

## THE SAMARITAN JESUS

Dedicated

To

Robert Eisenman.

The brilliant and noted scholar who helped free the Dead Sea Scrolls for public access and without whose deciphering of the first century coded language this book would not be possible--

And

Flavius Josephus,

The great Jewish scholar of the first century—

The two Jewish scholars two millennia apart who have had no interest in delineating the true story of a Christian mystery school Savior but without whose herculean historical efforts this effort would not be possible.

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“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows”—Paul, the Apostle in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:2

“For it is a new and perfect bridal chamber of the heavens...Since they were not afraid before me, they will pass by every gate without fear and will be perfected in the third glory. It was my going to the revealed height which the world did not accept, my third baptism in a revealed image”—‘The Second Treatise of the Great Seth’ (who is the ‘son of man/Adam’ in Genesis and the Samaritan hero) speaking in the voice of Jesus.

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## INTRODUCTION—

### THE EXTRAORDINARY PROOF TO AN EXTRAORDINARY CLAIM

“Meander (Menander), also a Samaritan...a disciple of Simon...All who take their opinions from these men, are as we have said before, called Christians...” (Justin Martyr, First Apologia, chapter 26, CE 155)

“Then the Jews answered and said to him, ‘Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon...’ (John 8: 48-49)

A summary of a Jewish view of Jesus Ca 200 CE: “Son of a carpenter or a prostitute, profaner of the Sabbath, A Samaritan and one who had a demon...” (Quote of Tertullian from ‘Jesus the Magician’, p. 80, by Morton Smith)

“He did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many, but to the few to whom he knew they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being molded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing as in the case with God.” ---Clement of Alexandria (‘Stromata’, Ca 210 CE)

“...that certain doctrines not revealed to the majority are attained after the public ones is not unique to the teaching of Christians only, but also to that of the philosophers for whom some things were public teachings, but others private” (Origen, Contra Celsum, 1.7, 248 CE, quoted from ‘Jesus the Sorcerer’, Robert Conner, p.200)

The hypothesis of this book is the outrageous proposition that Jesus and Simon Magus were the same person. How could this possibly be true with the scurrilous picture of Simon Magus in Scripture? How could this identity have been buried so well throughout history and denied by the early Church?

The answer to this puzzle lies in the embarrassment and danger of being a sorcerer in the Palestinian and Roman worlds which was a capital offense for both. The technique that was used as it is clear from many of the mystery school gospels like the Gospel of Philip and the Dialogue of the Savior is the psychomantium meditation process which goes back many thousands of years. This process was used to channel a being called 'the Son of Man'. The sacraments of water, oil, bread, and water or wine open to all disciples were used to confirm, approximate, remember, celebrate, recapitulate, and re-live this initiate experience permitted for only the highest initiates in the sacrament that was called the Bridal Chamber in the mystery school of early Christianity which could be termed 'Bridal Chamber Christianity'.

The 'Son of Man' which is, literally, 'Son of Adam' which would be 'Seth' in the Samaritan religious mindset was the great disembodied hierophant who assisted the initiates in their soul travel through the vast distances of the astral or dream-like planes to reach their home in their higher self that is outside of the time stream of time and space as we know it. It is the dew-drop of pure consciousness in the realms of ecstasy which is androgenous.

The Bridal Chamber verbiage comes from the reunification of the masculine and feminine sides of the soul depicted in the Adam and Eve division when the one soul incarnated in the physical world that required a bifurcated experience into two genders. The fragmented Dialogue of the Savior found in the Nag Hammadi library is a collection of some of these soul travel experiences from those closest to the Savior that records encounters with the Son of Man and one eyewitness account of the unification of two spirits in one robe light.

Because of the danger and, probably, the lack of trained hierophants in the Bridal Chamber process, the Pauline Church utilized safer, more Roman-familiar, charismatic techniques than Samaritans, ascetic Egyptians like Basilides, sexually free-wheeling Simonians in Rome, and mystery school adherents in Asia Minor, especially, who practiced Simon's techniques in the sacrament of the Bridal Chamber. Many Bridal Chamber Christians were crucified early on in Rome by Nero in 64 CE who were involved in 'magic' according to the accounts of Suetonius and Tacitus. (1)

The Pauline Roman Church responded to the Roman world and their Bridal Chamber competitors by fabricating an allegorical life story for their view of their Savior as shown by scholar Robert Eisenman as well as constructing a false life story for the Simon Magus they viewed as being misused by their opponents. They used some of the events from the life of Paul, most probably, such as trying to buy the power of the Holy Spirit, publicly debating the Apostle Peter, and spinning other bizarre and ridiculous 'flying' yarns about Simon. Their main effort

came in fortifying their gospel stories with spiritual allegories of Jesus like the journey into Jerusalem and the over-turning of the money tables to construct a new Roman-friendly Jewish Savior persona in their attempt to co-opt Judaism. The Gospel of Mark was the earliest and most honest depiction of all the Roman Gospels in showing Jesus using magical techniques in an attempt to first separate from Judaism and Jewish Christians. All the later Roman Gospels quickly ditched references to magical techniques and portrayed Jesus in the divine man mode.

This construction of a new religion out of the history of a Samaritan Egyptian-style mystery school teacher was a necessary step for the Herodians like Paul who built the early Roman Church since they were terrified that they would all be lumped together and butchered by the Romans who had difficulty telling Herodians apart from the fundamentalist Jews who were constantly threatening revolution and were bent on a suicidal path in challenging the Empire.

It is said that extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof and that proof complex exists unrecognized in the details of the life story of Simon Magus, the life story of Jesus of Nazareth, and the events of a little known nearby kingdom called Osrhoene ruled by a dynasty that was converted successfully by a Hebrew mission from Palestine. In addition, but not least, are bizarre, puzzling, and unrecognized stories by Josephus and the rabbis of the second century who wanted to tell the story from their own cynical viewpoint for only the insiders since the whole truth was too toxic to Roman sensibilities.

One major key to the mystery of who Jesus of Nazareth was lies in the figure of Mary Magdalene, the first witness to the resurrection, his close companion according in all accounts, and the one who officiated at what would have been considered a royal anointing in Mark 14:3 with the pouring of a large amount of oil upon the head of Jesus. This ‘christening’ corresponds to what should have been the ceremony initiating Jesus as the successor of John, the Baptist.

But, how could a woman in the conservatism of those Jewish times have possibly officiated at such a ceremony and one under such a cloud of a redeemed past of sexual or demonic innuendo—unless this was a mystery school initiation?

And, what does ‘Magdalene’ mean anyway? Rather than being some impossibly obscure place name it most obviously refers to ‘great’ as in the Magna Carta, magnum opus, or the Apophasis Megale (‘Great Work’) of Simon and his followers. Just as Jesus was a renunciate called ‘the Nazarene’ that referred to his renunciate group rather than a town so Mary was called ‘the Magdalene’. In addition, ‘Mary’ can very well be considered a spiritual name since the Gospel of Philip relates that Jesus had three Mary’s following him. ‘Mary’ as a spiritual name derives from Miriam the sister of Aaron who was such a powerful role model in being an extremely popular leader of the Hebrew. So, ‘Great Mary’ could have referred to her leading role as a disciple and spiritual attainment or it could also have other implications as we shall see.

The consort of Simon named Helen, as well, according to the Church Fathers supposedly also had the scandalous past of being plucked out of a brothel in Tyre before being raised to her

exalted position of being the incarnation of Wisdom. Beyond this personal relationship, however, she had some very real status as one of the thirty top disciples of John the Baptist and the only female among them. (2) Since Simon was reported to be the favorite disciple of John and his successor--just as Jesus was in the Gospels of John--and they both had a favorite female disciple with a scandalous past who was highly respected in her own right we need to follow this track East to the Kingdom of Osrhoene to find another highly respected and pious woman with a colorful profile of the exact same time period who also circulated in Palestine.

Helen, the Queen of Adiabene, was born about 20 BCE into the family of the monarchy of Osrhoene and was the half-sibling and became the favorite wife of King Monobaz I. Adiabene was a smaller kingdom and the Eastern capitol of Osrhoene with Edessa—also known as one of the many Antiochs of the region—as the Western center of Osrhoene. Helen, of course, had the same name as the consort of Simon while ‘Magdalene’ has a sound like ‘Adiabene’. Queen Helen was also part of a harem which lent itself to the ‘house of prostitution’ insult.

Helen’s second son, Izates, was born about year 0 and inherited his father’s throne about year 31—which exactly corresponds to the birth and ‘beginning the mission’ dates of Jesus, of course. This was no accident. It is as if to say: ‘This hot, new, pious Jewish King you would like to have to be replacing the Roman and Herodian boot is not your king—Jesus is your spiritual king.’

Izates, according to Eusebius, was converted in 29 CE—after which he learned his mother had been converted some time earlier. This kingdom of Izates lay in the confines of the great Parthian Empire which contended militarily with Rome over such areas as Armenia for much of the first century. In addition, the newly-Jewish kings of Osrhoene were an existential threat to Herodian and Roman rule over Jerusalem even more for their piety and virtue than for their military capability and Parthian alliance.

The extremely odd thing about this pair of conversions is that they came from a ‘non-circumcision mission’. When Izates was later confronted with the circumcision issue by a different Jewish missionary and was quite receptive to the idea his mother vehemently argued with him that it would endanger his reign for this to become known. Even his original mentor, Ananias, said that he would leave the kingdom since it wouldn’t be safe for him any longer.

The obvious choice for a mystical, non-fundamentalist Hebrew mission to Osrhoene in this time period would be the Baptist group. In fact, Eusebius—who thought these conversions were to Christianity--claims Judas Thomas was one of the missionaries.

Queen Helen actually moved to Jerusalem with five of her grandchildren and built some palaces and a huge tomb—which is still extant, funded the Temple, and funded grain-buying expeditions to Egypt during the terrible drought of 44-46 CE. She would have had easy access to Simon-Jesus in the Thirties CE (The crucifixion, as will be shown, probably occurred in 36 CE) and to James the Just for two decades after.

Queen Helen, also, undertook three consecutive seven year nazarite vows. Although there is speculation it had to do with some sexual issue the first one probably had to do with praying for the safe return of Izates from an upcoming war. The next two may have involved becoming ritually defiled by her contact with a dead body such as that of Jesus.

The Gospel of Thomas is aware of all these issues regarding Mary Magdalene being identified with Queen Helen. The one saying out of 113 original sayings that features Mary happens to be Logion 21—which, of course, refers to the length of her nazarite vow period. The fairly long and complex saying deals with renunciation, preparation against evil—which might refer to her kingdom, and ends with a very interesting sentence about harvesting grain which is a signature in regard to her famous grain-buying expedition.

The ‘sheep’ imagery familiar in Roman tradition comes from Simon’s reference to Helen as his lost sheep. The Gospel of Thomas in L 107, also, seems to reference Mary as the largest sheep in a Sophia Mythos-type parable:

“The kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and looked for that one until he found it. When he had gone to such trouble, he said to the sheep, ‘I care for you more than the ninety-nine’” (3)

To decode L 107, one can do no better than to look at its context. The next saying, L 108, refers to the mystic kiss that Jesus supposedly and famously was always giving Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of Philip:

“Jesus said: ‘He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him’ (or her!).” (4)

Now that we are familiar with the Queen Helen story it can be seen that another pseudonym of hers is ‘Queen Kandakes’ in Acts 8:26-27 whose eunuch was returning from Jerusalem after worshipping in the Temple before encountering the Apostle Philip who converted him. There was no Ethiopian queen by that name in that era and eunuchs were not allowed to enter the Temple. The ‘Ethiopian’ was a play on Queen Helen being Arab since Arabs were considered ‘black’. The story of the eunuch was a nasty parody on her son, Izates, who was confronted by a later fundamentalist Jewish evangelist who got him to circumcise himself. Circumcision was considered a form of self-mutilation in the Roman world.

The noted scholar, Robert Eisenman, has also made the link between Queen Helen and obscure figures in Rabbinic literature. Queen Helen parallels a ‘Nakdimon’ who was a fabulously rich man who promised to supply Jerusalem with enough grain for twenty-one years and who was able to fill twenty-one wells in Jerusalem in a time of drought. (5) The base of the

name refers to the sun breaking through the clouds in a miracle-working sense such as in Joshua making the sun stand or more recently in the tradition of James the Just in being a ‘rain-maker’.

The name of ‘Nakdimon’ (6) is also synonymous with the name ‘Nicodemus’ who we find oddly only in the Gospel of John despite his prominence. He is called a ‘ruler of the Jews’ in Chapter 3, defends Jesus before ‘the chief priests and Pharisees’ in Chapter 7 (as, perhaps, Queen Helen might) and assists in dressing the body of Jesus with expensive ointments at the end of John. The reason for this would be that the name of ‘Nicodemus’ for Queen Helen may only have been popularized late in the first century by Josephus and rabbinical scholars—but just before John was published. Queen Helen is the obvious candidate to have been a ‘ruler of the Jews’ as a follower of Jesus as well as one who had the status to challenge the High Priests and to request of Pilate the body of Jesus.

An associate of Nakdimon was a man called ‘Ben Kalba Sabua’ which can be translated ‘son of a filled dog or bitch’ according to Eisenman and who was also fabulously rich. (7) The explanation of his name is that he never turned anybody away from his door hungry since ‘Sabua’ has the meaning of ‘filled’. However ‘Sabua’ also relates to the ‘daily bathers’ or pious, conservative Jews in Syria and Osrhoene who did daily ablutions that King Izates was very generous to. ‘Ben Kalba Sabua’ can be seen to also relate to Izates being the son of Queen Helen who was ‘filled’ with the Holy Spirit. The word ‘Kalba’ meaning ‘dog’ or ‘bitch’ would be Jewish terminology for a ‘non-Jew’ who became ‘filled’. Ben Kalba Sabua also promised grain supplies to Jerusalem—this time for 22 years rather than 21—just as King Izates collaborated with Queen Helen in the drought years.

Another person that really reveals the reason for all the scholastic subterfuge is a daughter of Ben Kalba Sabua/King Izates named Rachel (8) who married the spiritual leader of the Bar Kochba Revolt of 132-36 CE named Rabbi Akiba who applied the Star Prophecy from Numbers 24:17 to make Bar Kochba the prophesied messiah. Rachel seems to have paid for her future husband to have studied with a radical Rabbi named Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. Rabbi Akiba also seems to have been a recruiter for the revolution with one of his students being named ‘Monobaz’—undoubtedly a descendant of Queen Helen as well. When the Romans finally got their hands on Rabbi Akiba he was martyred with his skin being slowly picked off his body.

The allegorical story from the first century called ‘Joseph and Asenath’ is unrecognized by scholars to do so but reveals in much detail the Jewish-Christian mystery school view of the life of Queen Helen. It utilizes the very scant outline of Joseph, the Vizier of Egypt being given in marriage to the daughter of a pagan priest by the Pharaoh and having two sons named Manasseh and Ephraim. Of course, Queen Helen is also very rich, a convert, has two sons, and is of foreign extraction.

Joseph is referred to as the “son of God”. Asenath is given a new name of “City of Refuge” that has a Sophia Mythos ring to it. The higher self or image of God is referred to a number of

times in different ways. The setting is definitely Jewish-Christian with references to food conventions but a rich Christian sacramental life is obvious in discussions involving foot-washing, the "bread of life", "cup of immortality", the "unction of incorruption", and the "bridal chamber".

Joseph doesn't figure much in the real plot of the story except to make some theological points about the union of twin souls and having some recognizable detail such as twelve advance men and his focus on grain distribution which is analogous to being 'the bread of life'.

The 'son of the Pharaoh' who wanted to capture Asenath for himself is analogous to Herod Antipas since they both were accused of or guilty of treasonous intent against their respective Empires. Antipas, according to the Gospel of Peter, was the real agent along with the High Priests behind the Crucifixion. It is not surprising that his relatives, the Herodians, who were behind the writing of the Roman Gospels conveniently left him mostly out at that point in the story although Luke does have Antipas interview Jesus. Antipas was banished from Palestine and died in obscurity just like the 'son of the Pharaoh' survived for a time but died out of view of most people.

The immediate side-kick of Asenath in the harrowing chariot escape was Benjamin, the brother of Joseph, who represented the Samaritans. The other two brothers of Joseph supporting Asenath were Simeon/Simon and Levi. Simon represented the hot-blooded fundamentalist Jews and Jewish Christians like Simon Peter where brother Levi was the proto-typical mystery school representative who had to step on Simon to make the point that they should not be repaying evil for evil. Brother Levi was mentioned as being able to interpret words from heaven in private to Asenath and able to see the place of her higher self, there. Disciple Levi in the first century sermons of the Dialogue of the Savior is a main participant along with Mary Magdalene in the soul travel described.

The Herodians involved with Herod Antipas are the half-brothers of Joseph named Dan and Gad whose mothers were hand-maidens or servants of Rachael and Leah just as the Herodians were considered not quite Jewish although with Hebrew blood. They were incited to violence over jealousy in the lies told by the son of Pharaoh just as the Herodians as the ruling family of Palestine were threatened by the popularity of Queen Helen's royal house that had so recently and piously been converted to Judaism. The High Priests involved in the Crucifixion were all appointed by the Romans just as the Herodians were. The massacre of the six hundred troops of Asenath by the two thousand troops of the conspirators could have corresponded well to the Samaritan Massacre in Josephus that Pilate was incited to commit of peaceful pilgrims in the run-up to the Crucifixion which is mentioned in Mark 15:7 in reference to Barabbas: "who had committed murder in the insurrection".

The major themes which thread through 'Joseph and Asenath' such as not returning evil for evil, forgiveness of enemies, support of ruling authorities, and renunciation of political ambition

seem written for the Christian attitude to the Romans in the pre-war atmosphere of the first century.

In keeping with the allegorical method of the Synoptic Gospels and 'Joseph and Asenath', the first century Jewish historian for the Romans, Josephus, crafted several bizarre counterpoints of them himself that are totally unrecognized. They are sandwiched into the Pilate era and begin talking about supposed Roman events in the middle of a discussion of Palestinian events such as the Samaritan Massacre.

The first story is about a woman named Paulina (9) who is rich and beautiful but very virtuous and modest who is hoaxed by a devotee of a man named Decius Mundus and some priests at the temple of the god, Anubis, into sleeping with Decius Mundus under the pretext that he is the god, Anubis. The name of Paulina can be seen to be taken from Paul, the Apostle. The name of Decius Mundus can be translated 'Worldly God'—a spoof by Josephus on the claim of Simon Magus to be the incarnation of the 'Great Power'. The scenario can easily be seen to correlate to Simon's true cosmopolitan religious viewpoint and his idea that divinity is working through him.

In the second story told by Josephus, Simon is un-named but described as a renegade Jew who is busy "teaching the wisdom of Moses" who solicits "purple and gold" for the Temple in Jerusalem from Fulvia, (10) "a woman of great dignity who has embraced Judaism" and then uses it all for his own purposes. Once again, this is a perfect description of Queen Helen, her dignity, and her convert status as well as the religious basis of Simon—this time in what is the Sophia Mythos—and his supposed nefarious usage of Queen Helen.

The original Fulvia was a very powerful wife of Marc Antony who ran Rome in his absence and was the first non-mythological woman to make it on to a Roman coin. An obvious key that ties the two stories together is the oddity that the husband of Queen Helen in both stories is named 'Saturninus'! About the time Josephus was writing there was a gnostic Christian spiritual teacher in Syria named 'Saturninus'.

The story of 'Joseph and Asenath' crafted by the circle around Queen Helen probably began the allegorical genre in the late Fifties with the author of the Gospel of Mark re-inventing it in a more life-like manner after the Roman War. The Rabbinical school that survived with Roman approval and not to be out-done began crafting their own allegorical truth-telling before the Gospel of John was published in the Nineties. It isn't surprising, then, that Josephus would jump in and compete in the genre with his own colorful stories and cynical viewpoint in the era in question.

This view of Jesus that he was a cosmopolitan Samaritan magician with a close female disciple-consort who channeled a being called 'the Son of Man' comports much better with the Roman Gospels picture that the one that he was a conservative, hell-fire breathing, Jewish messiah, himself. The baptism of John wasn't Jewish but resonates with the water immersion initiations of the pagan mystery schools. This holds true for the oil, foot-washing, Holy Spirit

sacraments as well. What alienated many or most conservative Jews according to the Gospel of John was the Eucharist sacrament. Drinking even symbolically, the blood of even the Son of God was a horrific thought for observant Jews. What was reserved for only the inner group of disciples that was obvious 'sorcery' was the psychomantium meditation technique which was called 'the Bridal Chamber' that is referred to in works like the Gospel of Philip and the Dialogue of the Savior.

Indeed, the gnostic Mandaeans with a priesthood called 'the Nazoreans' which descend from John and fled Palestine about 37-38 CE is probably a good reflection of what the Baptist group originally believed. John, himself, probably worked mainly in Samaria or the other side of the Jordan to work on the fringes and escape the fundamentalist wrath of the Jerusalem establishment. The first disciples of Jesus according to the Gospel of John were also in Samaria referenced in the Samaritan 'Woman at the Well' incident.

Contrary to Jewish rhetoric, Second Chronicles, Isaiah, and Jeremiah record that all the Samaritans were not taken into Captivity but many continued to reside in Samaria. It had a much more polytheistic cast to it with the goddess Asherah being worshipped as the consort of Yahweh who also presided over the assembly of lesser gods. Over the centuries BCE, Samaritans were also much more susceptible to Egyptian influences and Greek philosophy. Sophia or Wisdom was hypostasized as female and conceived as the first creation of God. She was his Holy Spirit.

The great Samaritan scholar, John McDonald, held that the Samaritans from this mix of influences had a gnostic frame of reference with large numbers of ex-pats scattered throughout the larger cities of Egypt and Asia Minor. (11) There was a large community in Alexandria that would have fueled the Baptist movement and a synagogue in Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman Empire, which could have fueled the early Christian community in Antioch that is generally considered 'Hellenistic' even before the Apostle Paul happened along.

The four Roman Gospels are acknowledged by scholars to have been all published after the Roman War of '66-'70 but the source identified as 'Q' making up good parts of both Matthew and Luke was arguably published before the War—or within three decades of the Crucifixion. Q portrays Jesus as a wisdom teacher in the mode of the Greek Cynic characters that would wander from town to town and 'tell truth to power'. The one difference in Q is that it is divine Wisdom or Sophia who informs Jesus and the continuing Christian community. There is nothing messianic about the Q Jesus. Of course, the Q material might be just the effort of Matthew and Luke to spin the Markan Jesus, the magician, away from exorcising demons and healing with spittle as well as continuing to spin the Jewish-Christian messiah away from fundamentalism and toward a role more comfortable for the Roman mind to appreciate by lifting Cynic material from some other source but Q at least shows the resonance of a non-Jewish spiritual teacher like Simon Magus to the Roman Gospels. Whether Q is fabricated or not it expresses well the relationship Simon Magus had with the divine feminine.

The roots of the Sophia Mythos about the descent of Wisdom into matter and the coming of the Son of Man to rescue her which colors all the Bridal Chamber literature from Nag Hammadi—rather than being some late second century CE corruption of pure Christianity—can be seen to go as far back as the probably second century BCE Egyptian Samaritan work called ‘Eugnostos the Blessed’ that attempted a philosophical synthesis that was both Platonic and Hebrew. It was probably after the Samaritan Temple was destroyed in circa 110 BCE by the Jewish state that the mood darkened into the development of the negative demiurge that was identified with the God of the Jewish state, Jehovah, and his minions that were called ‘archons’ or ‘the authorities’. This fuller rendition of the Sophia Mythos would have been the philosophical inheritance of Simon Magus and is reflected in the first century CE Egyptian Christian piece called ‘The Sophia of Jesus Christ’ as well as very many other first and second century CE works.’

Some people, having read some parts of the introduction, will read no farther in not desiring to read any more of what they regard as bad news. This is why Morton Smith’s ‘Jesus the Magician’ never caught on beyond academia. This is why the fabulous expose of Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince called ‘The Masks of Christ’ never caught on. This is why the two one thousand pagers of Robert Eisenman: ‘The New Testament Code’ and ‘James the Brother of Jesus’ never went too far past academia. I highly recommend all of these books, but people just from their genetic make-up do not like to hear bad news. They don’t really want to hear what they think is the bad news that Jesus was a fraud and the Gospels were fraudulently written.

In fact, this author regards this book as being really good news which the authors cited have not quite penetrated though they have come closer than anyone with their very courageous and unblinking intellectual integrity and scintillating scholarship.

The good news is that Jesus was not a fundamentalist, hell-fire breathing preacher damning people to hell and predicting what became a failed end-of-the world prophecy. This is the position, increasing, some modern scholars are reluctantly coming to.

Some more really good news is that Jesus wasn’t just a wandering wise guy telling camp-fire stories in the mode of the Greek Cynic who would wander through towns ‘telling truth to power’. This has been one popular view since the Nag Hammadi texts were brought into the public domain in recent decades.

Another piece of really good news is that Jesus was not a violent revolutionary in the mode of the Essenes who were gathering in the desert to overthrow the Romans.

Another piece of really good news is that Jesus really did exist which we can know for sure from scattered reports of Roman historians, contemporaneous Rabbinical references, and references in the Magical Papyri as well as from the disparate groups who all claimed his tradition.

The really good news is that Jesus was a human mystery school teacher who channeled higher divine being in a universe that is dimensional in keeping with modern concepts while in a mode that is relational philosophically to all others and using a safe and very accessible technique called the psychomantium well known for millennia which can be re-invented for modern use.

The really good news about the real metaphysics of Jesus was that it operated in the full blush of the embrace with the divine feminine—which the earth desperately needs today. We know this from all the early and Bridal Chamber Christianity works found in the Nag Hammadi Library such as the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Philip and many more.

The really good news about this book is that it delineates a Christianity that is not only just black and white: ‘The Bible is all true or none of its true’, but teaches and breathes ineffable truth from its very plurality and dimensionality.

The really good news is that this book expresses a spirituality untainted by crass and self-centered beliefs in physical immortality and leapfrogs the narrow concepts of what human consciousness has been considered to be into a new birth of freedom and relationality.

Finally, the really good news is that we don’t have to take just the word of the historical Jesus as odd as we find him to be or the charismatic word of the Living Savior of faith. We have the corresponding persistence of what could be called Bridal Chamber Christianity for over a century in Egypt, Syria, and in Rome in the works of the Dialogue of the Savior, Joseph and Asenath, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Second Treatise of the Great Seth, the Odes of Solomon, and many other companion works, inscriptions, and references which delineated a science of the soul and a pathway to the divine that transcends the simplistic fundamentalism, charismatic phenomenon, and hierarchical obedience of contemporary religion.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, p. 50
- (2) G. R. S. Mead, *Simon Magus: An Essay*
- (3) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p. 137
- (4) *Ibid.*
- (5) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, pp. 197-198
- (6) *Ibid.*
- (7) *Ibid.*, pp. 209-211
- (8) *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208
- (9) Flavius Josephus, ‘Antiquities of the Jews’, Book XVIII, Chapter 3, Para. 4
- (10) *Ibid.*, Para. 5
- (11) John McDonald, ‘The Theology of the Samaritans’, p. 30 and quoted from Picknett & Prince, ‘The Masks of Christ’, p.377

## 1. INTRODUCING JOSEPHUS

To find the historical Jesus we need to go to the best historical source of the period which is the turncoat Jewish historian, Josephus, who published in the 70's CE and again in the 90's for a Roman audience. Josephus was born near the year of the Crucifixion and so was well-versed in the events, personalities, sources, and drama of his century. He was twenty-five years old and living in Jerusalem in 62 CE when James, the Just, for example was stoned to death in an illegal conspiracy of King Agrippa and the newly installed High Priest.

Josephus was the quintessential cynical modern man who changed sides (or jobs) many times depending on how it would benefit him. His father was of the first order of the Sadducean Priesthood and his family on both sides was wealthy and related to Maccabean royalty. When the Jewish revolt began in the 60's, Josephus was against it but—all of a sudden—found himself the military commander of the rebel garrison in Galilee. This was the first great betrayal of Josephus. The Sadducees were the conservatives in favor of collaborating with the Romans. Josephus must have decided that the fanatical revolutionaries were going to kill all of their opponents who didn't go along and that if he had to become one of them it made sense to be at the top of the heap where he could broker a deal with the Romans. One can easily conjure up his pitch that with all of his education, money, and influence that he could be an asset with a military command.

It wasn't long, however, before Josephus ended up cornered in a cave with a small troop of soldiers after the Romans arrived. Josephus talked his troops into committing suicide by cutting each other's throats in a round robin approach starting with every third man. If Josephus had counted the lots to see who would die first and then stepped into the circle of men at the right spot then he would have been guaranteed to be one of the last two survivors. Of forty-one men, Josephus would have had to have been in position sixteen or thirty-one to have survived (in his book, 'Vita', he brags about his "great memory and understanding") according to modern mathematicians who have been fascinated by the problem. But it wouldn't have taken advanced math but something to write on or a little stick model to come up with the answer so, not surprisingly, Josephus ended up as one of the last two men. When the two were left, they agreed not to die. After being taken prisoner by the Romans and before being crucified, Josephus made the case to the Roman general, Vespasian, that a Jewish prophecy about a world savior coming out of Palestine applied to the general. Vespasian, who later did become a Roman Emperor, loved that idea and spared Josephus.

Josephus made himself so useful to the Romans in trying to facilitate a surrender to the hold-outs in Jerusalem and in helping to interrogate prisoners that he moved to Rome and was adopted by the ruling family, taking on the name 'Flavius Josephus'. He was even given a newly captured Jewish wife by the Romans after his first wife and parents had perished in the war.

Writing in the 70's, Josephus was very careful and circumspect not to mention some of the great personalities and movements leading up to it. Writing in the 90's and feeling obviously more comfortable he really showed a depth of knowledge in even claiming to have lived with Essenes for three years as a young man.

What is important to keep constantly in mind to understand Josephus, then, is the depth of knowledge he must have had of James the Just and the Jesus movement along with his high intelligence, and the depth of his cynicism and extreme cunning (that his commentators have not plumbed).

## 2. TESTIMONIUM FLAVIUM

Josephus has only one clear and famous text overtly referencing Jesus but it is clearly a later insertion or rewrite—probably by the Church father, Eusebius, who used similar verbiage and held a similar theology as the passage below. We know this since Origen who preceded Eusebius clearly states that Josephus did not accept Jesus as Christ. Secondly, Josephus thought that miracle workers that went out into the desert to raise a following were even more dangerous than revolutionaries. His whole body of work proves this. Josephus comes from the ‘can’t we all get along’ school and was sponsored by Epaphroditus who was a staff person under Nero—the same Epaphroditus, no doubt, mentioned in Philippians who sponsored Paul, the Apostle, in efforts to establish a Roman-friendly version of Judaism called Christianity.

The passage in question is called Testimonium Flavium or ‘the testimony of Flavius Josephus to Jesus’ and is to be found in ‘Antiquities of the Jews’ in Chapter Eighteen:

3. Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, (9) those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (10) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

There are just too many unbelievable passages such as “if it be lawful to call him a man”, “He was the Christ”, “he appeared to them alive”, and “ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him” to be written by a Jewish turncoat employed by the Roman Empire to write a secular history.

Josephus was not well read in his time or in the next few centuries so that it is conceivable that copies could have been emended in a Christian direction while the original versions could be gradually discovered and destroyed by a Christian empire.

