near the Dead Sea since 1947 give us an idea of the kind of Judaism out of which Christianity sprang.
- Jewish authors of the Hellenistic age, whose works were preserved mainly by Christian writers, reflect the situation in which the rise of Christianity took place. Among them Philo (20/15 B.C.E.–50 C.E.), a leading figure of the Jewish community in Alexandria, represents the Greek Diaspora; he recast the biblical narrative in the idiom of Plato and the Stoics, making wide use of the allegorical interpretation that the Alexandrian fathers and Ambrose were to develop with such gusto.
- The historian Josephus (ca. 37–100 C.E.), for his part, at home in Palestine, produced writings that are crucial for the understanding of the Herodian period and of the first revolt.
- Oral Torah eventually gets written as the Talmud

Messianic Dreams and Apocalyptic Visions

- The expectation of divine intervention to usher in a new age was acute in the first century C.E. It can be seen both as the by-product of a national situation exasperated by repeated frustrations, and as the expression of the vivid hopes that God would decisively steer the course of history.

Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism

- Judaism existed in 2 areas, one in Palestine (palestinian judaism / rabbinic judaism) and Babylonia.
 - Note that there was also Jews in Egypt, Asia minor, Syria, Cyrene and Greece who showed a higher degree of assimilation to Greek culture.
- As a group the rabbis concentrated on biblical interpretation in the form of Midrash, emphasizing first of all legal discussions (halakha), secondarily ethical teachings and stories about biblical or rabbinic figures (aggadah)
- Hellenistic Judaism finally withered away for lack of survival power.

Jewish Groups and Sects

- The Pharisees, so much and so unjustly caricatured in Christian literature, developed from about 150 B.C.E. as a loose association of pietists from the middle and lower classes, holding the ancient traditions of Israel as solely authoritative but accepting a whole set of “traditions of the fathers,” which were to be referred to as the “Oral Torah” by later rabbis. They distinguished themselves by their careful observance of the law as well as by their flexibility in adapting the law to new circumstances. In the process, two schools emerged among the Pharisees: the rigid school of Shammai and the more lenient school of Hillel. Their central teachings were to be incorporated in the rabbinic tradition—ideas concerning the soul’s immortality and the resurrection. The Jewish Legacy (50–150) / 31 of the dead, Providence, retribution, angels. As the Hasmonean leaders and their supporters became increasingly Hellenized, Pharisees dissociated themselves from them, thereby ceasing to be a political force and constituting themselves as a group of purely religious leaders, thus passing from politics to piety. Eventually the Pharisee merged with the rabbi, and the Tannaim inherited the Pharisaic approach to Judaism, especially the approach characteristic of the school of Hillel.
- The high priestly office was under the control of the Sadducees, who claimed some continuity with the times of Solomon. They belonged to the aristocracy. Like the Samaritans, they did not appeal to the traditions of the fathers and they favored a sort of literalism in interpreting scripture. Sadducees thought that purity laws did not apply to the daily life of all people but only to the Temple and its priests. They consistently denied the central teachings espoused by the Pharisees and were more open to Hellenization. The high priestly office was under the control of the Sadducees, who claimed some continuity with the times of Solomon. They belonged to the aristocracy. Like the Samaritans, they did not appeal to the traditions of the fathers and they favored a sort of literalism in interpreting scripture. Sadducees thought that purity laws did not apply to the daily life of all people but only to the Temple and its priests. They consistently denied the central teachings espoused by the Pharisees and were more open to Hellenization.
- The Dead Sea Sect (Qumran) presented basically the same features as the Essenes with the addition of sharp messianic and apocalyptic overtones. They actively prepared for the coming age when a clear distinction would emerge between temporal and priestly authority. They were prone to castigate the priest officiating in the Jerusalem Temple. Their relation to the Sadducees and to the Essenes is still debated but seems to have been real in view of their common anti-Hasmonean bent.
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Jewish Christianity

- It was only step by step that Christianity was identified as a distinct religion by its own members, by the Jewish community, and by the Roman rulers. The Jewish influence on Christianity was obviously seminal in a literal sense and there is a Jewish element to Christianity that is essential and permanent. If almost everything in Christianity could, in that way, be called Jewish-Christian,

this communality is certainly not what is meant when reference is made to the precise phenomenon of Jewish-Christianity and to the group of early Christians wearing that name

- Some Christians, Greek-speaking Gentile converts—some of whom may have been previous proselytes or God-fearers—as well as ethnic Jews, were reluctant to give up Jewish observance; critical of Paul and his letters, they assumed that it was preferable to uphold legal 34 / The Shaping of Christianity 1. HE 2.23.4–7. observance along with the church requirements, thus in a way combining the Jewish and the Christian religions. Such is the group properly called Jewish-Christianity, still quite visible within the church around the middle of the second century, distinct from all heretical groups mentioned by Justin² and rather considered with tolerance by him.

From coexistence to hostility

- The Christian writings produced after 70 attest to the beginning of an escalation in negative feelings and rhetoric. The Synoptics, after affirming that the prophecies had been fulfilled in the new Israel, retrojected in their narratives a situation of steady confrontation between Jesus and the Jews. They emphasized the dissociation from nationalist groups and began to shift the blame for the interruption of Jesus' career from the Romans to the Jews. For John the rupture with the synagogue is a fact. Correspondingly, the first anti-Christian polemics among Jews are registered before the end of the first century
- The confrontation became antagonism when it was claimed that Christianity supersedes Israel, being the authentic heir to Israel's traditions (see Barnabas, Epistle to Hebrews) and fulfilling its messianic prophecy (Justin in 140/155).
- Clear hostility emerged in Melito of Sardis (ca. 160), who through his misreading of the gospels still more bluntly than Justin held the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus, inaugurating a fateful tradition of interpretation that was to be reinforced in the fourth century (Ephrem, John Chrysostom).

The bible in Christianity

- From the start, the Jewish scriptures in the LXX version were the Bible of the Christians: They were seen as a Christian book, pointing to the new era opened up by the activity of Jesus and his followers.
- Philo, living in a Gentile context, had exploited the allegorical interpretation in order to make the Jewish Bible understandable or acceptable. The Alexandrian school developed that form of exegesis along with its "high" Christology. In Palestine the sages were rather inclined to the sounding of the literal meaning; not only did Jewish-Christianity with its concern for the maintenance of the law take over that stance, it was also promulgated by the Antiochene school of interpretation with its emphasis on the literal sense, its dependence on Jewish haggadic literature, and its "low" Christology.

The Dead Sea Scroll

Professors Commentary

- *The fragment of the war scroll speaks of the expectations of the Essenes. The war at the end of the world, and they speak of how they are the chosen one. Others betrayed the covenant with their sinfulness. They see themselves as the sons of light. There is a war between the sons of light (those faithful to the covenant) and the sons of dark.*
- *This is a deeper symbolism that goes back to the first Jewish temple that was developed by the occupation of the Jews through various populations.*
- *Represents good vs evil and (opposition between the sinful and the saints). Later adopted by the Christians*
- *There are similarities between the Dead Sea Scroll and the Revelations*
 - *According to the War Scroll the sole purpose of the war was to enable the sectarians to return and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and renew the practice of holy sacrifices*
 - *The Book of Revelations, discusses the building of a heavenly Jerusalem and not a temple.*

This is a type of apocalyptic literature that was produced in a time of crisis (similarity to the war scroll).

- *Mentions of the angel of darkness (abailial) leads the sons of darkness in to the war.*
- *The god of Israel will be the winners of the war.*
- *The essenes have joined forces with the zealots and other nationalist jewish groups in the year 66. For them the end of the world already had come for them with the destruction of the temple.*
- *Unfortunately they loose to the romans.*

Reading notes

- 1 For the battle is yours! With the might of your hand their corpses have been torn to pieces with no-one to bury them. Goliath from Gath, gallant giant, 2 you delivered into the hands of David, your servant, for he trusted in your powerful name and not in sword or spear. For the battle is yours! 3 The Philistines you humiliated many times for your holy name. By the hand of our kings, besides, you saved us many times 4 thanks to your mercy, and not by our own deeds by which we did wrong, nor by our sinful actions. For the battle is yours! And it is from you that power comes, 5 and not from our own being.
- The stricken of spirit you shall set aflame, like a torch of fire in straw, devouring wickedness, without ceasing until, 11 the sin has been consumed. From of old [you] foretold [us the appoin]ted time of the power of your hand against the Kittim saying: « Ashur will fall by the sword of not a man, the sword of 12 not a human being will devour it.» 13 For you will deliver into the hands of the poor the [ene]mies of all the countries, and in the hand of those prone in the dust in order to fell the powerful ones of the nations, to return the reward of 14 sin on [theirs guilty] heads, and to pronounce the justice of your truthful judgment on every son of man, and to make an ever-lasting name for yourself among the people of 15 [...]
- Fill your land with glory and your inheritance with blessing: may herds of flocks be in your fields, /silver,/ gold, and precious stones 13 in your palaces! Rejoice, Zion, passionately! Shine with jubilation, Jerusalem! Exult, all the cities of Judah! Open 14 your gate[s] continuously so that the wealth of the nations can be brought to you! Their kings shall wait on you, all your oppressors lie prone before you, the dust 15 [of your feet they shall lick. Daughter]s of my nation, shout with jubilant voice! Adorn yourselves with splendid finery! Rule over the king[dom of ...] 16 [... and] Israel to reign for ever. Blank [...] 17 [...] their [...] the heroes of the war, Jerusalem [...] 18 [...] above the heavens, Lord

