

Jesus & the Ten Gospels

Lecture 1 – What Ten Gospels say about Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Simon Gathercole
(University of Cambridge)

INTRODUCTION

Four gospels distinguishable from 'others'?

- Circumstances of composition
 - age? apostolic authorship?
- Popularity
 - citation? manuscripts?
- Literary character
 - aesthetics? narrative form?
- Content?

INTRODUCTION

(1) There are aspects of the theological content of the four New Testament gospels which bind them together, and which mark them out from most other non-canonical gospels.

INTRODUCTION

‘It would be difficult to argue on neutral exegetical grounds that differences between the Synoptics and Thomas are more fundamental than differences between the Synoptics and John.’ (Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 370)

INTRODUCTION

- (1) There are aspects of the theological content of the four New Testament gospels which bind them together, and which mark them out from most other non-canonical gospels.
- (2) The reason for this is that the content of the four New Testament gospels – unlike that of most others – conformed to a pre-existing apostolic creed or rule of faith or preached gospel.

INTRODUCTION

‘If we go back to the earliest known sources of Christian tradition - the sayings of Jesus (although scholars disagree on the question of *which* sayings are genuinely authentic), we can see how both gnostic and orthodox forms of Christianity could emerge as variant interpretations of the teaching and significance of Christ.’

(Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, 148).

INTRODUCTION

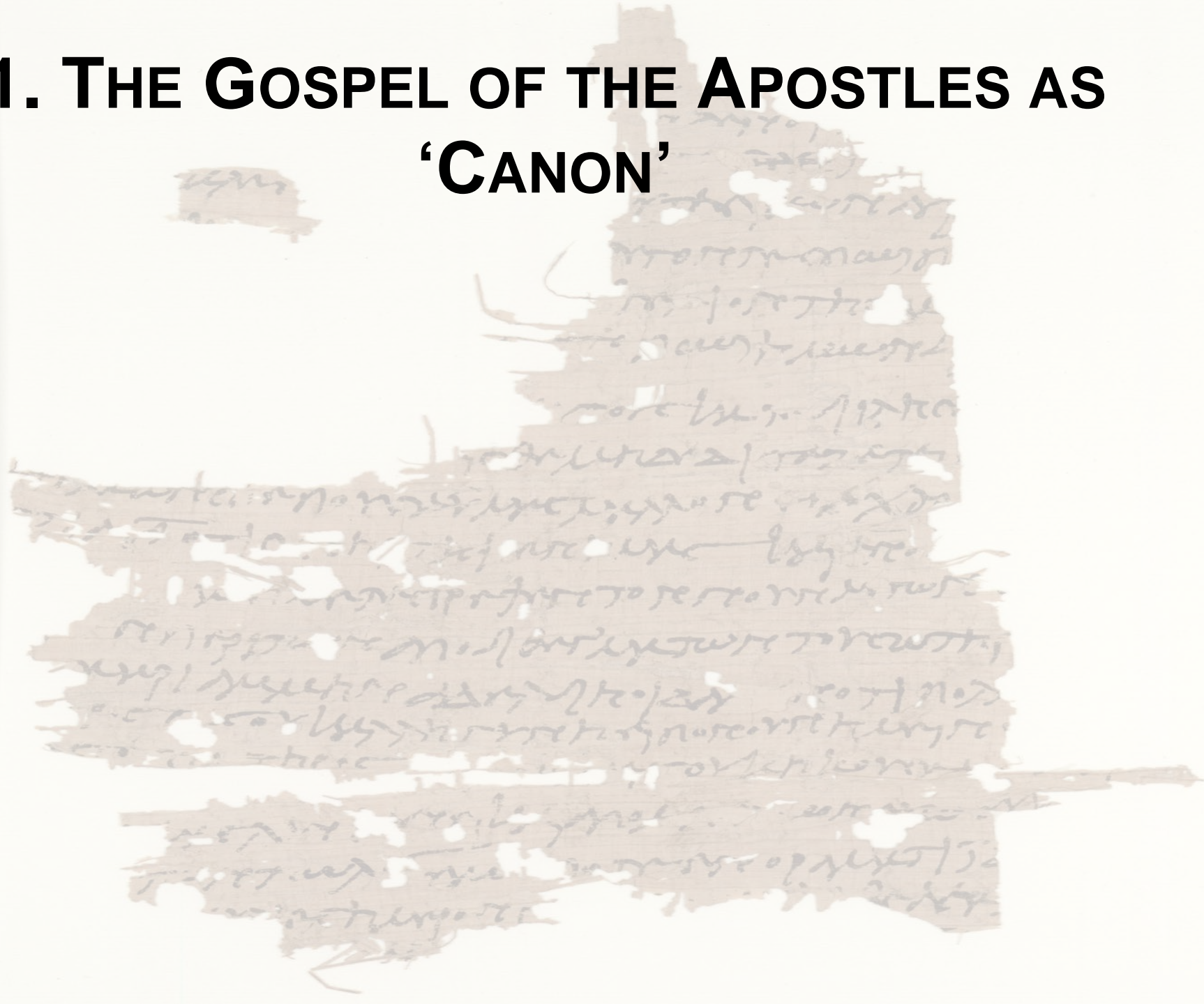
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INTRODUCTION