While in Josephus we have adequate material on Pontius Pilate, James, the Just, a descendant of Herod called Saul who is our Paul, and even a Simon who had his own congregation in Jerusalem, we do not have anything on a Galilean miracle worker who fed the four and five thousand and marched into Jerusalem, over-turned the money tables, and was crucified in 33 CE who was called Jesus.

What we do have in the one decade that Pilate served in Palestine is a curious story of a Samaritan massacre:

Antiquities 18.4.1-2 85-89

“1. But the nation of the Samaritans also did not escape without tumults. A man excited them who thought lying a thing of little consequence and who contrived everything that would please the crowds. So he bid them to gather together upon Mount Gerizzim, which is by them looked upon as the most holy of all mountains, and assured them that he would show them those sacred vessels which were buried in that place, where Moses had put them. So, armed, they went there, as they thought the man's statement was plausible, and while they stayed at a certain village called Tirathaba they welcomed the others as they assembled there, as they desired to go up the mountain in a great multitude together. But Pilate prevented their going up by blockading the way with a great band of horsemen and foot-men, who fell upon those that had first gotten together in the village; some of them they slew, and others of them they put to flight, and a great many they took alive, the leaders of whom and also the most influential of those that had fled, Pilate killed.

2. But when this tumult had quieted down, the Samaritan senate sent an embassy to Vitellius, a man of consular rank who was governor of Syria, and accused Pilate of the murder of those who had perished; for they had not gone to Tirathaba in order to revolt from the Romans, but to escape from the violence of Pilate. So Vitellius sent Marcellus, a friend of his, to take care of the affairs of Judea, and ordered Pilate to go to Rome to answer before the emperor to the accusations of the Samaritans. And so Pilate, when he had tarried ten years in Judea, made haste to Rome in obedience to the orders of Vitellius, which he dared not disobey. But before he could get to Rome Tiberius was dead.” (6)

This is the only massacre/crucifixion scenario in the era of Pilate according to Josephus who would have loved to have chattered on about any gory crucifixion event involving his hated miracle workers and revolutionaries happening in Jerusalem or elsewhere. It is here that we need to see if we can make out the outline of the historical Jesus.

One dynamic that fits the Gospel accounts is that probably only a year or two separates the death of John the Baptist and the Samaritan massacre. Pilate arrived in Rome very shortly after the death of Tiberias which occurred on March 16, 37 CE. This would have been in the month of Nissan according to the Jewish calendar which is the first month of the Jewish year. Undoubtedly, then, the massacre happened at least in 36 CE according to the Jewish calendar anyway. In fact, the Samaritan massacre could have happened a year earlier in 36 CE since it

was and still is traditional for Samaritans to make a pilgrimage up Mt Gerizim to celebrate the Passover. Josephus could well have been too discrete to mention this fact since it would make the Romans look bad to massacre peaceful pilgrims celebrating a holy day—and maybe why he asserts that they were “armed”. Josephus does make it clear there was a religious element to it anyway. The Jewish Passover occurred in 37 CE on March 18, but if had occurred a year earlier it might have taken some time for the Samaritans to get together, decide upon what to do, and to send a delegation to the Syria governor. It might have taken some time for Vitellius to investigate the matter with his own people. He also may have reported to Rome on this issue and requested advice. He may have wanted to notify Rome before removing Pilate as a safety measure. At any rate, it is not unreasonable that in some manner it may have taken a year for the bureaucratic workings to play out.

Indeed, with the religious element involved what better timing would there be than to have this pilgrimage coordinated with Passover on Mt Gerizim in 36 CE? This would correspond to the Gospels Passover timeframe as we shall see.

Robert Eisenman summarizes Josephus as saying John’s death was in the 34-36 CE period which is somewhat past the normal date for Jesus execution given in the Gospels of between 30-33 CE. (1) It is clear from Josephus that John was killed as a preventative measure since he was an extremely popular political-religious figure viewed as being aligned with King Aretas in complaining that Herod the Tetrarch was divorcing the daughter of King Aretas to marry Herod’s half-brother’s wife, Herodias. This marriage precipitated a small war where King Aretas, the king of Petra, defeated Herod and took Damascus in 36 CE. Herod was seen as getting his just desserts for killing John. This latter date of about 35 CE for John’s death is also closer in time to the Mandaean tradition that John’s disciples fled across the Jordan between 37-38 CE. (2) The last straw, maybe, for some followers of the Baptist was the Samaritan massacre of 36 CE who were on a peaceful religious pilgrimage up Mt Gerizim.

This later date for the death of the Baptist and the date of 36 CE for the Crucifixion accords much better with the early Church Father, Epiphanius, that the received oral tradition was that James the Just was stoned to death twenty-four years “more or less” after the death of Jesus. (3) James was stoned in 62 CE. Twenty-four years earlier is 38 CE for the Crucifixion. But, the stoning happened probably in the week before Passover or before that. Since the month of Nissan begins the Jewish year in which Passover is it is possible the stoning actually happened in 61 CE and taking the Crucifixion possibly to 37 CE. When it is considered that twelve and its multiples were considered holy numbers it is possible the “twenty-four years” is a rounded number. There were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles so that 36 CE is quite a reasonable in the ‘more or less’ time frame.

It is in this Samaritan story of Josephus, then, that we need to look for historical threads of the historical Jesus. That Jesus was crucified rather than being stoned to death was an indication that he was killed as an insurrectionist by the Romans which would have necessitated some cover-up of his identity such as making him into a Galilean that was aggressively making himself the enemy of Jerusalem.

One thing that jumps out is that in this rendition of a massacre we have the “rebellion”, probably, referenced in Mark in the story of Barabbas. This would put crucifixions and the rebellion in the same time frame. Josephus was compelled to refer to men being there who were armed so as not to blame the Romans for an unjust massacre. In fact, he makes plain that it really was just a peaceful gathering of people he thought had been deluded.

The next thing to notice—aside from the typical way Josephus regards miracle workers in presenting them as liars and hucksters-- is that the leader (who Josephus makes a point not to name!) was presenting himself as some sort of latter day Joshua—or ‘son of Joseph’ as all the Samaritans deemed themselves. That Jesus in the Gospels is referred to as the son of Joseph conceals more than meets the eye.

Oddly enough the Baptist had two chief followers who were Samaritans. One was Dositheus, who however, was probably the ‘Messiah ben Joseph’ called ‘Doetus’ who was crucified with four others in another messianic disturbance at Lydda between 48-52 CE mentioned in Josephus and in the Talmud. (4)

The other chief disciple in Samaria was Simon Magus who is given more respect outside of Luke’s Acts of the Apostles and the Roman Church fathers than within them. Simon was actually the favorite of thirty main disciples according to G.R.S. Mead’s research (5) and anointed successor of John the Baptist after besting Dositheus for the leadership. Since Simon and Jesus were both said to have been the successors of John then we have to examine if they are the same person.

In the Jewish Christian version of events recorded in the Pseudo Clementine’s to Simon and Dositheus is accredited the first public promulgation of the ‘Primal Adam’ theology (6) which involved the heavenly Adam’s soul coming down to earth and being split into male and female versions. This is discussed in the very early work called ‘Dialogue of the Savior’ and is slightly referenced in Paul’s comments about the first Adam and second Adam with Jesus being the ‘Last Adam’. (7) The Pseudo Clementine’s misconstrue but roughly approximate the sense of this higher self by accusing Simon of channeling the spirit of a young boy. (8) What Simon was really doing seen in the context of the Gospel of Thomas was acting as a vehicle for the androgenous Primal Adam (the idea of the original, innocent Adam in the Garden before the division of the sexes in Genesis) which is the image of God or higher self that is actually outside of time and space. The “sacred vessels” of Moses that were supposedly to be found on Mt Gerizim can be seen as allegory referring to the higher self that was seen, perhaps, in meditation.

The Gospel of John in Chapter Three reveals that John was baptizing in Samaria: “And John was also baptizing in Aenon, near Salim, for many waters were there”. After the key testimony of John we find a large part of Chapter Four dedicated to The Woman at the Well in Samaria. Jesus is supposedly only passing through for two days but acquires a large following of true believers. The message of Jesus to the woman is “an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem...” The mountain referenced would be Mt Gerizim where the massacre took place.

In light of the supposed Samaritan charlatan seeming to claim the mantle of Moses in knowing where to find the ‘sacred vessels’ it is interesting that the Gospel of John also makes constant analogies and references to Moses. Both Jesus and Moses were ‘prepared’ or ‘loved’ before the foundation of the world, were alone seeing God’s glory, were called prophets and good shepherds, were “murmured” against, met a woman at a well, showed mastery over water, and provided manna, loaves, and fishes for the people.

Although Josephus knows so many details of the massacre and description of the leader he is careful not to name names. But, “A man who excited them who thought lying of little consequence and who contrived everything that would please the crowds” would be an excellent description by a Jewish person like Josephus of such a one as Simon Magus recently returned from Egypt with his techniques considered magic—or of the Gospel portrayals of Jesus who charmed the crowds. Even at the end Josephus reports “the leaders of whom and the most influential of them that had fled, Pilate killed”—without mentioning any names, again, of either category of the ‘leaders’ or of the ‘influential’.

Justin Martyr (103-165 C.E.) was a very early Christian theologian who did name names. He says in Apologia that nearly all Samaritans in his time were adherents of Simon of Gitta. This is clearly Simon Magus. Gitta is a town in North Samaria and not far from Neapolis or modern-day Nablus where Justin Martyr was born.

Simon Magus (the Magician) is the ideal candidate to have been the mystery school teacher of Mark. He was studying in Egypt when John was killed according to G.R.S. Meade so he came ‘out of Egypt’ like Jesus. All the very early depictions of Jesus in the early centuries show him using a wand in turning water into wine or doing a healing or a raising from the dead. (9) Picknett and Prince note that the earliest Jewish tradition in the Mishnah from about 200 CE but based on earlier information has Jesus killed for practicing magic: “On the Sabbath of the Passover festival Jesus was hung (on the cross)...because he has practiced sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God.” (10)

Nevertheless, Jesus was killed as a revolutionary against Rome with crucifixion rather than as a blasphemer of Judaism by stoning officially so his identity would have had to have been covered up and some elements of his cult fictionalized to make him Roman-friendly. His followers, no doubt, though would not have considered ‘Jesus’ meaning ‘savior’ and ‘Christ’ with an original meaning of being christened as the legitimate successor of the Baptist as particularly deceptive so this subterfuge began at a very early date. But more about this mysterious man and a similar mystery to the ‘sacred vessels’ will be discussed in the next chapter on ‘The Slavonic Josephus’ from which more can be gleaned that modern commentators suppose.

#### Footnotes

(1) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, p. 742

(2) Ibid., p. 109

(3) Epiphanius, ‘Panarion’, 78:14: 5-6

(4) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, pp. 102-105

(5) G. R. S. Mead, ‘Simon Magus’, III. Part 1: ‘Sources of Information’ quoting from the Pseudo-Clementines and quoted on [www.gnosis.org/library/grsm-simon-magus.htm](http://www.gnosis.org/library/grsm-simon-magus.htm)

- (6) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', p 102
- (7) For Paul's 'Last Adam' theology see: I Cor 15:45: "The first man, Adam, became a living person. But the last Adam—that is Christ—is a life-giving Spirit." and Romans 5:14: "...Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come."
- (8) For the vicious parody of the Primal Adam see: G.R.S. Mead, 'Simon Magus', III. Part 1: 'Sources of Information' quoting from the Pseudo-Clementines and quoted on [www.gnosis.org/library/grsm-simon-magus.htm](http://www.gnosis.org/library/grsm-simon-magus.htm).
- (9) For depictions of Jesus using a wand see William Henry, 'Starwalkers and Dimension of the Blessed', p.28 especially but there are other like depictions of Jesus raising Lazarus (Vatican Museum), changing water into wine, raising from death the son of the Widow of Nain, and multiplying the loaves.
- (10) Babylonian Sanhedrin (Talmud), 43 a-b

### 3. THE SLAVONIC JOSEPHUS

A version of ‘The Jewish War’ by Josephus was found in the Nineteenth Century in Russia that has been given little scholarly attention since none of the eight extra ‘pieces’ found in it regarding John the Baptist, Jesus, and early Christianity exist in any other 120 extant copies of Josephus. (1) It is easily perceived they are Christian interpolations into the text. Scholars have also lost interest since a goodly amount of the material seems either be broadly general, legendary, or clashing with the received Gospel tradition. However, it is precisely for the original nature of the material that it should be of tremendous interest. Why would the Christian editor wanting to make his case for Christ purposely include material incongruent with the Gospels—unless his editing occurred prior to his awareness of the publishing of the Gospels? This very early editing very well could have been the case.

In 1906 the Estonian scholar, Alexandeer Berendts, did a German translation of the Slavonic Josephus making the argument that it is not a Slavonic innovation but most definitely a translation from a Greek text which itself is a translation from Aramaic. (2) This became the opinion of German scholarship although the Slavonic Josephus has been identified obviously as some kind of Christian interpolation. (3) In fact the original title of the first version written in Aramaic by Josephus during the War of 66-70 CE was entitled ‘The Conquest of Jerusalem’-- which is the only title found in the Slavonic version. The first Aramaic “Conquest” version which has not been found was quickly translated into Greek for the occasion of the triumphal entry into Rome in June of 71 CE. Later in the 70’s a new Greek version of ‘The Jewish War’ was produced.

The working hypothesis would be that the lost Aramaic Slavonic Josephus was edited by a Christian editor in the early 70’s before the Gospel of Mark was at least circulated in Palestine and Syria. (It is clear from Clement of Alexandria that Mark was not circulated publicly until Matthew and Luke were circulated.) The Slavonic Josephus also could be used to solve the mystery of how the paragraph called Testimonium Flavium about Jesus showed up in the Antiquities of Jews published by Josephus in 93/94 CE. It is not referenced by Christian theologians until Constantine’s official historian, Eusebius, in the Fourth Century. Scholars do not really want to accept Eusebius made it all up out of whole cloth, yet the fall-back position that an originally uncomplimentary passage about Jesus was edited to a positive one has its problems too. It would burnish the reputation of Eusebius a bit and make sense if it were accepted that he had run across a copy of the Christian-interpolated Slavonic Josephus, edited it down to a paragraph, and inserted it into Antiquities—even if it wasn’t a transfer to the exact same book. The Antiquities could be viewed as just a more complete version of The Jewish War.

Reading many key phrases one can see the similarities. Here is an edited rendition of the Testimonium Flavium: “...Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man...doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure...Pilate at the

suggestion of the principle men...he appeared to them alive again the third day...ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him...”

Here is an edited rendition of ‘Piece 4’ from the Slavonic Josephus: “...if even it is fitting to call him a man...his showing forth was more than a man. His works were godly, and he wrought wonder-deeds amazing and full of power. Therefor it is not possible for me to call him a man (simply)...and he wrought through some kind of invisible power, he wrought by word and command...Some said...first Lawgiver has risen from the dead and shows forth many cures and arts...by word solely he effected everything....Jewish leaders...gathered together with the High priest...went and told Pilate...wonder-doer brought up...teachers of the law envenomed with envy...gave them consent...crucified him.”

Much more can be known about the First Century editor of the Slavonic Josephus than scholars suspect. But, first of all the editor must be treated carefully since it is obvious there was the deceitful attempt to speak in the voice of Josephus. The editor could very well have felt no guilt in ‘completing’ the work of a Jewish traitor who was cranking out propaganda for the great empire he was sponsored by.

The biggest problem for scholars is to perceive who the editor affiliated with. Some think that the editor was a ‘well-meaning Jew’. There are several very big problems with that. The first is that there are way too many tell-tale Christian viewpoints like “if it is fitting to call him a man...it is not possible for me to call him a man...some said of him, that our first Lawgiver has risen from the dead...he opposed himself in much to the Law and did not observe the Sabbath...or God himself appears as man and accomplishes what he will...but others said it was not possible to steal him, because they had put guards all around his grave,--30 Romans but a thousand Jews.” It has to be remembered that the editor is trying to speak in the voice of Josephus, the Jew and trying to sound objective.

There are some major problems, also, with seeing the editor in the mainstream trajectory of the Four Gospels story. One of them is the long timespan for the career of John the Baptist who was supposed to be a cousin of Jesus and the same age. The opening of Piece 1 is “Now at that time”. This would refer in the context to the reign of Archelaus who succeeded Herod the Great in 4 BCE and who was deposed in 6 CE This would have made John a child minister but aside from the Gospel story the fact that John had a many decades long career would certainly make sense in regard to the prominence he attained.

A similar incongruity follows from Piece 2 where John interprets the dream of King Philip who died in 34 CE and outlives Philip. This would not have been Philip the Tetrarch but his older half-brother, sometimes called Herod Philip I whose first marriage was to Herodias who deserted him to marry Herod Antipas and which seems reflected by the editor. Agrippa did indeed inherit territories from Herod Philip as Slavonic Josephus reports. According to the Gospel story John should already have been imprisoned and beheaded before the death of Philip. Following the time-frame of the Samaritan massacre and his beheading in proximity to the war with King Aretas the death of John was more likely around 35 CE--which corresponds to the Gospel length of the ministry of Jesus assuming the crucifixion in the Spring of 36 CE at the time of the Samaritan massacre.

More incongruities between the editor and the Gospels arise in Piece 4 dealing with Jesus. The editor claims Jesus had 150 ‘servants’ or disciples and doesn’t mention anything about The Twelve.

The editor describes a massacre of the followers of Jesus prior to the Crucifixion: “And he sent and had many of the people cut down.” This does actually, though, correspond to the Samaritan Massacre and it is echoed in Mark referring to “the recent uprising” when Barabas was the topic of discussion.

The editor relates the trial of Jesus by Pilate who then let him go to “to his accustomed place and wrought his accustomed works” before Pilate was bribed to allow the crucifixion. This would provide a time and place bridge between the Samaritan Massacre on Mt Gerizim and the Gospels portrayal of the crucifixion happening around Jerusalem.

The editor alleges it was the “teachers of the Law” who actually crucified Jesus. However, it was Pilate that was legally responsible who “gave them consent”. The Gospels clearly reflect this dynamic with the Romans putting Jesus to death but with very strong Jewish complicity to the point of being able to be accused of anti-Semitism.

The editor alleges that the bribe of thirty talents was to Pilate—seeming to betray no knowledge of this being to Judas. It could be argued that the Gospels are so anti-Semitic that why would the authors cover up this bribery with the over-write of Judas and crucifixion by “teachers of the Law” but it must be realized that to have mentioned the bribery of Pilate would have been a dangerous and needless Roman embarrassment to have published.

Objections could be raised to the Slavonic Josephus that Romans used crucifixion but Jews used stoning for executions. There are a few problems with this blanket viewpoint. One relates to the fore-going argument that Pilate was legally responsible for the death sentence so Jews were just implementing that in the Roman manner. Another response is that the last sentence in Piece 4: “crucified him according to ancestral law” actually was a scribal error that should have read “against ancestral law” although it is hard to hang your hat on such a blatant error. Another rationalization is that Maccabean Jews actually did wholesale crucifixions of their Pharisee opponents a century earlier under Alexander Jannaeus—which is maybe one reason why the practice ceased.

One strong possibility is that it was Herod Antipas who carried out the crucifixion rather than the Sanhedrin. This is what the Gospel of Peter reports which scholars agree was published late in the second century but which contains earlier sources. Herod had a Samaritan mother and Christian relationships. From Paul we know Joanna was the wife of the steward of Antipas. An associate of Paul, also, was Manean, a ‘foster brother’ and companion of Antipas. Although Manean was a Herodian and Robert Eisenman suspects he is a stand-in for Paul, it was probably the case that Antipas had enough Samaritan relatives and friends in his entourage and that he felt so vulnerable to criticism along this line from the High Priest and fundamentalists in Jerusalem that he felt obliged to condemn Jesus. (4)

After Pilate was summarily sent back to Rome in 37 CE following the Samaritan massacre by his Syrian over-lord, Vitellius, we find Vitellius paying a visit to Jerusalem. He curried favor with the people by alleviating some taxes and some rules on High priest vestments (garments) but deposed the High Priest, Caiaphas (Joseph Caiaphas) who had served since 18 CE and replaced him with Jonathan, the son of the former High Priest Annas—sending a clear message on behalf of Rome that he wanted to be accommodating but certain persecutory behaviors were not acceptable.

What we have learned so far is that the editor was not just a ‘friendly Jew’ and not a Christian in the normal Four Gospels trajectory. We, also, can perceive he is not a fundamentalist type of Jew from near the end of Piece 1:

“there rose up in anger Simon, an Essaeon by extraction, a scribe, and he spake: ‘We read every day the divine books. But thou, only now come from the forest like a wild animal—thou darest in sooth to teach us and to mislead the people with thy reprobate words.’ And he rushed forward to do him bodily violence. But he, rebuking them, spake: ‘I will not disclose to you the mystery which dwelleth in you, for ye have not desired it. Thereby an untold calamity is come upon you, and because of yourselves.’”

Notice the control over the interpretation of the ‘divine books’ by Simon. Notice the threat of violence. Notice, on the other hand, the mystical focus by John on “the mystery which dwelleth in you”. It cannot be sustained that the reference is to ‘Jesus who dwells within you’ since this appears to happen early in the ministry of John that is seemingly in the time of Archelaus. There is the clear contrast between fundamentalism and mysticism. The depiction of Jesus also opposes the ‘fundamentalist Jew’ model: “he opposed himself in much to the Law and did not observe the Sabbath according to ancestral custom”. This viewpoint is in harmony with the Gospels. With the ‘hidden vessels’ in the Testimonium Flavium and the ‘mystery within’ along with the anti-Law/Sabbath approach outlined in the Slavonic Joseph we have enough clues to say that this picture of Jesus is consistent with Jesus being identified as Simon Magus, the Egyptian mystery school teacher. It would be hard to make the case that the ‘hidden vessels’ were not metaphorical, that Simon was really going to get away with digging up literal vessels of Moses. The description in Slavonic Josephus of Jesus through-out as the ‘wonder-do’ is, of course, the equivalent of ‘magician’ or ‘Magus’.

The Dead Sea Scrolls clearly depict a fundamentalist version or type of Essene prone to violence and revolution. Robert Eisenman links the four and five thousand that Jesus fed in the wilderness with this sectarian movement gotten from the number Josephus gives for the Essenes. (5) The Gospels are clear that despite teaching them and miraculous events manifesting that they were rejecting him. The Slavonic Josephus artfully makes the point that the establishment “doctors of the Law” and the ‘Essaeon’ maintained the same attitude. So, the entire eight pieces of the Slavonic Josephus though written ostensibly from a Josephus-Roman anti-Jewish viewpoint can be seen to be written from what has to a Samaritan and a comprehensively anti-Jewish Hebraic viewpoint:

## I.

### John's Proclamation and His Rebuke of the Authorities.

1. Now at that time a man went about among the Jews in strange garments; for he had put pelts on his body everywhere where it was not covered with his own hair; 2. indeed to look at he was like a wild man.

3. He came to the Jews and summoned them to freedom, saying: "God hath sent me, that I may show you the way of the Law, wherein ye may free yourselves from many holders of power. 4. And there will be no mortal ruling over you, only the Highest who hath sent me." 5. And when the people had heard this, they were joyful. And there went after him all Judæa, that lies in the region round Jerusalem.

6. And he did nothing else to them save that he plunged them into the stream of the Jordan and dismissed them, instructing them that they should cease from evil works, and [promising] that there would [then] be given them a ruler who would set them free and subject to them all that is not in submission; but no one of whom we speak (?),<sup>1</sup> would himself be subjected. 7. Some reviled, but others got faith.

8. And when he had been brought to Archelaus and the doctors of the Law had assembled, they asked him who he is and where he has been until then. 9. And to this he made answer and spake: "I am pure; [for] the Spirit of God hath led me on, and [I live on] cane and roots and tree-food. 10. But when they threatened to put him to torture if he would not cease from those words and deeds, he nevertheless said: "It is meet for you [rather] to cease from your heinous works and cleave unto the Lord your God."

11. And there rose up in anger Simon, an Essæan by extraction, a scribe, and he spake: "We read every day the divine books. 12. But thou, only now come from the forest like a wild animal,—thou darest in sooth to teach us and to mislead the people with thy reprobate words." 13. And he rushed forward to do him bodily violence. 14. But he, rebuking them, spake: "I will not disclose to you the mystery which dwelleth in you, for ye have not desired it. 15. Thereby an untold calamity is come upon you, and because of yourselves."

16. And when he had thus spoken, he went forth to the other side of the Jordan; and while no one durst rebuke him, that one did what [he had done] also heretofore.

## II.

### His Interpretation of Philip's Dream.

1. While Philip was [still] in possession of his dominion, he saw a dream,—how an eagle tore out both his eyes. 2. And he summoned all his wise men. 3. But when each interpreted the dream differently, there came to him suddenly, without being summoned, that man of whom we have previously written, that he went about in skins of animals and cleansed the people in the waters of the Jordan. 4. And he spake: "Give ear to the word of the Lord,—the dream which thou hast seen. 5. The eagle—that is thy venality; because that bird is violent and rapacious. 6. And that sin will take away thy eyes which are thy dominion and thy wife." 7. And when he had thus spoken, Philip died before evening and his dominion was given to Agrippa.

## III.

### His Persistent Rebuking of Agrippa and His Execution.

1. And Herod, his brother, took his wife Herodias. 2. And because of her all the doctors of the Law abhorred him, but durst not accuse him before his face.

3. But only that one whom they called a wild man, came to him in anger and spake: "Why hast thou taken the wife of thy brother? 4. As thy brother hath died a death void of pity, thou too wilt be reaped off by the heavenly sickle. 5. God's decree will not be silenced, but will destroy thee through evil affliction in foreign lands. 6. For thou dost not raise up seed for thy brother, but gratifiest thy fleshly lust and committest adultery, seeing that four children of him are alive."

7. Now when Herod heard [this], he was filled with wrath and commanded that they should beat him and drive him away. 8. But he accused Herod incessantly wherever he found him, and right up to the time when he (H.) put him under arrest and gave orders to slay him.

9. Now his disposition (or character) was extraordinary and his mode of life not that of a man; indeed just like a bodiless spirit,

thus did this one too continue. 10. His lips knew no bread; not even at Easter [? orig. Passover] did he taste unleavened bread, saying that, in remembrance of God who had freed the people from slavery, it was given for eating in the flight, for the way was in haste. To wine and intoxicating drink he let himself not even draw near. And every animal he abhorred [as food], and every wrong he rebuked, and tree-produce served him for use.

#### IV.

##### The Ministry, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus.

1. At that time also a man came forward,—if even it is fitting to call him a man [simply]. 2. His nature as well as his form were a man's; but his showing forth was more than [that] of a man. 3. His works, that is to say, were godly, and he wrought wonder-deeds amazing and full of power. 4. Therefore it is not possible for me to call him a man [simply]. 5. But again, looking at the existence he shared with all, I would also not call him an angel.

6. And all that he wrought through some kind of invisible power, he wrought by word and command.

7. Some said of him, that our first Lawgiver has risen from the dead and shows forth many cures and arts. 8. But others supposed [less definitely] that he is sent by God.

9. Now he opposed himself in much to the Law and did not observe the Sabbath according to ancestral custom. 10. Yet, on the other hand, he did nothing reprehensible nor any crime; but by word solely he effected everything.

11. And many from the folk followed him and received his teachings. 12. And many souls became wavering, supposing that thereby the Jewish tribes would set themselves free from the Roman hands.

13. Now it was his custom often to stop on the Mount of Olives facing the city. 14. And there also he avouched his cures to the people. 15. And there gathered themselves to him of servants (*Knechten*) a hundred and fifty, but of the folk a multitude.

16. But when they saw his power, that he accomplished everything that he would by word, they urged him that he should enter the city and cut down the Roman soldiers and Pilate and rule over us. 17. But that one scorned it.

18. And thereafter, when knowledge of it came to the Jewish leaders, they gathered together with the High-priest and spake: "We are powerless and weak to withstand the Romans. 19. But as withal the bow is bent, we will go and tell Pilate what we have heard, and we will be without distress, lest if he hear it from others, we be robbed of our substance and ourselves be put to the sword and our children ruined." 20. And they went and told it to Pilate.

21. And he sent and had many of the people cut down. 22. And he had that wonder-doer brought up. And when he had instituted a trial concerning him, he perceived that he is a doer of good, but not an evildoer, nor a revolutionary, nor one who aimed at power, and set him free. 23. He had, you should know, healed his dying wife.

24. And he went to his accustomed place and wrought his accustomed works. 25. And as again more folk gathered themselves together round him, then did he win glory through his works more than all.

26. The teachers of the Law were [therefore] envenomed with envy and gave thirty talents to Pilate, in order that he should put him to death. 27. And he, after he had taken [the money], gave them consent that they should themselves carry out their purpose.

28. And they took him and crucified him according to the ancestral law.

## V.

### THE TREATMENT OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

1. Again Claudius sent his authorities to those states—Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, both of whom kept the people in peace, not allowing them to depart in anything from the pure laws.

2. But if anyone diverged from the word of the Law, complaint was brought before the teachers of the Law. 3. Often they expelled him and sent him to the Emperor's presence.

4. And at the time of these two many had been discovered as servants of the previously described wonder-doer; and as they spake to the people about their teacher,—that he is living, although he is dead, and that he will free you from your servitude,—many from the folk gave ear to the above-named and took upon themselves their precept,—5. not because of their reputation; they

were indeed of the humbler sort some just cobblers, others sandal-makers, others artisans.

6. And [yet] as marvellous signs they accomplished in truth what they would.

7. But when those noble governors saw the misleading of the people, they deliberated with the scribes to seize and put them to death, for fear lest the little be not little if it have ended in the great. 8. But they shrank back and were alarmed over the signs, saying: "In the plain course such wonders do not occur. 9. But if they do not issue from the counsel of God, they will quickly be convicted." 10. And they gave them [the Christians] authority to act as they would.

11. But afterwards, becoming pestered by them, they had them sent away, some to the Emperor, but others to Antioch, others again to distant lands,—for the testing of the matter.

12. But Claudius removed the two governors, [and] sent Cumanus.

## VI.

### The Trilingual Inscription Concerning Jesus.

At it (the barrier of the Temple) were columns . . . and on these inscriptions in Greek and Roman and Jewish characters, publishing the law of purity and [proclaiming] that no foreigner should enter the inner [court]; for they called it the Holy [Place] to which one had to ascend by fourteen steps, and whose upper part was built in a square.

And over these tablets with inscriptions hung a fourth tablet with inscription in these [three] characters, to the effect: Jesus has not reigned as king; he has been crucified by the Jews, because he proclaimed the destruction of the city and the laying waste of the temple.

## VII.

### Portents at the Death of Jesus and Rumours of His Resurrection.

1. This curtain (*katapetasma*) was prior to this generation entire, because the people were pious; but now it was lamentable to look at. 2. It had, you should know, been suddenly rent from the top to

the ground, when they delivered over to death through bribery the doer of good, the man—yea, him who through his doing was no man.

3. And of many other signs they tell which came to pass at that time.

4. And it was said that after he was put to death, yea after burial in the grave, he was not found.

5. Some then assert that he is risen; but others, that he has been stolen by his friends. 6. I, however, do not know which speak more correctly.

7. For a dead man cannot rise of himself—though possibly with the help of another righteous man; unless it (lit. he) will be an angel or another of the heavenly authorities, or God himself appears as a man and accomplishes what he will,—both walks with men and falls, and lies down and rises up, as it is according to his will.