THEO 206 - Reading 4

Sunday, October 18, 2015 4:39 PM

The Greek Legacy - Professors Commentary

- *One important issue here that you should understand is the connection of Hellenism. It is the Greek way that promoted Greek philosophy, trade, wars, culture in the Greco-Roman empire and it's relationship with Judaism and Christianity. You saw in the slides that in fact what happened that Judaism tended to reject Hellenism in general in the land of Judeah. However, this wasn't the case outside of this land. For example Philo of Alexander he was an important Hellenistic Jew. He was proud to say that there were affinities between Greek philosophy and Judaism. He thought that Greek philosophers had read Moses (even though it's not the case). But it was a way to connect Greek and Jewish philosophy.*
- *In this reading you will also learn that Christianity received help from Hellenism by adopting it as the lingua franca of the time. The first Christian writings are written in Greek as well as the New Testament.*
- *You will also learn about many philosophical schools which emphasized virtue, and happiness, and the dissatisfaction with the current human condition. Just like Christians they encouraged people to be virtuous and talked about how bad humans were especially in the first several centuries when Christianity was persecuted.*
- *You will also learn about important philosophical figures (Socrates, the Stoics who recommended virtue). Some Christians have blended a number of these elements. This is what formed the first Christian theology at the time. You will also learn about competition between them. Because they were talking about the same issues, especially since Christians were trying to form and attract new believers in their church. Philosophy at the time had the appearance of religion in the Jewish and Christian sense of the world. It's not necessarily so. It is the case of Celsus, he thought Christianity was for the uneducated and that their philosophies were poorly written, did not understand rhetorics. They cannot speak in a very elaborate way.*
- *Tertullian - He asked what does Athens have to do with Jerusalem. He means what does philosophy have to do with Christianity. Why do we need philosophy as Christians? This has remained a valid question to this day. Why do we need this? Jesus wasn't a philosopher. It's because Christianity was born in the Greek environment and in the environment of those Greek schools that lead to competition as well.*
- *By adopting the language of Hellenism and the way of thinking and Christianity was able to spread its message.*

The Greek Legacy (50 - 170)

- *Judaism was the native soil of early Christianity and that is why Judaism had to be treated in the first place. But now it must be emphasized: The Judaism that concerns us here was in a state of more or less advanced Hellenization.*
- *Around 1950 and with the help of technology it became widely recognized that Hellenistic influences on Christianity had been chiefly mediated through the variously tinted Greek-speaking Judaism thriving in the Diaspora and in Palestine itself. Even elements that until then were thought to have directly shaped Christianity (pre-Gnostic tendencies, aspects of Hellenistic mystery religions, and popular philosophy) appeared now to have largely reached the young movement via their various Jewish embodiments. A consensus developed then that Hellenistic Judaism, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora, exercised the greatest influence on the rise of the church.*

The Hellenistic Period

- *"Hellenism" first designates a historical period, the Hellenistic age ushered in by the Macedonian Alexander the Great (whose tutor had been Aristotle) and extending from 332 B.C.E. onward. It followed on*

the classical (Hellenic) age (sixth to fifth centuries) and overlapped with the most creative period of Greek cultural history, 500 to 200. Spreading from India to Spain and including Persian, Semitic, and Egyptian tracts, Alexander's empire made possible the universalization of Greek culture. On his death three dynasties divided the realm, though, and put a check on his dream of unification: The Antigonids in Macedonia were of little import; the Ptolemies (304–230) ruled from Egypt and its recent foundation, Alexandria; the Seleucids (312–295) governed Babylonia, Syria, and Palestine from their main center, Antioch. Ptolemies and Seleucids were most of the time at swords' point with each other. For over two centuries and a half, Palestine appeared as a toy in the hands of Egypt and Syria. It has been observed that at least 200 campaigns were fought in or across Palestine during that period. Rivalries between the two main dynasties spawned various alignments in the land and gave the native religious parties a distinctly political slant.

Hellenistic Culture

- Hellenism refers to a specific cultural phenomenon, a world culture that permeated the western and eastern parts of the Mediterranean world; it extended well into Roman times. In fact, although the Romans were the ones who helped Greek culture to its victory, the Greeks' influence around the world was already felt prior to the Hellenistic period and the Roman takeover, and remained dominant in the East up to the fourth century C.E. Mentioned for the first time along with "Judaism" during the Hasmonean period (2 Mc 2:21, 4:13), "Hellenism" received, from scholars in the nineteenth century, an extended meaning. It now denotes that blend of Greece and the Orient arising in the wake of Alexander's conquests and embracing all aspects of life.
- Beyond the command of the Greek language, it came to mean the adoption of Greek education and its ideals in matters of administration, warfare, trade, commerce, sport, rhetoric, literature, philosophy. Greek culture thus understood exercised a pervasive influence and shaped all forms of life and thought among the people who came in contact with it.
- Hellenistic culture was dominated by two figures: Alexander the Great, who dreamed it, and Augustus, who Hellenized the most important regions of the realm and made Romans the patrons of Greek culture. Claiming to originate from the Aeneas of the Homeric epic, the Romans took over the political and cultural heritage of Alexander, without properly initiating a new culture; along with Latin, Greek was to be the really effective language.

Hellenism in Palestine

- The process of Hellenization in Palestine began with Alexander's conquest in 332 and was intensified thereafter. Greek became the language of commerce, government, and literature in the cities and in the upper levels of society. Aramaic and Hebrew continued to be used in other areas of life, so that a truly bilingual (or trilingual) society emerged, especially in cities like Jerusalem.
- Palestinian Judaism stood in a situation of uneasy tension between acceptance and rejection of the Hellenistic zeitgeist. It was clear to mobile strata of society that, were they to climb the social ladder and share in the "blessings of civilization," they had to invest in better education, that is, Greek paideia, and multiply contacts with the non-Jewish world.
- A movement appeared around 175 B.C.E., predominantly made up of well-to-do aristocrats of Jerusalem around the high priest Jason, that espoused the so-called Hellenistic reform; it was symbolized by the construction, due to the same Jason, of a gymnasium at the foot of the temple mount. Encouraged by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, it sought to transform the largely international Jerusalem into a Greek polis, to alter the traditional way of life, and to bring about what was perceived by some as an excessive Hellenization of the land, even as an attempt to abolish Torah.
- Against the penetration of that alien spirit the Maccabees revolted (168–164) and led a movement of self-assertion to overcome cultural and religious assimilation,

and to counter the policy of alienation sponsored by the Jewish reform party. In spite of the success of the nationalistic revolt, the Hasmoneans did not stop nor even really slow down the process of Hellenization in Palestine; as soon as they themselves came to power they pursued it. In fact, with the passing of time, Jewish faith felt less and less threatened by Hellenization. Greek models were imitated without inhibition; a good example can be seen in the gerousia, made up of principal priests, rich lay nobility, landowners, and heads of clans, from Herod's time called the Sanhedrin. It was a borrowed Greek institution. With Herod and the Herodians the process reached a new climax.

- Most inscriptions connected with the Temple and Jewish burials in the first century are in Greek. Paul, some of Jesus' disciples, the seven "Hellenists" of Acts 6.

Jewish Break with Hellenism

- Owing to the failure of the Roman procurators and their administration in the 50s C.E., the radical anti-Roman forces, at one and the same time anti-Hellenist, began again to gain ground and precipitated the final catastrophe. The Jewish wars between 66 and 135 had as a sequel the destruction of a flourishing Jewish-Hellenistic culture that involved a major segment of the population. That segment, made up of various interest groups (Herodians, high-priestly families, Jews returning from the Diaspora, well-to-do proselytes, landowners merchants, etc.), joined the moderate Pharisees of the Hillel school and the Jerusalem middle class, and stood up to the Jewish revolutionaries. To no avail. Their attempts to integrate Judea into the Roman Empire by encouraging Greek education and life-style had miscarried. The Roman repression bitterly put an end to their designs of a shared culture. Henceforth Judaism would be more concerned with its own difference; fixed on the letter of Torah, it would gradually renounce the dream of becoming a world religion.

Two Opposite Reactions

- The relation of Christianity to Judaism had been one of dependence and, for that reason, it followed a one-way path. The rise of Christianity left Judaism quite unaffected. Not so with respect to Christianity and Hellenism. Here the relation was one of interaction by virtue of which each party appropriated elements of the other and sought mutual accommodation. For Christianity the reception of Greek culture was evidently to be fraught with historic consequences, usually beneficial, though at times uncomfortable.

The First Christians and the Gentiles

- The first bearers of the Christian proclamation are said to have come from the Palestinian creative middle class open to Hellenism, although their literary and philosophical education appeared rather superficial. At any event, it was natural, in the work of gathering all nations into a "new Israel," that the apostles first turned to Hellenized Jews in Palestine and abroad, and to those Gentiles in Palestine and abroad who had been already touched by the influential Jewish communities, and that they reaped special success among those groups
- Thus the Greek language in the form of koine (common Greek spoken in the Hellenistic and Roman periods) was the natural vehicle for the Christian proclamation in Hellenized Palestine, in Syria, Asia Minor, the Aegean, and Rome

Encounter with the Real Gentiles

- When confronted with more sophisticated Hellenists among Gentiles, for example, in Athens and Ephesus, the missionaries were apparently shaken and certainly made aware of the limitations of their own education. The overcoming of such limitations on the part of Christian spokesmen would be the decisive event of the second century.
- In the meantime, the first confrontation with real Gentiles revealed a quality of Hellenism unfamiliar to the Palestinian apostles. Here we can look at the

example of Paul, one of the better educated members of the community. His education in the Hellenized Semitic Tarsus and in Jerusalem (“at the feet of Gamaliel”: Acts 22:3) had certainly included training in rhetoric and pharisaic exegesis, sprinkled with a shimmer of apocalyptic worldview. In philosophy his education seems to have been confined to its popular form. What else could be expected? After all, what gave impetus to the mission was less the level of culture of the missionaries than their vivid expectation of God’s impending action.

- Paul’s education had ill prepared him for an encounter with the “real Gentiles,” that is, those who had imbibed Greek education from birth and had noticeable knowledge of the philosophical tradition. They were the ones who posed the most disquieting challenge to the mission. To approach them and their views of the world was an invitation to an intellectual venture within the overall religious campaign.