Apocrypha:

- *Gospel of Peter* (c. 150-190 CE)
- *Gospel of Thomas* (c. 140-180 CE)
- *Gospel of Truth* (c. 140-170 CE)
- *Gospel of Philip* (c. 200 CE?) } Valentinian
- *Gospel of the Egyptians* (c. 200 CE?) } "Gnostic"
- *Gospel of Judas* (c. 140-170 CE)

1. THE GOSPEL OF THE APOSTLES AS 'CANON'



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- (i) the identity of Jesus as the 'Christ',
- (ii) the work of Christ as fulfilling Scripture,
- (iii) the atoning death of Christ, and
- (iv) the resurrection.

1. THE GOSPEL OF THE APOSTLES AS 'CANON'

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that

- **Christ**
- **died for our sins**
- **according to the Scriptures,**
that he was buried,
that
- **he was raised on the third day**
- **according to the Scriptures....**

(1 Cor. 15.3-4)

1. THE GOSPEL OF THE APOSTLES AS 'CANON'

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

(1 Cor. 15.3-4,

11)

1. THE GOSPEL OF THE APOSTLES AS 'CANON'

Brothers and sisters, let me remind you of **the gospel I preached** to you, **which you received** and on which you have taken your stand. **By this gospel you are saved**, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as **of first importance**:

that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

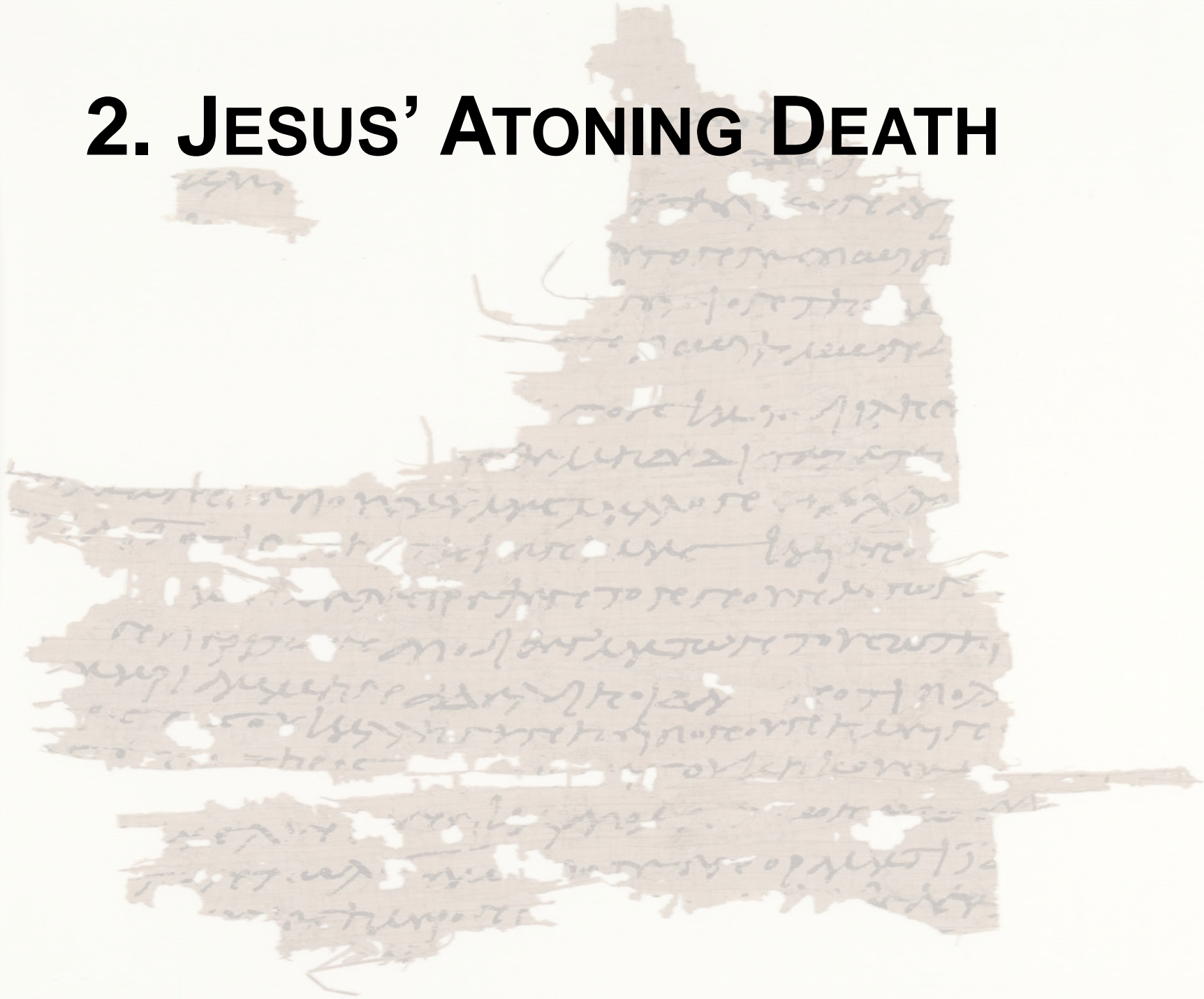
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1. THE GOSPEL OF THE APOSTLES AS 'CANON'

Four elements to the apostolic preaching:

- (i) the identity of Jesus as the 'Christ',
- (ii) the work of Christ as fulfilling Scripture,
- (iii) the atoning death of Christ, and
- (iv) the resurrection.