8. But others said that it was not possible to steal him, because they had put guards all round his grave,—thirty Romans, but a thousand Jews.

9. Such [is narrated] as to that curtain (*katapetasma*). Moreover [as to] the cause of its tearing there are [? various statements].

## VIII.

### A Prophecy Concerning Jesus.

Some indeed by this understood Herod, but others the crucified wonder-doer Jesus, others again Vespasian.

‘But...but...There is no reference to ‘Samaritan’ in all eight pieces!’ Exactly. Why would a Samaritan editor draw attention to his own despised minority status rather than expending his energy like a modern-day Super-Pac with his fabulous opportunity to trash all his opponents?

Piece 1 brilliantly covers the tracks of the Samaritan background of John—which is reflected in the Gospel of John with his baptizing in Samaria and in the modern day discovery of the ‘Cave of St John at Suba’ (in Samaria) among other sources—by depicting him as the classic Greek Cynic who lives a Stoic life in harmony with nature and speaks truth to power. (6) Cynics were called ‘dogs’ since they lived shamelessly and self-sufficiently in the streets and were the watchdogs of society in maintaining a virtuous self-discipline of leading a philosophical life while hounding people about the errors of their ways.

John is portrayed as a “wild man” living off nature who came to “summon them to their freedom” who was fearless before Archelaus, Philip, Herod Agrippa, and the Essenes alike. The editor is careful not to imply John has disciples: “there will be no mortal ruling over you” and “he did nothing else to them save that he plunged them into the stream of the Jordan and dismissed them”. The “no mortal ruling over you” is a version of a phrase that is common in Sethian Samaritan literature: “the generation without a king over it”.

In contrast to John and Jesus practically everyone else comes off looking rather poorly: Archelaus “threatened to put him (John) to torture”. Simon, the Essaeian and scribe, was a fundamentalist threatening violence. Philip was like a bird that was “violent and rapacious”. Herod was the adulterer who killed John. The Jewish leaders sic Pilate on Jesus to supposedly save their own butts and then bribe Pilate to kill Jesus.

In Piece 5, the replacements for Pilate sent by Emperor Claudius, Cuspius Fadus and Tiberias Alexander, are given a pass by the editor since they “kept the people in peace”—even though Fadus sent his troops after another ‘imposter’ who tried to lead the people out of Judea across the Jordan. They were butchered and he was beheaded. The leader was Theudas who Robert Eisenman thinks could have been Thomas Judas, the brother of James the Just. If this is the case then he would be leading a Jewish Christian exodus. In contrast, the editor ends with “But Claudius removed the two governors, and sent Cumanus”. This subtly deprecating comment refers to the internecine violence between Samaritans and Jews that Cumanus let get out of hand which resulted in the leaders being sent to Rome where the Samaritans were executed after losing the argument. The editor ignores the probable Jewish-Christian massacre but subtly deprecates the man responsible for events leading to the execution of Samaritan leaders.

The entire Jewish people come off looking bad in Pieces 6-7. The editor claims an inscription hung in the Temple reading “Jesus has not reigned as king; he has been crucified by the Jews, because he proclaimed the destruction of the city and the laying waste of the Temple.” But, chances are such juicy statements would have found their way into the Four Gospels if they were true. The Gospels do reflect the messianic fears regarding Jesus and that he was crucified regarding them. Luke 19 and Matthew 26 have Jesus predicting the destruction of the Temple while many verses accuse Jesus of doing so. Many verses like John 2:19-21 and the Gospel of Thomas give the impression he was talking about the ‘temple of his body’.

Piece 7 implies the curtain in the Temple was torn because the people were no longer pious. Towards the end of the Piece the editor says the tomb of Jesus was guarded by “thirty Romans but a thousand Jews”.

Of the positive comments, in Piece 1 speaking about John there is “He came to the Jews...when the people heard this they were joyful. And there went after him all Judea, that lies in the region around Jerusalem.” But many of these may have been in the Samaritan regions ‘around Jerusalem’ and then “Some reviled, but others got faith” It is clear at the end, though, that the upshot was that he was driven away and had to work on the other side of the Jordan. Many positive comments were made about Jesus who accumulated a hundred and fifty disciples and crowds but their adulation is soured by their urging him to enter Jerusalem and defeat the Romans. However, Jesus still did become popular after his release by Pilate for his “accustomed

works”. The followers of Jesus after the Crucifixion are mentioned positively as “the humbler sort” (which leaves out Paul and his Herodian associates) for their “signs”—but are not given the dignity of a name.

The Slavonic Josephus, then, with its pro-Roman, anti-Jewish, and ignorance—purposeful and not—of Pauline Christianity is entirely consistent with an editor who is an early Samaritan Christian. Indeed, it would be puzzling to think of who else it could possibly be. The avoidance of any Samaritan reference, in fact, can be taken as a signature that the editor is Samaritan.

The editor goes overboard in including ‘legendary’ material in its Super-Pac advertisement approach in probably not caring for the literal truth since he is speaking in the voice of Josephus. The ‘Interpretation of Philip’s Dream’ where Philip drops dead “before evening” could be included. The healing of Pilate’s wife is another. The incendiary inscriptions about Jesus on the Temple are another. The tearing of the Temple curtain is probably another but could have some basis in fact with the Gospels mentioning it—who, though, could have picked it up from the Slavonic Josephus.

In summary, the sources presented so far can be harmonized relatively easily. John the Baptist had a Samaritan background, lived an ascetic life, had a mystical perspective, ‘spoke truth to power’, ministered in the regions around Jerusalem and in Samaria until being driven to the other side of the Jordan and finally executed preemptively about 35 CE in the run-up to the war between Herod Antipas and King Aretas.

We know from the Gospel of John that Jesus had early Samaritan disciples and from Mark that he was probably initiated or ‘christened’ as the successor to John by a woman called Mary Magdalene with a year’s pay worth of oil on the head which would have been considered a royal or mystery school-type anointing. We know from the Slavonic Josephus and from the Gospels that he didn’t always honor the Sabbath or the Law and that he was setting himself up as a competitor to the Jerusalem Temple cult by leading a pilgrimage in the mode of Moses up on Mt Gerizim during Passover. All of these characteristics would have been enough to incite the fundamentalist Jews of Jerusalem to conspire in his death.

Just as the death of John was a preemptive strike the year before so Pilate would have seen his own attack upon a supposedly armed group of Samaritans massing on Mt Gerizim before Passover of 36 CE as a preemptive strike to support Herod in the looming threat of King Aretas—which materialized within months of the Crucifixion. After the Samaritan massacre—that is referred to in the Barabbas section of Mark—Pilate from his interrogations of prisoners realized that he had been had by the Jewish leaders and the High Priest, Joseph Caiaphas. He let Jesus go according to the Slavonic Josephus and then accepted a bribe to allow the Crucifixion. The fragmentary Gospel of Peter which scholars think shared the Passion proto-gospel source with the other Gospels opens up in the scene where Pilate is washing his hands. Herod is present with other Jewish leaders refusing to do so and orders the execution of Jesus which he had previously given the orders to his underlings for. It makes more sense that Pilate is washing his hands of the affair and trying to shift responsibility to King Herod Agrippa rather than to the High Priest. Herod uses crucifixion rather than beheading or stoning since he is a Roman

surrogate and to fortify the story-line that Jesus was being crucified by Pilate for his role in an insurrection and that he was just carrying it out.

The identification of Jesus with Simon Magus is easily made since John the Baptist is shown to be a mystical opponent of fundamentalist Jews of every stripe. John has a Samaritan background and his successor is the Samaritan Simon Magus. Justin Martyr who was born in Samaria in 103 CE claims a century after the Crucifixion about Simon that: “nearly all the Samaritans confess him to be the first god and worship him.” (7) The Moses pretender of the Samaritan massacre is totally consistent with Simon. The Crucifixion in Mark is shown to be happening in this time-frame. The Slavonic Josephus with the “wonder-deeds” of one who “opposed himself in much to the law and did not observe the Sabbath” is totally consistent with Simon. The Slavonic Josephus records also in the context of Jesus what must be the Samaritan massacre: “The Jewish leaders spake....we will go and tell Pilate...he sent and had many of the people cut down.”

#### Footnotes

- (1) G. R. S. Mead, ‘The Gnostic John the Baptizer’, III—The Slavonic Josephus Account of the Baptist and Jesus, p. 97-119 from [www.sacred-texts.com](http://www.sacred-texts.com)
- (2) John Martin Creed, ‘The Slavonic Version of Josephus’ “History of the Jewish War”’, from The Harvard Theological Review 25 (4)
- (3) G. R. S. Mead, ‘The Gnostic John the Baptizer’, III—The Slavonic Josephus Account of the Baptist and Jesus, p. 97-119 from [www.sacred-texts.com](http://www.sacred-texts.com). See the Introduction.
- (4) For Paul as Manaen see Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, p. 18-21
- (5) Ibid., p. 24
- (6) For Cave of John the Baptist at Suba see Shimon Gibson, ‘John the Baptist’ about excavations showing first century sacramental use of the cave involving foot-washing.
- (7) G. R. S. Mead, ‘Simon Magus: An Essay’ p. 8 (quoting Epiphanius)

#### 4. SIMON MAGUS

“Flavia Sophe—You who did yearn for the paternal light, sister and spouse, my sophe, Anointed in the baths of Christ with incorruptible, holy oil, you hastened to look upon the divine faces of the aeons, the great angel of the great council, the true son. You entered into the Bridal Chamber, ascending deathless to the bosom of the Father.” (Ca 275 CE Roman epitaph)

“...the Chief Priests and Pharisees were gathered to Pilate saying, “Sir, we have recalled that that magician (deceiver) said while living ‘After three days I will rise.’” (Morton Smith argues that ‘planos’ is interchangeably translated either ‘magician’ or ‘deceiver’)—Matthew 27: 62-3

“(You Jews) have sent chosen men into every part of the empire as official representatives (of the High Priest and Sanhedrin), proclaiming, ‘A godless and libertine heresy has arisen from a certain Jesus, a Galilean magician.’”—Justin Martyr to an imaginary opponent in ‘Dialogue with Trypho’ (150-165 CE)

“They still reverence that man who was put on a stake in Palestine because he introduced into (human) life this new initiation.”—pagan essayist, Lucian, in ‘Life of Peregrinus’, Ca 170 CE who is probably referring to what is known as the Bridal Chamber sacrament.

“He, therefore, was glorified by many as a god; and he taught that it was he himself who, forsooth, appeared among the Jews as the Son, while in Samaria he descended as the Father, and in the rest of the nations he came as the Holy Spirit. That he was the highest power, to wit, the Father over all, and that he allowed himself to be

called by whatever name men pleased.”—Irenaeus on Simon Magus (Contra Haereses,I.xxiii.1-4)

After the Crucifixion there was not only the need to employ subterfuge in fear of the Romans since the method of execution represented insurrection but even more from Jewish authorities who instigated and implemented the Crucifixion on their own charges that he had “practiced sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God” (1) in the words of the Mishna. The name ‘Jesus’ or ‘Yeshua’ was a contraction of ‘Yehoshua’ or ‘Joshua’ which was a Samaritan reference to the coming of their savior which was conceived as the coming of a ‘second Joshua’ who conquered the Promised Land called the ‘Taheb’. To call Simon ‘the Savior’ was a common expression for early Christians.

The title of ‘Christ’ most obviously comes from Simon being ‘christened’ as the successor of John the Baptist. This was the biggest propaganda point of the earliest Christians to claim to be the successor of the immensely popular John. However, it also had the in-group meaning of referring to the great being channeled by Simon called ‘the Son of Man’.

A testimony to the status of John and the argument that the Roman Gospels were shamelessly fabricated in disregard of the truth is the point made by Picknett and Prince that the introductory Lukan material on Mother Mary was lifted from traditions honoring John. (2) They point out that Irenaeus of Lyon about 180 CE stated forthrightly that the Magnificat glorifying God was said by Elizabeth rather than Mary. (3) The introductory “she said”—so the argument goes—was later switched to ‘Mary said’. The wording of the Magnificat goes back to the barren Hannah in the book of Samuel and is appropriate for Elizabeth rather than Mary who would have had the passage better placed after the visit of Gabriel or after the birth of Jesus if Mary had said it. In fact, most of the Infancy narrative of Luke most obviously has come from Baptist material. Picknett and Prince point out that Luke is the only Gospel to indicate that John and Jesus were even related. (4)

To find the historical Jesus the distinguished Professor of History from Columbia, Morton Smith, argued that the earliest rabbinic sources should be given equal value with the Roman Gospels since they are roughly contemporaneous. The earliest source he notices is that of the late first century Rabbi Eliezer who is accused of being a Christian who confessed that he assented to some heretical teaching of a Galilean who was a follower of “Jesus, the son of Panteri”. (5) A generation later Smith notes another rabbi died after a snakebite and before another Galilean could try to heal him “in the name of Jesus ben Pantera” after a certain Rabbi Ishmael complained. (6) These sources must also reflect the attitude prevalent before Church discipline took over that “Do not forbid him, for no one who does a miracle in my name can soon speak evil of me.” (Mark 9:39). The name of Jesus was also invoked in the Egyptian magical papyri along with the names of Solomon, Moses, and others. (7)

The importance of the two early “son of Panteri” references as Smith argues is that they push the fuller story given in an account by Celsus, a Platonist, who studied Christianity and wrote an anti-Christian book called ‘The True Word’ about 177 CE. The book, itself, was destroyed for obvious reasons but Origen comments so thoroughly on it that much can be learned. Smith concludes from Celsus that his sources are a mixed bag but uses some tradition that is early and independent of the Gospels. (8) The story of Celsus was that the mother of Jesus conceived him by a Roman soldier named Panthera. She was thrown out of the house by her husband who was a carpenter and wandered about until giving birth. She made her living by her spinning. Jesus grew up in Galilee and went to work as a hired laborer in Egypt where he learned ‘magical rites’. He returned to Palestine and ‘proclaimed himself a god’. It is interesting that Mark 6:3 has the home town people of Jesus ask: “Isn’t this the laborer, the son of Mary” which Matthew found embarrassing and substituted ‘son of a laborer’. Luke and John avoided the subject altogether. (9) With this as a background it is clear why the Roman Gospels would craft stories about the virgin birth, early travels, and his only going to Egypt as a baby (when he could not have learned any magic from the ‘Magi’).

Smith makes an excellent point that the reference in Mark 6:3 to Jesus being referred to as “the son of Mary” was pejorative in making it clear that the townspeople did not know who the father was. (10) The reference was even so embarrassing for Matthew, Luke, and John that they altered the verbiage. John 8:41 acknowledges in dialogue with the scribes and Pharisees, though, that the paternity of Jesus was in question: “We were not born of fornication.” In fact, Smith points out the mother is only addressed twice in the Gospels and addressed as “woman” at that. Smith also notices that the genealogy of Matthew seems to have been written to excuse Mary in only mentioning four women but all whom had serious issues such as “Tamar whose children were born of incest; Rahab, the madam of a brothel; Ruth, a non-Israelite, who got her husband by solicitation, if not fornication...and Bathsheba (the wife of Uriah), whose relations with David began in adultery”. (11) The Gospel of Thomas is aware of this issue too in Saying 105 where Jesus says: “He who knows the father and the mother will be called the son of a harlot”. (99) (12)

Picknett and Prince cite an interesting argument by “the eminent Jewish New Testament scholar Geza Vermes” that the Greek word for ‘laborer’ or ‘tekton’ in Mark was ‘naggar’ in Aramaic which was a colloquialism for ‘learned man’ or ‘scholar’—which would make sense in the context of Jesus coming to his hometown and teaching in the synagogue in a scholarly way: ”What wisdom is this that is given to him?” (13) Picknett, Prince, and Vermes seem to over-reach a bit since Mark was originally written in Greek and not Aramaic. In addition, it might make more sense to read it as a ‘laborer’ with the townspeople making a contrast between the wisdom of Jesus and his day job. However this may be, it is another instance of Mark making a very subtle point to his mystery school that would be pointed out by his initiates to his novices in the very same way they would point out that Jesus being from ‘Nazareth’ really meant that that he was a Nazorean or a member of a renunciate sect.

The early Jewish Christians who also venerated the Law were called the Nazoreans especially by their Jewish neighbors who eventually began saying a ritual curse against them in the synagogues toward the end of the first century. The British scholar, Hugh Schonfield, believes the term derives from ‘nozrim’ and ‘notstrim’ which come from ‘nazir’ that means ‘shoot’ or

‘branch’. For Schonfield they were “Keepers or Preservers...those who maintained the true teaching and tradition, or who cherished certain secrets which they did not divulge to others.” (14) In fact ‘Samaritan’ also goes back to the meaning of ‘Keepers’ or ‘Preservers’.

The Mandaeans from Iraq are a modern window into the belief system of the Baptist group since they are descended from those who fled Palestine beginning in 37-38 CE who have a priestly group called the Nazoreans. Pliny records they were given sanctuary by King Artabanus—no doubt the Jewish convert, King Izates, would have interceded for them. (15) It is said they were led by a disciple of Dositheus who was also a Samaritan disciple of John and clearly a competitor for leadership of the group. The animosity towards Jesus of the Mandaeans may go back to this competition and why they regard Jesus as a false prophet who perverted the teachings of John. Their descriptive words used for Jesus involve ‘lie’ and ‘book’. This could refer to the handful of books that Simon wrote. Otherwise, the animosity could reflect in part their rejection of the Pauline Church and the Roman Gospels.

The Mandaeans may also have rejected the methodology of the psychomantium that the followers of Jesus crafted into the sacrament known as the Bridal Chamber as Egyptian sorcery. The normal ‘Daily Bather’ prayer life of many related groups in Palestine, Syria, and Iraq seemed to have involved praying to the North where the Big Dipper and North Star were visualized as the Throne of God which was a replacement for the lost first Temple and Zadokite priesthood. This goes back to the book of Ezekiel. Gershom Scholem has concluded after extensive research: “No doubts are possible on this point: the earliest Jewish mysticism is throne-mysticism. Its essence is not absorbed contemplation of God’s true nature but perception of His appearance on the throne, as described by Ezekiel, and cognition of the mysteries of the celestial throne-world.” (16)

It is more likely, though, that they partook of the very same mystical practices as early Christians in meditating into a bowl of water until the eyes tire and images come forth. One such early ‘incantation bowl’ was discovered in the harbor at Alexandria in 2008 with the inscription: “Dia Chrestou O Goistais” around it. (17) It could be translated “Through or by Christ the Magician”. The spelling of ‘Chrestou’ is similar to that of the Roman historian Suetonius who replaced the ‘i’ with the ‘e’, although Christ or Chrest could have been a proper name of someone. The ‘Goistais’ is similarly problematic. It most obviously goes back to the root of ‘goes’ or magician but is unclear. Could it be plural in referring to the Son of Man figure working through his stable of human magicians? At any rate, the context of being on a scrying bowl with words that could mean ‘Christ’ and ‘Magician’ in proximity from the first century lends itself to the obvious meaning of referring to the most famous magician of the first century: Simon Magus/Jesus Christ.

In fact, about two thousand ‘incantation bowls’ have been discovered in showing that they were a common cultural artifact—maybe not in the areas under Temple control around Jerusalem—but in Syria and in Babylon among Jews, Christians, and Mandaeans alike. (18) About eighty of them are even Jewish with most of those found in the city of Nippur. (19)

These incantation bowls are often called ‘devil trap bowls’ or ‘demon bowls’ since they commonly have inscriptions running from the rim around in a circular manner down to the center

with repetitive incantations to ward off demonic entities and sexual temptresses. (20) While the normal cultural practice could have been to place them in corners to keep demons from sneaking into a dwelling through a crack, they very well also could have been meditative practices involving filling the bowl with water in a practice like the psychomantium where one self-hypnotizes in the circular and repetitive reading until revelations occur. Some bowl inscriptions include common divine names and speak in magical voices. Some have the symbol of the ouroboros which is the circular snake eating its own tail. This is a universal magical symbol of eternity, unity, and cyclicity that goes back to the ancient Egyptians and Plato.

The Mandaean conception of the ultimate is one that is formless that emanated a series of somewhat problematic demiurges in a theological formation which was Samaritan rather than Jewish. The 'Son of Man' figure channeled by Jesus may have been considered just another demiurge by the Dosithean branch which became the Mandaeans. Yet, Picknett and Prince record that the Mandaeans portray John as, himself, a magician who talks directly with divine spirits while entranced. (21) Was it that Simon claimed to be a constant channel of an entity rather than a periodic one?

The Mandaeans considered their highest conception of the deity to be "the great first life from the worlds of light, the sublime one that stands above all works". (22) It is remarkable that in the 'stands above' verbiage we find the Standing One theology of Simon Magus: "he that stood, stands, and will stand". The three Mandaean demiurges can be seen to correspond with later gnostic formulations. The highest one is Yushamin or Joshamin who, like Sophia, is well-meaning but wanted to create a world of his own and was punished for it. It is speculated his name may derive from 'Yahweh of the heavens'. The second one, Abathar, sounds a bit like and would correspond with Yaldabaoth or Ialdabaoth who was in the later gnostic formulations the son of Sofia and god of the lower archon races but which in this one judges souls. The third one is Ptahil which lends itself to the impression that it is a combination of the Egyptian god, Ptah, and the Hebrew god, El (from which Elohim is derived). It is also similar to the major Sumerian god, En-lil who was known to have a negative influence and attitude toward humans. Ptahil is rather clear indication that the Mandaeans probably originated in Egypt among the Samaritan ex-patriot community.

Other Platonic and Egyptian influences common to Simon among the Mandaeans involve:

--Etheric worlds of ideas or Ideals from which the human soul is exiled and striving to find its way home to Divinity. (23)

--A correspondence the Mandaeans have with Simon and Egyptian and Sumerian religion is in a Father-Mother syzygy of the Deity—although Hebrews approximated this as well with a Sophia/Wisdom/Holy Spirit. (24)

--A striking Hebrew correspondence between Simon and the Mandaeans is the theology of the Primal Adam theology which produces the universe and informs its character and pops up in Paul with his first Adam, second Adam comments. (25)

The ‘God beyond God’ concept and the Primal Adam concept can both be seen to go back to what is probably a much earlier second century BCE Samaritan Egyptian work found in the Nag Hammadi Codices called ‘Eugnostos, the Blessed’. (26) Eugnostos is clearly Platonic and spends a lot of energy describing God in seeming contrast to Jewish Scripture as beyond human concept who sees himself as in mirror as shining and effable light. Out of this light appeared from the beginning a “great power” which is Immortal Androgenous Man whose male side is Perfect Mind and female side is Truth or Sophia. From Immortal Man came gods, archangels, and angels. Immortal Man then creates First Begotten Son of Man who is androgenous as well and creates angels who are “shadow-less lights”. Son of Man, then, creates the androgenous Savior whose female side is Pistis (Faith). Son of Man-Pistis, then, in turn creates six androgenous beings which are twelve powers which devolve seventy-two heavens and 360 firmaments—which can be thought of as the Platonic Forms or spiritual counterparts of what were considered the seventy-two nations and three hundred and sixty days of the year. The interesting thing in the Hebrew context is that Immortal Man, Son of Man, and Savior all correspond with the Genesis story of God, Adam, and Seth. Seth is the Samaritan hero. In the first century BCE and later developments after the Samaritan Temple is destroyed we would find the development of the negative demiurge(s) and archons who rule Jerusalem from the creation of Pistis.

Eugnostos The Blessed was re-written probably towards the end of the first century CE in Egypt into a work called ‘The Sophia of Jesus Christ’ using the voice of the Son of Man who is considered to be Christ. A few metaphysical changes are made. The demiurge is considered to have been created by Great Sofia, the consort of Immortal Man. The Son of Man rather than spawning the Savior is identified with him. It is unclear whether Jesus Christ would be considered a combination term of both the great being, Son of Man, who was channeled by a human being, but that may be.

It is not clear what sacraments the Mandaeans utilize since they have employed great secrecy with their priesthood but they clearly use frequent ablutions with flowing water. This was common to the Sumerians as well who kept sacred ponds and sacred fish. Later in the time of Solomon among the Israelites, kings were crowned by sacred springs. The Cave of John the Baptist reveals his followers employed a sacrament using oil with the huge number of broken oil containers found. They also had a foot-washing or anointing ceremony like Jesus instituted from an incised space for a foot in the rock in the cave. (27)

Smith notes that Celsus in one argument against Jewish-Christians states that Jesus “followed all the Jewish customs, even (those) about the sacrifices.” (28) This would not be surprising as John the Baptist as one of Samaritan background was extremely popular in Judaea and so must have not offended Jewish sensibilities while James the Just, later, was thought of as the ‘alternative High Priest’ of the Temple by the lower priesthood according to Robert Eisenman. (29) Simon was a mystic chameleon as well who had the Pauline ability to change colors depending on his environment. This is why the Roman Gospels had to fabricate the ‘overturning the tables’ episode as allegorical show to make their negative points about Judaism.

It is taken at face value that Jesus and James were brothers but this was not universally agreed upon. The First and Second Apocalypse of James both deny he was a blood brother. (30) The term may have come into use with the priests or small group of leaders in the Baptist group

calling themselves brothers. Originally there was John, Simon-Jesus, and Dositheus. Supposedly John and Jesus were cousins but cousins were often loosely called brothers. Then, Jesus, Judas Thomas, and James shared a brother relationship who all happened to be leaders in the early movement. Paul, later, documents he met with the next Church leadership threesome of James, Simon Peter, and John.

Luke relates that John and Jesus were cousins but from the research of Robert Eisenman it is clear that this is much more likely to be a transference from the point that John and James were cousins—both grandsons of another famous ‘zaddik’ or ‘righteous man’ named Honi the Circle-Drawer who was also martyred by Roman-collaborating Pharisees in 65 BCE. (31) This helps account from their prominence, piety, and success in the ‘family business’.

John the Baptist corresponds very well to the character in Rabbinic literature known as Hanan the Hidden. (32) The name ‘Hanan’ is identified with the English ‘John’. The ‘Hidden’ reference could have derived from his humility or having to elude the Herodians during his long career but it can clearly be seen to possibly be a reference to his activities in the ‘Cave of John the Baptist’ in Samaria but near Jerusalem where there is clear evidence of large amounts of first century sacramental activity occurring. The Protevangelium of James has both Elizabeth and Mary hiding their sons in a cave.

A third meaning of ‘Hidden’ as pointed out by Eisenman is in relation to the legend that Honi the Circle-Drawer ‘fell asleep’ for seventy years and then came back to life. (33) This relates to the idea that John was, perhaps, considered the returning of his grandfather, Honi, and both of them were, perhaps, considered the return of Elijah the prophet. Eisenman points out, though, that the nasty Talmudic humor of the “Hidden” referring to Hanan getting his cognomen from his hiding out in the toilet indicates the Rabbis really had an adversarial stance towards Hanan.

Eisenman makes a key point that “some texts have Elizabeth, John the Baptist’s mother, as the daughter of one ‘Anon’, that is ‘Onias’ or ‘Honi’”. (34)

A figure consistent with James the Just emerges from the Babylonian Talmud whose name is ‘Abba Hilkiyah’ who was also a grandson of Honi. (35) The name ‘Abba’ means ‘father’ and is reminiscent of both Honi and James being known for having a ‘father-son’ relationship with God. The original Hilkiyah was a Zadokite High Priest under Josiah who, apparently, found what scholars think was the book of Deuteronomy in the Temple and stood behind the religious reforms of Josiah. Both James and Abba Hilkiyah were involved in ‘rain-making’ miracle-working, were contemporaries, and were regarded with a high degree of awe by others. Little children tried to touch the hem of James’ garment as he passed by while the Rabbis were in such fear of Abba Hilkiyah that they sent little children to ask him to pray for rain.

This is why Luke felt the necessity to graft Jesus onto the Honi, John, and James family tree—especially after the death of James and strong competition from the competing sect of followers of John the Baptist.

Since males were married off uniformly in their late teens by their parents or parent and the Crucifixion probably did not happen until Simon was in his early fifties there would have been

plenty of time for children to have been raised and for Jesus to have become a renunciate disciple of the Baptist before leaving for Egypt and further training among the Therapeutae (among probably others) who also employed bread and wine sacraments that Simon/Jesus must have later reinvented.

The famous Theosophist, G.R.S. Mead, who published in 1892 after exhaustive studies of ancient texts concludes:

“It was at Alexandria that Simon perfected his studies in magic, being an adherent of John, a hemero-baptist, through whom he came to deal with religious doctrines...Of all John’s disciples, Simon was the favorite, but on the death of his master, he was absent in Alexandria, and so Dositheus, a co-disciple, was chosen head of the school.” (36)

Picknett and Prince point out that the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies say that Simon was “the forerunner of Lord Jesus” and that the original Greek in the Homilies “implies that Simon finished his magical training in Alexandria because he was a follower of John’s”. (37) Further evidence of the Baptist group in Alexandria is Apollos in Acts who came from Alexandria who was a disciple of John. There was certainly a large community of Samaritans in Egypt from which to draw support.

The Slavonic Josephus makes it clear that John had to flee during his long career to the other side of the Jordan where his fiery truth-telling was not as problematic. This would have left Simon and Dositheus to work Samaria, Galilee and Judaea. It would seem that Simon was behind the ‘non-circumcision’ evangelization of Queen Helen and King Izates in Osroene in the decade of the Twenties CE since Judas Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, is implicated in that effort. Scholars think Dositheus is associated with the more fundamentalist Essene communities like Qumran.

Even though Mead also finds that Simon returned to Palestine and bested Dositheus for leadership of the group using his magic and taking on the title of ‘The Standing One’, it is clear the movement split into factions with the Dositheans resisting Simon’s innovations and authority. (38) Origen notes that Dositheus also thought himself “the Son of God”. (39) In a few years again many of the Nazorean priesthood who had had enough of the violent Jerusalem establishment fled to Parthia under a disciple of Dositheus to become known as the Mandaeans.

Smith argues in his book, ‘Jesus the Magician’, that the Eucharist which is mentioned as early as the letters of Paul and is one of the very earliest traditions that precedes the Gospel framework--despite it supposedly having come from Passover beginnings--has Egyptian and pagan origins in being found in the magical papyri since any consumption of blood even in a symbolic sense would have been entirely abhorrent to any Jewish person. (40)

Picknett and Prince note what a common thing it was for mystery religions in cultures outside of Palestine whether it was Mithras, Dionysus—Bacchus, or Serapis/Osiris and Isis to partake of sacred meals of wine and bread which unite them with the divine. (41) An important role played

by Judas in all the Gospels is to cover up the pagan nature of the Eucharist and to link it with the sacrificial death of Jesus. Picknett and Prince further note that Biblical scholars Jeremias and Lincoln find that all five of the Eucharistic accounts in the New Testament go back to either “an Aramaic or Hebrew original, which argues against Paul’s inventing the Eucharist, since his first language was Greek.” (42) I might note this also argues against the general assumptions of contemporary scholars like Robert Eisenman and April DeConick that Jesus was a conservative Jew in the mode of James the Just.

Whatever the case may be regarding foreign influences, the Egyptian Essene sect called the Therapeutae in Egypt had instituted oil, bread, and wine/water sacraments that memorialized the Passover (43) which Simon obviously reinvented for his disciples to help channel the ‘Son of Man’ figure that the group encountered in their soul travel related in the ‘Dialogue of the Savior’. (44) The mystery school work called ‘Joseph and Asenath’ which easily can be dated to the first century well reflects the use of these early sacraments.