The Challenge of Greek Thought

- To turn to those Gentiles, then, was to turn to a world of thought that, to be sure, had already affected Judaism to some extent (there were Hellenized poets and philosophers of the Stoic and eclectic brand in Palestine). That world of thought, however, went beyond what the Jews had generally perceived of it; it had its own history and vitality. Christianity had now to define itself in relation to the culture that had been shaping the Mediterranean world for centuries.
- In the first and second centuries the philosophical ground, difficult to reconnoiter with total clarity, was mainly occupied by the conglomerate called Middle Platonism. After the mid-third century, Neoplatonism took its place. How had it come to the philosophy of the day called Middle Platonism in the first place?

Philosophical Schools

- For centuries there had been widespread talk about “schools” (haireseis) to designate loose associations of like-minded people espousing the way of life recommended by a particular philosopher. Judaism itself had been referred to by the Jew Aristobulus (ca. 175 B.C.E.) as “our school of philosophy.”² From the fourth century B.C.E. what the various philosophical schools had in common was a keen interest in virtue and happiness, and a flaunted dissatisfaction with the human condition. Philosophers taught people to turn from a life of luxury, self-indulgence, and superstition to a life of discipline, freedom, and wisdom. They promised tranquillity and happiness to those who did. To those general concerns each school added its own specific ingredient and offered “differing ways of deliverance from the uninformed and mentally footloose life.”³ Teachings and life-style of the schools are particularly relevant to an understanding of early Christianity.
- The Cynics, of either mild or austere allegiance, appealed to many in the Mediterranean world. They were dogged critics of those received ideas and customs that encouraged falsity in society and religion. Yet they had nothing to do with our popular label cynical, but were deeply concerned with how to live a better life. Making use of philosophical anecdotes of the kind that marks Jesus’ sayings and style and the life of the first desert ascetics, Cynics insisted on a conduct based on frugality, simple demeanor, and personal decision. The notion of world-citizenship was also one of their leitmotifs. The Sceptics, for their part, shared the Cynics’ attitude toward ancient dogmas. Ironically, they came to be located mainly among the traditional Platonic Academy.
- The Stoics had a lasting impact on Christian ethics and conceptuality. In many matters quite close to the Peripatetics, the followers of Aristotle, the Stoics recommended the virtuous life and a life according to nature, an ideal wrought by mental discipline and apatheia (a kind of active indifference), and they insisted that one’s worth is to be judged by the canons of virtue, not by one’s descent. Stoicism came close to constituting a religion. At least it represented a philosophy of life that, in addition to the attention given to one’s conduct and to self-mastery, enjoins people to see the divine reality in everything and to detect a Providence at work in the world. Stoicism was to fade into the kind of Christianity represented by

Clement of Alexandria or into the resurgent Platonism. Seeking, as the Stoics also did, to liberate humans from fate and from dependence and reliance on externals, the Epicureans were well known for their unrelenting critique of religious fear. They formed highly organized communities (collegia), taking an oath of obedience to their founder and teachers. Their ideal in ethics was summarized in ataraxia (tranquillity) and expressed itself in the concern to free oneself from illusory anxieties and false needs. With the Christians they were to share the same suspicions of presumed atheism, misanthropy, social irresponsibility, and sexual immorality.

- Nothing prevented one from picking left and right bits of philosophical wisdom for the conduct of one's life. Around the turn of the era all thinkers had a good dose of eclecticism, well illustrated by Cicero, who was hard pressed to decide between Plato and the Stoic Cleanthes; he personally came up with an unbinding blend of disparate wisdom and, as a true Roman, finally reverted to the traditional religion of the ancient gods. Eclecticism certainly satisfied his intellectual curiosity although it seems to have been of little use in his personal life. Others were able to make a better use of the "philosophical supermarket."
- Philosophical conflicts in the second century led to the triumph of mysticism and prepared the way for Neoplatonism, which was to evolve in the direction of a religious philosophy and thereby itself become a serious rival of Christianity.

Philosophy a Competitor

- The initially ambivalent attitude toward philosophy might be attributed to the perception that Hellenistic philosophy, much as it criticized traditional religions, constituted a rival religion of sorts. As encountered in the various schools, it had all the appearances of a religion, proposing a way of life based on specific beliefs and practices, offering a coherent worldview along with practical guidance

Alliance with Greek Thought

- It therefore became natural for Christian writers to show interest in the moral teaching of the philosophers and to associate themselves with them—in fact Christianity made few innovations in morality—in order to involve the masses and thereby try to alter the moral texture of the Roman world.
- Morality was quite without interest to Greco-Roman cults, not known for proposing codes of ethics. This, admittedly, was the reason why "pagan philosophy had often been very cool towards popular religion."⁶ Seemingly aware of the double meaning of "Hellenism" (paganism, Greek culture), the church fathers made a clear distinction between pagan religion and Greek philosophy
- They generally chose to make common cause with philosophy and to oppose pagan cults with the same energy they displayed from the second century in their opposition to "heresies" (now understood as doctrines at variance with prevailing "orthodox" beliefs). Both cults and heresies, in the end, will be traced back to demonic origins

Justin Martyr (160 - 165) And Greek Philosophy

- Born in Palestine, a descendant of Greek or Roman colonists settled in Samaria since 72 C.E., Justin, he tells us in a stylized account, embarked on a spiritual pilgrimage in search of "the knowledge of reality and a clear understanding of truth."⁷ That quest for the sources of religious and moral knowledge took him through the main philosophical schools of the time: Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean, Platonist. Having exhausted what philosophy could offer him and still unsatisfied, he came into contact with the writings of the Jewish prophets and finally those of the Christian church. There he found the end of his philosophical pursuit, convinced that Christianity was the true philosophy. He converted (probably in Ephesus) and then became a philosophy teacher in Rome—wearing the philosopher's cloak and looking much like a Cynic philosopher—where he was martyred for his faith around 165, after having repeatedly confessed that as a Christian he was atheist "so far as gods of this sort (i.e., pagan gods) are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God."⁸

- In his extant writings, the largest set of writings from one single Christian author until the middle of the second century, Justin addresses a double audience. (A lost writing, the *Syntagma*, dealt with heresies and had a Christian audience.) First in his *Dialogue with the Jew Tripho* (a Hellenized Jew!), Justin musters all the resources of typological exegesis to convince the Jews that their scripture, the Old Testament, is superseded, that Judaism has been replaced or crowned by Christianity, that the Old Testament promises have been fulfilled in the career of Jesus and the life of the church. (Note that Justin is not able to call on a book called the New Testament, which does not yet exist; he can appeal only to the “memoirs” of the apostles.) Christians constitute a “third race” between or beyond Greeks and barbarians (Jews). They have begun to gather all people into the new and true Israel and they invite the Jews to recognize the signs of the times. Justin hoped to win over more cultured Jews, encouraged by the fact that around 155 there were still a good number of Jews in the Christian ranks.
- It is in his *Apology*, a petition addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius, the Roman senate, and the Roman people on behalf of the maligned Christians whose civic loyalty and reliability he wishes to vouch for, that Justin conducts the most searching interpretation of Greek philosophy from a Christian perspective so far, and thereby offers what might be the first instance of a real encounter with pagan culture. Perhaps prompted by Polycarp’s death at the stake in 156, Justin is eager to respond to current prejudices and slanders affecting the Christians. In doing so, he is led to make quite daring claims for Christianity; the critic Celsus seems to have taken Justin’s arguments seriously enough to try in his turn to discredit them in his work, the *True Logos*.
- Justin’s main argument is this: Among Christians is found Christ the universal Logos, who is divine Reason and embodies the whole truth; but teachings similar to Christian teachings are also found, right or distorted, in various forms of pagan thought. To account for this state of affairs Justin offers three theories that were to keep recurring in the history of Christian thought.
 1. The agreements with Greek philosophical tenets are due to the fact that philosophers read or “borrowed from the prophet Moses”⁹ and the Old Testament, a bizarre argument already put forward by Aristobulus in 175 B.C.E. and taken over by Philo. (It is interesting to note that Celsus thought the opposite—that the prophets had stolen from the Greeks!) This is the “loan theory”; its purpose was to vindicate the antiquity of Christianity. It was to become, in the hands of Justin’s disciple Tatian, the “theft theory”; without too much regard for ethical niceties, Clement of Alexandria was to add that the thief genuinely possesses what he steals. Perhaps surprisingly to us, a contemporary of Justin, the philosopher Numenius of Apamea, agreed with Justin on that score and used to ask: “What else is Plato but Moses in Attic Greek.”
 2. Distortions of the truth encountered, for instance, in Greek mythology with its immoral stories, but also in philosophical aberrations, are the works of the demons’ “wicked disguise.”¹² This is the “demons theory”; it explains both the disagreements with Christian views and those among philosophical schools
 3. More valuable is the logos or “logos spermatikos theory,” in which logos refers both to Christ the Word and to human reason, and which says: The whole of logos is in Jesus Christ, the sowing Logos, but portions of it are also found among Jews and Greeks, in the words of prophets and philosophers. These are seeds of truth implanted in human hearts, being the formative principle of right knowledge and right living. Thus Christ was “known by Socrates, for He was and is the Logos, who is in every man
- A searching exploration, his position has been variously assessed by theologians—applauded by most, seen by some as a case of naive

harmonization and by others as a melding of Christianity into Platonism (i.e., Middle Platonism), by still others as a dangerous contamination of Christianity by philosophy, which, under the cover of a clumsy camouflage, was able to make inroads into Christianity and ended up rendering a fatal disservice to Christian thought.

- However Justin's contribution is judged, it ought to be maintained that thanks to the work of second-century Apologists Christianity raised itself to the level of respectability that was up to then the exclusive preserve of philosophy. Pagans soon began to acknowledge that promotion. For instance, it has been noted that Galen (131–201) is "the first pagan author who implicitly places Greek philosophy and the Christian religion on the same footing."¹⁵ The way was thus prepared for philosophical theology and, we might say, for theology altogether.