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH



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Mt, Mk: Jesus' life given as 'a ransom for many'

Mt, Mk, Lk: his blood 'poured out for many/you'

Mt: Jesus' death 'for the forgiveness of sins'

Jn: Jesus' body given 'for the life of the world'

Jn: Jesus 'lays down his life for his sheep'

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

Gospel of Truth:

Jesus Christ enlightened those who were in darkness through oblivion. He enlightened them; he showed a way; and the way is the truth which he taught them. For this reason, error grew angry with him, persecuted him, was distressed at him, but was brought to nothing. He was nailed to a tree and he became fruit of the knowledge of the Father. (*Gos. Truth 18*)

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

Gospel of Philip:

“My God, my God, why, lord, have you forsaken me?” He spoke these words on the cross, for he had left that place. [The master] was conceived from what [is imperishable], through God. The [master rose] from the dead, but [he did not come into being as he] was. Rather, his [body] was [completely] perfect. [It was] of flesh, and this [flesh] was true flesh. [Our flesh] is not true flesh but only an image of the true

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

Gospel of Peter:

And the Lord cried out saying, 'O my power, o power, you have left me.' And saying this he was taken up. And at the same hour the curtain of the temple in Jerusalem was torn in two.

(*Gos. Pet.* 5.19-20)

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

Gospel of Thomas:

Jesus said, 'Whoever does not hate his father and mother will not be able to be a disciple of mine.'

'And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters, and take his cross like me, will not be worthy of me.'

(Gos. Thom. 55)

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

Gospel of Judas:

(Jesus speaking):

'Tomorrow, the one who bears me will be tormented. Truly I say to you (all), no human mortal hand will do me harm. Truly, I say to you, Judas ... you will be greater than them all. For you will sacrifice the man who carries me about.'

(*Gos. Jud.*

56)

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

Gospel of the Egyptians

'...Jesus who was begotten by a living Logos, he whom the great Seth has put on. And through him (i.e. Jesus) he (i.e. Seth) nailed down the powers of the thirteen aeons, and made them motionless.'

(*Gos. Egy.* IV 74.22—
75.24)

2. JESUS' ATONING DEATH

(1) rejection of Jesus' death:

Gos. Judas; Gos. Egyptians

(2) limited/unclear significance:

Gos. Thomas, Gos. Philip, Gos. Peter

(3) effective atoning death:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, *Gos. Truth*

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

[Faded, mostly illegible text from an ancient manuscript, possibly the Shroud of Turin, showing signs of wear and discoloration.]

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn: predictions of resurrection

Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn: reports of the empty tomb

Mt, Mk, Lk: resurrection appearances

Lk, Jn: emphasis on the physicality

Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn: resurrection on the third day

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

Gospel of Peter

‘They saw coming out from the tomb three men, two supporting one, and a cross following them. And the heads of the two reached as far as heaven, but that of the one led by them surpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from heaven saying, “Have you preached to those who sleep?” And an answer was heard from the cross, “Yes.”’
(*Gos. Pet.* 10.39-42)

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

Gospel of Judas (cf. Gos. Egyptians)

Some of the scribes were there looking out so that they might arrest him at prayer. For they feared the people, for they all held him as a prophet. And they went to Judas and they said to him, "Why are you here? You are the disciple of Jesus." He answered them according to their wish. Judas took some money, and he handed him over to them.

The Gospel of Judas (Gos.

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

Gospel of Thomas

‘These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke, and Didymus Judas Thomas wrote them down.’

(Gos. Thom.

Prologue)

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

Gospel of Philip

‘Those who say that the master first died and then arose are wrong, for he first arose and then died. If someone is not first resurrected, would that person not die?’

(*Gos. Phil. 56*)

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

Gospel of Truth

‘O such great teaching! He draws himself down to death, though life eternal clothes him. Having stripped himself of the perishable rags, he put on imperishability, which no one can possibly take away from him.’

(*Gos. Truth. 20*)

3. RESURRECTION ON THE THIRD DAY

(1) No resurrection:

Gos. Egyptians, Gos. Judas

(2) Uncertain presence:

Gos. Thomas

(3) Resurrection imagery:

Gos. Philip, Gos. Truth

(4) Third-day Resurrection:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, *Gos. Peter*

CONCLUSION

[The following text is mirrored bleed-through from the reverse side of the page and is largely illegible due to the paper's damage and the bleed-through effect.]

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