It is clear the foot-washing sacrament was an early institution of not only the Jesus movement but probably the Baptist movement in the Cave of John the Baptist that would have replaced Jewish ablutions and would have represented the cleansing off of the body of the dirt, dust, and cares of the world rather than a focus on a cleansing of ‘sin’. Paul is the earliest witness to the sacramentalism of Jesus (in the Eucharist anyway) and well reflects in his negative assessment of Judaism the sense of Simon that the god of Judaism was a demiurge somewhat short of the highest divinity where all the guilt regarding the Law needed to be cleansed off the feet as well.

It is clear the baptism of Jesus by John represents some kind of extraordinary, unique, and divine experience just as Simon is depicted as claiming to be an incarnation of the ‘Son’. The dove of the Holy Spirit in Mark is said to come into Jesus. The other gospels are uncomfortable with the implications of this spirit possession and make the dove just alight on Jesus instead.

What is clear from non-canonical texts such as Dialogue of the Savior and The Second Treatise of the Great Seth is that it was a ‘Son of Man’ figure that was channeling through Jesus. (45) The Baptism by John appears to be both a cover-up and a revealing allegory. The goddess, Isis, in Egypt was the personification of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom as the divine consort of the god, Osiris who died and was resurrected as Lord of the Dead. She it was who wandered the world like Wisdom but also flew around it like a bird with wings to piece together the body of Osiris. Indeed, the god, Set or Seth, in Egypt who dismembered Osiris and was considered the god of foreigners such as the Hebrew was pictured with a falcon head. So, the Baptism, in fact, could be representing the descent of not only the Holy Spirit in Egyptian imagery but the descent of the Samaritan hero, Seth, the son of Adam or its equivalent which is the ‘Son of Man’ that was channeled by Jesus.

It has been noted by many that the experience of being driven into the wilderness after the Baptism is a common shamanic experience. It is noteworthy that there is where Jesus encountered the devil since the wilderness was also the gathering place of revolutionaries who considered that the Romans and their tax-collectors, the Herodians, had polluted the Temple.

Two of the temptations directly related to the dissidents. It was the convert Queen of Adiabene and her son, King Izates, who were very attractive replacements for the Herodian establishment which had funded drought relief (“bread”) in Jerusalem from 44-46 CE which Matthew and Luke argue people should not be tempted by.

Another temptation by the devil was in receiving “all the kingdoms of the world” which also related to the desire of the revolutionaries to defeat the mighty Roman Empire and rule in Palestine like their Maccabean forerunners had done.

The third temptation was a snide and nasty swipe at James the Just by the Pauline authors. The Pseudo-Clementine literature records sensationally that as a young man who was, seemingly, Saul/Paul with a gang of thugs caused a riot in the Temple and threw James off the Temple where he ended up breaking one or both of his legs. (46) Obviously, even though he was such a holy person angels did not bear him up “lest he dash his foot against a stone”. James, who was considered a ‘rain-maker’ or miracle-worker in his own right, was shown to have not been protected by the angels in this case.

Celsus claims that Jesus did his miracles by magic and had ten disciples. (47) This is interesting since he very well knew the Gospel stories of the Twelve (where the number seems to have crafted to reflect the Christian displacement of the Twelve Tribes) and is more evidence of the origin of Celsus’ information which is both independent of the Gospels and of Jewish information dependent upon the Gospels. The Slavonic Josephus knows nothing of the Twelve but says Jesus had one hundred and fifty disciples and a multitude of other followers. If the editor of the Slavonic Josephus is seen as an early Samaritan Christian it is further evidence that the Twelve was a product of the Synoptic writing effort.

The First Apocalypse of James uplifts a small group of women disciples in the voice of Jesus and upbraids the male “Twelve” in the person of James. (48) The Gospel of Philip claims Jesus traveled personally with three Mary’s. (49) It would have been scandalous for a rabbi to have traveled with women but it is clear he was financially supported by women from Luke (8:1-3). It would have been much easier for a magician to have traveled with a small group and be put up for the night even though he had many more disciples. Probably the earliest material contained in the Dialogue of the Savior has a dialogue with just the small group of Matthew, Judas, and Mary.

Just as Helen was known as the main consort of Simon, so many figures in the New Testament can be seen to relate to Mary Magdalene. She was not only a witness to the Crucifixion, the empty tomb, and the Resurrection but can be seen to be the Mary who initiated him with oil, the Mary who had Martha and Lazarus as siblings, and even the figures of Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea who were rich and powerful supporters who did not desert him.

Very oddly as one who had such an important role as providing spices to dress the body of Jesus, Nicodemus only shows up in John. The reason for this was that it was a coded name only recently devised by the rabbi’s to cloak the identity of Helen of Adiabene. (50) Her identity as a Queen Mother is why Nicodemus had to come secretly to Jesus earlier by night and had the

social status to be able to argue with the chief priests to not condemn Jesus. This is also why her earlier identity as Joseph of Arimathea had the social standing to be able to request the body of Jesus from Pilate.

Smith gives credence to many of the healings since he observes that many of the exorcisms and cures done by Jesus involving “blindness, deafness, loss of speech, paralysis, and the like” could have been related to psychological disorders and healed once the “hysteria” passes. (51)

Celsus also charged that the miracles were done by the control of a demon that doesn't seem to be related to the same charge in the Gospels according to Smith but which is present in the Pseudo-Clementine literature in regard to Simon. (52)

Smith points out the Gospel of Mark emphasizes that no doctrinal requirement was imposed except ‘trusting’ in the ‘Son of Man’ when it came to ‘forgiveness of sins’—which may relate to release from the strictures of the Law imposed by the Jewish demiurge—and the allowance of strangers to exorcise demons in his name as well. (53)

The Gospel of Mark is pretty transparent in showing Jesus accused of being possessed by demons. This is a central issue in Mark as demonstrated by how many times Jesus is driving out demons from others: a demonic divided house cannot stand, therefore he must be doing it by the power of God. This problem is demonstrated in the Jewish Christian Pseudo-Clementines where Simon Magus is accused of capturing the spirit of a young boy who becomes his spirit slave. (54) This was widely known as a classic magic technique but can be seen to reflect in a warped way the view of Simon that he was channeling the androgenous Primal Adam. Of course, all the followers of Jesus employing certain techniques or part of the group that did could be subject to stoning for ‘sorcery’.

It is clear from all sides that Jesus was regarded as a healer and wonder worker. Smith cites how his name was even being included in pagan or Egyptian-style prayers. (55) Robert Conner quotes one from the Magical Papyri: “I cast you out by the god of the Hebrews, of Jesus.” (56)

As Mark documents, Jesus was being accused of utilizing the spirit of John the Baptist or of Beelzebub, the chief Palestinian demon in Matthew 10:25. This could have been the ‘sin against the Holy Spirit’ that was unforgiveable. Other Jewish claims were that he had tattooed his flesh with magic incantations or stolen the divine name of God to do his healings.

Smith describes the whole range of different views of what Jesus was doing from either channeling or utilizing the spirit of John or Beelzebub to employing ‘goetia’ as a goete who would travel around going into ecstatic trances and speak from the other side of the veil to acting in the divine-man mode as in the Gospel of John where miracles happen just through a word or will rather than through technique. The goete was often thought of as a lower class vaudeville show that was opening a window into the divine. It is clear Jesus was doing some of that from Mark 3: 20-34 where his family thought him out of his mind and tried to have him restrained.

The magus was one step up who was considered to have control of a spirit or ‘the Holy Spirit’ in the case of Jesus which could do miracles. The divine-man modality, of course, was the highest claimed level. It is very possible that Jesus-Simon evolved over decades from a wandering goete who would go into ecstatic trances while working on healings to a mystery school teacher who would initiate disciples in the psychomantium process to do their own soul travel as well as author books on his spiritual viewpoint.

Where the Gospel ‘Son of David’ designation fits in is that, literally, the son of King David was Solomon. Solomon was famous as not only a great king but as a great magician who exerted control over demons. This popular tradition that inspired works like *The Testament of Solomon* and *The Wisdom of Solomon* had risen to such a crescendo already by the first century that even the cynical Josephus as a proud Jew comments on it:

“God allowed (Solomon) to learn the art of casting out demons for the benefit and healing of men and the formulation of incantations by which sicknesses are healed and he left behind the ways of performing exorcisms...” (57)

Josephus even proudly mentions an exorcist named Eleazar who expelled a demon in the presence of the future emperor, Vespasian, with the use of a signet ring supposedly from Solomon. (58) Smith notes as well that up to as late as the third century that a certain Rabbi Yohanan held that magical expertise should be required of those in the Rabbinic Assembly. (59)

Smith asks the question regarding how Josephus (or other good Jews) could be proud of the power of magic from certain avenues on the one hand and be critical of Jesus on the other. Smith perceives three differences. One was that Jesus was perceived to have a ‘demon’ or was ‘possessed’ like a goete rather than as a master who masters demons and uses them. Secondly, Jesus had no real respect for the Law or the Jerusalem cult as is clear from nearly every viewpoint. Thirdly, it is clear that Jesus laid claim at least in some sense to the ‘Son of God’ moniker. Smith points out the use of the ‘bridegroom’ imagery in Mt 2:29 and Jn 3:29 as examples that reference God as the Bridegroom which comes from the Song of Songs. (60)

Conner notes that an article by David Duling: “Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David” makes an excellent argument that the ‘son of David’ moniker specifically references the magical skills of Jesus. (61)

Smith notes that a handful of images have been found from sometime around the year 200 CE in Rome and Carthage showing Jesus having a donkey head. These are the earliest images of Jesus. (62) This comes from an Egyptian reference where the donkey was the sacred animal of Seth, the god of foreigners, who appears donkey-headed on magical gems. Iao or Yah was the Hebrew god and Io or Eio means ‘donkey’ in Coptic so this would make Jesus easily depicted as donkey-headed as the incarnation of the Hebrew god. What Smith doesn’t pick up on, though, is that the ‘Son of Man’ means the ‘Son of Adam’ who was Seth in Genesis and that Simon was perceived by his Samaritan followers as the incarnation of Seth. This can be seen just from the title of the Christian work called ‘The Second Treatise of the Great Seth’. (63)

It is clear that Jesus taught others soul travel such as in the Dialogue of the Savior. The Second Treatise of the Great Seth claims in the voice of Jesus: “It was my going to the revealed height which the world did not accept, my third baptism in a revealed image”. (64)

It is clear from a close examination of the Gospel of Philip and other Nag Hammadi texts that the early Christians were using scrying techniques for meditation that Simon had brought from Egypt. (65) In the Roman gospels we have intimations of secret initiations. ‘Secret Mark’ which was certainly originally part of Mark has the youth come to Jesus in the evening clothed only in a “linen clothe over his naked body” for secret instruction in the “mystery of the Kingdom of God”. (66) Canonical Mark has a youth running away also only in the initiatory garment of a linen cloth on the night of the arrest of Jesus. Nicodemus in the Gospel of John also comes to Jesus at night for secret instruction.

Many Nag Hammadi books mention ‘the bridal chamber’ beginning with the earliest first century material of ‘Dialogue of the Savior’ and culminating in ‘The Gospel of Philip’ that was published probably in the first decades of the second century which explains rather clearly their methodology. (67) Early in Philip there are several separated references to dyes such as “the Son of Man has come as a dyer”. It refers to looking into dyed water until the eye tires and visual images come forth. Later, there are references to “the mirrored bridal chamber” and “none can see himself either in water or in a mirror without light. Nor again can you see in light without water or mirror”. The last sentence of Philip a little defensively sums up the argument for their practices of scrying secretly in the dark before a mirror to experience the higher self: “This is the way it is: it is revealed to him alone, not hidden in the darkness and the night, but hidden in a perfect day and a holy light.”

One description of this process is in the Magical Papyri from Egypt (1, 180-V:4-5, 44-46):

“Divination by means of a bowl and a lamp: the boy sits holding the bowl in his lap, scrying by the aid of lamplight reflected in the surface of the water. A spell pronounced over the boy induces a trance...” (68)

It is clear the early disciples were doing soul travel. Scholars think the ‘Dialogue of the Savior’ was published around 100 CE but consists of four sermonettes and some individual sayings from much earlier in the first century. (69) The first sermon speaks about letting go of fear to reach “the high place” by “the reasoning power” since “the crossing place is fearful before you. But you with a single mind, pass it by! For its depth is great, its height is enormous.” The first sermon reassures at the end with “The lamp of the body is the mind. As long as the things inside you are set in order, (at rest), your bodies are luminous.”

The second sermon begins by expressing the unity of being: “It is the one who speaks who also listens.” and then describes the psychomantium or scrying process they used: “If one does (not fear to stand in the) darkness, he will be able to see (the light). So I tell you (the place of) light is the darkness (so) stand in (the darkness or you will) not see the light. Most of the sermon seems like a didactic explanation of the spirit, soul, and mind but Judas does seem to have a real experience: “Behold! I see that all things exist (on earth) like signs upon (the waters).” This

seems to express the perception going back to at least Plato that earthly phenomenon reflect heavenly realities or 'forms'.

The third sermon begins again with mention of the psychomantium: "If one does not stand in the darkness, he will not be able to see the light." with some explanation: "Whoever will not understand how he came will not understand how he will go". Then Judas, Matthew, and Mary are taken "to the edge of heaven and earth. And when he had placed his hand upon them, they hoped that they might (see) it." While Jesus is their guide it is clear that they then experience a whole new character in their visionary experience who is "the Son of Man" who relates to them how "the Greatness sent the Word into the earth to rescue the First Word" (The 'First Word' is Sophia in the Sophia Mythos.) Judas is the recipient of the next part of the vision which describes the reunification of the masculine and feminine sides of the soul which have been divided since Adam and Eve in Genesis who "saw an exceedingly high place, and he saw the place of the abyss below" and "he saw two spirits bringing a single soul with them in a great flash of lightning. And a Word came forth from the Son of Man: 'Give them their garment'" (This is the garment of light and notice it is a singular garment.) The ending of the sermon refers to the 'bridal chamber in the sky' and how to get there: "When you rid yourselves of jealousy, then you will clothe yourselves in light and enter the bridal chamber".

The final sermon discusses how the Holy Spirit is like a mustard seed and contrasts "the works of womanhood" (which could be thought of as a metaphor for materiality) with "the true Word which is coming forth from the Father to the Abyss, in silence with a flash of lightning, giving birth...And you will go via the path which you have known...I tell you it is even difficult for me to reach it."

Virtually all the traditional information supposedly about Simon comes from his opponents. Although he includes a lot of obviously unfriendly and legendary material, probably some of the most accurate information comes from the Church father, Hippolytus, who was a careful scholar and lived from 170-235 CE in Rome and was their most important scholar of the third century.

Here is a short summary Hippolytus took from a manuscript of Simon reflecting a philosophical mind:

"Of all things that are concealed and manifested, the Fire which is above the heavens is the treasure-house, as it were a great Tree from which all flesh is nourished. The manifested side of the Fire is the trunk, branches, leaves, and the outside bark. All these parts of the great Tree are set on fire from the all-devouring flame of the Fire and destroyed. But the fruit of the Tree, if its imaging has been perfected and it takes shape of itself, is placed in the store-house (or treasure), and not cast into the Fire. For the fruit is produced to be placed in the store-house, but the husk to be committed to the Fire; that is to say, the trunk, which is generated not for its own sake but for that of the fruit." (70)

This passage represents the very simple idea that fires all later Gnosticism of Egypt, Samaria, and Syria that the Greeks were right and the Jews and Roman Christians are wrong about the resurrection of the body—that we are spiritual beings here just having a material experience.

In addition, even though there are images from ‘the burning bush’ to the ‘fire of the Holy Spirit’ the Fire terminology is a universalist, and Greek one and comes from Heraclitus five hundred years before Simon whose fundamental concept was that the Fire was the underlying principle of all things: “All things are an interchange for fire, and fire for all things, just like goods for gold and gold for goods.” Heraclitus saw a dimensional shift between the material world and fire which he called “the turnings of fire”. Wandering alone in the wild, he was more mystic than philosopher in essence, though, since he, like Simon, saw the only purpose of the material world to exist temporarily for the sake of the fire. As Heraclitus expressed it: “The fairest universe is but a heap of rubbish piled up at random.” (71) The soul for him was made up of fire on the one hand and watery worldly pleasures on the other. The goal was to become all fire.

The earliest Christian material that can be identified would be the four mini-sermons and stray sayings that compose the Dialogue of the Savior. These are ‘ascent’ stories of their spiritual journeys and make reference to ‘fire’ frequently. The first sermon that references it is a very fragmented section that could well read: “For the crossing place is fearful before you. But you, with a single mind, pass it by! For its depth is great; its height enormous (but a) single mind (of concentration and) the fire (of the Holy Spirit and) all the powers (of the aeons can raise) you,” At the end of the first sermon there are light references: “The lamp of the body is the mind. As long as the things inside you are set in order, that is, (at rest), your bodies are luminous. As long as your hearts are dark, the luminosity you anticipate (will escape you.)” Heraclitus may also have used ‘fire’ as an approximation of ‘light’ since fire was one of the four elements thought to make up the world.

The second mini-sermon uses ‘the light’ in contradistinction to standing in the ‘darkness’ in speaking about the psychomantium process. Farther on there is a reference to “fire of the Spirit”. Towards the end of the sermon in the telling of a creation myth it is water that composes the lower heavens and surrounds the earth but “(Outside) the water, a great fire (was) encircling them like a wall.”

The third sermon, once again, describes the psychomantium: “If one does not stand in the darkness, he will not be able to see the light.” In the great vision story, “Judas said to Matthew, “Brother who will be able to climb up to such a height or down to the bottom of the abyss? For there is a tremendous fire there, and something very fearful.” In a scene that redresses that ancient split between Adam and Eve we see some ‘lightening’ as a form of light: “As they stood there, he saw two spirits bringing a single soul with them in a great flash of lightning. And a word came from the Son of Man, saying, “Give them their garment!” In a later discussion about the ‘bridal chamber’—which would be the heavenly one rather than the earthly sacrament by that name which was the psychomantium process—the spiritual process is revealed: “when you rid yourselves of jealousy, then you will clothe yourselves in light and enter the bridal chamber.”

The fourth sermon reprises some of the verbiage of the third: “Now behold! A true Word is coming forth from the Father to the Abyss, in silence with a flash of lightning, giving birth”

‘The Second Treatise of the Great Seth’ was probably published roughly a half century after the Crucifixion and is very interesting since it is both very Sethian/Samaritan and fully Christian, having three different descriptions of the Crucifixion. It opens with: “And the perfect Majesty is at rest in the ineffable light” and then refers to the “Son of Light”. Speaking in the voice of the Son of Man it goes on “And I was visiting them all with fire and flame because of my Ennoia (personality).” Towards the end the Majesty is summed up: “For the Father of all these exists, being immeasurable (and) immutable: Nous and Word and Division and Envy and Fire. And He is entirely one,”

The Gospel of Thomas was probably crafted about fifty years after the Crucifixion between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John. (72) L 10 succinctly states: “Jesus said: ‘I have cast fire upon the world, and see, I am guarding it until it blazes.’” A protocol that works every time to interpret a saying in Thomas is to check the next logion. L 11 is the great mystical logion. Among other things it says: “When you come to dwell in the light, what will you do?” Here we have a direct link made between the fire kindled by Jesus and the mystic Light.

Later in L 24 of Thomas there is: “There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world.” L 33 adds the familiar “For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel”. Thomas reaches a high point in L 50 with the great ascent story: “We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established (itself) and became manifest through their image.”

L 77 speaks in the manner of the fire of Simon: “Jesus said: ‘I am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the All. From me did the All come forth, and unto me did the All extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone and you will find me there.’” Once again in L 82 Jesus says: “He who is near me is near the fire, and he who is far from me is far from the Kingdom.” Once again we have a link between fire and light since the very next saying is L 83: “The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the Father...”

Thomas also reflects the attitude of Simon who speaks about ‘husk’ and the ‘trunk’ that are “committed to the Fire”. In L 56 we have “Whoever has come to understand the world has found only a corpse”. In L 71 is the famous “I shall (destroy this) house and nobody will be able to build it. . . .”—which must be referring to his body. L 97 is an unknown parable about meal leaking out of a cracked jar which refers to our physical vehicles being inherently unable to contain the spirit. L 98 which defines it, similarly, is an unknown parable about practicing with a sword until you can kill a powerful man. This refers to practicing with the spirit until you can slay your own ego.

Thomas also uses some tree imagery. L 19 refers to “five trees for you in Paradise” which may refer to five dimensions. Interestingly this is followed by the mustard seed parable in L 20. The “smallest of all seeds” becomes a “great plant” which gives the impression that what is being talked about are mental dimensions.

The statement of Simon that “the fruit of the tree, if it’s imaging has been perfected and it takes shape of itself, is placed in the storehouse, and not cast into the fire.” is reprised in L 43 with the complaint of Jesus that “you have become like the Jews, for they (either) love the tree and hate it’s fruit (or) love the fruit and hate the tree”.

The Gospel of Philip was probably published several decades after Thomas but is in the same spiritual lineage of the bridal chamber sacrament. Firstly, we find some sacramental references: “It is through water and fire that the whole place is purified”. Later we find a statement that could have been abstracted straight from Heraclitus: “It is from water and fire that the soul and spirit came into being”. But, Philip goes on to explain: “It is from water and fire and light that the son of the bridal chamber came into being.” This would relate to the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, and the Bridal Chamber. Philip continues to explain: “The fire is the chrism, the light is the fire. I am not referring to that fire which has no form, but to the other fire whose form is white, which is bright and beautiful, and which gives beauty.” Philip is, finally, explaining Simon and Heraclitus.

A famous pagan essayist named Lucian who flourished from about 120 to 185 CE references Jesus sometime after 165 CE: “They still reverence that man who was put on a stake in Palestine because he introduced into (human) life this new initiation...these poor creatures have persuaded themselves that they shall be completely immortal and live forever.” (73) Lucian doesn’t go into detail in terms of what the “new initiation” is all about but the ‘Second Treatise of the Great Seth’ discusses this as well in the voice of Christ: “It was my going to the revealed height which the world did not accept, my third baptism in a revealed image.” (74) This would refer to the psychomantium technique used by Christians to access their higher self, called the Bridal Chamber, if we assume that the first baptism was the one of water and the second baptism or sacrament that of the Holy Spirit.

After John was killed it is clear that Jesus made his pitch to the more fundamentalist, militant constituency of John in the various ‘Feeding of the Five or Four Thousand’ scenes. The going out into the wilderness, the number of those fed, the seating as they were in military formation all are signatures of that effort. Despite the multiplication of food, one does not get the impression it was terribly successful. John finally owns up to this when after his version of the ‘Feeding’ he inserts the ‘Bread of Life Discourse’ where “the Jews then murmured at him” (6:41, like Moses got murmured against). The upshot was that “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” And “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry” (7:1).

The Gospel of John has the High Priest decision to kill Jesus linked to the resurrection of Lazarus. Since this was clearly a mystery school initiation from the ‘Secret Mark’ version and Lazarus can be identified with King Izates then the motives are clear concerning why the Jerusalem establishment wanted to prevent the growing alliance between homegrown pagan practices and an attractive neighboring Hebrew head of state. The betrayal of Judas in Mark, as well, comes right after Mary initiates Jesus with the oil on the head as the successor to John the Baptist. This was not only seen as a political threat by the Jerusalem power structure but it was seen as a scandal to have a woman officiate by the more conservative Jewish element. It is interesting that the location of the ceremony was at the home of ‘Simon the Leper’. Simon

Magus certainly was seen as ‘unclean’ in many of his practices such as eating with gentiles. Luke has the same scene played out at the home of a Simon who is a Pharisee. Perhaps Luke thought that ‘Simon the leper’ was too funny and obvious of a joke to leave in. But, later on in our story the name-gaming continues when another Simon carries the cross of Jesus. This maybe is a response to the Samaritan work called *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* where it is claimed that Christ took over body of Jesus for a time—presumably Simon since he carried the cross.

Mark, Matthew, and Luke have the decision to kill Jesus happen because they had heard he was preaching or telling parables against them and attacking the Temple. The scene with Jesus chasing out the money-changers in the Temple never could have happened, though, without a major riot and intervention of Temple authorities which would have become an historical incident outside the Roman gospels. The Gospel of John does finally set the historical record straight when Jesus narrowly escapes stoning in Chapter 10:31-34: “...For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?’”

It is interesting that Celsus relates that Jesus was “deserted and betrayed by his associates, hid, fled, and was caught.” (75) This could relate to Simon hiding during the Samaritan Massacre which he probably organized, fleeing the scene, and being caught later in a betrayal. The character of Judas may have been constructed to demonize Judaism by name but also to cover for the allegation made by the Jewish point of view that there were many betrayers. Picknett and Prince make a strong argument that Judas was a fabricated character but what most commentators do not seem notice is that the kiss of Judas demonizes the mystic kiss that Jesus gives James the Just in the Jewish Christian mystery school tradition of the First and Second Apocalypse of James. (76) The motives of the Synoptic Gospel writers are transparent here.

The Gospel of John, notes Smith, twice refers to Jesus hiding—once at the end of Chapter Eight to avoid being stoned and, then, once from his disciples in Chapter 12:36! (77) These both could be displacements purposely put in by John to cover for the embarrassment of the final ‘hiding before the Crucifixion’ accusations. Luke 20:20 defensively reports that the chief priests and scribes “watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men...”

The Jewish Christian Passion story of the Gospel of Peter related to the lost Gospel of the Hebrews and found in the desert of Egypt is probably closer to the early sources than the Canonical Gospels are. The Gospel of Peter makes the most sense in saying that it was Herod Antipas that played an active role in the Passion. Luke actually records, though, that Jesus had a hearing before Antipas. It makes sense that the Pauline gospels would leave out the decisive role Antipas played so as not to embarrass the Herodian family as well as not to embarrass the Romans by mentioning that Pilate took a bribe.

The Gospel of John finally admits that a cohort of soldiers arrested Jesus. This is six hundred men and is suggestive of the size of the force that Pilate used in the Samaritan Massacre. Antipas was playing to his base in doing the wishes of the High Priests. In addition he was vulnerable to the accusation that he was coddling Samaritan trouble-makers since he had Samaritan family connections. The allegory of ‘Joseph and Asenath’ alleges that he, in the

disguise of the son of the king, had marital designs on Queen Helen and was trying to eliminate a rival too.

Although Pilate was a brutal man he probably feared being implicated in the killing of a favorite spiritual teacher of Queen Helen who wielded political power through her son, the King of Osroene, and was a big financial contributor in the Jerusalem arena. Pilate tried to wash his hands but Antipas and the High Priests probably used crucifixion rather than stoning to help tie the event to the reluctant assent of Pilate.

One can well wonder who Barabbas—meaning ‘son of the rabbi’—actually was in relation to Jesus. Picknett and Prince note that some early versions of Matthew and other early texts call him ‘Jesus Barabbas’. (78) He could have been the son of Jesus but very possibly could have been the son of John the Baptist who the Mandeans claim was married and had eight children. (79) Speculation is that he was well-known and possibly released as an unrelated event after the Samaritan Massacre.

Celsus also called Jesus a “bandit” which relates to the supposed ‘insurrection’ of the Samaritan Massacre that is referenced in the Barabbas section of Mark since the word had an equivalency to ‘revolutionary’ in usage. (80)

Robert Conner notices that the same charge laid against Jesus: “perverting our people” in Luke 23:2 was the same charge laid against the magician Bar-Jesus who could be a stand-in for Simon Magus by Paul in Acts 13:10: “will you not stop making crooked the paths of the Lord?” in terms of the verb used. (81)

All the Synoptics report that a ‘Simon of Cyrene’ carried the cross of Jesus. Gnostic literature reports that it was actually Simon who was crucified in the place of Jesus. (82) In line with an allegorical view of the Gospels it can be viewed that Simon Magus was actually crucified while the ‘Son of Man’ figure he channeled stood by and watched. The Gospel of John in speaking to a Samaritan audience which knew the truth did not dare any allegorical subterfuge with a ‘Simon of Cyrene’ story.

The Orthodox tradition is full of evidence that Simon/Jesus and the Son of Man were two different beings. John Lash on [www.metahistory.org](http://www.metahistory.org) makes the case from the Second Treatise of the Great Seth that the Son of Man was more than just being channeled by Simon but was in modern terminology what is called a ‘walk-in’—actually taking over the body of Simon on a permanent basis. Whatever the case, we can see the evidence for the ‘Adoptionist’ viewpoint in the first few hundred years of Church history that derive from the early evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit-dove experience Simon/Jesus had in the baptism of John. Paul, as well, does not go back to a pre-incarnate Logos but ignores the earthly life of Simon and says in Romans 1:4 that he was “...declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

It is clear that it would had to have been Queen Helen in her persona as ‘Joseph of Arimathea’ who had the standing to request the body of Jesus from Pilate and, then, interned him in a tomb of hers. The experiences of the resurrection from the Gospel of Peter and the ‘five hundred’ in

Paul are likely to have been some of the earliest in reflecting charismatic or visionary experiences. (83) This was probably true for what people surmise is the missing ending of Mark. The mystery school did not look forward to bodily resurrection so we have Saying 71 in the Gospel of Thomas saying in the voice of Jesus: “I shall (destroy) this house, and no one will be able to build it (again).”

Probably the first witness to the Resurrection was James the Just reported by Jerome in the Gospel of the Hebrews (84) who was probably one of the two on the road to Emmaus as Robert Eisenman concludes. (85) This would have provided gravitas in a male dominated society to the report of Queen Helen and her experiencing of the spiritual body of Jesus.

Although Morton Smith quotes the Church Father, Tertullian, about 200 CE who summed up the Jewish view of Jesus that he had heard that we can see now are fairly accurate although simplistic terms: “Son of a carpenter or a prostitute, a profaner of the Sabbath, a Samaritan and one who had a demon...” (86), the insiders view of Jesus was much more complex. Of the successors of Simon-Jesus they were legion as the saying goes. Much of the Samaritan leadership may have been killed but their successors produced and re-interpreted the Sethian literature.

Many of the Jewish followers with their connections in Jerusalem survived the massacre like James the Just and his brother Judas Thomas whose followers produced literature large enough to be called a genre called ‘the Jewish-Christian gospels’ where James becomes the hero given the mystic kiss by Jesus, becomes the first witness to the Resurrection, and where the Holy Spirit has a female persona.

Many with Herodian connections survived whose hero becomes the Apostle Paul whose literature cuts the history of James out of it as much as possible and where the mystic kiss to James becomes the kiss of betrayal of Judas. It is clear from Pauline letters referring to “false apostles, deceitful workers” such as in 2nd Corinthians that this attitude was not accidental.

It is clear from the Bridal Chamber gospels that many disciples survived in or found a home in Syria, Edessa, and Adiabene that resulted in a large body of literature found in the Nag Hammadi Codices along with others like The Gospel of Peter and The Odes of Solomon. The independence of these areas from Roman control persisted in the second century and, then, well beyond. The Adoptionist Patriarch of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, was, finally, deposed by an ecumenical synod and Roman Emperor Aurelian in 274 CE.

Followers of Simon/Jesus also broke up into distinct factions for geographical, ethnic, and cultural reasons. The Egyptian followers remained more philosophical and syncretistic in their religious stance—which is why very little of their literature and history survives. The ‘Simonians’ with their libertarian ‘free love’ stance established a presence in Rome and elsewhere and became a distinct threat to the more covert Herodian Christians who were busy trying to co-opt the presence of fundamentalist Judaism in the Empire for their own survival. The picture of Simon Magus in Acts of being a separate personage from Jesus is the attempt by the author of Acts to distance the Herodian Roman elite from this ‘hippy’ group that had no self-discipline and threatened to bring the fury of the Empire on them.