Threat of All-Out Hellenization

- Over the centuries it has been a recurrent criticism of Paul, mainly in Jewish circles, that as he turned to the Gentiles he succumbed to Hellenism and that he was rightly censured for his presumed apostasy to Hellenistic syncretism. Paul is sometimes blamed for having begun a process that would result in people's thinking they converted to a religious faith when in fact they were merely embracing a new philosophical position. Some scholars see a similar ambiguity even in Augustine's conversion. Affirmations of that kind, however, tend to short-circuit a complex process that still is in need of greater exploration and remains an object of research. As for Justin and the Apologists, in their impassioned effort to make Christianity understandable and acceptable to well-educated people in particular, one would be hard pressed to demonstrate how they have unduly watered down the religious element. They were rather involved in a novel contest and fought expressly for the cause of Christ; the sincerity of their commitment was paid for by many with their lives.
- But the danger of excessive Hellenization was there and it is a sign of its potential noxiousness that, when it was not resisted, it led to marginality in relation to the mainstream church, as will appear below. In principle Christianity intended to interact with Hellenism, not to be subordinated to it. But the debate continues and it remains a valid and creative query to investigate the extent to which Christianity was Hellenized as well as the extent to which Hellenism was Christianized.

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The First Apology - Professors Commentary

Chapter 6 - The charge of atheism is refuted

The main idea is that Christians were accused of being atheists, He refuses that. If they are to be considered to be pagans, they are atheists but if they are considered as Christians, they are not atheists. He talks here about God the Father, who he calls him the sun who came from him and the prophetic spirit and Christians worship these 3. He is not afraid to confess about the trinity. Early occurrence of the doctrine of the trinity.

Chapter 7 - If Christians are to be tried they must be judged individually, being Christian doesn't mean we are criminals. There are maybe some who are criminals but the rule is that we try not to be and Christianity has nothing to do with criminality.

Chapter 8 - Christians are not afraid to confess their faith in God because they have a high hope that in the kingdom of God they will live in a world where there is no sin and live in a just world.

Chapter 46 - The word in the world before christ, there is an issue before the coming of Jesus Christ and before the incarnation of the word of God into the historical person. He said that there were people who lived before this and they themselves had a part of the knowledge of the logos. They were partakers, he

introduces the theory of the logos. It is the important principle that Greek people had was present in the world always. But the fullness of its presence is only made through Jesus. When the logos became incarnate in an actual human. It wasn't just the logos spermatikos (seminal reasons) it became incarnate.

- This chapter also deals with the creed. It's an early version of a creed that Justin had with his community. According to the word of God, the word was born from a virgin mother and a man and died and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. This is one of the earliest forms of the Creed.
- In the 3rd century in the creed of Nicene Constantinople this element is taken again.

Chapter 49 - Talks about Jesus's rejection from the Jewish people which was foretold by the prophets. He says that he reflects a tension that already existed in that time between the Jewish religion and Christianity. This tension existed for reasons that people would oppose an NRM. There were prophecies that spoke about the rejections but today people see it more as a reflection of social tensions of the time.

Chapter 6. Charge of atheism refuted

- Hence are we called atheists. And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son (who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to Him), and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and truth, and declaring without grudging to every one who wishes to learn, as we have been taught.

Chapter 7. Each Christian must be tried by his own life

- But some one will say, Some have ere now been arrested and convicted as evil-doers. For you condemn many, many a time, after inquiring into the life of each of the accused severally, but not on account of those of whom we have been speaking. And this we acknowledge, that as among the Greeks those who teach such theories as please themselves are all called by the one name Philosopher, though their doctrines be diverse, so also among the Barbarians this name on which accusations are accumulated is the common property of those who are and those who seem wise. For all are called Christians. Wherefore we demand that the deeds of all those who are accused to you be judged, in order that each one who is convicted may be punished as an evil-doer, and not as a Christian; and if it is clear that any one is blameless, that he may be acquitted, since by the mere fact of his being a Christian he does no wrong. For we will not require that you punish our accusers; they being sufficiently punished by their present wickedness and ignorance of what is right

Chapter 8. Christians confess their faith in God

- And reckon that it is for your sakes we have been saying these things; for it is in our power, when we are examined, to deny that we are Christians; but we would not live by telling a lie. For, impelled by the desire of the eternal and pure life, we seek the abode that is with God, the Father and Creator of all, and hasten to confess our faith, persuaded and convinced as we are that they who have proved to God by their works that they followed Him, and loved to abide with Him where there is no sin to cause disturbance, can obtain these things. This, then, to speak shortly, is what we expect and have learned from Christ, and teach. And Plato, in like manner, used to say that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the wicked who came before them; and we say that the same thing will be done, but at the hand of Christ, and upon the wicked in the same bodies united again to their spirits which are now to undergo everlasting punishment; and not only, as Plato said, for a period of a thousand years. And if any one say that this is incredible or impossible, this error of ours is one which concerns ourselves only, and no other person, so long as you cannot convict us of doing any harm.

Chapter 46. The Word in the world before Christ

- But lest some should, without reason, and for the perversion of what we teach, maintain that we say that Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago under Cyrenius, and subsequently, in the time of Pontius Pilate, taught what we say He taught; and should cry out against us as though all men who were born before Him were irresponsible — let us anticipate and solve the difficulty. We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious. So that even they who lived before Christ, and lived without reason, were wicked and hostile to Christ, and slew those who lived reasonably. But who, through the power of the Word, according to the will of God the Father and Lord of all, He was born of a virgin as a man, and was named Jesus, and was crucified, and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, an intelligent man will be able to comprehend from what has been already so largely said. And we, since the proof of this subject is less needful now, will pass for the present to the proof of those things which are urgent.

Chapter 49. His rejection by the Jews foretold

- And again, how it was said by the same Isaiah, that the Gentile nations who were not looking for Him should worship Him, but the Jews who always expected Him should not recognize Him when He came. And the words are spoken as from the person of Christ; and they are these I was manifest to them that asked not for Me; I was found of them that sought Me not: I said, Behold Me, to a nation that called not on My name. I spread out My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people, to those who walked in a way that is not good, but follow after their own sins; a people that provokes Me to anger to My face. Isaiah 65:1-3 For the Jews having the prophecies, and being always in expectation of the Christ to come, did not recognize Him; and not only so, but even treated Him shamefully. But the Gentiles, who had never heard anything about Christ, until the apostles set out from Jerusalem and preached concerning Him, and gave them the prophecies, were filled with joy and faith, and cast away their idols, and dedicated themselves to the Unbegotten God through Christ. And that it was foreknown that these infamous things should be uttered against those who confessed Christ, and that those who slandered Him, and said that it was well to preserve the ancient customs, should be miserable, hear what was briefly said by Isaiah; it is this: Woe unto them that call sweet bitter, and bitter sweet. Isaiah 5:20

THEO 206 - Reading 5

Sunday, October 25, 2015 7:15 PM

Professors commentary - Varieties of Syncreticism

- Present even today where we are trying to take many doctrines and combine them as a whole (new age movement)
- In the beginnings of christianity this phenomenon was also present. It affected a lot of the doctrines in early christianity, especially the heretical ones until the 20th c. Nowadays we change our terminology. Our knowledge of these movements have changed as well as our perceptions. We see them more as syncretical, from what became orthodox christianity (4th and 5th c).
- Vallee presents 3 groups
 - Gnosticism
 - Manichiasm - sort of late manifestation of gnosticism that is condemned by church fathers. (Augustin) 4-5th c
 - Mystery cults⁸

Orthodoxy vs Heresy and New terminology

- Heresiologists - Proto orthodox authors (eclisiastical christianity, those embraced by the church), those who define the church. In this group, I discussed already that Leon 2cnd century proto orthodox author, wrote against gnostics (valentinian) and said they were heresies.
- Justin Martyr - Liked Greek philosphy saw it in a positive light,
- Arinaous - saw philosophy in a negative light. Suspected the gnostics as being badly influenced by philosophy. Saw that they were pooring their contempt on the church.
 - He Opposed the rule of faith in the gnostic tradition. He claimed that the proto orthodox leaders had the same beliefs and were not part of the same group. This is only possible later, when orthodoxy becomes more cristallized in the 4th and 5th c when consults are being held and they deal with various issues. But at this time in the 2cnd century, the environment was much more fluid. He doesn't wanna recognize that but scholarship shows us that things were more complicated than he thought. We have Cathololics and are divided into anglican, pentacostal etc... they're all christians despite their differences.

Heresiologists

- Hypolythus of Rome p71
- Turtolian also 2cnd to 3rd century
- Clement and Origin (more sympathetic to philosphy) although they took shots at groups who misused philosphy in their interpretation of christianity.

The dwindling of tolerance

- Important because in this processus of arguing against the heresies, the mystery cults and manichiasm, (were regarded as christians) the proto orthodox authors defined their beliefs. It took several hundred years that culminated with the birth of orthodoxy, and the list of books that were to be included in the NT, and other books hat were said to be canonical at certain times.
- In our understanding of orthodoxy and heresy today, a major role was played by a book written by a german author, the 2cnd world war starts it was disregarded and forgotten, until the late 1960's and was translated into english in 1970's whether one agrees or disagrees with this book. It is clear in the anglo american scholarship, we cannot ignore the thesis of Walter Bauer. Orthodoxy was the winner in the battle between orthodoxy and heresies (and their own orthodox doctrines). Nowadays we do not have evidence of a battle

but his arguments are important because they draw attention to this notion of a complex picture in christianity. Something that is comparable to today. Although they disagree with one another, the crystalization of doctrine was something that lead to the exclusion of certain groups. There werent any real wars, it was an ideological war. The winners were really the ones that took their time to understand what they believed and whether that agreed with the original message of Jesus.

- *Canonicity - The important issues were raised, was how old the books were to be considered canonical. The gnostics and manicheans made appeal to books that werent really ancient. The proto orthodox people though did, some of the earliest to the time of Jesus. That is an important idea to keep in mind.*
- *The church had a difficulty to separate heresy and orthodoxy, they didn't have clear criteria to separate them and clear awareness of an appropriate authority to take care of this. They only came during the debates themselves.*
- *Clement and Origen were living in the 2cnd century and were like school principals. They were part of the administration and the teaching. 1 century after them, the bishops felt that this type of authority beyond their control was necessary to be brought under the church control of the bishop. Thus there is a centralization of church authority.*
- *2cnd and 3rd century Clement and origen are independent scholars. And we don't see independent scholars after 4th century, unless they are under the authority of a bishop.*

Reading Notes - Varieties of Syncretism

Syncretism

Now from the point of view of its prehistory Christianity, like all religions for that matter, was syncretistic; it could not begin and grow without incorporating elements coming from the “outside,” especially from the not particularly monolithic Judaism and from Hellenism. From its inception, Christianity was never a pure and pristine entity totally alien to its surroundings

The term syncretism is derived from a metaphor relating to chemical processes (such as mix, alloy, compound, amalgam) but its meaning remains fluid. For some it connotes decline and fall in regard to presumed pure beginnings; then it designates an artificial mix of sundry and incompatible things, and implies an illicit contamination or compromise. In that sense it easily becomes a term of abuse. For others (and it is the way the term is used here) it does not carry a value judgment; it simply refers to a universal cultural phenomenon, common to the formation of all religions in their very first stages and resulting naturally from sociohistorical placing, population movements, and/or explicit religious propaganda.

In the formative period of Christianity, three great religious constellations fully deserve the strict epithet syncretist: mystery religions, Gnosticism, and Manichaeism.

Oriental Cults and Mysteries

Most Greek cults and mystery religions were based on the agrarian cycle. Great gods and nature spirits were celebrated at festivals related to agriculture and fertility. This became true also of the Roman religion from the third century B.C.E. when its deities were identified with Greek deities (the famous *interpretatio romana*) or new cults were introduced to satisfy the religious needs of the individual.

Variety of Mysteries

“Mystery” refers to a secret rite performed in a ceremony of initiation that allowed certain individuals to enter into a privileged relation with a god/goddess and receive certain benefits therefrom. Along with the Syrian sophist Pausanias, Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* (or *Golden Ass*) written around 150 C.E. is our principal source of information here, summing up the epoch with its multiple alternatives in thought and religion. The main mysteries of Hellenistic and Roman times included the Greek mysteries of the grain-goddess Demeter at Eleusis, appealing mostly to rural populations; the originally Egyptian, then Hellenized mysteries of Isis and Osiris/Sarapis, more urban in character; those of the Syrian goddess Atargatis, of the Phrygian Cybele (the “Great Mother” of the gods) and Attis, of the Phoenician Astarte and Adonis. Those cults moved around the Mediterranean and, through transfer of personality traits, identifications (e.g., Astarte was successively identified with Atargatis, then with Cybele, finally with Aphrodite and Demeter), and combinations, received an international stamp. This evolution applies also to the religious transformations of the cult of Dionysus (the Roman Bacchus); to Orphism, often allied with Pythagorean ideas; even to Judaism in its Hellenistic form with the new role accorded to Wisdom, almost seen as a consort of Yahweh. The mysteries had in common that, not heavily syncretist at first, they became so once transplanted into a new social context and welcoming novel additions. Through assimilation and mingling, imported gods went indigenous. They all promised a happy afterlife or at least a transformed life in the company of the gods, whose friendship made an arbitrary fate appear as divine Providence or “good fortune.”

Innovations

At that time two religious movements appeared that were real innovations. The first one was indeed very much like the cult of Asclepius, related to the search for personal salvation and healing: Mithraism. It is generally argued that, originating in Persia centuries earlier and centered on the Persian Sun-god Mithras, the cult was especially strong among soldiers of the frontier garrisons, among Roman sea-merchants and city dwellers. Reserved to males, it displayed a certain anti-Greek bent, accounting for its being virtually absent from Greece, Asia Minor, and Palestine. Its profound solar symbolism made it a more or less formidable competitor of Christianity as well as a close kin of its infancy.

Mithraism finally was the only cult clearly to offer a supernaturally sanctioned ethic, basically Stoic, comparable to Judaism and Christianity—usually moral conversion was the domain of philosophy, as mentioned earlier. The second innovation was Christianity itself. And here the question arises: Did “this ordered multitude of mysteries”¹ help or hinder the progress of Christianity? It is certain that they constituted “one of the most tenacious foci of resistance to Christianity.”² But in turn Christianity “succeeded in depriving the old religion of its power,”³ if not of its attraction, by absorbing and, more or less consciously, adopting pagan symbols and customs.

Similarities between mysteries and Christianity are undeniable. Yet they should not blind us to the point of reading Christian elements back into mysteries only then to see mysteries as the source of Christianity. Once parallels have been identified (need of healing, quest for blessedness beyond the grave, dying and rising of a savior, a ruler of the dead, salvific meaning of initiation, solar and light imagery, in some cases moral earnestness and, generally, religious symbols such as vine, fish, lamb, anchor, dove, palm, bread, good shepherd), we must immediately stress that meanings change when their traditional support is changed and they are grafted onto new wood.

Gnosis and Gnosticism

in the mid-second century in the form of the Gnostic movement, perceived by some as the Gnostic landslide.

As a fully constituted system of life and thought, it belongs mainly to the second century and in its Christian form is of special interest to us.

In the Gnostic lore, syncretism came to a new blossoming and brought the previous syncretist elements it incorporated to a new pitch.

It was felt to be execrable to Marcion, for whom any form of syncretism had to be radically excised, even the syncretism that aligned the Christian message with the Hebrew Bible. Christian Gnostics for their part did not reject the Old Testament out of hand; they subverted it.

Gnostic Sources

usually hostile reports of the church fathers who fought them, the so-called heresiologists. In the eighteenth century Egypt yielded some Gnostic writings from the third century written in Coptic (Codex Askewianus, Codex Brucianus) and a few more texts (including the Berlin Papyrus 8502) were brought to light in the nineteenth century. Altogether this amounted to a rather modest collection of authentic writings compared with the "library" uncovered by the momentous event of December 1945: Thirteen codices or books (not scrolls) were discovered at Nag Hammadi (Upper Egypt), hidden in a jar, close to ancient monastic settlements; they contained fifty-two tractates, of which forty were previously unknown, most of them bearing the Gnostic stamp.

Origins of Gnosticism

The origins of the Christian Gnostic movement still constitute the object of a lively debate among scholars. In addition to the view that Gnosticism was simply a Christian heresy, and the theories of an Iranian or purely Greek origin, some favor is now accorded to theories claiming a prevalingly Jewish origin. Thus it is asserted that in the late first and early second centuries Jewish fringe groups in Egypt or in Syria-Palestine or in Samaria, with qualified apocalyptic tendencies, began to claim a superior form of "knowledge" (gnosis) able to explain the miserable state of the world and to correct the unacceptable shortcomings of the biblical writings as to the nature of God and the human self. Besides the many literary difficulties and doctrinal misconceptions found in Genesis, grave stumbling blocks were encountered in the Bible: How could an all-powerful God produce a deficient cosmos and such a failed creature as the human body, plagued by illness, suffering, and death?

At least the creator/demiurge of the Bible and of Plato had to be demoted and a disjunction introduced between him and the true, unknown God.

Main Gnostic Tenets

The superior knowledge postulated by the Gnostics and mediated to them through messengers (Jesus and his secret teaching, apostles, etc.) found expression in diverse versions of a myth depicting the phases of a theogony and cosmogony focusing on the true genesis of the human Self and on a powerful explanation of the origin of Evil. It posits a primordial deity, the Father, transcendent, unknowable directly, and "unknown," from whom a number of emanations (aeons) proceeded, the last of which is usually called Sophia/Wisdom. For her disorderly passion to know the Father directly, without intermediary, she became guilty and sinned; her passions had to be expelled from the divine world (Pleroma or Kingdom of Light), condemned to wander below the Pleroma and thus, so to speak, to inhabit two worlds. Out of her abortive passions the creator-God (demiurge) was made, the Old Testament God who formed bodies and souls,

unaware that he was thereby hijacking the world and holding captive (in some or in all creatures) fragments of the divine or sparks of the spirit surreptitiously inoculated in them by the Unknown God or by Sophia, that is, holding captive their selves like gold in the mud.

Gnostics who, thanks to a revealer, are “in the know” as to the origin of their true Self yearn to break out of the fetters of matter and the rule of the demiurge.

Echoes of the Jewish scriptures, candidly or maliciously distorted, are unmistakable here. The Jewish God is firmly rejected and found lacking for his blindness and meanness. Only here and there in the Old Testament is the voice of the superior Unknown God perceptible under ciphers that the “knowers” alone can interpret. So Gnosticism has all the marks of a rebellion against the Jewish God, who is now superseded by the true God.

Gnostic Schools

From around the mid-second century, prestigious teachers knew how to channel the religious protest, augment it, and anchor it in a graphic world view. They were active mostly in Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch, and headed creative and colorful groupings. Among them Valentinus was perhaps the most influential, and his impact was still felt in the eighth century; but Basilides, Heracleon, Theodotos, and their like exerted significant influence as well and kept manufacturing systems. Their power of invention was boundless, if we give credence to the heresiologists. In the ancient sense they constituted “schools” (hairesis) or alternative groupings, soon to be labeled sectarian or heretical by their church opponents.

Gnostics were skilled in biblical criticism and had a passion for speculation, philosophical and mystical. They are said to have been the first speculative theologians of the Christian tradition.

Manichaeism

The third century gave birth to the consummate form of Gnostic syncretism: the religion of Mani (216–277), emerging from Persia-controlled Mesopotamia to become a truly world religion, in fact “the only premeditated universal religion in the history of thought.”⁴ After spending his early life among the Jewish-Christian Elkesaites (a fact now better established thanks to recent finds), Mani received a revelation that made him into the prophet summarizing all previous prophets, especially Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus. His mission took him to India and the Near East; his religion spread all over the inhabited world, becoming state religion in Central Asia in the ninth century and surviving in China until the seventeenth century. Manichaeism became a serious competitor of Christianity in the fourth century, claiming to be superior to Christianity or a superior form of Christianity. The core of its system is a dualist gnosis affirming the all-determining influence of two co-eternal principles, Good (Light) and Evil (Darkness) over a space of “three times” (times of separation of the two principles, of their mixing in combat, and of their final separation), engaged in a cosmic war that echoed in human history in that particles of light turned out to be imprisoned in bodies, the whole resulting in a total condemnation of the material world and the promotion of moral encratism (extreme asceticism) among the perfect (or true members, elect) of the community. Augustine spent close to ten years in the sect and we shall see later (chapter 5) how he wrested himself from it.