Most of the traditional images of ‘Simon Magus’ can be seen as dis-informational attempts to maintain the cover-up. Some of them are most probably transferences from the more unsavory stories in the life of Paul, the Apostle, such as trying to ‘buy the power of the Holy Spirit’ or convincing one Herodian princess to marry a Herodian prince. Others are clearly bizarrely fictional such as the one where Simon is flying over Rome or having himself buried alive so that he could resurrect himself.

It is clear, however, from the Nag Hammadi texts that Simon’s Bridal Chamber Christianity as a distinct set of communities survived for probably a century after his death—probably centered around Edessa, especially, since that city was not in the Roman Empire until early in the second century.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Baraita Sanhedrin 43a
- (2) L. Picknett, C. Prince, ‘The Masks of Christ’, pp. 94-96
- (3) Ibid., p. 95
- (4) Ibid., p. 96
- (5) Morton Smith, ‘Jesus the Magician’, pp. 46-48
- (6) Ibid., p. 48
- (7) Ibid., p. 63
- (8) Ibid., p. 59
- (9) Robert Conner, ‘Jesus the Sorcerer’, pp. 26-27
- (10) Morton Smith, ‘Jesus the Magician’, p. 26
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p.107
- (13) L. Picknett, C. Prince, ‘The Masks of Christ’, p.106
- (14) Ibid., p. 113,
- (15) Ibid., p. 257
- (16) Peter Levenda, ‘Stairway to Heaven: Chinese Alchemists, Jewish Kabbalists, and the Art of Spiritual Transformation’, p. 149 and quoted from Gershom Scholem, ‘Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism’, pp. 43-44
- (17) Biblical Archaeology Review, ‘Possible Earliest Known Reference to Christ Discovered in Alexandria Ancient Harbor’ (Oct 5, 2008)
- (18) J. A. Montgomery, ‘A Syriac Incantation Bowl with Christian Formula’, (AJSL34)
- (19) The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ‘Aramaic Incantation Bowls’ (Geoffrey W Bramiley, 1986, p. 217)
- (20) Gideon Bohak, ‘Ancient Jewish Magic: A History’, (2008)
- (21) L. Picknett, C. Prince, ‘The Masks of Christ’, 259
- (22) Edmondo Lupiere (Charles Hindley, trans), ‘The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics’, pp. 38-41
- (23) Ethel S Drower, ‘The Secret Adam: A Study of Nasoraean Gnosis’
- (24) Ibid.
- (25) Ibid.
- (26) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p.220
- (27) For Cave of John the Baptist at Suba see Shimon Gibson, ‘John the Baptist’ about excavations showing first century sacramental use of the cave involving foot-washing.
- (28) Morton Smith, ‘Jesus the Magician’, p. 59
- (29) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, p. 109
- (30) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p. 269 and p. 277
- (31) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, p. 157
- (32) Ibid., p. 157
- (33) Ibid., p. 175-177
- (34) Ibid., p. 151
- (35) Ibid., p. 158-160
- (36) L. Picknett, C. Prince, ‘The Masks of Christ’, 250
- (37) Ibid., pp. 250-251
- (38) Ibid.
- (39) Ibid.
- (40) Morton Smith, ‘Jesus the Magician’, pp. 146-147 who quotes the great scholar, Rudolph Bultmann, concluding the Eucharist story of the magical rite precedes its placement in the Passover framework. See ‘History of the Synoptic Tradition’.

- (41) L. Picknett, C. Prince, 'The Masks of Christ', p.221
- (42) Ibid., pp. 216-217
- (43) Ibid, pp. 221-222
- (44) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p.244
- (45) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 244, ff. and p. 362, ff.
- (46) Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.70
- (47) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 59
- (48) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 260, ff.
- (49) Ibid., p.139, ff.
- (50) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', pp. 197-207
- (51) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 8
- (52) Ibid., p. 98
- (53) Ibid., p. 205
- (54) Clementine Homilies I. xxv-xxx
- (55) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 114
- (56) Robert Conner, 'Jesus the Sorcerer', pp.178-179 quoting from Papyri Graecae Magicae, I, 170 (IV: 3019)
- (57) Ibid., p. 292 quoting from Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews 8:45
- (58) Ibid., p. 295 quoting from Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews 8:46-49
- (59) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 208 quoting from B. Sanhedrin 17a, end
- (60) Ibid., p. 144
- (61) Robert Conner, 'Jesus the Sorcerer', pp. 293-294 quoting from David Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David." In the Harvard Theological Review 68: pp. 235-252
- (62) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 62
- (63) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 362, ff.
- (64) Ibid.
- (65) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 139, ff. Notice the voluminous references to water, light, and mirrors.
- (66) L. Picknett, C. Prince, 'The Masks of Christ', pp. 283-284
- (67) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 244, ff. and 139, ff.
- (68) Robert Conner, 'Jesus the Sorcerer', p 273
- (69) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 244, ff.
- (70) G. R. S. Mead, 'Fragments of a Faith Forgotten', p 172
- (71) Hippolytus, 'Refutation of all Heresies'
- (72) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 124 ff
- (73) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 56
- (74) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 362 ff
- (75) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 60
- (76) L. Picknett, C. Prince, 'The Masks of Christ', pp. 308-316
- (77) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 60
- (78) L. Picknett, C. Prince, 'The Masks of Christ', p. 326
- (79) Ibid., p.259
- (80) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 60
- (81) Robert Conner, 'Jesus the Sorcerer', p 61
- (82) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', (The Second Treatise of the Great Seth, p.365)
- (83) L. Picknett, C. Prince, 'The Masks of Christ', p. 342
- (84) Jerome, De viris illustribus
- (85) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', p. 516
- (86) Morton Smith, 'Jesus the Magician', p. 61

5.

‘THE GREAT ANNOUNCEMENT’—‘APOPHASIS MEGALE’

“O truly sacred mysteries! O Stainless Light! My way is lighted with torches and I survey the heavens and God; I become holy whilst I am initiated. The Lord is my hierophant, and seals while illuminating him who is initiated, and presents to the Father him who believes, to be kept safe forever.”—Clement of Alexandria (Exhortation to the Heathen, Chapter 12, Ca 200 CE)

“My Power, o Power, you have forsaken me”—Quote of Jesus on the Cross from the Gospel of Peter

The following piece that Hippolytus transcribed from the Simonians is thought by scholars to be a later development and not to go all the way back to Simon however there is no real good reason to assume this. Simon had a philosophical mind as shown by the fact that he authored several books no longer extant. One was an argument against the Jewish Old Testament. The other was called ‘The Four Corners of the World’. From the title one could surmise it was an expression of a universalist philosophy and where each corner got it right or wrong. The followers of Simon in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Rome each used the local culture to colonize their viewpoint. The Great Announcement, below, and the ‘Tree of Fire’ appear to be the philosophical underpinnings of these diverse expressions:

"This is the Writing of the Revelation of Voice-and-Name from Thought, the Great Power, the Boundless. Wherefore shall it be sealed, hidden, concealed, laid in the Dwelling of which the Universal Root is the Foundation.

To you, therefore, I say what I say, and write what I write. And the writing is this.

Of the universal Aeons there are two shoots, without beginning or end, springing from one Root, which is the Power invisible, inapprehensible Silence. Of these shoots one is manifested from above, which is the Great Power, the Universal Mind ordering all

things, male, and the other, (is manifested) from below, the Great Thought, female, producing all things.

Hence pairing with each other, they unite and manifest the Middle Distance, incomprehensible Air, without beginning or end. In this is the Father who sustains all things, and nourishes those things which have a beginning and end.

This is He who has stood, stands and will stand, a male-female power like the preëxisting Boundless Power, which has neither beginning nor end, existing in oneness. For it is from this that the Thought in the oneness proceeded and became two.

So he was one; for having her in himself, he was alone, not however first, although preëxisting, but being manifested from himself to himself, he became second. Nor was he called Father before (Thought) called him Father.

As, therefore, producing himself by himself, he manifested to himself his own Thought, so also the Thought that was manifested did not make the Father, but contemplating him hid him—that is to say the Power—in herself, and is male-female, Power and Thought.

Hence they pair with each other being one, for there is no difference between Power and Thought. From the things above is discovered Power, and from those below Thought.

In the same manner also that which was manifested from them although being one is yet found as two, the male-female having the female in itself. Thus Mind is in Thought—things inseparable from one another—which although being one are yet found as two.” (1)

To summarize, the ultimate ground of being is an incomprehensible Silence or Power which gives rise to the “Great Power, the Universal Mind” on the one hand and the “Great Thought, female, producing all things” on the other. They pair with each other in the “Middle Distance” that sustains and nourishes all things. This unitary being enlivening Middle Distance is “He who has stood, stands, and will stand” outside of time and space and yet also through whom ‘First Thought’ proceeded.

This ‘Great Power’ and ‘Silence’ terminology rather than being a second century CE invention of later ‘Gnostics’ actually goes back to at least the first or second century BCE since it exists in the work called ‘Eugnostos the Blessed’ (2) which scholars link to not later than the first century BCE in Egypt. It makes reference to “all the philosophers” which would not have been appropriate after that period and betrays a long period of usage from its several versions.

Assuming that both Simon and Egnostos share a context in the Samaritan communities in Egypt and Samaria since neither can be classed purely in Egyptian and Greek philosophies we can narrow down the time-frame for their similarity of perspective which has a resonance with the Greek, Platonic architecture of the unseen that posits a One that is beyond conception which creates the ideal Forms that are imperfectly out-pictured in the material world. Egnostos even uses the 'shadow' terminology of Plato.

The Samaritan Temple on Mt Gerezim is dated by scholars to the mid fifth century under the Persian Empire. Greek influence began with the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE but, presumably, the Israelite character of Samaritan religion was probably maintained despite the intellectual competition from Plato who flourished just prior to Alexander.

It may have been in the period of Antiochus Epiphanies that a philosophical melding of Israelite and Greek perspectives was required to be produced. The Jerusalem Temple and cult were desecrated to the extent that the Maccabean revolt resulted. The Samaritans were more Hellenized than Jews. They were under such tremendous pressure that they allowed their Temple on Mt Gerezim to be dedicated to Zeus Ca 170 BCE.

It was in 110 BCE that the relative apostasy of the Samaritan Temple probably resulted in being one of the reasons for its destruction by the Jewish king, John Hyrcanus, who also reduced the nearby city of Shechem down to a village in a murderous attack. It could have been, then, in the previous period from 170 to 110 BCE that the rather calm, professorial, scholarly, and metaphysical work of Egnostos took place.

Much of Egnostos was scavenged and re-written word for word in many parts probably in the late first century CE Egypt by the Christian author of 'The Sofia of Jesus Christ' (3) who, doubtless, felt theologically justified in thinking the same Savior was behind Egnostos.

The major innovation in 'Sofia' is the development of the demiurge and his minions which actually is taken over from Plato's Timaeus written Ca 360 BCE. It is a mark of the non-confrontational Egnostos probably written prior to 110 BCE and a mark of the bitterness after the destruction of the Samaritan Temple that the demiurge first only shows up in 'Sofia'. The understandable twist on Plato is that while the demiurge in Plato is seen as a benevolent craftsman, the demiurge in the Samaritan development has a definite selfish or malevolent intent. This can be seen especially in 'Sofia' in the description of the minions of the demiurge being described as "robbers".

The demiurge is named 'Yaldabaoth' which pops up later frequently in gnostic literature. He is also called "Almighty" and "Arch-Begetter". It doesn't take too much imagination to identify Yaldabaoth with the Jewish Yahweh which would have been a logical theological development after the genocidal attack of Hyrcanus on the Samaritans and their Temple.

It is not at all surprising that the history of early Egyptian Christianity having the character of Sofia Mythos perished as Roman Orthodoxy entered and triumphed. The Herodian Gospel writers concerned with coopting Judaism and the Old Testament for their own survival which

required ditching the demiurge tradition of identifying him with Yahweh. They also hated the idea of celibacy promoted in 'Sofia' where sex was as a tool of the demiurge intended to keep the soul light trapped in this world and preferred a more this-worldly, Roman-friendly religion. The development of the Savior as the Jewish 'god-man' when Matthew and Luke were being written also required them to ditch the complicated Samaritan metaphysics of various iterations or planes of the Father, Son, and Sofia.

The book of Acts (8: 9-11) betrays its knowledge of Apophasis Megale: "But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God'". Notice his 'sorcery', 'great power' terminology, and "to whom they all gave heed". This is the frightening image Roman Christians had to baptize away into a sanitized Roman-safe, Jewish-safe religion: "Then, Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip..." (Acts 8:13)

In contrast to the picture of Simon in Acts where he submits meekly to the phenomenology of the healing motif, the real Simon's sophisticated philosophical stance in Apophasis Megale makes clear the unitary nature of being in contrast to the light/dark duality of Zoroastrianism—which infected Judaism and Roman Christianity-- or a later Gnosticism giving that impression from its discussion of the lower evolution of the archons. Everything for Simon emanates from higher or more subtle planes of existence in successive unfoldments.

A second focus of Apophasis Megale is the gendered character of being which is both "Power" and "Silence" until bifurcating but, then, working together as a complementary unity in 'The Standing One'. This gendered emanation of the Godhead is explored in early Christian literature beginning with the Dialogue of the Savior, the Second and First Apocalypse of James, and the Gospel of Thomas. (4)

The first sermon in the Dialogue of the Savior expresses this higher unity and sense of emanational distance: "look at the (light)...It will take you up to the high place where there is no rule or tyrant. When you (look down) you will see those..." After fragmentary sentences we find, again: "For the crossing place is fearful before you. But you, with a single mind, pass it by! For its depth is great; its height is enormous."

The unity of consciousness is expressed in the second sermon beginning with: "He who seeks (is the one who) reveals (to Himself)" and "It is the one who speaks who also listens, and it is the one who can see who also reveals." The complementarity of the higher planes is expressed in: "(Mary) said, 'Lord tell us where the (soul) is established, and where the true mind exists.' The Lord said, 'The fire of the spirit came into existence (to save/unite) both. On this account the (soul and spirit) came into existence, and the true mind came into existence within them (to save them)'"

The third sermon, again, begins with: "Judas raised his eyes and saw an exceedingly high place, and he saw the place of the abyss below." Then the Son of Man recounts the Sophia Mythos not told in Apophasis Megale since it only addresses the origin of Power and Thought: "A seed from a power was deficient, and it went down to the abyss of the earth. The Greatness

remembered it, and he sent the Word to it. It brought it up into his presence, so that the first word might not fail.” Of course, the ‘Word’ represents the male Power. The ‘Seed’ represents the female. This is most likely the origination of the term ‘Barbelo’ for Sophia. The ‘First Word’ refers to Barbelo/Sophia and is appropriate since it refers to ‘First Thought’ which bifurcated first from the Boundless Power.

The third sermon, next, redresses Genesis and the issue of the division of the sexes to restore the primal unity coming down from Power and Thought: “As they stood there, he saw two spirits bringing a single soul with them in a great flash of lightning. And a word came forth from the Son of Man saying, ‘Give them their garment!’ And the small one became like the big one. They were (clothed like) those who received them (from) each other. Then (revelations came to the) disciples, whom he had touched). Mary said, ‘(I see evil (has divorced) them from the first (from) each other.’” Notice that that two spirits bring one soul and they are given a single garment and how they share it. The comment of Mary confirms that this is the healing of the division between the genders within the soul that goes back to ‘Adam and Eve’.

In the imagery of the ‘Fire Tree’ the outer manifestations of the tree are destroyed but the ‘fruit’ is placed in the storehouse. This could refer to the memories, lessons, and soul qualities are retained. The fourth sermon has Mary asking about the ‘mustard seed’. The answer of “the Lord” is “When the Father established the cosmos for himself, he left much over from the Mother of All. Therefor he speaks and he acts.” So, here we have the ‘Father’ and ‘Mother’ working together as in the ‘Middle Distance’ of Apophasis Megale where the ‘Standing One’ operates. The mustard seed represents divine thought since it is so little as to be almost nothing and yet results in a huge plant that is the material world. Here we have tree imagery representing creation from higher planes just as the value of the material is translated entirely back to higher planes in the ‘fruit’.

The work entitled The Second Apocalypse of James is an early work produced by a Jewish Christian community that betrays no knowledge of the New Testament but may be defensively responding to the letters of Paul in uplifting James, the Just. It seems to be making an effort at bridge-building but it does utilize some Sophia Mythos terminology such as “the Pleroma (of Imperishability)” and describes Jesus as “he who passed through the (worlds)”. In a very fragmentary paragraph Sophia/The Holy Spirit is spoken of almost in passing in the voice of Jesus: “This virgin about whom you hear—this is how (...) virgin (...) namely, the virgin. (...), how (...) to me for (...) to know (...) not as (...) whom I (...). For this one (masc.) (...) to him, and this is also profitable for you. Your father, whom you consider to be (rich), shall grant that you inherit all these (things) that you see.” It is clear that Jesus is speaking about Sophia rather than Mother Mary since the previous paragraph ends with “Your father is not my father. But my father has become a father to you” which is spoken in the context of ‘understanding’ which is normally the province of Wisdom/Sophia. The next paragraph seems to begin speaking in the Wisdom context: “I proclaim to tell you these (words) that I shall speak. When you hear, therefor, open your ears and understand and walk (accordingly)!” The paragraph continues on speaking about the demiurge and archons that are a part of the Sophia Mythos.

The First Apocalypse of James was probably written after Mark since it loses the compromising tone and takes up an angry one, links the Twelve Disciples with the archons,

uplifts the women disciples, and blames some disciples (like, maybe, Paul?) for killing James. One indication it may have been published after Mark and before Matthew relates to the point that some in the death scene of James were saying: “We have no part in this blood” which got transposed, apparently, in Matthew to Pilate saying about Jesus: “I am innocent of this man’s blood”.

1ApocJas clearly outlines its version of the Sophia Mythos. Jesus is the image not from Sophia but an image of “Him-who-is” like ‘Great Power-Great Thought’ from Simon. It is explained that Sophia (Great Thought) gave rise to a daughter Achamoth who gave rise to the archons which are so problematic upon the earth since Achamoth created without agreement from the “Pre-existent One”. This is reminiscent of the Mandaean series of demiurges such as the one who created without agreement from higher divinity.

The Gospel of Thomas is a very subtle and sophisticated work published probably after the Synoptics that utilizes Synoptic mythology and verbiage in expressing the Sophia Mythos of Wisdom, the fall into matter, the demiurge in L 7, the archons in L 30 and L 50, and the ascent back to the Father as in L 50.

The “two shoots...one root” focus throughout Apophasis Megale is, oddly, a constant refrain in the Gospel of Thomas as well beginning from the opening: “Didymos Judas Thomas” which means, actually ‘the twin Judas the twin’! Most of it has to do with a play on the higher and lower selves as in L 11: “On the day when you were one you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?” The games can be seen to continue in L 22 (no less) which gives a full exposition of the ‘two shoots’ philosophy that includes gender: “When you make the two one and the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then you will enter (the kingdom).”

The Holy Spirit/First Thought/Wisdom/the Mother is expressed very subtly in Thomas such as in L 4: “The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life and he will live” The answer to the riddle is ‘the breast of the Holy Spirit’. One of the most clear of references to Wisdom is L 101: “For my mother (gave me birth) but (my) true (mother) gave me life.” Another one at L 105 is “Jesus said, ‘He who knows the father and the mother will be called the son of a harlot’”. This refers to being a son of Wisdom or the Lower Wisdom which created materiality without a consort. There are many more subtle references to feeding, gold and wealth, and spirit relating to First Thought. A good example of referring to Great Power and First Thought is L 85: “Adam came into being from a great power and a great wealth”

The Gospel of Philip (5) was published probably several decades after Thomas to respond to the Gospel of John. It, also, clearly identifies the Holy Spirit in the feminine gender as Wisdom such as “Some said, ‘Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit’. They are in error. They do not know what they are saying. When did a woman ever conceive by a woman?” Further on we see this again and also the link with ‘mother’ which verifies its usage as a metaphor in the Gospel of

Thomas: “The saints are served by evil powers, for they are blinded by the holy spirit into thinking that they are serving an (ordinary) man whenever they do so for the saints. Because of this a disciple asked the Lord one day for something of this world. He said to him, ‘Ask your mother, and she will give you of the things which are another’s’”. Philip also refers to ‘Sophia’ and ‘Echamoth’ in passing which we remember from 1ApocJas.

The ‘Standing One’ statement in Apophysis Megale: “This is He who has stood, stands and will stand, a male-female power like the preexisting Boundless Power, which has neither beginning nor end, existing in oneness. For it is from this that the Thought in the oneness proceeded and became two” is stunningly paralleled in the Gospel of Philip: “The Lord said, ‘Blessed is he who is before he came into being. For he who is, has been and shall be.’” The difference lies in the preexistence extending to the disciples, although it may be inferred in the thought of Simon in existence being conceived of as a series of emanations. This ‘Standing One’ imagery is exactly equivalent to the various iterations of the Primal Adam theology in Palestine which cues off the Genesis story.

Another odd confluence of terms is the ‘Middle Distance’ of Simon and the ‘middle place’ of Philip. Simon renders his description in positive terminology: “Hence pairing with each other, they unite and manifest the Middle Distance, incomprehensible Air, without beginning or end. In this is the Father who sustains all things, and nourishes those things which have a beginning and end”

The Gospel of Philip views a middle place with horror: “And so he dwells either in this world or in the resurrection or in the middle place. God Forbid that I be found there!...But there is evil after this world which is truly evil—what is called ‘the middle’. It is death.” Philip regards it as some describe the New Age astral plane of dreams, illusions, and delusions populated by those who are prisoners of their own desires and regrets where one will “walk in the middle” as opposed to being “found in rest”.

The discrepancy between the two conceptions of ‘middle’ may be one of degree where the ‘middle place’ is a subset of ‘The Middle Distance’. A key sentence from Simon is the last one: “In this is the Father who sustains all things, and nourishes all things which have a beginning and end.” The ‘middle place’ filled with the perception of lack and limitation is what has a beginning and an end.

In the third sermon of the Dialogue of the Savior where it is speaking about “two spirits bringing one soul” which then receive one “garment” it is clear that this is a reprise of Adam and Eve—especially when Mary follows up with “Mary said, “[I] see evil [HAS DIVORCED] them from the first [FROM] each other.” The Gospel of Philip reprises this Adam and Eve scenario that is a lower octave of Great Power and Great Thought “pairing with each other” in the Middle Distance of Apophysis Megale in its main theme throughout of its discussion of the sacrament of the Bridal Chamber.

The Gospel of Philip should more appropriately be entitled “Sermon on the Mirrored Bridal Chamber”. While it is clear that the goal of it can be described as the union of the higher self

with the lower self or as when “the image and the angel are united with one another”, it is also clear there is a union of two spirits, one male and one female, which share the same soul:

“If the woman had not separated from the man, she should not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death. Because of this Christ came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two, and to give life to those who died as a result of the separation and unite them. But the woman is united to her husband in the bridal chamber. Indeed those who have been united in the bridal chamber will no longer be separated. Thus Eve separated from Adam because it was not in the bridal chamber that she was united with him.”

Apophysis Megale stands, then, at the philosophical mid-point between the Platonizing Euginostos the Blessed in the second century BCE with its benign demiurge and the late first and early second century iterations of the Sophia Mythos which flesh out the development of ‘Great Thought’ and ‘Middle Distance’ in revealing the later trinities of the ‘Father-Mother-Son’ or ‘God-Holy Spirit-Primal Adam’ with their respective heroes and villains

#### Footnotes

- (1) G. R. S. Mead, ‘Fragments of a Faith Forgotten’, p 173-174
- (2) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p.220
- (3) Ibid. (Euginostos the Blessed and The Sophia of Jesus Christ are written together to reveal their similarity.)
- (4) Ibid., p. 244, p. 269, p. 260, p. 124
- (5) Ibid., p. 139

## 6. MARIAM THE MAGDALENE

“...John, the Moon, had thirty, the number of days in a lunation, or more correctly twenty-nine and a half, one of his disciples being a woman called Helen, and a woman being reckoned as half a man in the perfect number of the Triacontad, or Plerôma of the Aeons (H.I. xxiii; R. II. viii).—from G.R.S. Meade, ‘Simon’ quoting from the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies about the disciples of John the Baptist.

It is revealing that the Four Gospels give Mary Magdalene a lot of press and position her as the first witness to the resurrection but the Nag Hammadi texts present her in more exalted roles. The Dialogue of the Savior has her with the inner group of disciples participating in their vision experiences and who was highly respected: “She uttered this as a woman who had understood completely”. (1) The Gospel of Mary (2) has her instilling some backbone in the disciples, speaking about a vision only she was privy to, and being supported by Levi who reports that the Savior loved her more than the other disciples. In the First Apocalypse of James (3) Mary is one of several women disciples in a group of women who are uplifted and encouraged by Jesus while the male disciples are upbraided by James. The Gospel of Thomas (4) dedicates the long Logion 21 for an answer to Mary that has hidden implications for her identity.

It is the Gospel of Philip that is extraordinarily revealing:

“There were three that always walked with the Lord: Mary his mother and her sister and the Magdalene, the one who was called his companion. His sister and his mother and his companion were each a Mary”. (5)

The near redundancy of the last sentence gives the impression that ‘Mary’ is used in the sense of a spiritual name, title, or role after Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, who was a very highly respected leader of the Israelites in her own right.

The word ‘Magdalene’ is, also, more likely to be a cloaked or purposely corrupted word meaning ‘great’—as in ‘Great Mary’. John Lamb Lash, the great Gnostic scholar, notes that the ancient initiates spiritual encounters would be with the Magna Mater or ‘Great Mother’. (6) ‘Great Mary’, then—if that is the derivation—would reference her relationship to Wisdom.

Picknett and Prince sense all this in their careful investigation:

“In Mark, Matthew, and John she is ‘Mary the Magdalene’ (Maria e Magdalene), an unusual construction if ‘Magdalene’ simply

refers to her home town. Luke has the even more peculiar ‘Mary who is called Magdalene (Maria e kaloumene Magdalene), apparently implying something even more significant, but which is lost on us today, although it is possibly some kind of nickname—or even a title. It is reminiscent of the ambiguity about Jesus’ being described as ‘the Nazarene’.” (7)

Robert Conner agrees that the earliest scriptural evidence is that Mary was called ‘Mary the Magdalene’ such as in Mt 27:56 and 28:1. (8)

The most extraordinary passage involving Mary is a slightly fragmentary one in the Gospel of Philip:

“ And the companion of the [...Lord was] Mary Magdalene. [...He] loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her (mouth). The rest of the disciples [...were jealous]. They said to him "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The Savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you like her? When a blind man and one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. When the light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness." The Lord said, "Blessed is he who is before he came into being. For he who is, has been and shall be." (9)

We know from the Second and First Apocalypse of James that a kiss on the mouth can be a kiss of gnosis between a disciple and Jesus rather than having sexual implications. Jesus gives the reasoning for why he loves her in that she sees the light and implying she really sees the eternal soul. The Gospel of Philip, then, goes on to discuss the difference between carnal marriage and union in the Bridal Chamber.

Of great significance are the prefaces to the passage of Jesus kissing Mary on the mouth. Jesus is being characterized as the one who brings the light: “The Lord went into the dye works of Levi. He took seventy-two different colors and threw them into the vat. He took them out all white. And he said, “Even so has the son of man come as a dyer”. This is a rather creative passage. Levi is a supporting disciple to Mary that we meet by name in the Gospel of Mary, acts as the spiritual advisor to Asenath (who is really Mary) (10) in the ‘Joseph and Asenath’ allegory from the first century, and appears among the visionaries in the Dialogue of the Savior by the name of Matthew. The “dye works” is actually referring to the psychomantium process of peering into dyed water to see the light.

The following sentence to the one on the dye works is a key: “As for the Wisdom who is called “the barren,” she is the mother of the angels.” This is referring to the ‘higher Sophia’

rather than the 'lower Sophia' who created the problematic archons or authorities. This is the only sentence mediating between the dye works and "And the companion of the (Lord was) Mary Magdalene..." It isn't real clear whether the Wisdom sentence really belongs to the thought of the dyer paragraph in referencing the Holy Spirit which is key also in the Gospel of Thomas but it is striking that "And" prefaces the Mary passage in seeming to connect them.

It is also possible that the fragmentary passage went something like this: "And the companion of the (Lord who knew Wisdom was) Mary Magdalene." In fact, it is surprising that the translator does not suggest (Lord was) in the fragmented space which indicates, perhaps, that those simple and obvious words were not the only ones that fitted the space allowed. It, also, would be odd that the one short sentence on wisdom should stand alone since the author normally speaks in well-developed paragraph form. The implication of all this contiguity is that Philip is referencing Jesus's indication that his 'Mary' was some degree of incarnation or channeling of divine Sophia/Wisdom just as Simon's Helen was supposedly said by Simon to be the incarnation of Sophia/Wisdom.

The later Orthodox detractors of the Simon story from Justin Martyr and Ireneus to Hippolytus, and including the Jewish-Christian Pseudo-Clementine literature have Simon finding a consort named Helen in a brothel in Tyre who then becomes the reincarnation of Wisdom just as he is the incarnation of the 'Standing One':

"In the beginning God had his first thought, his Ennoia, which was female, and that thought was to create the angels. The First Thought then descended into the lower regions and created the angels. But the angels rebelled against her out of jealousy and created the world as her prison, imprisoning her in a female body. Thereafter, she was reincarnated many times, each time being shamed. Her many reincarnations included Helen of Troy; among others, and she finally was reincarnated as Helen, a slave and prostitute in the Phoenician city of Tyre. God then descended in the form of Simon Magus, to rescue his Ennoia, and to confer salvation upon men through knowledge of himself." (11)

It has to be remembered that this version of the story is from sources who are not friends of Simon but there are many threads in common that Mary and Helen share that include the 'consort-type' relationship with Jesus/Simon, the implication of past sexual history issues, and the relationship with Wisdom.

As we have seen from the Dialogue of the Savior (12), though, early Christians made a distinction between Jesus and the 'Son of Man' who was encountered in the visionary process initiated by the human Jesus. This channeling of the 'Son of Man', so to speak, is also reflected

in the Samaritan Christian work called ‘The Second Treatise of the Great Seth’ where the crucifixion is described three different times and the author speaks in the voice of the ‘Son of Man’: “I visited a bodily dwelling. I cast out the one who was in it first, and I went in.” This was, no doubt, the origin of the ‘Adoptionist’ theology held by early Jewish Christians and others such as Basilides in Egypt where the ‘Son of Man’ appeared in Jesus at his Baptism by John.

Just as Jesus/Simon was seen to channel the ‘Son of Man’, so it would follow that Mary/Helen should be seen to channel Wisdom. Wisdom could also be seen as a metaphor for the entrapment of the soul in matter or the light in matter that is not specific to a single person. Mary/Helen was just more conscious, perhaps, of the light of Christ and so reflected the incarnation of Wisdom. As the light of Christ was not seen as limited to one human incarnation, Mary/Helen could have been viewed as only the current best medium for the incarnation of the presence of Wisdom in contrast to the stories told about her.