Christian Search for Identity and Difference

Had the Gnostics professed their speculations in the quiet of study rooms, they could have been ignored, but by their public display “they brought dishonor on the church,”⁷ hurled calumnies on it, and had to be denounced. For reasons analogous to those put forward by heresiologists, even philosophers such as Plotinus thought they had to speak out against Gnosticism and its

denigration of the visible world.

In addition, because Gnostics brought up, for the first time in the Christian tradition, speculative questions of cosmology, anthropology, Christology, and trinitarian doctrine, leading members of the church feared a theoretical free-for-all and felt forced to take a stand and articulate the position of the "great church." The church could not afford being dissolved into the surrounding melting-pot and, it was thought, run the risk of being identified with self-proclaimed prophets whose conduct was not always commendable. The task was one of authentication of true prophets and carriers of revelation and of elaboration of a normative self-definition of the Christian movement.

Pistis or Gnosis

To the manifold Gnostic challenge a no less manifold response was offered by church writers who considered themselves in touch with the public tradition of the apostles. They decided to save the tradition that, in the hands of Gnostics, threatened to fall into arbitrariness, esotericism, and elitism. In order to do that, they had to clarify the question of the relationship of faith (pistis) to knowledge (gnosis).

Among the Greek Apologists it is Justin who may have offered the first elaborate refutation of Gnosticism in his lost work, Syntagma. It may be possible to reconstruct, on the basis of Irenaeus's report and of Justin's extant works, the list of opponents he attacked and the core of his critical argument: that Gnostics calumniated the creator, disparaged the Old Testament, and gave Christians a bad name.

The Heresiologists

Their appeal to a secret tradition upsets him most not only because it introduces arbitrariness into matters of faith and salvation but also because it tends to restrict the salvific message to a chosen group of "knowers" who disparage the simple faith of ordinary people. Irenaeus is adamant in his rejection of gnosis in favor of pistis, or rather he firmly holds that "true gnosis is the doctrine of the apostles"⁹ and is identical with the "rule of faith." The rule is a kind of creedlike summary of church teachings affirming the basic facts of Jesus' fate as related by the generation of the apostles, and it stands at the basis of ecclesiastical orthodoxy.

Heretics are seen as plagiarizers of the Greeks; to denounce this shameful recourse is already to have refuted their claims and to reveal them in the end as failing to recognize the true author of the cosmos. Like most ancient polemicists, Hippolytus exhibits an amazing liking for the bitter tone, a propensity brought to its extreme in the next century by Epiphanius. Controversies of the time, it is true, reveal a capacity to hate, shared by all sides, that today gives us pause, for we cannot see how they could fail to betray or induce negative attitudes no longer commendable. Yet it has to be kept in mind that polemical attacks, then still more than now, contained more bark than bite.

The North African Tertullian (160–225), in turn, resolutely privileged faith over knowledge (nothing is needed besides faith, he claimed) and thought that philosophical speculations had perverted scripture and the "rule of truth." This at least he could write. In fact, he was able to make a sophisticated use of both philosophy and knowledge in his highly creative writings, such as *Apology*, *On Prescription Against Heretics*, *Against Valentinus*, and *Against Marcion*, written around the turn of the third century.

The Dwindling Tolerance

The rejection of gnosis and the encounter with mystery religions had a double implication for Christianity. **First, the option for pistis led to a stabilization of the Christian movement.** Orthodoxy was born. In the course of the debates with the Gnostics and with Marcion, the need was felt for more reliability and accountability concerning Christian sources. Not just any book could henceforth be received as authoritative by the self-appointment of a prophet; the canon of New Testament books had to be defined. Belief in arbitrary myths and obscure mysteries was no longer receivable; the rule of faith, found in inspired books and in the apostolic tradition, set the norm of what was certain and essential to the believers. Authority in the church had to be identified and strengthened. Bishops were to constitute the backbone of the organization, looking to Rome for the spiritual center of authority. The option against fullfledged gnosis was thus an option for an institutional model of the church, with a certain preference for conservatism and uniformity, and with a clear authoritarian structure based on the criteria of antiquity (apostolicity) and consent (majority). Many a colorful and creative element thus vanished from visibility, but such was the price to be paid for the church's surviving as a distinct entity.

Second, the option against gnosis amounted to a resolute rejection of all-out syncretism, but this happened in such a way that many syncretist elements could be subsumed, especially in the area of practice (liturgy, ritual) and thanks to the high rank accorded to knowledge in the theological appropriation of the saving doctrine. Here both similarities and differences in relation to the Greco-Roman culture were manifested. Pagan thought was familiar with ideas of a suffering and dying son of God; it also knew of approximations to incarnation and resurrection. Those aspects constituted valuable points of contact, making possible a favorable response to the church's proclamation. Nevertheless the pagan world was hardly prepared to consider the crucifixion of its founder as a criminal by civil authorities a recommendation for a doctrine promising bliss and happiness.

THEO 206 - Reading 5.3 - Apophasis

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 11:54 PM

At first, everyone embraced the idea that this gospel depicted Judas Iscariot as a close friend of Jesus, a hero who would liberate him from his mortal body in order to return to the Pleroma. This positive assessment of Judas stemmed from what some considered being a request on the part of Jesus.

hole is understood. In the first lines, the author gives us an important hermeneutical key. It is similar to what we find in the Gospel according to Thomas, where the interpretative key is at the beginning of the text. In the introduction, Thomas invites readers to seek the interpretation of the hidden words of Jesus. Unfortunately, most scholars strictly focus on the history of the text and never get around at interpreting the gospel.

One must actively participate in constructing the meaning of the text itself. The Gospel according to Thomas has a variety of interwoven themes. In order to uncover the meaning of a number of logoi, one must carefully establish a correlation between various themes. This type of exegesis is done through what I call a network of meaning.

The secret word of declaration by which Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot.

Before I specifically examine the expression apofasis, a few words need to be said on some of the difficulties encountered in the opening phrase.⁷ For example, one must determine the antecedent of the relative Nta. The final preposition \nHht\F can shed light on the matter, since the masculine pronominal suffix -\F can only point to plogos and not to apofasis which is feminine. apofasis is in fact the determinative of plogos etHhp (the secret word).

We should then translate the phrase as follows : the secret word of the apofasis by which (or in which ; during which) Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot. Jesus did not tell the secret word to Judas ; rather, he spoke in conversion with Judas by the secret word which the author understands to be an apofasis. But what exactly is the meaning of apofasis in GosJud 33:1 ? This is what I intend to examine here.

In the critical edition, M. Meyer and F. Gaudard translated the Greco-Coptic term apofasis (ἀπόφασις) by the word “declaration”.⁹ G. **Wurst, in his introduction to the GosJud, appeals to Hippolytus’ Refutatio omnium haeresium by indicating that apofasis can mean “declaration”, “explanation” and even “revelation”**

At times, some will translate ἀπόφασις with the expressions “decision” (Ref. IV 17.7 ; 19.5)¹² or “revelation” (Ref V 9.20).¹³ Simon Magus’ Apophasis megalē (Ref VI 9.16 ; 11.4 ; 14.26 ; 18.6) is also understood as a “revelation”¹⁴ or an “announcement

According to the LSJ,¹⁶ the noun ἀπόφασις refers to a “sentence” (i.e. declaration) or a “decision”¹⁷, and derives from the verb ἀποφαίνω which means “to show forth”, “display” or “declare”.¹⁸ But at the same time, the LSJ considers the primary meaning of ἀπόφασις to be “denial”, “negation”¹⁹ and even “exclusion”.²⁰ In this case the noun would derive from ἀπόφημι.²¹ An example of this use is found in Aristotle’s De interpretatione where he clearly defines ἀπόφασις as “denial” or “negation”.²² This is also the case in his Metaphysics²³ and in many of his other works.²⁴ Ἀπόφασις also has the meaning of “denial” or “negation” in some Patristic texts, especially when it is used in negative theology as the only true way of speaking about the attributes of God.²⁵ Negative theology, also called Apophatic theology, endeavors to describe God in negative terms. It expresses what God is not rather than what he is. Apophatic theology uses denial statements in order to talk about the attributes of God, i.e., God is not evil, God is not darkness, God is not hate, etc.

Because of the immediate context, it is difficult to understand apofasis as a “declaration” or an “explanation”. According to the LSJ, logos already carries with it ideas such as “statement”, “sentence” and “explanation”.²⁷ This clearly overlaps in meaning with apofasis as deriving from ἀποφαίνω (to show forth, display, or declare). The same could be said of apofasis as “revelation”. The formulation plogos etHhp recalls the famous NSaJe eqhp (οἱ λόγοι οἱ ἀπόκρυφοί) found in the incipit of the Gospel according to Thomas.

in the context of an expression such as plogos etHhp. However, if one understands apofasis as “denial”, this certainly eliminates some of the confusion. In that case, the first lines of the Judas gospel would read as follows :

The Gospel of Judas would then be the secret word of the denial. This way of understanding apofasis is coherent with the rest of the gospel. As a matter of fact, the idea of denial does explain several statements and actions therein : 1. apofasis is first and foremost Jesus’ denial of Judas. This can be seen in several places. For example, when Jesus reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to Judas, he calls him a demon (daimwn ; GosJud 44:21).³⁰ Jesus also tells Judas that he has been misled into thinking he could enter the house of the holy generation (GosJud 45:14-19). Still during the revelation, Jesus informs Judas that he was duped by his star (GosJud 45:13-14). Judas will eventually realize that he was purposely distanced from the holy generation and will never be part of it (GosJud 46:16-18).³¹ By denying Judas access to the holy generation, Jesus shows that the betrayer is not his favorite disciple. Here, Jesus says no to Judas ; he denies Judas the status and salvation he had come to believe for himself.³² 2

“But you will do more than all of them, for the man who bears me, you will sacrifice him.” In the Gospel of Judas, sacrifices are always seen in a negative light (GosJud 38:16ff ; 39:26-40:1), and Jesus specifically orders his disciples to stop making sacrifices (GosJud 41:1-6).³³ Before the prediction of Judas’ demise in GosJud 56:17-20, the text characterizes those who offer sacrifices to Saklas as evildoers (GosJud 56:12-16). Judas will do more than all of them (knaR Houo eroou throu), that is, more evil than those who sacrifice to Saklas.