Rather than being a mere consort of Simon and consonant with her status as an incarnation of Wisdom we find in the Pseudo-Clementines that Helen had a much more exalted status than that of the Roman tradition and comparable to that of Mary Magdalene. According to them, John the Baptist had thirty main male disciples and included Helen who was called ‘Luna’ in reference to the moon. (13) If Helen was, first, a prominent disciple of John then that would help explain her anointing the head of Jesus with oil as ‘Mary Magdalene’ in Mark as, apparently, she was doing in christening him the successor of John.

According to Justin Martyr, Simon called her “First Thought” and “lost sheep”. (14) This would help explain the imagery of Jesus as the ‘Good Shepherd’ but especially L 107 in Thomas speaking of the ‘big sheep’ in its’ version of the Lost Sheep Parable referring to Queen Helen as one of its possible multiple meanings:

“Jesus said, ‘The Kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and looked for that one until he found it. When he had gone to such trouble, he said to the sheep, ‘I care for you more than the ninety-nine.’” (15)

These elements of being an early disciple of the Baptist, having sexual issues, possessing the name ‘Helen’, and having some sort of exalted status such as ‘the big sheep’ or being the incarnation of Wisdom all correspond to a third figure in the first century who is little known due to all the major dis-informational efforts enlisted on her behalf—Helen, the Queen of Adiabene. Her identity has been shrouded for centuries by Christians and Jews alike since she was the ‘Queen Mother’ in a family that fought and died as martyrs and helped fund the War of ’66-’70 against Rome.

Queen Helen was a contemporary of Simon/Jesus dying in 56 CE and having been born probably a few years earlier that he in roughly 20 BCE if her oldest son was born before year 0.

If the Gospel of John (8: 57) taken seriously about Jesus/Simon 'not being yet 50' in, maybe the Mid-30's CE and Irenaeus is heeded that Jesus was more than fifty years old when he died then Jesus might have been born roughly around 15 BCE.

Irenaeus states in *Aversus Haereses* that Jesus lived through all ages of life for everyone "So, likewise he was an old man for old men, that he might be a perfect Master for all". (16) A section later Irenaeus explains that he means old age is greater than fifty: "...from the fortieth year to the fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while he still fulfilled the office of a teacher, even as the Gospel and the elders testify." (17)

Queen Helen was probably the half-sister (according to Josephus) and main wife of King Abgarus who was called by Eusebius "The Great King of the Peoples beyond the Euphrates" (18) and is also referred to as Monobaz I. (19) King Abgarus was the King of Osroene which included Adiabene as the Eastern capitol and Edessa as the Western capitol. It was his 'harem' that Queen Helen belonged to that was lampooned as the house of prostitution that Simon 'rescued' his 'consort' Helen out of. Robert Eisenman believes that this Edessa is one of the many Antiochs: Antioch-by-Callirhoe and the Antioch Paul is associated with. (20) Adiabene was a somewhat smaller kingdom about a hundred miles East of Edessa. One of the roles of Paul/Saul may have been as an intelligence agent in keeping track of what the monarchy of Osroene was up to from Edessa/Antioch on behalf of all his nervous Herodian relatives and associates.

Helen underwent some kind of odd Jewish non-circumcision conversion prior to 29 CE involving Judas Thomas and Thaddeus as reported by Eusebius. Her son, Izates, was evangelized in a similar non-circumcision conversion in 29 CE. by Ananias. (21) After an approach by another Jewish evangelist at some later date urging circumcision, both Helen and Ananias urged Izates not to comply. These conversions would have had to have been conversions initiated by the John the Baptist circle—probably involving Simon, though, since Judas Thomas is associated with that missionary effort. It would not have been done by the official cult in Jerusalem or their fundamentalist enemies who had set up camps in the 'Wilderness' across the Jordan represented by the Qumran literature. John instituted a non-traditional baptism and probably followed non-traditional mystical practices in the 'Cave of John the Baptist' at Suba in Samaria but near Jerusalem. He was well-known for complaining about the marriage practices of the Herodians and his circle may have been looking for an alternative royal dynasty in evangelizing Edessa royalty.

In the early 30's C.E. Helen undertook a temporary seven year nazirite vow in gratitude that her son had come back from a war safely. This required her to not touch alcohol, cut her hair, or come into proximity of a corpse or grave. It is interesting that Jesus was described as a Nazarene from Nazareth—certainly circumlocutions for taking a nazirite vow. At the end of the seven year period Helen had become ritually unclean and was required by religious authorities in Jerusalem to undergo another seven year nazirite period. The initial period would have corresponded with her coming into contact with the body of Jesus in 36 C.E.

At the end of the vow the nazirite is required to do a ritual bathing in a mikveh, cut their hair and burn it, and offer sacrifices of meat and grain in the Temple. The end of the second seven

year nazarite period for Helen would have roughly corresponded to the great Palestinian drought of 44-46 C.E. that was spoken of by Paul when Helen relieved it for the residents of Jerusalem with her great grain-buying purchases in Egypt. This is obscured in Acts in the Ethiopian 'Queen Kandakes' story of the eunuch converted by the Apostle Philip. Helen also brought in figs from Cypress.

At the end of Helen's second seven year nazarite period she was still considered un-clean by the religious scholars and was required to undergo a third seven year period. Robert Eisenman speculates that there was, of course, some financial interest on the part of the Jerusalem authorities in keeping this gravy train going. One could also speculate that she may have become ritually unclean again by coming into contact with the body of Judas Thomas who Robert Eisenman associates with being the 'Theudas' who lead a 'reverse Exodus' out of Palestine during the drought but was caught and beheaded. The name of 'Theudas' could be viewed as a contraction of the name 'Thomas Judas'. (This event may be one of the main reasons for the names of 'Judas' and 'Thomas' to be besmirched in different ways in the Roman Gospels.) (22)

Queen Helen also built a large pyramidal tomb still present north of Jerusalem. It is questionable whether this could have been completed for the internment of Jesus in 36 CE however. The remains of her palace that was destroyed in the war of '66-'70 were discovered in 2007 South of the Temple Mount. In the basement of the palace was a mikveh for ritual bathing which certainly would not have existed in the Herodian palaces.

One of the gifts that Queen Helen gave to the Temple was a golden plate with an inscribed passage from the Pentateuch regarding adultery which a priest would hold and read from in adultery situations. Eisenman speculates there were adultery issues as well with Queen Helen and the reason behind some of these nazarite periods. (23) The Jerusalem fundamentalists were particularly sensitive about this issue with the Herodian ruling class constantly violating sexual prohibitions with situations like marriages to nieces. Queen Helen was definitely part of a harem and her husband, King Monobaz I, was very possibly her half-brother.

Another oddity with Helen was that her second son, Izates, was from childhood chosen as successor as king to his father and was called by Helen her 'only begotten' according to Josephus. This may have been a nasty invention by Josephus in recognition of the Gospels jealousy and use of the Izate materials. Alternately, this may indicate—despite having the name of Monobaz--that something was fishy about the conception of the oldest son. Perhaps he was conceived before the marriage. Perhaps he was not the biological son of Monobaz I. The son, Monobaz, was trusted as an interim king before Izates could be sent for and ruled after the death of Izates so there is no evidence of his earlier demotion being due to a biological imperfection. The sexual mysteries around Queen Helen are as mysterious as they are around Mary Magdalene.

The Gospel of Thomas understands the Queen Helen history in keying in the Mary material in L 21 which represents the twenty-one years that Queen Helen spent in her Nazarite vows. It is the only saying in the original 113 sayings to mention Mary:

(21) Mary said to Jesus, "Whom are your disciples like?" He said, "They are like children who have settled in a field which is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say, 'Let us have back our field.' They (will) undress in their presence in order to let them have back their field and to give it back to them. Therefore I say, if the owner of a house knows that the thief is coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes and will not let him dig through into his house of his domain to carry away his goods. You, then, be on your guard against the world. Arm yourselves with great strength lest the robbers find a way to come to you, for the difficulty which you expect will (surely) materialize. Let there be among you a man of understanding. When the grain ripened, he came quickly with his sickle in his hand and reaped it. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear." (24)

L 21 can be viewed to represent the asceticism of Mary and the threatening presence of the Romans. It is funny that the obvious meaning of the last sentence about harvesting the grain is metaphorical and the hidden meaning is actually literal in reflecting the grain-buying beneficence of Queen Helen.

Rabbinical scholars funded or tolerated by the Romans after the War of '66-'70 also needed to cloak the identity of Queen Helen and her family who supported and funded Zealot opposition to Rome during the War and suffered martyrdom. This is why we find interesting figures appearing in Rabbinic sources like Nakdimon who Robert Eisenman thinks is a double for Queen Helen. (25) Nakdimon was a very wealthy man responsible for keeping the cisterns filled and grain supplied to Jerusalem for 21 years. Eisenman says that his name relates to 'the sun piercing through the cloud' in the sense of having a real miracle flavor to it like being a holy man 'rain-maker' or making 'the sun stand still'.

The name of Nakdimon, says Eisenman, is also synonymous with Nicodemus. (26) In the Gospel of John it was Nicodemus who provided expensive ointments for the body of Jesus. Nicodemus appears three times in John but, oddly, not in the Synoptic Gospels which leads to the suspicion the name was abstracted from the Rabbinic mythology about Queen Helen. Nicodemus is described as 'a ruler of the Jews', 'the teacher of Israel', and who was obviously wealthy in bringing a hundred pounds of spices to the burial.

Nicodemus appears early in John (Chapter 3) while the Baptist was still baptizing in Samaria. Nicodemus "came to Jesus by night" signifying, perhaps, the psychomantium process the disciples were engaged in as well as the covert nature, perhaps, of Queen Helen's early discipleship. This long dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus is reminiscent of The Dialogue of the Savior but with different import. It is the famous one about how can a person "enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" The answer by Jesus references the Pauline sacraments of "water and the spirit" and specifically squelches the idea of visionary journeys that the Dialogue of the Savior is all about: "No one has ascended to heaven but he who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." Of course, the 'Son of Man' terminology is the specific one in the Dialogue of the Savior.

The 'born again' passage also links unmistakably with Queen Helen where Jesus is referred to as "the only begotten Son" just as Queen Helen called Izates her "only begotten son" (supposedly, for Josephus).

Despite the supposedly 'gnostic-type' Gospel that John is there is the characteristic judgmentalism of the Pauline school extant in all the Pauline Gospels: "He who believes in Him is not condemned but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God".

Nicodemus comes up briefly in Chapter Seven in a debate among the "chief priests and Pharisees" defending Jesus: "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They attack Nicodemus: "Are you also from Galilee?" Robert Eisenman makes the point that 'Galilee' is maybe short hand for 'zealot'. (27) 'Zealot', of course, in the parlance of the day was shorthand for 'dangerous revolutionary'. In addition to their anger at Simon importing 'magic' from Egypt there would have been the fear of any close relationship between him and Helen's Syrian royalty that was a threat to supplant the Herodians, and the priesthods beholden to them.

Not only was Nicodemus in an intimate theological dialogue with Jesus and had the social status to argue with the "chief priests and Pharisees" but had the wealth in Chapter Nineteen of John to help 'Joseph of Arimathea' prepare the body of Jesus with a hundred pounds of spices.

Joseph of Arimathea does appear in the other three Synoptic Gospels as well as the Gospel of Peter. He is described as a "respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God". It is all very suspicious. Normally, the body would have been turned over to a member of the family. Somehow, "Joseph" had enough status, intimacy with the Jesus movement, and courage to claim the body. It is Queen Helen who would have had the social status as the Queen Mother of a neighboring state and status as the 'companion' of Jesus who would have been the logical party to have claimed the body of Jesus on behalf of the frightened family and friends. The name 'Joseph' could have been crafted to capture the Samaritan flavor of the movement since Samaritans are all considered 'sons of Joseph'. The supposed place name of Arimathea could have creative linguistic relationship to Adiabene just like 'Magdalene' has.

Queen Helen lived for another two full decades after the Crucifixion in Jerusalem in close proximity, obviously, to James the Just. She returned to Adiabene upon the death of her son, Izates, and died soon afterwards (probably in her late seventies). Both were returned to Jerusalem and interred in her huge tomb.

It is the belief of this author that the mystical allegory called 'Joseph and Asaneth' (of which there is good on-line availability) was probably written as a memorial soon after the death of Queen Helen which gives a remarkable commentary on the spirituality and sacramentalism of the early Jesus movement as well as upon the personalities and events of the time. Scholars are totally confused about whether it is Jewish or Christian or even BCE or CE. One clue to its Jewish Christian character is that it was written in Greek but translated in Syriac, Slavonic, Armenian and Latin with 90 manuscripts surviving and varieties of titles. This would well

reflect the missionary endeavors from Adiabene, Edessa, and Antioch the successors of Queen Helen would have made.

If Queen Helen/Mary Magdalene had journeyed to Europe leaving off progeny to populate the royal houses as legends say, they most likely would have been some of the five grandchildren she had brought with her from Adiabene—royal blood, indeed, from the woman considered to be the incarnation of Wisdom, if not from Jesus.

- (1) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p.244
- (2) Ibid., p. 523
- (3) Ibid., p. 260
- (4) Ibid., p. 124
- (5) Ibid., p. 139
- (6) John Lamb Lash, 'Not in His Name', p. 126
- (7) L. Picknett, C. Prince, 'The Masks of Christ', p. 168
- (8) Robert Conner, 'Jesus the Sorcer', p. 301
- (9) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p.139
- (10) Gideon Bohak, 'Joseph and Asenath and the Temple in Heliopolis'
- (11) Epiphanius, Panarion, 21.3.5
- (12) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p.362
- (13) Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions, Chapter XXIII
- (14) Justin Martyr, Apologia i. 26
- (15) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p.124
- (16) Irenaeus, 'Adversus Haereses', II: 22: 3
- (17) Ibid., II: 22: 5
- (18) Eusebius, 'Ecclesiastical History'
- (19) Flavius Josephus, 'The Antiquities of the Jews', Book 20
- (20) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', pp. 4-5
- (21) Eusebius, 'Ecclesiastical History', I. xiii
- (22) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', pp. 114-117
- (23) Ibid., pp. 279-280
- (24) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 124
- (25) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', pp. 197-198
- (26) Ibid., pp. 257-262
- (27) Ibid., p. 246

## 7. THE HIDDEN JOSEPHUS ON SIMON/JESUS AND HELEN/MARY

“Penalties were on the Christians, a kind of men (holding) a new superstition (that involved the practice) of magic”—Roman historian Suetonius writing about the Christians blamed for the fire that burned down Rome who were crucified by Nero in 64 CE. (p50 Smith)

“Then pouring out a quantity of our names, he (Celsus) says he knows certain Simonians who are called Heleniani, because they worship Helen or a teacher Helenus.” Origen in ‘Contra Celsus’, v. 62; vi. ii

(Disciples of Simon) “have a statue of Simon in the form of Zeus, and one of Helen in the form of Athena, which they worship, calling the former Lord and the latter Lady. And if any among them on seeing the images, calls them by the name of Simon or Helen, he is cast out as one ignorant of the mysteries.” Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies (Philosophumena, vi 20)

Like the Rabbinical and Christian scholars Josephus felt the need to cover up the real story of the relationship between Simon Magus and Queen Helen in deference to the Romans, yet for his friends and perceptive minds he needed to give some explanation for their absence so he cloaked them in several mythological tales which give clues to their identity while allowing him to give free reign to as much defamatory and cynical imagination as he could muster.

Both stories come very appropriately--though seemingly are unconnected—in the middle of the ten year period that Pontius Pilate served as Procurator of Palestine and immediately before

the Samaritan Massacre that ends the career of Pilate. (1) The first story involves sex and the second one money but both describe a supposed con man hoodwinking a well-meaning and prominent woman in the religious contexts of both the Greek gods and the Jewish faith. Both are very oddly placed in that during a discussion of events in Palestine the focus suddenly veers to Rome that includes a discussion of the Temple of Isis about characters and events that are otherwise unattested outside of Josephus:

“4. About the same time also another sad calamity put the Jews into disorder, and certain shameful practices happened about the temple of Isis that was at Rome. I will now first take notice of the wicked attempt about the temple of Isis, and will then give an account of the Jewish affairs.”

Just after Josephus, Justin Martyr in 152 C.E. mentioned a popular sect called the Simonians derived from Simon who were known for venerating Zeus and Athena as Simon and Helen. (2)

“There was at Rome a woman whose name was Paulina; one who, on account of the dignity of her ancestors, and by the regular conduct of a virtuous life, had a great reputation: she was also very rich; and although she was of a beautiful countenance, and in that flower of her age wherein women are the most gay, yet did she lead a life of great modesty.”

“Paulina” would reference Paul and Christianity. This is a perfect description of Queen Helen and the “dignity of her ancestors”, her “virtuous life”, her “great modesty”, and who was also “very rich”. The phrase “in that flower of her age wherein women are the most gay” may refer to Queen Helen being just past child-bearing age when she knew Simon.

“She was married to Saturninus, one that was every way answerable to her in an excellent character.”

It is extremely odd and a signature of their relationship that the husband, Saturninus, bears the same name in both of these seemingly unrelated stories. There were three men bearing the same name who relate to the grain-buying, religious heterodoxy, and rebellion of Queen Helen and her family in general. A Saturninus in 104 B.C.E. imported grain for Romans. A Saturninus who was a Roman Governor in a German province led a rebellion put down by Emperor Domitian in the decade before Josephus wrote Antiquities of the Jews. The most interesting Saturninus was a Christian gnostic who taught at Antioch and was a rigid ascetic. He was said to have been taught by Menander who was the chief successor of Simon and in turn taught Basilides the renowned Egyptian gnostic Christian.

“Decius Mundus fell in love with this woman, who was a man very high in the equestrian order;”

The name “Decius” is a made-up name deriving from the Latin ‘dei’ or ‘deus’ that means ‘god’ and, of course, being a snide reference to Simon’s channeling of the divine. The name

“Mundus” means ‘world’ in Latin so Josephus could be laughing at Simon by calling him a ‘Worldly God’. The “equestrian order” was the lower of two aristocratic Roman classes. They could be thought of as the ‘knight’ class. The occupation of ‘tax farming’ (among others) was exclusively done by them—the ‘publicani’ or ‘publicans’. This is essentially what the Herodians were doing in Palestine and would be a reference to Paul, his Herodian relatives, and circle who populated early on the Roman form of Christianity. In fact, the Roman Gospels advertise that Jesus was known for eating with ‘tax collectors and sinners’: the Herodians. The Gospel of Thomas gives this impression too in L 61 about Salome.

“ and as she was of too great dignity to be caught by presents, and had already rejected them, though they had been sent in great abundance, he was still more inflamed with love to her, insomuch that he promised to give her two hundred thousand Attic drachmae for one night's lodging; and when this would not prevail upon her, and he was not able to bear this misfortune in his amours, he thought it the best way to famish himself to death for want of food, on account of Paulina's sad refusal; and he determined with himself to die after such a manner, and he went on with his purpose accordingly.” (3)

The “two hundred thousand Attic drachmae” illustrates several points. It might be considered equivalent to about 300 skilled work man wage years—which illustrates the ridiculous nature of the story. Another point would be that Queen Helen could not be bought at any price. Another point would be how fabulously rich she really was. The “famish himself to death for want of food” can refer to Simon’s asceticism in being a Nazirite. The Attic drachmae, also, had a depiction of the Roman goddess Minerva upon it who was Athena among the Greeks which the Simonians connected to Queen Helen. Minerva was goddess of the mind and magic among other things and was born from the head of Jupiter (Zeus for the Greeks). On the reverse side of the coin was Minerva’s bulged-eyed owl named Glaucus that represented wisdom. Owls see in the dark and don’t sleep at night so Glaucus was particularly symbolic of Simon and Helen’s psychomantium activities.

“Now Mundus had a freed-woman, who had been made free by his father, whose name was Ide, one skillful in all sorts of mischief.”

The conversion of Queen Helen and her son was preceded by the conversion of the harem she was in. According to Josephus “a certain Jewish merchant, whose name was Ananias, got among the women that belonged to the King and taught them to worship God according to the Jewish Religion.” (4) We know from many sources as well that Jesus was surrounded by women. The “father” mentioned could just as well be ‘God, the Father’ consistent with the symbolic context. The name ‘Ide’ goes back to the mythology of Zeus where one of the two nymphs in Psychro Cave on Mt Ida on Crete who nursed Zeus as an infant was named Ide. Ide comes from a root meaning ‘goddess’. Some speculate the Idaean cave may have been used for initiations

and where an oracle held court as well. The reference to Zeus as a stand-in for Simon is not likely to be an accident. The word ‘mischief’ could be synonymous for ‘magic’.

‘This woman was very much grieved at the young man's resolution to kill himself, (for he did not conceal his intentions to destroy himself from others,)’

In Mark and Matthew (that were certainly published before Antiquities of the Jews) in the context of the trial Jesus is accused of saying he is able to destroy the Temple of God and build it back up in three days. The assumption here is that Jesus is speaking metaphorically and about his body. The Gospel of Thomas in L 71 puts its own spin on the saying in a fragmentary saying: “Jesus said: ‘I shall (destroy this) house and nobody will be able to build it...’” (5) The Gospel of John comes along later to reiterate the saying in its Chapter 2.

“and came to him, and encouraged him by her discourse, and made him to hope, by some promises she gave him, that he might obtain a night's lodging with Paulina; and when he joyfully hearkened to her entreaty, she said she wanted no more than fifty thousand drachmae for the entrapping of the woman. So when she had encouraged the young man, and gotten as much money as she required, she did not take the same methods as had been taken before, because she perceived that the woman was by no means to be tempted by money; but as she knew that she was very much given to the worship of the goddess Isis,”

We know that Simon was a philosopher with a universal perspective and that his followers utilized the thought constructs of whichever culture they were in. In Egypt the hypostasis or personality of the male and female divinities were Osiris and Isis, among the Greeks it was Zeus and Athena. The correspondence to Isis and Athena among the Hebrew, of course, was Wisdom whom Helen, the consort of Simon was identified with.

“ she devised the following stratagem: She went to some of Isis's priests, and upon the strongest assurances [of concealment], she persuaded them by words, but chiefly by the offer of money, of twenty-five thousand drachmae in hand, and as much more when the thing had taken effect; and told them the passion of the young man, and persuaded them to use all means possible to beguile the woman. So they were drawn in to promise so to do, by that large sum of gold they were to have. Accordingly, the oldest of them went immediately to Paulina; and upon his admittance, he desired to speak with her by herself. When that was granted him, he told her that he was sent by the god Anubis, who was fallen in love with her, and enjoined her to come to him. Upon this she took the message very kindly, and valued herself greatly upon this condescension of Anubis, and told her husband that she had a message sent her, and was to sup and lie with Anubis; so he agreed

to her acceptance of the offer, as fully satisfied with the chastity of his wife. Accordingly, she went to the temple, and after she had supped there, and it was the hour to go to sleep, the priest shut the doors of the temple, when, in the holy part of it, the lights were also put out. Then did Mundus leap out, (for he was hidden therein,) and did not fail of enjoying her, who was at his service all the night long, as supposing he was the god; and when he was gone away, which was before those priests who knew nothing of this stratagem were stirring, Paulina came early to her husband, and told him how the god Anubis had appeared to her. Among her friends, also, she declared how great a value she put upon this favor, who partly disbelieved the thing, when they reflected on its nature, and partly were amazed at it, as having no pretense for not believing it, when they considered the modesty and the dignity of the person.”

Anubis was the jackal-headed god of the dead who was later super-ceded by Osiris. It figures that Josephus would try to give Simon a scavenger and dog-like motif rather than that of Osiris or Zeus. Throughout his works Josephus always portrays Queen Helen in a positive light but here we can see the nuance of portraying how gullible he thinks she is. Josephus portrays others complicity in the sexual liaison between Simon and Helen but which was generally not very well known. Josephus twists what may have been a night-time visionary encounter where “the god Anubis appears to her” into a sexual encounter.

“But now, on the third day after what had been done, Mundus met Paulina, and said, "Nay, Paulina, thou hast saved me two hundred thousand drachmae, which sum thou sighest have added to thy own family; yet hast thou not failed to be at my service in the manner I invited thee. As for the reproaches thou hast laid upon Mundus, I value not the business of names; but I rejoice in the pleasure I reaped by what I did, while I took to myself the name of Anubis." When he had said this, he went his way. But now she began to come to the sense of the grossness of what she had done, and rent her garments, and told her husband of the horrid nature of this wicked contrivance, and prayed him not to neglect to assist her in this case.”

Suspensions are—and they probably ran especially rampant in the mind of Josephus—that at least some of the twenty-one years Queen Helen spent under nazarite vows had to do with sexual indiscretion but the verbatim conversation about the “two hundred thousand drachmae” is rather ludicrous. The “I value not the business of names”, however, does ring true with Simon.

“So he discovered the fact to the emperor; whereupon Tiberius inquired into the matter thoroughly by examining the priests about it, and ordered them to be crucified, as well as Ide, who was the occasion of their perdition, and who had contrived the whole

matter, which was so injurious to the woman. He also demolished the temple of Isis, and gave order that her statue should be thrown into the river Tiber; while he only banished Mundus, but did no more to him, because he supposed that what crime he had committed was done out of the passion of love. And these were the circumstances which concerned the temple of Isis, and the injuries occasioned by her priests. I now return to the relation of what happened about this time to the Jews at Rome, as I formerly told you I would.”

Tiberias was emperor from 14 CE to 37 CE and, apparently did destroy the Iseum Campense in 19 CE when statuary was thrown into the Tiber and Simon would have been roughly thirty and Helen roughly forty but the events seem better conflated with the Samaritan Massacre period where some principle leaders were crucified but Simon, himself, was initially released by Pilate after Pilate realized he had been snookered by the authorities in Jerusalem. Josephus maintains the fiction of the Roman view that the Romans were not responsible for the Crucifixion. The problem with this passage and its dating is that it supposedly happens in the Pilate era but Pilate was only Procurator from 26 to 36 CE and the destruction of the Temple of Isis happened in 19 CE. Another problem is the dating for ‘Saturninus’. The husband of Queen Helen died in 29 CE and would not have been around during the Samaritan massacre of ’36 CE. It would have been her son, Izates, on the thrown which the Gospels allege was an initiate of Jesus—but more about that in the next chapter. Neither of the monarchs, however, had any love for the Romans and would not have complained to Pilate or Tiberias.

This second consecutive fictitious story told by Josephus in the Pilate era covers Simon’s relationship to Judaism since that could not be covered well in his Isis fable. Since he is, oddly, not defining the difference between the Saturninus in each story it can be taken as a subtle key he is purposely leaving behind that the stories are connected.

“5. There was a man who was a Jew, but had been driven away from his own country by an accusation laid against him for transgressing their laws, and by the fear he was under of punishment for the same; but in all respects a wicked man. He, then living at Rome, professed to instruct men in the wisdom of the laws of Moses. He procured also three other men, entirely of the same character with himself, to be his partners.”

This is a perfect description of Simon’s problems with Jerusalem who accused him of sorcery that was a capital offense. Of course, Josephus hated these ‘magicians’ who he deemed “wicked” but the “professed to instruct men in the wisdom of Moses” is an absolutely apt description of the Samaritan, Simon. These early movements—if they are really different from each other—seemed to employ a triumvirate leadership. The Qumran sect had three priests who led a council of twelve. Prominent in the Baptist group were also Simon and Dositheus. The early Christian leaders in Jerusalem were James the Just, Peter, and John.

“These men persuaded Fulvia, a woman of great dignity, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion, to send purple and gold to the temple at Jerusalem; and when they had gotten them, they employed them for their own uses, and spent the money themselves, on which account it was that they at first required it of her.”

The historical Fulvia had a lot of resonance with Queen Helen. Fulvia’s third husband was Mark Antony. She was the first non-mythological woman to appear on a Roman coin. She was a very powerful political force in her own right, popular with the people, and really ruled Rome in the absence of Antony off fighting wars. Helen, no doubt, supported Simon’s activities as well as funding the Temple in Jerusalem. Ever the symbolist, Josephus describes the gifts as “purple and gold”—purple being a royal color. Only the very wealthy could afford purple so Roman Emperors wore purple robes and Roman Senators wore a strip of purple on their white robe, yet purple was certainly used in the Temple as well. The “one that had embraced the Jewish religion” describes the convert status of Queen Helen very well.

“Whereupon Tiberius, who had been informed of the thing by Saturninus, the husband of Fulvia, who desired inquiry might be made about it, ordered all the Jews to be banished out of Rome; at which time the consuls listed four thousand men out of them, and sent them to the island Sardinia; but punished a greater number of them, who were unwilling to become soldiers, on account of keeping the laws of their forefathers.<sup>[11]</sup> Thus were these Jews banished out of the city by the wickedness of four men.”

The problem with this passage as with the previous fable is that though it supposedly happens in the Procurator

ship of Pilate from 26-36 CE, the events happened in 19 CE--evidence of the purposeful fabrication of these stories. Tiberias banned Egyptian and Jewish religious rites according to Tacitus since they were becoming too popular in converting the native Romans and four thousand slave descendants were shipped to Sardinia. Suetonius explains they presented a problem since the young ‘foreigners’ were natural-born citizens and couldn’t be banned so they were pressed into military service.

Josephus, conveniently for himself, provides no dating for his two fables except “About this same time also” but it is well-known that after the banishments of 19 CE that it was Claudius in the 49-51 CE timeframe that instituted the next ban: “He banished from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus” (Roman historian Suetonius: ‘Lives of the Twelve Caesars’). Acts 18:2 also mentions this: “because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome”.

In summary, Josephus pulls out all the stops in his two fables to blacken the image of Simon. He ridicules his pretensions at being a god and portrays him both as stupidly love-struck and as venal. He portrays a despicable hoodwinking and sexual usage of Queen Helen of which she

repents her involvement. He alleges the theft of her wealth. He blames the banning of both Jews and Egyptians from Rome in 19 CE on Simon by violating or corrupting the institutions of both. He portrays his followers as naïve or evil. All in all, these passages must have been great entertainment for the Romans in on the joke and provided excellent ‘talking points’ for those who hated and feared the Christian proselytizers around the turn of the first century.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Flavius Josephus, ‘The Antiquities of the Jews’, Book 18, Chapter 3.4 and 3.5
- (2) Hippolytus, ‘Philosophumena’, VI. 20
- (3) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p. 133
- (4) Flavius Josephus, ‘The Antiquities of the Jews’, Book 20, Chapter 2.3
- (5) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, p. 134

## 8. KING IZATES--LAZARUS

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are well known in the Gospel of John as siblings but from the standpoint of the conversion story of Queen Helen they are correctly viewed as spiritual siblings who were relatives converted in the Edessa area together by the same ‘non-circumcision’ Hebrew mission.

There are a number of valuable sources, fortunately, that can be cross-referenced regarding King Izates. Josephus provides a good, basic story but is he to be trusted? Eusebius from the fourth century supposedly visited the archives in Edessa and translated what he found there into Greek but the same question can be asked since he is widely seen to have Christian apologetic motives. The Talmud also has things to say but has a Jewish bias. In addition, the New Testament—we should not be surprised to find—has its own obscured commentary on such important figures as not only Queen Helen but on her son, Izates, who can be seen to be the underlying figure for the Lazarus stories as well as the prophet called ‘Agabus’ and the story of the eunuch of ‘Queen Kandake’.

Eusebius dates the conversion of King Izates to 29 CE <sup>(1)</sup> that seems to correspond well with the dating of Josephus who records Izates dying in 55 CE after serving as king for 24 years. <sup>(2)</sup> This would have him enthroned in 31 CE—shortly after his conversion according to Josephus.