In conclusion, we have seen how our understanding of apofasis can influence our interpretation of the GosJud as a whole. Deriving from the verb ἀποφαίνω, the noun apofasis can certainly mean “declaration”, “explanation” or “revelation”. It is difficult to make sense of such a choice of words in the GosJud, since these expressions are redundant with the use of plogos etHhp. In the opening lines of the GosJud, apofasis most probably derives from ἀπόφημι and should be translated as “denial” (or “exclusion”). This fits perfectly with the overall thrust of the gospel : Judas is denied access to the holy generation and deprived of true salvation.

THEO 206 - Reading 5.5 - Gospel Of Judas

Thursday, October 29, 2015 6:55 PM

Professors commentary

- *A big gnostic discovery. Scholars did not have access to it until year 2000. The first translation was not good because only 4 scholars translated it and coptic scholars have criticized it. Thus national geography stepped up. It is difficult to read. In the actual gospel of Judas, half of it contains text and the other half is foot notes. This is due to criticism. Quite a few scholars objected to the first translation (e.g presenting him as a good guy).*
- *The gospel of Judas, wasn't written by Judas. The gospel of Judas, was written in gnostic circles, that's why we are connecting it to gnosticism. We are dating it to the middle or late 2nd century. Jesus is a gnostic figure to bring sacred knowledge to the world. And his apostles don't really understand the knowledge that he brings.*
- *The Jesus of the gnostics is not the same as Jesus of the church.. He is not a supreme god (trinity), he is a Jesus that brings knowledge to people, that they are in fact coming from a different realm and that their spirit is divine and needs to be released for humans in the know to go back to that spiritual realm from once they came. In the gospel of Judas there is some gnostic cosmology from a gnostic P.O.V, (Barbelo, Saklas, Sophia).*
- *Sophia is the one who led to an accident that led to a creation to a material world and started trapping parts of the divine in it. And that's what humans are in gnostic religion. There is a hierarchy of Gods and intermediary gods. The closest one who created the world is the god of the old testament (who according to gnostics is bad).*
- *Judas seems to understand more than the other disciples what he is supposed to do (doesn't really obey the OT). In particular on page 33, that's connected to footnote 25 "not that you will go there to this kingdom, but you will grieve a great deal". Here he says that he can achieve this. But in this version he isn't in the know as the first translation presented it.*
- *There is talk of sacred knowledge. There is talk of sacrifices, which the other apostles continue to perform. Especially in the dream they had. And they will continue to continue doing sacrifices, but they aren't the right way.*
- *These are references to the opponents of gnostics, e.g proto orthodox. They formulate proto orthodox canonical books (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon). It is important to keep this in mind. It is not just about gnostic cosmology, it is about taking shots to the orthodox writers.*
- *Laughter - Jesus laughs several times. Apostles see that as reprehending. But he laughs because they don't understand, because they will become the ones who will behave in an unspiritual manner.*

THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS (LOCATION 582).

The ministry of Jesus

- He began to speak with them about the mysteries⁶ beyond the world and what would take place at the end. But often he does not appear to his disciples (as himself), but you find⁷ him among them...

Jesus Converses with his Disciples

- They said, "Master, you [...] are the son of our God." ¹⁴ Jesus said to them, "In what way do [you] know me? Truly [I] say to you, ¹⁵ no generation of the people that are among you will know me."

The disciples become angry

- When his disciples heard this, [they] started getting angry and infuriated, and began blaspheming against him in their hearts.
- lack of understanding, [he said] to them, "Why has this agitation led (you) to anger? Your God who

is within you and [his...] 17 [35] have become angry together with your souls.

- But their spirits¹⁹ could not find the courage to stand before [him], except for Judas Iscariot. He was able to stand before him, but he could not look him in the eyes, and he turned his face away.

Jesus speaks to Judas Privately

- Knowing that he (Judas) was reflecting upon the rest (of the things) that are exalted, Jesus said to him, “Step away from the others and I shall tell you the mysteries of the kingdom, ²⁴ not so that you will go there, ²⁵ but you²⁶ will grieve a great deal.
- For someone else will replace you, in order that the twelve [disciples] may again come to completion with their God.”

Jesus Appears to the Disciples Again

- Jesus said to them, “I went to another great and holy generation.” ³¹ His disciples said to him, “Lord, what is the great generation that is superior to us and holy, that is not now in these aeons?” ³² When Jesus heard this, he laughed. He said to them, “Why are you thinking in your hearts about the strong and holy generation? [37] Truly³³ [I] say to you, no one born [of] this aeon will see that [generation], and no host of angels of the stars will rule over that generation, and no person of mortal birth will be able to associate with it, because that generation is not from [...] that has come into being, [but... the] generation of people among [you] is from the generation of humanity³⁴ [...] power, which [...] powers [...] by] which you rule.” When [his] disciples heard this, they each were troubled in [their] spirit.

The disciples behold the temple and discuss it

- The men who stand [before] the altar invoke your [name]. [39] And while they are involved in all the deeds of their sacrifice, ⁴⁰ that [altar] is filled.” After they said this, they were quiet, for they were troubled.

Judas has a vision

- When Jesus heard this, he laughed and said to him, “You thirteenth daimon, ⁷⁶ why do you try so hard? But speak up, and I shall bear with you.” Judas said to him, “In the vision I saw the twelve disciples stoning me and [45] persecuting [me severely]. And I also came to the place where [...] after you. I saw [a house...], ⁷⁷ and my eyes could not [comprehend] its size. And great people were surrounding it, and that house < had > a single room, ⁷⁸ and in the middle of the house was [a crowd— nearly two lines missing—], (saying), ‘Master, take me in along with these people.’” [Jesus] answered and said, “Your star has led you astray, Judas.” And (he continued), “No person of mortal birth is worthy to enter the house you have seen, for that place is reserved for the holy. ⁷⁹ Neither

Judas Asks about his own fate

- Jesus answered and said, “You will become the thirteenth, ⁸⁶ and you will be cursed by the other generations, and you will come to rule over them. ⁸⁷ In the last days they < will... > to you, and you⁸⁸ will not ascend on high⁸⁹ [47] to the holy [generation].”

Adamas and the luminaries

- Adamas¹⁰⁶ was in the first cloud of light¹⁰⁷ that no angel could (?) (ever) see among all those called ‘divine.’ And he [49] [...] that [...] after] the image [of...] and after the likeness of [this] angel. ¹⁰⁸ He made the incorruptible [generation] of Seth¹⁰⁹ appear to the twelve [luminaries], ¹¹⁰ the ²⁴ [...]. He made ⁷² luminaries appear in the incorruptible generation, in accordance with the will of the Spirit.
- And the ⁷² luminaries themselves made ³⁶⁰ luminaries appear in the incorruptible generation, in

accordance with the will of the Spirit, that their number should be five for each.

The Rulers and Angels

- “And the twelve rulers spoke with the twelve angels: ‘Let each of you [52] [...] and let them [...] generation [...] five] 124 angels’: The first is [(?) e] th, who is called ‘the Christ.’ 125 The [second] is Harmathoth, who is [...]. 126 The [third] is Galila. The fourth is Yobel. The fifth is Adonaïos. “These are the five who ruled over the underworld, and first of all 127 over chaos. 128

The Creation of Humanity

- “Then Saklas said to his angels, ‘Let us create a human being after the likeness and after the image.’ 129 And they fashioned Adam and his wife Eve. But she is called, in the cloud, ‘Zoe.’ 130 For by this name all the generations seek him (Adam), and each of them calls her (Eve) by their names. Now, Sakla did not [53] com[mand...] except [...] the gene[rations...] this [...]. And the [ruler] said to him, ‘Your life will last [for a...] time, 131 with your children.’”

Judas hands Jesus over

- And they approached Judas and said to him, “What are you doing here? You are Jesus’ disciple.” And he answered them as they wished. And Judas received money and handed him over to them.

THEO 206 - Reading 6

Thursday, November 5, 2015 1:34 AM

Discussion - Conversion of an Empire

We go from a pagan empire to a christian empire. And that happens in the 4th century. It starts with the creed ... Edict of Milan. Which is given by Constantine in 313 and somewhat culminates in the years 390 and 392 there is a new legislation by Theodosius who declares Christianity as the new official religion of the roman empire.

The movement of Christianity grew from a persecuted religion to becoming the official religion of the empire. The persecutions are painful memories, but it was reality. It is still surprising that christianity went through the persecution from the roman authorities.

There is an issue of church and state. We are dealing with christianity that comes out of a period of persecution (after Diocletian). This religion has to deal with the past. And there is an issue. Those doing the persecution were actually collaborating with the persecutor. Some christians were tortured and killed (martyred), some abandoned their faith.

You never know how you would react in this case. Usually living in a western democratic state, you would think that you are nice if you are really not having to face difficult issues. If you are placed in a difficult situation you may discover that you are a coward, or turn on others, or against some of your own principles. Thus it is hard to jump to these conclusions (with the people who collaborated with the persecutors).

The church had to decide what to do with those who abandoned their faith. But after persecution they wanted to come back. Tertullian and Novatian were radicalists, and the church sought to ban them (they are sinners). However, some people said that the church has been built by both saints and sinners and that they should have a chance to repent.