Eusebius was a fourth century Christian historian for King Constantine who journeyed to Edessa and records that he translated the official conversion story of King Izates from Syriac to Greek. There was some correspondence supposedly between Jesus and King Izates which scholars unanimously regard as spurious—maybe fabricated in the second century using Gospel material as an elaboration upon the rough factual outline that was known.

The archives of Edessa called Izates ‘Agbarus the Black’. Agbarus (or Abgarus in Semitic style) was a dynastic name going back a century before Izates that he may have assumed upon his coronation. The ‘Black’ was synonymous with being Arab in the view of the Greco-Roman world.

Izates as the favorite son of his father was sent away early to be safe from the jealousy of his half-brothers to grow up in a nearby and friendly semi-independent kingdom at the head of the Persian Gulf called Characene in the capitol city of Charax Spasinou where he married the daughter of King Abinergaos I who was named Samacho. Characene was ruled by a similar and fairly stable Arab dynasty in place for over a century that had probably inter-married with Iranian royalty and probably with Izates’ family—which is why they were trusted with the prince and heir to the Osrhoene throne

A number of the aspects of the story told by Eusebius correspond with other versions. The contact that Agbarus has that is the ‘courier’ from Agbaras to Jesus is ‘Ananias’. Ananias in Josephus is the merchant evangelist responsible for converting Agbarus-Izates. Ananias also shows up in the conversion account of Paul, the Apostle.

There was clearly a strong relationship and correspondence that had developed between the royal family of Edessa and the Jesus movement. Eusebius affirms letters. Josephus confirms a ‘non-circumcision mission’ that put a lot of effort into converting both Queen Helen and Izates separately. The Qumran material as well has copies of a letter that went out to a foreign king that was a new convert. James the Just, also, sent out a similar letter listing some of the basics involved with conversion that is similar to the Qumran letter. (3)

Eusebius forthrightly lists Judas Thomas as responsible for the mission to Edessa in contrast to the mish-mash of different Judas’ and Thomas’ in the Gospels and Acts which Robert Eisenman with good reason suspects may all be referring to the same person. (4) Judas Thomas then sends Thaddaeus to Izates. Eisenman makes the point that Thaddaeus in the Apostle lists parallels ‘Judas of James’ in Luke 16:6—so who we may be talking about in ‘Thaddeaus’ as being sent by Judas Thomas to Izates may actually be James the Just. Eisenman thinks that this would be a reversal and that James the Just was predominant in the movement from the 40’s to the 60’s CE but this may not have been true in the early years in the inner circle of Jesus. Nevertheless, in the two Apocalypses of James from Nag Hammadi (5) we do find this reversal where James commissions ‘Addai’ or ‘Theudas’. The name ‘Theudas’ can be seen as a contraction of ‘Th(omas) (J)eudas. This may only be a bias of these Jewish Christian gospels, however. Eisenman notes that it was ‘Judas Barsabas’ who delivered the letter that James wrote in Acts 15: 22-32, though. (6)

At any rate, Josephus very obviously does not identify the unknown evangelist who converted Queen Helen in Adiabene or Edessa sometime before Ananias converted her son Izates in Charasene—whether it was James, Judas Thomas, or one of their alias’ since he hated to draw any connections to the Jesus-Simon faction. He did note that it was a ‘non-circumcision’ mission so the protagonist had to be someone in the circle of the Baptist, Simon, Judas Thomas, or James. Eisenman thinks it was possibly Paul but that seems unlikely since Paul was a younger man in the 20’s CE spending his youth as a hit-man for his Herodian elders. (7) Even if his conversion had happened this early so many years before the Crucifixion he would not have had the gravitas compared to James and Judas Thomas to have been commissioned to convert those in the harem of the King of Edessa and Queen Helen. In fact, after Paul’s conversion in ‘Damascus’ in Acts 9:19 where he meets ‘a certain Disciple by the name of Ananias’ he is also staying at ‘the house of one Judas’.

Eisenman identifies Edessa, the Western capitol of Osrhoene as being the real ‘Antioch’ in Northern Syria rather than the more standard and Western one that is spoke about in Acts and in the letters of Paul. (8) It was originally called Antiochia Orrhoe just as Queen Helen was also called ‘Queen of the Osrhoceans’. It was near the birthplace of Abraham and why circumcision and Abraham figure so prominently in the discussions of James, the material from Qumran, in the writings of Paul, and thinking of Queen Helen and Izates.

Of course there are differences in the conversion accounts. Eusebius thinks the conversion of the ‘Great King of the Peoples beyond the Euphrates’ was to Christianity. Josephus makes out that the conversion was to Judaism. There was not a big difference in the minds of many people it was clear. Queen Helen and Izates spent decades funding the Jerusalem Temple and Helen underwent three seven year periods of penance in conformity with the authorities in Jerusalem.

Even the ‘non-circumcision’ aspect may be over-emphasized since it could be viewed as a practical exception for a king risking his kingdom and his life when the news had gotten out to a large percentage of his populace adhering to their ancient polytheism from Sumer or their more recent Zoroastrianism that their King had become a fundamentalist Jew to the extent that he would ‘mutilate’ (circumcize) himself. Josephus documents that Queen Helen argued vociferously with Izates that he should not get circumcised. When a different fundamentalist evangelist named Eleazar confronted Izates about the obedience of Abraham to get circumcised so also did Izates do the deed. Eleazar was from Galilee and Eisenman points out that this region represented a fundamentalist revolutionary perspective different from the accommodationist Temple one. (9) This would also be why Jesus in the Roman Gospels is from Galilee—to over-write its revolutionary history for a Roman-friendly and Jewish fundamentalist un-friendly one. But, since we are not talking about the Temple agents or Jewish fundamentalist enemies of the Temple initially converting Helen and Izates but someone from the Baptist circle then we are talking about ‘Christianity’.

Acts Chapter 8 of the Apostles is so insecure about the whole conversion episode of Paul in Syria that directly preceding it is the ‘Simon...the great power of God’ passage re-writing history of Simon Magus who, supposedly, tried to buy the power of the ‘laying on of hands’ (It was more likely something Paul would do.) before the vicious parody also in Chapter 8 involving “Candace (or Kandake) the queen of the Ethiopians” who had sent her “eunuch of great authority” who “had charge of all her treasury”. This is none other than an obvious parody of Queen Helen and Izates since there was no such Ethiopian queen at this time. The “Ethiopian” is a play upon being ‘Arab’ that was considered ‘Black’. Since the Roman world considered circumcision a form of self-mutilation, Izates is parodied as being a eunuch. The entire scene of the eunuch busy reading Scripture, having it interpreted by the Apostle Philip, and then offering to be immediately baptized is an over-write of the story of Izates reading from the Old Testament, having it interpreted by Eleazar, and then going out and getting circumcised right away. The passage is also an over-write of the Queen Helen’s agents going to buy grain in Egypt to feed the starving in the drought of 44-46 CE. The purported purpose that the eunuch was going to worship in the Jerusalem Temple is ridiculous since eunuchs were not allowed to enter the Temple.

Another apparent difference in the accounts between Eusebius and Josephus is that Izates was not the king when he was converted by Ananias. However, he had already married Symacho, the daughter of King Abinergaos, who as a dowry to the future king “bestowed a country on him, from which he received large revenues.” In addition it is possible that Izates had already started his harem with these large revenues since he was born about the year 1 CE and spent his twenties with his in-laws before the conversion in 29 CE according to Eusebius. When he died it is reported he left twenty-four sons and twenty-four daughters. When Josephus reports that the Jewish evangelist merchant, Ananias, “got among the women that belonged to the king” it isn’t clear which king is being spoken of. The context would not seem to indicate the father of Izates. It could be the harem of King Abinergaos. However, it very well could be and probably is the harem of King Izates.

Symacho makes her appearance for the first time in the Gospels in Luke 10:38-42 right after the Good Samaritan passage which talks about being justified by doing good works even if one is ethnically different:

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

- The Martha passage balances off the Good Samaritan passage by affirming Mary who “sat at Jesus feet”—meaning that Mary was taking on discipleship—chose the better part over just “much serving”.

Martha-Symacho, indeed, must have been quite busy and under social pressure as the main wife of King Izates. The name ‘Martha’ means ‘mistress’ or ‘the lady’ and is the feminine gender for the word ‘master’—quite an appropriate designation for the wife of King Izates. This passage reflects what must have been the social pressure Queen Helen was under from her own family for following a charismatic Samaritan leader in the Baptist movement in Simon who was not approved of by the Jerusalem elite.

Martha-Symacho and Lazarus-Izates are introduced very slowly and carefully in the Gospels as politically sensitive as they were. Izates also makes his appearance in Luke in the story or parable of ‘Lazarus and the rich man’ in Luke 16:22-31. It is preceded by the ‘Parable of the Unjust Steward’ which is really a justification of the Herodian tax-collecting relationship with the Romans. It is followed by a short attack on the hypocrisy of the Jewish Christians or ‘Pharisees’. The following paragraph is an attack on adultery in the mouth of Jesus which can be taken as an attack on the Syrian royal family harem practices as if to say about the upcoming story of Izates-Lazarus that “isn’t it a little hypocritical to think it is alright that the good, observant, Jewish-convert you want to replace the Herodian kings with actually has a harem?”

Usually figures in parables are not given names in the Gospels but Lazarus is the one exception. The “certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day” is the father of Izates. Purple is a royal color.

The “certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table” is a play upon Izates being a follower of James the Just whose followers were called ‘the Poor’. The ‘rich man’ is a play upon the spiritual wealth of James the Just as well as the King of Osroene, the father of Izates. The “laid at the gate” refers to the birth of Izates.

It must have given the author of Luke a laugh to write next “Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores”. Normally Gentiles were referred to as ‘dogs’ but here the author turns the

tables and calls the Pharasaical and Jewish Christian followers of James the Just “dogs” who are nourished by the legendary generosity of Izates oozing nourishment and financial support.

The story continues and both pass away. Lazarus ends up in the bosom of Abraham while the rich man ends up in the fires of Hades. The rich man repents but it is too late and then implores Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers to warn them. Like the story of Martha complaining about the discipleship of Mary we have the family of Lazarus-Izates who “do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead”.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Eusebius, ‘Ecclesiastical History’, I. xiii
- (2) Flavius Josephus, ‘The Antiquities of the Jews’, Book 20, Chapter 2.3
- (3) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, pp. 22-34
- (4) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, pp. 108-109
- (5) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, pp. 260, 269
- (6) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, p. 941
- (7) Ibid., p.398
- (8) Ibid., p. 941
- (9) Ibid., pp. 87-89

## 9. IZATES--KING OF ISRAEL?

King Izates not only dabbled in mysticism with the Baptist group but went through the full conversion process of having himself circumcised that satisfied the fundamentalists. Scholars believe it was Izates who was responsible for sponsoring a Syrian language edition of the Old Testament. He sent his sons to study in Jerusalem. He funded the Temple and his family funded the food-buying expeditions in the great drought from 44-46 CE. In addition, Helen and Izates built a huge tomb in Jerusalem still present to this day and palaces for them to reside in that were destroyed in the 66-70 CE war.

For those outlying groups like the Baptists, the Samaritans, and fundamentalists alienated from the Sadducees running the Temple that were seen as complicit with the decadence of the Romans and Herodians it was King Izates and his family who were seen as the great hope to replace the Romans in an up-coming war. The alienated Hebrew lived in the context where the foreigners had been driven out once in the establishment of a Jewish state and they could be again. Izates was king of a client state in the great Parthian empire which battled Rome for much of the first century over neighboring states such as Armenia—so Izates had a power base given the right sort of circumstances.

Since we know from Josephus that Izates died in 55 CE at about the age of fifty-five we know Izates was born about the year 1 CE—right about the year Simon-Jesus was said to have been born. Izates ascended to the throne of his father about the year 31 CE since we know from Josephus that he reigned for twenty-four years--which is about the time Simon-Jesus was said to have begun his mission—‘about thirty’. Since we know from Mark and Irenaeus that Jesus was actually about fifty at the Crucifixion we can be confident the other dates in the Gospels for Jesus are over-writes of the dates for Izates as if to say: ‘Izates is not your king. Jesus is your king.’ All the supposed geneology of Jesus going back to King David plays out to this same argument that it is a son of David who should be ‘king’ rather than a foreign monarch.

Josephus says that the King called his son his “only begotten”. (1) The story goes that King Monobaz was lying with his arm on the stomach of his wife pregnant with Izates and heard in a dream that the baby would have a happy end. Subsequently, Izates became the favorite of his father even though the king had an older son by Helen and many other older sons by many other wives.

The “only begotten” terminology doesn’t make a lot of sense, literally, since Izates wasn’t but it could refer to his being chosen as heir to his father in the tradition of Abraham who called Isaac his ‘only begotten’ even though he had an old son, Ishmael, by Hagar, his slave wife. This could indicate an early appreciation of Jewish culture since Abraham as well as the Ark of Noah were reputed to be in and from the area.

Alternately, the “only begotten” terminology could be just an historical reference by the royal family or it could be an editorial gloss on the story by Josephus who had just read and was irritated enough by the possibly newly published Gospel of John and its ‘only begotten’ references that he couldn’t resist sticking in a dig at Christianity.

Even though 'Izates' is similar to 'Isaac' our Izates bar Monobaz or Izates II as he was called was named after his grandfather, Izates I, in the line of the Abgar kings who flourished early in the first century.

Josephus records that for his own protection Izates was soon shipped off to a neighboring, friendly kingdom:

“However, he sent Izates, with many presents, to Abennerig, the king of Charax-Spasini, and that out of the great dread he was in about him, lest he should come to some misfortune by the hatred his brethren bore him; and he committed his son's preservation to him. Upon which Abennerig gladly received the young man, and had a great affection for him...” (2)

The hatred and jealousy was actually well-placed by the brothers of Izates since it was a practice in the Parthian Empire for monarchs to kill their siblings so as not to be usurped by them since, especially, they were often only half-siblings of different mothers in a harem. The contemporary of Izates and king of the Parthian Empire from 10 CE to 38 CE who Izates actually helped re-instate on his throne once was Artabanus II who suffered a contentious reign with various royal pretenders challenging him. Consequently, Artabanus murdered every prince of his family he could find.

Izates was probably married off fairly soon to Samacho, the daughter of King Abinergaos. Coins of King Abinergaos I, father-in-law of Izates, were only found minted from 10 CE to 23 CE in denoting the length of his reign so Izates and Samacho could very well have been married in his very early twenties or before. This would have given the decade of the twenties time for Izates to collect his revenue, develop his harem and time enough for Ananias to “get among the women that belonged to the king”.

Accepting the dating of Eusebius that Izates was converted in 29 CE and that of Josephus that he ascended the throne in 31 CE, this would leave two years for Izates to be recalled back to his home country by his father who was feeling his age and wanted to see his son and establish him as his successor. Monobaz happened to pick Carra or the province of Harran which, oddly enough, was the birthplace of Abraham for Izates to govern and to await his succession. It was close to Edessa.

The Kingdom that Monobaz ruled over had a Western center in Edessa and an Eastern center in the smaller kingdom of Adiabene whose capitol was Arbela. When Izates was recalled it was to the closer capitol of Arbella that was just up the river from Characene at the head of the Persian Gulf. Ananias accompanied Izates to Adiabene and it is probably in this time frame that Izates learned of his mother's conversion as well and a discussion erupted about circumcision which Izates wanted to undergo. Queen Helen vociferously made the case that his future subjects would not accept his obvious, outward conversion and that he should not do it. Ananias was equally as adamant saying he would leave Izates since he would be blamed as the evangelist and his life would be endangered. Ananias assured Izates God would forgive him based on the

special circumstances. Izates was dissuaded for a time. The traditional religion of Adiabene was Ashurism which was a polytheism going back several thousand years to the Sumerian culture.

When King Monobaz died he may still have been in Arbella with Izates off closer to Edessa and it would have taken some time to notify him and for him to journey to Adiabene. Queen Helen the day Monobaz died assembled the generals and governors and quickly challenged them as to whether they would affirm Izates as the choice of Monobaz to succeed him. They all paid their respects to Queen Helen and probably felt there was little choice at the moment but to accede to her wishes. The powers of the kingdom, however, requested that Queen Helen order the killing of all the other “brothers and kindred” so as to assure the kingdom not be embroiled in a civil war. Queen Helen put them off but agreed to have them imprisoned until Izates returned to make the final decision. The generals and governors, further, requested Helen appoint an interim king. She chose her older son, Monobaz, who may also have been involved early on in the Jewish conversion with Queen Helen since he also ended up circumcising himself later and ended up being quite devout.

When Izates arrived in Adiabene and assumed the kingship from his brother, Monobaz, he was not happy about the imprisoning of his brothers, their children, and relatives and considered it “impiety” to have them slain or imprisoned but also feared their release from their past jealousy of him. So, he sent them off in what was a common practice for the times as hostages to the Parthian and Roman Empires that was meant to assure the peace and cooperation of smaller kingdoms to the larger.

Josephus records that they were sent to Artabanus II in Parthia and to Claudius in Rome. Artabanus ruled from 10-38 CE so that isn't a problem but Claudius only reigned from 41-54 CE so that is a problem. It is difficult to see how Josephus could have made a ten year mistake in his dating. He records very thoroughly how Izates assisted Artabanus in the 30's and, of course, he knew the dates for Claudius. It is possible, though, that since his kingship existed as part of the Parthian Empire that Izates sent most of his hostages to Artabanus. Later on in the internal conflicts that Izates had he may have sent a whole new group of royal prisoners to Rome in the era of Claudius when it seemed politically expedient.

It is probably at this point in the story of Izates in the early 30's that a fundamentalist scholar from Galilee entered the palace of Izates and convinced him that he was breaking one of the cardinal laws of Judaism by not getting himself circumcised—the story that is so parodied in Acts 8 about Queen Kandake's eunuch who is baptized. Queen Helen and Ananias, the “tutor” of Izates were quickly informed and were horrified should this news have gotten out that would risk the kingdom.

Nevertheless, things probably settled down for Queen Helen with the monarchy firmly in the hands of her son so she probably could have made many trips to Jerusalem in the early 30's.

In 35 CE in what must have brought tremendous tension to the entire region, the King Zeno (King Artaxia) of Armenia died. After Artabanus had defeated Vonones decades earlier for the Parthian kingship, Vonones had fled to Armenia and styled himself king until Artabanus drove him out of Armenia as well. Subsequently, King Zeno who was the son of the King of Pontus

which was a neighboring state and who also happened to be the great grandson of Marc Antony had been placed on the throne as a client-king of Rome.

Upon the death of Zeno, Artabanus saw his opportunity, appointed his son, Arsaces, as the King of Armenia, and prepared to invade. Unfortunately for Artabanus there were pro-Roman forces in Parthia who had no interest in battling Rome over Armenia. They requested the return of a royal hostage in Rome to return and become king. Tiridates III, then, was crowned king of Parthia when he reached Syria by the Roman governor of Syria, Vitellius. The Armenian campaign of Artabanus collapsed and he fled Eastward.

The prospective war in Armenia is the most likely point at which Queen Helen began her first seven year Nazarite vow in hopes that Izates would return safe from it. This is referenced in the Mishnah (Nazir 3:6). If she began her first seven year Nazarite vow in 35 CE then the year of her death in 56 CE would mark the last year of her third seven year vow. This twenty-one year period is eerily reflected in the Gospel of Thomas which allocates Logion 21 for the one reference to Mary Magdalene in the original 113 sayings of the Gospel. (3)

This historical time-frame is where Herod Antipas executed John the Baptist as a pre-emptive measure who was so critical of Herod and who had the real potential to incite the masses against him should King Aretas of Nabataea attempt to avenge his daughter--or if it should turn into all-out war between Rome and Parthia over Armenia with a newly minted Jewish King sitting over the hill as King of the Osreans in a client-state of the Parthian Empire who one would think would like to replace the Herodians in Jerusalem.

Suspicious of King Izates would not have been mis-placed since it is clear that Izates must have given at least nominal support to Artabanus in the Armenian Campaign. We know this since only two years later Josephus records that Artabanus fled to Izates who negotiated back for him the throne of Parthia.

Despite the collapse of the Armenian Campaign, the flight of Artabanus to the East, and installation of Tiridates III as the Parthian king—or maybe because of their new feeling of ascendancy—Herod Antipas and the High Priest Josephus Caiaphas conspired in early 36 CE to fool Pilate into thinking revolutionaries were organizing in Samaria and to initiate the Samaritan Massacre. Herod was vulnerable with his Samaritan mother and probably other Samaritans in his entourage to pressure from the rabid fundamentalists in Jerusalem who hated Simon for his importation of Egyptian magical practices and his vocal opposition to the Temple authorities. They also feared his relationship with Queen Helen who the Gospel of Mark claims did a royal anointing of Jesus with oil on the head in her persona as Mary Magdalene to succeed the Baptist. This is what Herod also must have greatly feared.

King Aretas of the Nabataeans attacked the positions of King Herod later in 36 CE taking the West Bank of the Jordan River and Damascus away from him. Aretas must have feared the Roman response but saw popular opinion swinging in his favor with the killing of the wildly popular John the Baptist and the shocking Samaritan Massacre. He had supported Roman military campaigns in decades past and had gotten some nominal support from them. He was hoping, undoubtedly, that with the stupidly unjust recent moves of Antipas that Tiberias would

give him a pass on this inter-Palestinian squabble. He probably counted on the friendship of the Syrian Governor Vitellius to get him through this.

Tiberias saw things differently. After Antipas appealed to him, Tiberias ordered Vitellius to attack Aretas in punishment for the naked and unprovoked aggression against one of his client kingdoms. Vitellius was one of the shrewdest generals Rome ever produced but he found himself in an uncomfortable spot. He did not dare defy Tiberias but probably had no sympathy for such a ham-handed local buffoon such as Antipas who angered Aretas by dumping his daughter, the first wife of Antipas, in favor of marrying his Antipas' brother's wife--probably while he was still alive, then creating an uproar with the execution of the Baptist, and to top it all off--enraging every Samaritan by his duplicitous organizing of the Samaritan Massacre.

Vitellius had just recalled Pilate to Rome to answer for his crimes and replaced the High Priest, Josephus Caiaphus who he held responsible for instigating the Samaritan Massacre but Antipas was someone he had to live with so he decided to send his army on a circuitous march around Jerusalem while he attended a feast in Jerusalem with Antipas. In this circumstance, anyway, Vitellius found himself to be as lucky as he was skilled. While at the feast the news came from Rome that Tiberias had died on March 16, 37 CE. Vitellius quickly decided he had no current authorization to wage war against Aretas and the war campaign was ended--no doubt to everyone's relief and benefit. Aretas, as well, quickly withdrew from Damascus.

Also in 37 CE Artabanus came roaring back into Parthia with an army of fierce Scythian troops to contest the kingship. Tiridates III lost too much support in being seen as a puppet of the Romans and fled Parthia. Artabanus, once again became king but realized he didn't have enough support to wage war in Armenia and quickly signed a peace treaty with Vitellius who represented Rome. This was all to no avail with another quick attempt to depose him. Cinnamus was installed as king of Parthia and Artabanus fled to the kingdom of Izates.

Izates is clearly a hero of Josephus who spent a lengthy segment on the re-instatement of Artabanus by Izates. Artabanus arrived in a very humble manner and paid his respects to Izates "with tears in his eyes". One can only wonder how much creativity Josephus employed in this encounter but the upshot was that Izates negotiated successfully with the Parthians in 37 CE that if Artabanus was re-established that Izates would be the guarantor that Artabanus would exact no retribution. With the Parthian Empire seemingly evenly split over Artabanus, it was Izates who was strong enough to swing the balance either way.

Josephus records that Izates was rewarded for his loyalty in being given some privileges peculiar only to the kings of Parthia. One was to wear his tiara or crown 'upright' and the other was to sleep on a golden bed. But, Izates was also given the city of Nisibis and the area around it which Artabanus split off from Armenia. It had been a city long in contention by various invaders and was on the invasion road to Armenia. A prominent rabbi mentioned in the Mishna, Judah ben Bathyra, had a college there before the destruction of the Temple and so, probably, also in the time of Izates. (4) This would probably have been a project that Izates would have initiated or sponsored.

Vardanes I was the son and successor of Artabanus and Josephus claims that Izates spent a lot of time and effort talking him out of launching a new war against Rome over Armenia—realizing, also, that his mother and five of his sons were vulnerable in Jerusalem in Roman territory. With one of his vassal kings refusing to follow his lead, Vardanes threatened war against Izates but was killed first by the Parthians who had no wish, either, to get into a war with Rome.

This is also the period coinciding with the great drought from 44-46 CE in Jerusalem when Queen Helen probably moved permanently to Jerusalem taking with her five of Izates' children and a great deal of money from Izates: Possibly, these grandchildren were considered 'hostages' since they resided within the confines of the Roman Empire and vulnerable to its intrigues and dictates. Both Izates and his mother spent a lot of money alleviating the famine from 44-46 CE in Jerusalem in importing figs and grain. That Claudius is mentioned as the emperor in Rome when hostages are sent might indicate this time period and these grandchildren since the reign of Claudius began in 41 CE. The building of her tomb and palaces would have been great 'public works projects' to employ the poor in a time of hardship.

In 49 CE when Vardanes was assassinated his brother, Gotarzes, became king but was challenged by another hostage prince of the family released from Rome to challenge him. Izates, maintaining his loyalty to the Parthian Empire over the Roman prisoner betrayed Meherdates who was captured and taken to Gotarzes who cut off his ears to disqualify Meherdates from becoming a Parthian king.

The greatest threats to Izates kingship occurred late in his reign when Vologases I was king of Parthia beginning in 51 CE. Josephus reports that the precipitating factor was the conversion of the brother of Izates, Monobaz, and many other members of the family which was discovered by the governors of Adiabene. Many of them were so unhappy about the royal family overthrowing the traditional religion that they conspired with an Arab king named Abia that when he would invade they would desert their king to give him the victory.

Both sides prepared for war. Certain generals did desert as planned but Izates quickly regrouped and defeated Abia decisively who then committed suicide when he found himself surrounded.

The dissidents were not finished—apparently not removed by any vicious purge on the part of Izates-- and appealed for a new Parthian ruler to Vologases who was particularly receptive to them since he was beginning a revival of the Iranian language and customs and the Zoroastrian religion to the point of re-naming cities. Vologases demanded the return of the privileges granted under Artabanus or he would make war against Izates.

Josephus records that Izates was highly stressed about how to proceed but finally decided he could not give into cowardice and that the privileges were just a subterfuge for an attack Vologases would undertake anyway so he prepared for war in securing most of his wives and children in a secure fortress, putting up his corn, and burning the fields so invaders would have no grass for their horses. Izates was able to muster six thousand horsemen but was far outnumbered. Vologases made a final threat and Izates engaged in fasting and prayer with his

remaining wives and children which, apparently, worked for Izates since Josephus records “immediately that very night” (6) communication came to Vologases that Eastern nomads were taking advantage of his absence and ravaging Parthia so he packed up and left immediately.

Izates died a few years later in 55 CE at the age of fifty-five and, no doubt, the stress in his last few years with the threat from Vardanes, the attack of Abia, and the frightening prospect of an onslaught from Vologases didn't contribute to his longevity. Vologases began waging a nine year war with Rome over Armenia in 54 CE before the death of Izates so it would be logical to assume that Vologases came to his senses and made peace with his client king who had long proved his loyalty to the Empire in order to fry bigger fish. It is also logical to assume that Izates who had narrowly escaped death three times in his later years from the kings and governors of Parthia lent his support to the war—especially so since his successor and brother apparently ran into no trouble from Vologases.

Queen Helen died shortly after King Izates in 56 CE and just after she had returned to Adiabene. Both of their bodies were transported to Jerusalem where they were buried in the tomb constructed by Queen Helen that is still extant to this day and the most impressive tomb ever built in Israel. Her sarcophagus was made of stone and weighed 1200 kilograms. It is currently in the Louvre Museum in Paris with inscriptions of ‘Tzaddan Malka’ and ‘Tzadda Malkata’—one in Jewish and the other in Aramaic. Since the word for ‘provisions’ is ‘tzeda’ the words probably mean ‘Provisioner Queen’ after her crucial role in bringing relief to Jerusalem in the drought of 44-46 CE. The bones of Queen Helene “wrapped in shrouds with golden embroidery” (6) were also sent to the Louvre where they may or may not still reside in some obscure box.

While the Gospel of Luke has the first mention of Lazarus-Izates as kind of a funny little parody about how he was somehow justified in the bosom of Abraham in contrast to his family who were not, in the Gospel of John there is the beginning of the tomb theme where Lazarus is four days in the tomb and Jesus finally shows up to raise him from the dead shortly before his own resurrection. This is the longest and most dramatic narrative in John except for the following Passion narrative.

There are a few things about that story which indicate maybe that everything is not perhaps what they seem. One is that Jesus is irritated at being confronted over Lazarus being in the tomb. Next, he delays a few days before going to bring him out of the tomb.

These mysteries are resolved if the tomb scene is viewed as really a covert spiritual initiation where Roman Christianity is claiming the huge public relations coup that Lazarus-Izates was an initiate of Jesus.

Backing for this view comes in the 1958 discovery of ‘Secret Mark’ in the Mar Saba Monastery library by Morton Smith who became a professor of Ancient History at Columbia which he began writing about from 1973. (7) This was a letter supposedly written by Clement of Alexandria detailing a ‘more spiritual’ version of Mark that includes the tomb scene in Bethany where Lazarus is called ‘a young man’ or ‘youth’.

Despite ‘Secret Mark’ being extremely controversial for decades such well-known scholars as Ron Cameron, Helmut Koester, and John Dominic Crossan (8) believe that it was the original version of Mark that was edited out:

“And they came to Bethany, and a certain woman, whose brother had died, was there. And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me.’ But the disciples rebuked her. And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb. And going near Jesus rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. And straightway, going in where the youth was, he stretched forth his hand and raised him, seizing his hand. But, the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him. And going out of the tomb they came into the house of the youth, for he was rich. And after six days Jesus told him what to do and in the evening the youth comes to him, wearing a linen cloth over (his) naked (body). And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the Kingdom of God. And thence, arising, He returned to the other side of the Jordan. (9)

This secret version of Mark makes it clear that Lazarus was in the tomb as part of a preparation for an Egyptian mystery school-type initiation which happened later with Jesus in private. The reason for the anger of Jesus—and his delay in responding in the Gospel of John-- is due to his irritation that the sister of Lazarus has interfered in the initiation process. The Gospel of John, while doing a better job of making out that it was clearly a miracle-raising from the dead, does clearly identify Lazarus as the brother of Mary and Martha and other similar elements to the story.

The letter of Clement also includes one additional verse that strongly indicates all of ‘Secret Mark’ was original to Mark. The standard version of Mark 10: 46 we are familiar with reads:

“Now they came to Jericho. As he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.”

Notice nothing happens in Jericho! The word “Now” introduces the sentence as if something is going to happen. Mark could have easily have said: ‘Now passing near Jericho, blind Bartimaeus...’

The most logical explanation for Mark 10: 46 is a deletion—especially when we have an allegation of one. Clement claims the missing words were: “And the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them.”