The church coming out of this period of persecution has a different relationship with the state than the church that was persecuted. Now the church has a lot of rights and is favored by various emperors, first being Constantine who encourages the mission of the church. Christianity also becomes the official religion of the roman empire. Christianity is in a powerful position. It wants a lot of rights for itself, but it also engages in the persecution of other religions. Paganism becomes banned completely by Theodosius. Temples are being destroyed to not remind them of the previous persecutions. Intellectual figures are being targeted by angry christians. The church should be ashamed.

The relationship between church and empire - The roman emperors who weren't Christian, the relationship was very tense. Some people thought that both of these should be separate because of threat of persecution. However, some theologians believed that there should be some collaboration between the church and empire. There are no more apocalyptic expectations, there is no wish of its destruction. It is not seen as evil anymore. St-Augustin says yes, the bible talks about the end of the world, but until then we should collaborate together. Theodosius of Caesarea starts revealing the relationship between church and empire as uncritical. He sees Constantine as the holy roman emperor. He is barely under Jesus, but he sees him as a son of God (started in the Byzantine empire). Leads to a particular understanding in this relationship e.g. symphonia (harmony). 6th century by Justinian, in the eastern part of the roman church, the patriarch should collaborate closely with the emperor (who was the sun of the church and promote its mission).

In the west, the empire somehow collapsed. Rome is being abandoned because of the Barbarians in 476 who don't immediately convert to Christianity. Thus a new relationship between church and state

develops. They see them as 2 powers separately, but should not interfere in each others fears. However, this is contrary to the byzantine empire. It is still reflected today. The understanding was that church and state collaborate very closely and support each other legislatively. There is a dual understanding of the two.

Religious Toleration

Governing Romans were deeply convinced that their religion was, in the words of Cicero, “the foundation of our state”;¹ they saw it as a body of civic laws relating to sacred matters and devised to preserve the pax deorum by means of the appropriate ceremonial, irrespective of one’s personal faith or inner feelings or rational justification. That is why external compliance was deemed sufficient to express one’s religious care for the welfare of all. Beyond that, toleration was the rule. If the Jews, respected but little loved in Roman society, were excepted from even the minimal prescription of outward compliance, it was due to the fact that theirs was a cult of ancestral origin. They were expected, though, to pray for the well-being of the emperor. Needless to say, Jews, for their part, never experienced the Roman Empire as a regime of generous toleration nor paganism as compatible with their religion. It is more accurate to say that all they got was “hostile and contemptuous tolerance.”

Persecutions

Given that situation and the fact that Christianity started as a Jewish sect, historians have long been searching for the precise reason why it was illegal to be a Christian. No legal enactment to that effect is known. Strangely enough, the sporadic persecutions between 110 and 211 were carried out “because of the name”;³ it is even the only known case of a cult’s devotees being executed for the mere profession of adherence to a name. The “name” must have contained something explosive. In fact, the name Christian evoked an inherent disloyalty to the state. Porphyry denounced the Christians for having “turned away from those recognized as gods” by all “and [having] rather chosen what is impious and atheistic among men.”

Christians claimed to be “atheists of all those gods”;⁵ exclusively clinging to their “superstition,”⁶ announcing the impending ruin of the empire and belittling the gods. They appeared as “enemies of the Roman order,”⁷ despisers of the sacred rites and apostates of the traditional Roman religion, the essence of Roman citizenship. They were dangerous not so much for the crude “abominations”⁸ (ritual murder, cannibalism, incest, magic) they were suspected of fostering, but first of all because they belonged to an antisocial organization that made a virtue of the neglect of the gods, of the ceremonies, and of the commonwealth kept healthy by those ceremonies. To be accused of being christian made people treasonable and liable to the death penalty.

Until 250 harassments and persecutions took place here and there, mainly due to the zeal of governors and the violence of the mobs holding Christians responsible for sundry disasters. It is only in 250, at a time when the Roman frontier was threatened by Persians as well as barbarians, and population was shrinking due to social maladies, that an emperor, Decius, and with him the government seized the initiative of persecution. To cement the unity of the realm, he decreed that all inhabitants should openly sacrifice to the gods, failing which they would become outlaws. Scores of Christians apostatized. This caused a major setback for the church, which had recently been experiencing a steady expansion. The persecution was general under Decius (in 250–251) and almost general under Valerian (in 257–259). Bishops were singled out as privileged targets in order to demoralize the community.

There followed a period of complete tolerance from 260 to 302, a crucial time for the growth of Christianity. Then established Roman religion made a final attempt at silencing Christianity—this was the Great Persecution (303–313), begun under Diocletian with all the appearances of a pagan revival.

Even where local authorities showed merely lukewarm enthusiasm in carrying them out, persecutions were a savage business, especially the Great Persecution. They involved destruction of churches and scriptures, confiscation of property, prohibition of worship, cancellation of legal and civil rights, arrest of clergy, orders to sacrifice to the gods on pain of death, torture and execution. Manichees were most severely treated, doubtless because their doctrine came from a Persia at war with the empire.

Many Christians ("masses" according to both Cyprian and Eusebius) were prompt to apostatize in order to save their skins, or paid lip service by placing a pinch of incense on the altar or swearing in order to clear themselves of suspicion; but those who stood firm were those who really counted. Their actual behavior might have been embellished by hagiographers who drafted the various "passiones." What remained, though, was the memory of their unflinching courage; it had signaled the failure of persecutions and was to influence the future course of events

Growth of the Movement

A quick look at the evolution of the Christian community between 150 and 300 conveys the clear impression of a minority moving up: from a negligible "superstition" to the doors of the imperial palace, close to the center of power

Although they could still be described around 179 as a small prickly lot, Christians by 200 had been able to attract a growing number of adherents from the lower middle class, and several respectable artisans in cities, even winning over such powerful minds as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian. In the course of the third century, while it is still more hazardous to give figures (1 million Christians by 260 it appears that Christianity was making great headway among all classes of Roman society and was spreading geographically. The "third race"¹⁶ was in the process of becoming a "nation." A sharp expansion took place between 260 and 302, a period of peace decisive for the "triumph of Christianity." Christianity was effectively tolerated and began to reach the countryside

By the turn of the fourth century the Christian community with around 5 million (close to one-tenth of the population) almost equaled the Jewish group, in number if not in standing and influence.

Many of them saw those Roman achievements as divinely ordered, an evolution that made Constantine's conversion (312) understandable. It comes as no surprise that, due to the momentous event of the emperor's conversion and to the contemporary irresistible impulse of the movement, among other favorable circumstances, Christianity was soon to experience its greatest expansion—from about 5 million around 300 to about 30 million around 410 (representing two-thirds of the population). It was now the religion of the majority, however timid the commitment of those claiming to be within the Christian pale might have been.

After 312

If we give credence to Eusebius (265–340), the first church historian, and to his enthusiastic celebration of Constantine, the emperor's conversion, on attributing to Christ his victory on the battlefield, was an unequivocally advantageous event for Christianity. The nature and sincerity of the conversion of the ever ruthless Constantine, the quality of his understanding of Christianity and of his notion of the church, his persistent flirtation with Sun worship, mixing up Sun cult and Christian monotheism—those are some of the problems that have been scrutinized and argued by a great number of scholarly studies.

Galerius's decree of toleration in 311 had already put an end to the Great Persecution, though it still lingered in the East for a while. Two years later, through the so-called Edict of Milan, Constantine and his coemperor in the East, Licinius, granted universal religious freedom, giving legal equality to all cults and restoring to Christians their confiscated property. But soon, with Constantine's favor, the situation of the church changed radically

Constantine himself liked to be seen not only as the representative on earth of the Christian God, but also as "bishop extraordinary"¹⁷ (an enigmatic expression that can also mean "bishop of those outside the church" or "bishop for external affairs"). He liked to be seen as the patron of a church he intended to shower with favors and raise to a privileged position. His summoning of the council of Nicaea in 325 was an important step toward consolidating the place of Christianity and establishing orthodoxy within the church, two elements essential to his personal prestige.

Toward Establishment

After defeating Licinius and founding Constantinople—the "New Rome"—in 324 on the site of ancient Byzantium, and now sole master of the empire, Constantine went on to conquer hearts in the eastern provinces.

Two policies of Constantine were continued by Constantius II (337–361). Along with purges of pagans in the administration, sacrifices and oracles were prohibited, and an increasing number of Christians were appointed consuls and praetorian prefects. The established Roman religion was indeed under siege, a fact that was to be graphically underscored by the removal of the Altar of Victory from the Senate in 382.

Ultimately, the so-called triumph of Christianity took place in three stages: the rapid growth from 260 to 302, Constantine's conversion in 312, and the reign of Theodosius I (378–395). With the latter, Christianity became legally enforced. Paganism and heresy suffered repression; deviationists were submitted to coercion; exclusiveness and intolerance triumphed.

Pro-Christian Legislation

Imperial legislation, most of which is preserved in the Theodosian Code published in 438 and later in the Code of Justinian, was to reflect this new situation. It openly favored Christians with preferential treatment, often at the expense of others.

Christianity and the Barbarian Kingdoms

The Germanic invaders who, in the later fourth and fifth centuries, had settled within the imperial frontiers of the western provinces gradually were led to create their own kingdoms on Roman soil. These were often seen as so many parts of the empire. With the collapse of the western empire, which in many respects had rather the appearance of a soft-landing fall, Christianity was presented with new opportunities; it was now called on to play a creative role in the shaping of the new Germanic societies, otherwise generally committed to maintain *romanitas*. Since the empire had become Christian before fading out, it can be said that Christianity was both heir and bequest of the moribund empire.

N.B recruitment of Western Aristocrats in Christianity.

Church and Empire

The establishment of Christianity as official religion, completed

under Theodosius I, took different forms in the two halves of the empire. Since Constantine had become ruler of the West before he converted, there he followed patterns of behavior set by his pagan predecessors. He remained "supreme pontiff," as did his immediate successors, continuing public support of the ancient cults and staffing the priestly colleges. But in the eastern provinces where Christianity was more solidly implanted and to which he came after his conversion, traditional cults were eagerly discouraged. There Constantine and, after him, Constantius and Theodosius followed the consistent policy of substituting Christianity for the ousted cults.