The family members of Lazarus not received are open to question. On the surface they would appear to be the sister of Lazarus, the mother who would be Queen Helen, and someone named

Salome. On the other hand, they could be the 'sister' of Lazarus who was actually Martha—his wife Samacho, his mother--Queen Helen, and someone named Salome. On the third hand, his 'sister' and his mother could be the same person and 'Salome' might be the code for his wife Samacho. It would make sense that 'Salome' would be a family member of Lazarus-Izates. If she is not his 'sister' or his mother then who is she? Mark makes the point in this sentence by snubbing the family of Lazarus that the initiation of Lazarus was a personal initiation and not some kind of grand alliance with the Syrian royal family.

There is no historical indication the Izates ever journeyed to Palestine until his body was brought there. In fact, any journey by him would have been a noteworthy event and duly recorded somewhere unless it had occurred in the 20's CE but there is no indication Queen Helen was there that early and building her palaces and tomb. It is much more likely that the palaces and tomb gave Mark his literary setting where he would like the audience to think the events had taken place. However, Jesus very well could have followed the trail of his associates, Thomas Judas and Ananias, to Edessa in the early 30's to initiate Izates there.

It would seem from Mark that the initial meditations of Izates were interrupted early by the family of Izates, Jesus worked with him for six days, and then initiated him on the seventh day in a Sabbath similitude which other literature from Nag Hammadi would describe as 'rest'. Logion 51 in the Gospel of Thomas reads: "His disciples said to him, 'When will the rest of the dead come about, and when will the new world come?' He said to them, 'What you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it.'" (10)

The beginning process of the psychomantium that Jesus-Simon used would involve working on the ability to concentrate the mind, overcome bodily distractions, initial visioning, and overcoming the fear of the unknown. At a certain point Jesus-Simon seems to intervene to assist in having the experience of the higher self as that viewpoint is described in the Gospel of Thomas or in an encounter with an illuminator in the Dialogue of the Savior called 'the Son of Man'.

The Dialogue of the Savior (11) also begins with the 'Savior' saying: "Already the time has come, brothers, for us to abandon our labor and stand at rest. For whoever stands at rest will rest forever." It goes on to speak about "the high place" and "using the reasoning power" while affirming that the "crossing place is fearful before you, but you with a single mind, pass it by! For its depth is great, its height is enormous."

That the Dialogue of the Savior is speaking about attaining the higher self is affirmed in various places such as: "It is the one who speaks who also listens and it is the one who can see who also reveals." The Dialogue of the Savior also makes a distinction between Jesus and the 'Son of Man' in the fabulous visionary encounter in what is probably the third separate sermon of four that were crafted together in the book that also references the Sophia Mythos story-line:

Then he [TOOK] Judas and Matthew and Mary [TO] the edge of heaven and earth. And when he placed his hand upon them, they hoped that they might [SEE] it. Judas raised his eyes and saw an exceedingly high place, and he saw the place of the abyss below.

Judas said to Matthew, "Brother, who will be able to climb up to such a height or down to the bottom of the abyss? For there is a tremendous fire there, and something very fearful!" At that moment, a Word came forth from it. As it stood there, he saw how it had come down. Then he said to it, "Why have you come down?"

And the Son of Man greeted them and said to them, "A seed from a power was deficient, and it went down to the abyss of the earth. And the Greatness remembered it, and he sent the Word to it. It brought it up into his presence, so that the First Word might not fail."

The "seed" refers to Sophia or 'Barbelo' as she is called sometimes. The Dialogue of the Savior is a collection of some of the oldest and most intimate peek-holes into the Jesus movement and it is easy to see why Mark shows that initiation can take some time.

In the next two chapters we will travel down more unexplored worm-holes with literature directly from the mystery school surrounding Mary Magdalene, first, and then Sethian Samaritan literature claiming to be the mystery school of Jesus-Simon.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Flavius Josephus, 'The Antiquities of the Jews', Book 20, Chapter 2
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 129
- (4) Mishna, 'Sanhedrin 32 b'
- (5) Flavius Josephus, 'The Antiquities of the Jews', Book 20, Chapter 4
- (6) Pearl Herzog, "A Light from the Nations" Mishpacha (a newspaper), 5-15-2012
- (7) Morton Smith, Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark
- (8) John Dominic Crossan, Secret Mark at early Christian writings dot com, including citations from:  
Helmut Koester, Ancient Christian Gospels, pp. 293-303  
Ron Cameron, ed., 'The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts', pp 67-71
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 132
- (11) Ibid., p. 244

## 10. THE 'JOSEPH AND ASENATH' ALLEGORY OF JESUS/SIMON AND MARY MAGDALENE/QUEEN HELEN

It is unrecognized by scholars that 'Joseph & Asenath' (1) is a Christian allegory that was probably published by the mystery school surrounding Queen Helen of Adiabene and most likely produced as a memorial sometime shortly after the year of her death in 56 CE.

The Biblical story of Asenath is extremely brief in Genesis 41: 45-52 where she is the daughter of a pagan priest of 'On' which is Heliopolis that was a storehouse of grain for times of famine and had a Hebrew population. She was given in marriage to Joseph by the Pharaoh and had two sons named Manasseh and Ephraim who were the legendary ancestors of the Samaritans. A good question remains as to why Joseph married the daughter of a pagan priest. This allegorical tale purports to answer that question.

Queen Helen also had two sons, was a Hebrew convert, and provided food relief in a time of great famine. Simon, as a Samaritan 'son of Joseph', also lends himself to the allegory very well. Herod Antipas as "Pharaoh's son", the Herodians as half-brothers of Joseph by handmaidens, and fundamentalists and mystics of the first century represented by Simeon and Levi are also very recognizable.

The first chapter opens with a description of the great wealth of the father of Asenath who was the chief of all the satraps and lords of Pharaoh—quite a good counterpart description Helen's father, the King of Osrhoenia. Asenath is described as strikingly beautiful and more like a Hebrew than an Egyptian. The plot begins early as the oldest son of Pharaoh wants her for his wife but is advised she is of lower station.

The second chapter is quite remarkable in describing the tower of Asenath as a metaphor for divine Wisdom. It has windows facing all directions but west—or to the Roman world. It has ten rooms with seven, perhaps representing the seven dimensions of the universe, populated by seven virgin servants who were all born on the same day as Asenath. The other three rooms may be place-holders for the Trinity but currently holding her Egyptian gods, her earthly pleasures, and her personal wealth. That she always looked out the east window would represent a rejection of the Romans and/or a metaphor for looking toward the sun/Son. Near the house of the tower was an ever-bubbling spring flowing into a cistern which had a river flowing out of it that watered all the fruit trees around the house—an obvious metaphor for the garden of Eden.

It is interesting that the Clementine Recognitions (II. Xi) mentions John the Baptist's disciple, Helen, who became the companion of Simon Magus being in a tower and acting as one would think divine Wisdom would: "On one occasion Aquila says he was present when Luna (Helen) was seen looking out of all the windows of a tower on all sides at once." Maybe this is a commentary by the later Recognitions irritated that she didn't look West!

The third chapter begins the visit of Joseph who represents Simon/Jesus who sends his twelve advance men or disciples to the father of Asenath. Asenath is only interested in seeing her parents who have just returned from the country. This chapter represents the lack of earthly attraction or interest in Jesus.

In the fourth chapter Asenath comes down from her tower to greet her parents “adorned as the bride of God”—which represents Wisdom. Asenath’s father describes Joseph as a “mighty man of God” and as a virgin and tries to talk Asenath into becoming betrothed to him. Asenath is maddened into a “red sweat” and complains about his being the son of a shepherd, a man of another race, and having slept with his mistress and having been thrown into prison for it—which would refer to the rumors of a relationship between Simon and Queen Helen, herself.

In the fifth chapter Asenath spots Joseph arriving in the viceroy’s chariot wearing a golden crown with 12 jewels that had 12 rays of light coming from them and carrying a royal scepter in his right hand along with an olive branch with much fruit.

In the sixth chapter Asenath repents of her evil and ignorant thoughts in seeing the great light of Joseph who can see all secret thoughts and desires to become his maid servant and slave forever.

In the seventh chapter Joseph begins his meal preparations by washing his feet, sitting separately from the Egyptians, and asking that the woman watching him in the window be sent away since so many of the women in Egypt were lusting after him. These facets betray the foot-washing sacrament that Jesus instituted which represented cleaning the dust and attachments of the world off your body, the Jewish Christian food prohibitions still adhered to, and the purity of the motives of Simon/Jesus. Asenath’s father, Pentephres, explains that his daughter hates all men and they both agree to regard Asenath as the sister of Joseph. This represents the idea that Simon and Helen were regarded as twin souls by their mystery school. The name of Asenath’s father in Genesis is ‘Potipherah’ but the Septuagint version of Pentephres lends itself to an association with ‘Pentateuch’ or what the first five books of the Bible are called.

In the eighth chapter Joseph refuses to give Asenath a kiss in greeting since she was a strange woman who worshipped idols and it wasn’t fitting for someone who eats “the blessed bread of life, and drinks the blessed cup of immortality and is anointed with the blessed unction of incorruption. “—reversing the reports of scandalous kissing of Mary by Jesus later reported in the Gospel of Philip. This brings Asenath to tears that touches Joseph and he pronounces a blessing over her that God may “quicken her with thy spirit” so that she may “enter into thy rest”. The ‘rest’ is a mystery school term.

In the ninth chapter Asenath retires to her top story, weeps, and repents of her false god worship. Joseph is offered a night’s lodging but he refuses saying he has a lot of work to do in all the other districts but will be back in eight days to spend the night. The eighth day represents the

day of the resurrection and spending the night represents the initiations of Simon/Jesus which happened at night.

In the tenth chapter Asenath locks herself in her upper room for seven days, throws out her window all of her best wardrobe, her gold and silver gods, and all her choice food. She dresses in black and weeps into the pile of ashes she poured around her until it becomes thick mud.

The eleventh is an extremely short one sentence about Asenath looking up from her pile of ashes on the floor on the eighth day. Presumably this is a metaphor for looking up to heaven. The shortness of the chapter emphasizes the importance of this act of looking up to heaven.

The twelfth chapter begins the prayer of confession of Asenath. She flees like a “child to his father and his mother” so as not to be devoured by the lion that would be a reference to materiality while the ‘mother’ reference would be to Sophia-Wisdom-Holy Spirit. The children of the lion were the gods of the Egyptians she says and both are fathered by the devil. This would seem to be the apologetic response from Jewish Christians to the charge that Simon had brought foreign influences in from Egypt. At the end the Lord is described as “father of the orphan, and champion of the persecuted, and the help of them that are oppressed”.

In the thirteenth chapter Asenath recounts her penitential actions of donning sack cloth and ashes, sprinkling the floor with her tears so it is muddier than a public thoroughfare, and fasting from food and drink for seven days. She confesses about Joseph to God that she “did not know he is thy son”. Finally she requests to be the servant of Joseph “so that I may wash his feet and serve him and be his slave for all the days of my life.”

The fourteenth chapter opens dramatically with a ‘Son of Man’ –type figure appearing out of a great light coming from where the morning star had just arisen who looked just like Joseph with a robe, crown, and royal staff. The difference was that his face, eyes, and hair were like lightening, fire, or the rays of the sun. He said that he was “Commander of the Lord’s house and Chief Captain of all the host of the Most High”. He told her to clean up, put on the double girdle of her virginity, and a new garment she had never worn before. Asenath cleaned up, put a girdle around her breast and one around her waist, put on a “new and brilliant” robe, and put on a lovely veil.

In The fifteenth chapter the man from heaven told her to take off the veil “For today you are a pure virgin and your head is like a young man’s.” This harkens to the theology of the androgenous Primal Adam such as at the end of the Gospel of Mary where Levi exclaims about Mary:

“Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect man and acquire him for ourselves as he commanded us”. (2)

The man from heaven then said that her name is written in the “Book of Life”, she would partake of the sacraments that day, and she would be given as a bride to Joseph. Her new name would be “City of Refuge” for “many nations” of penitents she would harbor since “Penitence is the Most High’s daughter” who constantly intercedes for everyone. This reflects iterations of the Sophia Mythos where there are higher and lower Sophia’s. Penitence “has prepared a heavenly bridal chamber for those who love her”. This sentence puts this allegory squarely in the lineage of Bridal Chamber Christianity extending from the sermons in Dialogue of the Savior to later works like the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Philip. The man from heaven tells her to wear her “wedding robe, the ancient robe, the first that was stored away in your room, and deck yourself in all your finest jewelry, and adorn yourself as a bride and be ready to meet him”. This would refer to the donning of the soul’s original robe of light in preparation for the marriage with one’s twin soul that was lost in the creation of ‘Adam and Eve’.

In the sixteenth chapter the man from heaven tells Asenath to go into her inner room and bring him a honeycomb. Asenath at first thinks to send a servant as if this an outer world request but is obedient and finds the mysterious honeycomb that was “white as snow” and “it’s smell was as the breathe of life” in her “inner room” which smells of myrrh and asks if it came out of the man from heaven’s mouth. Myrrh was used by Nicodemus in the burial of Jesus. The breathe of heavenly life also has a reminder of earthly death. He tells her: “The bees of the Paradise of Delight have made this honey and the angels of God eat of it, and no one who ever eats of it shall ever die”. The man from heaven then treats the honey like the eucharist giving some to himself and some to Asenath. After this the man touched the comb on the east and the path of his finger became like blood and he did the same on the north edge. The blood symbolism pretty clearly refers to the blood of Jesus. The eastern direction can refer to the rising of the sun and the light of the Son. The north was the direction of prayer at night to what was considered the throne of God which was the Big Dipper and the Pole Star since they never dipped below the horizon and were a symbol of eternity. (3) From the honey arose bees as white as snow with iridescent wings and golden diadems on their heads which flew around Asenath from toe to head. The man told them to go to their places in the plural so they all dropped dead at Asenath’s foot and left materiality. When he told them to go to their place in the singular they arose and flew to the courtyard around Asenath’s tower. This change of number can represent the unseen and multiple dimensions on the one hand and the singularity of the material dimension on the other and where the presence of Asenath represents the incarnation of delight or ecstasy in it.

In the seventeenth chapter the man dissolved the honeycomb in fire which gave off a refreshing scent and blessed all the handmaids of Asenath. He disappeared suddenly in a fiery chariot.

In the eighteenth chapter, Asenath on hearing Joseph was coming, ordered a dinner and dressed in her “finest robe that shown like lightening”. She wore a girdle of precious stones, golden bracelets and boots, an expensive necklace, a veil, and a golden crown with costly stones.

The stones represent eternity, perpetual virginity, and the mind of God in this context. Asenath was transformed in the process of her dressing since her “face was like the sun and her eyes like the rising morning star”.

In the nineteenth chapter Asenath descends with the seven virgins to the gate to greet Joseph. This can represent descending into the physical world and maybe from seven unseen dimensions and bringing that consciousness with her. Joseph greets her in calling her a virgin and asks for an embrace since he has heard all about her from heaven. They embrace for a long time and “received new life in their spirit”. The point of the chapter is that they are one spirit.

In the twentieth chapter Asenath invites Joseph into her house and washes his feet saying they were her feet as well. Her parents return and a wedding is planned.

In the twenty-first chapter Pharaoh blesses the wedding declaring that Joseph “is the first born son of God” and that Asenath would be called “Daughter of the Most High” and put golden crowns on their heads. He declared that anyone doing any work during the seven days of the wedding would be put to death. This represents the immateriality of the wedding. Bringing the union down into physical consciousness cannot help but kill the real spirit of it. After the wedding Joseph and Asenath conceived and bore two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. This corresponds in real life to the two sons of Queen Helen who each became the King of Osrhoene successively.

In the twenty-second chapter Asenath and Joseph visit his father, Jacob, and Joseph’s brothers in Goshen. Brother Simeon guards them on the left hand but Levi is profiled who guards them on the right hand. Brother Levi is clearly the Disciple Levi taking such an active part in dialogues with Jesus in Dialogue of the Savior and the one who wrote the first extant written gospel in Hebrew. Asenath loved Brother Levi because he was a prophet and could see letters written in heaven which he interpreted for Asenath privately. He could also see the place in heaven where Asenath had her rest. The word ‘rest’ of course, is mystery school terminology.

In the twenty-third chapter, “Pharaoh’s eldest son” who in real life in this allegory is Herod Antipas becomes jealous of Asemath’s marriage to Joseph. He butters up Simeon and Levi and tries to bribe them to help him kill Joseph so that he can have Asenath. Simeon who portrays the fundamentalists reacts angrily and rushes at Pharaoh’s eldest son with his sword. Levi trods on his right foot and rebukes him about his violent intention in “repaying evil for evil”. At this point—very oddly—“Simeon’s” name changes to “Simon” as if Simon Peter is being referred to. Levi, then, addresses his “neighbor”, the Pharaoh’s son, saying they could not ever do anything so evil and to not say anything more about this to anyone or the brothers would be forced to take up swords against him. Pharaoh’s son collapses in fear and Levi comforts him.

In the twenty-fourth chapter the plot thickens with Pharaoh’s son going to Dan and Gad who are brothers of Joseph but children of the maid-servants of Leah and Rachel. These two represent the Herodians who considered themselves Hebrews but were not ‘Jewish’ or

Samaritan. They were told Joseph was plotting against them to supplant them so Dan and Gad agreed to his plan. Pharaoh's son would kill his father, the Pharaoh, and Dan and Gad would kill Joseph. The oddity of this plan in real life was that shortly after the Crucifixion of Jesus, Antipas was accused by his cousin before the Roman Emperor of building up a large and threatening military force, deposed from his position, and banished from Palestine. When Asenath was going to her country estate without Joseph but with six hundred and fifty soldiers, Dan and Gad laid an ambush with two thousand men. Pharaoh's son would kill his father and then take fifty archers to catch Asenath when she fled the ambush. These numbers might have roughly corresponded to the number of Samaritan pilgrims going up the mountain before the Samaritan Massacre in 36 CE and the number of troops sent to intercept them by Pilate.

In the twenty-fifth chapter, Pharaoh's son tried to gain entry to the suite of the Pharaoh with the ruse that he had to go off soon and harvest grapes from his grapevines. This may be a subtle Christian reference to Herodian's like Paul the Apostle behind the creation of the Roman Church. Pharaoh complains of illness and the son's plans are foiled. The son takes his fifty archers and lies in wait for Asenath. Brothers of Dan and Gad complain to them that their plan is defying heaven and Joseph could send down fire from heaven and burn them up. This relates to Simon conceiving like Heraclitus that the primal concept is fire. It is no coincidence that Jesus says in Logion 10 of the Gospel of Thomas: "I have cast fire upon the world, and see, I am guarding it until it blazes." (4)

In the twenty-sixth chapter Asenath is afraid to go alone to the country but Joseph is too busy distributing corn to the poor to go. In real life, Queen Helen and her son, King Izates, were famous for saving Jerusalem for years with imported grain. The ambush succeeds and all of Asenath's soldiers are killed—just as most of those at the Samaritan Massacre are butchered--and she flees in her chariot. At the Samaritan Massacre, as well, Simon Magus probably escaped the initial massacre by not arriving on time but was hunted down, betrayed, and arrested later.

In the twenty-seventh chapter Benjamin is sitting in the chariot with Asenath facing Pharaoh's son and his fifty archers on horseback. He topples and severely wounds Pharaoh's son with a stone from his slingshot and then does the same for the other fifty horsemen. This reprises the work of King David who Jesus was supposed to be descended from. Brother Levi, who heard of these evil deeds from God since he was a prophet, rounded up five other sons of Leah and came to the rescue and killed the two thousand troops of Dan and Gad by themselves. Benjamin represented the Samaritans and the sons of Leah represent the Jews who all went in delegations to Pilate's Roman over-lord in Syria to complain about the Samaritan Massacre which got Pilate deposed and sent back to Rome to answer for it. Possibly the role Antipas played in pushing Pilate into the execution of Jesus according to the Gospel of Peter (and, possibly, even more importantly, into the Samaritan Massacre as well) may have helped sour the Romans on Antipas and into deposing him a year later. Dan and Gad, when they saw their plans foiled, determined to kill Asenath and then flee to the woods. Asenath prayed and the swords fell from hands and crumbled. In the Rabbinic tradition disguised as Nakdimon she is a miracle worker as well. (5)

In the twenty-eighth chapter Dan and Gad are so shocked at the miracle-working of the 'swords to dust' that they collapse and beg forgiveness of Asenath and her protection from the wrath of their brothers. Asenath tells them that their brothers are men of God and do not repay evil for evil but nevertheless they should go hide in the woods until she can effectively intercede for them. When the brothers arrived it was Simeon, especially, who argued with Asenath about killing Dan and Gad but Asenath argued effectively that she was miraculously protected and so God was in charge.

In the twenty-ninth and last chapter, Pharaoh's son arouses from his head injury and sits up. Benjamin approaches to finish him off but Levi accosts him saying that he should not be repaid evil for evil—a theme which has become dominant in this allegory. Levi binds up his wound, puts him on his horse, and takes him to the Pharaoh in a replay of the Good Samaritan story. The Pharaoh was so grateful that he "made obeisance to Levi on the ground". However, the son of the Pharaoh died three days later. The Pharaoh grieved for his son and died at the age of one hundred and nine. He left his kingdom to Joseph who ruled it for forty-eight years who, then, gifted it back to the Pharaoh's grandson. This last point was an important argument to the Romans that Christians were not looking for earthly power even though Joseph had two sons of his own. The numbers may be significant. The 'three days later' reprises the length of time Jesus was in the tomb. The 'forty-eight years' is almost a fifty year Jubilee cycle. The great age of the Pharaoh almost approximates the age of some long-lived and virtuous Old Testament figures. The story ends on a main point of the allegory that in gifting back the crown to the grandson of Pharaoh rather than keeping it for his own sons and being 'like a father' to the grandson of Pharaoh Joseph demonstrated that Christians are not bent on earthly power or expecting some hereditary theocratic dynasty from the family of Jesus in contrast to much of the militancy of first century Palestine against Roman rule.

#### Footnotes

- (1) Gideon Bohak, 'Joseph and Asenath and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis' (Early Judaism and Its Literature 10)
- (2) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 527
- (3) Peter Levenda, 'Stairway to Heaven: Chinese alchemists, Jewish Kabbalists, and the Art of Spiritual Transformation'
- (4) James Robinson, ed., 'The Nag Hammadi Library', p. 127
- (5) Robert Eisenman, 'The New Testament Code', pp. 197-198

## 11. THE SETHIAN JESUS

“To those who saw him (Jesus) he did not appear alike to all.”

(Origen in *Contra Celsum*, quoted by Roelof Van den Broek in ‘Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem on the Life and Passion of Christ’)

With the assumption that Jesus-Simon was Samaritan we could also suppose that the Sethian literature from Nag Hammadi would contain some real information—assuming, also, that Sethians arose in a Samaritan environment which it seems clear that they did. Eugnostos the Blessed (1) from the second century BCE develops a Platonizing view of God, Adam, and Seth in holding they are three androgenous divine beings called Immortal Man, Son of Man, and Savior who each included a Sophia feminine side within themselves. This can be seen as a natural development happening in the second century BCE as the Greeks came to impose themselves on both Samaritans and Jews.

The Sethians also had a Father-Mother-Son version of the Christian Trinity. In fact, the idea of ‘son-ship’ is a very foreign element to Judaism. It was considered blasphemous for a famous holy person named Honi the Circle-Drawer—who Robert Eisenman thinks might have been the maternal grandfather of John the Baptist—to have used this son-ship analogy. (2) He ended up being stoned to death for various political reasons as did John.

John Turner, the Sethian expert, sees similarities between Sethian books and Christianity in both of them utilizing water baptism, having the concept of ‘Living Water’, and affirming redeemer descents. (3)

In addition, it would have been natural for the Samaritans repressed by Jerusalem, to have viewed Jews as descendants of an evil demiurgic son of Sophia while the Samaritans were descendants of the holy Seth—as Sethians portray things. This development could have happened very naturally after the destruction of the Samaritan Temple by the Jewish state circa 110 BCE in a further unfoldment from the basic structure of ‘Eugnostos’.

One of the most interesting works to mine for references to Jesus among the Sethian books is the Apocalypse of Adam. Some commentators such as George W Macrae assert “the absence of any explicit or clear borrowings from the Christian tradition”. (4) However, others see many common elements in the Christian story such as “He came from a virgin womb”, “He will perform signs and wonders”, the association of ‘word’ and ‘water’, “They will punish the flesh of the man upon whom the Holy Spirit came”, and, at that point, the “glory will withdraw”. (5)

Close enough! The bottom line for this commentator is that the Sethian books arose in a Samaritan environment and Justin Martyr, who was born in Nablus, Palestine in Samaria in 100 CE, declares of Simon: “And almost all of the Samaritans and a few among the other nations acknowledge and adore him as the first God.” (6) The Samaritan redeemer mentioned in Apoc. Adam would have to be, logically, Simon.

Apoc. Adam (7) opens with a discussion by Adam to his son, Seth, concerning how Adam had gone about androgenously with Eve in a great glory having originated in higher sphere until the demiurge creator in jealousy divided them and then had sex with Eve to create a child. Adam and Eve, then, conceived Seth which resulted in their weakening and eventual death. The story continues with the demiurge destroying most of humanity in the Flood except for Noah and oppressing his descendants. Finally, “for third time, then illuminator of knowledge will pass by in great glory...to leave for himself fruit-bearing trees.”

It would seem that the first two illuminations would be Adam and Seth. The “pass by” phraseology would seem to give the sense of presence but not incarnation in the sense of the Dialogue of the Savior that the ‘Son of Man’ was a distinct being separate from Jesus. This same theology is reflected in the Sethian ‘The Second Treatise of the Great Seth’ which describes the Crucifixion three times with Seth taking over the person we suppose is the body of Jesus-Simon. The author of Apoc. Adam, then, could be receiving a revelation from the ‘Son of Man’--‘Seth’ regarding the history from Adam to Simon.

The real jewel in Apoc. Adam comes next in a hymn with thirteen stanzas each giving a slightly different view of the contemporary redeemer from the viewpoint of “the angels (or archons) and all the generations of the powers”. This would refer to the Jewish demiurge who had earlier oppressed Adam, raped Eve, and enslaved Noah in the Samaritan view and who transfers seamlessly to Roman Christianity as we shall see:

“Now the first kingdom says of him that he came from [a high aeon which sent] A spirit [of God] to heaven. He was nourished in the heavens. He received the glory of that one and the power. He came to the bosom of his mother. And thus he came to the water.”

Each stanza is ended with “And thus he came to the water” which would refer to his history prior to coming into the John the Baptist group. The inserts are a suggestion from this commentator. The “mother” mentioned could be the real clue where it refers to Sophia or The Holy Spirit. If so, this would refer to the Wisdom community such as produced the ‘Q’ source making up the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

“And the second kingdom says about him that he came from a great prophet. And a bird came, took the child who was born, and brought him onto a high mountain. And he was nourished by the bird of heaven. An angel came forth there. He said to him ‘Arise! God has given glory to you.’ He received glory and strength. And thus he came to the water.”

The bird in the “second kingdom” is reminiscent of the dove alighting on or infilling Jesus at his baptism. However, these are both Egyptian imageries. The goddess, Isis, appeared in the form of a bird as she journeyed around to collect all the lost body parts of Osiris to make him whole again. The god, Set or Seth, who dismembered Osiris and was considered the god of foreigners and the Hebrew was also portrayed as having a falcon head. The “second kingdom” could be interpreted, then, that Jesus came from a great prophet who was Seth, the son of Adam

and taken by the Holy Spirit/Isis up to a high mountain which would be his image of God metaphorically.

“The third kingdom says of him that he came from a virgin womb. He was cast out of his city, he and his mother. He was brought to a desert place. He was nourished there. He came and received glory and strength. And thus he came to the water.”

The rabbinical scholarship which survived the Roman war of 66-70 CE allege that Jesus was born out of wedlock to a Roman soldier named Pandera according to Peter Schafer who wrote ‘Jesus in the Talmud’ and decodes the code words in the Jerusalem Talmud as well in discussing the Babylonian Talmud which had more freedom under the Persians to write what they wanted. (8) The pagan Roman philosopher, Celsus, made the same claim a century and a half about Jesus. (9) Morton Smith cites one rabbi in the generation before the beginning of the second century and one rabbi after it using the name “ben Pantera” for Jesus. (10) These sources could be taken as typical anti-Christian propaganda however there is a reference in the Gospel of John in 8:41 showing these attacks are of long-standing: “... Then they said to him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.’”

“The fourth kingdom says of him that he came from a virgin. [...] Solomon sought her, he and Phersalo and Sael and his armies, which had been sent out. Solomon himself sent his army of demons to seek out the virgin. And they did not find the one whom they sought, but the virgin who was given them. It was she whom they fetched. Solomon took her. The virgin became pregnant and gave birth to the child there. She nourished him on a border of the desert. When he had been nourished, he received glory and power from the seed from which he was begotten. And thus he came to the water.”

The “fourth kingdom” may refer to Jesus being a ‘son of Solomon’ or of Wisdom but reflects the violence tendencies of the fundamentalist Essenes from Qumran who wanted to capture Wisdom and didn’t recognize Jesus who was raised in their desert environment who was the ‘son of Wisdom’. The ‘Wisdom of Solomon’ from the second century of this era that has been reconstructed in the past century is Trinitarian but viewing the Holy Spirit as feminine. The “seed” is an analogy to the higher self like the “drop” is in other stanzas or the “rock”.

“And the fifth kingdom says of him that he came from a drop from heaven. He was thrown into the sea. The abyss received him, gave birth to him, and brought him to heaven. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water.”

The “fifth Kingdom” may reference a Gentile, philosophical understanding in the idea of the “abyss” which would refer to material creation as distinct from ideal Platonic forms. Notice in this one he is nothing special but blessed. This stanza is one of three which references the soul

as a “drop from heaven” which would refer to the idea of a piece of pure, transparent God consciousness that descends to matter but infused with the Holy Spirit he ascends to heaven.

“And the sixth kingdom says that [he came] down to the aeon which is below, in order to gather flowers. She became pregnant from the desire of the flowers. She gave birth to him in that place. The angels of the flower garden nourished him. He received glory there, and power. And thus he came to the water.”

The “sixth kingdom” refers to a Samaritan version of the Sophia Mythos who conceived without her male consort. The “angels of the flower garden nourished him” may refer to him being raised by ascetic Essenes—since implications are he was a Nazarite (from ‘Nazareth’)—at least early in his career. The “flowers” would be souls enriched by earthly experience.

“And the seventh kingdom says of him that he is a drop. It came from heaven to earth. Dragons brought him down to caves. He became a child. A spirit came upon him and brought him on high to the place where the drop had come forth. He received glory and power there. And thus he came to the water.”

The “seventh kingdom” reflects knowledge of the psychomantium process used by Jesus-Simon. The “cave” is mentioned which could have referred to ‘The Cave of John the Baptist at Suba’. The sentence “He became a child” references the experience of Simon of his higher self that is conceptualized as the androgenous Primal Adam of the Gospel of Thomas such as L 22: “...Shall we then, as children, enter the Kingdom?...When you make the two one...so that the male not be male nor the female...then you will enter the kingdom”. (11) The “spirit came upon him and brought him on high to the place where the drop (soul) had come from” passage would be the ‘Son of Man’ in the Dialogue of the Savior. (12) The “dragon” reference would refer to spiritual initiates. The word ‘dragon’ in Greek is ‘drakein’ which means to ‘see clearly’. The conception of the ancients of a dragon was that of a large serpent. Serpents had connotations of wisdom and magic. The number ‘seven’ is an esoteric number relating dimensions. (13)

“And the eighth kingdom says of him that a cloud came upon the earth and enveloped a rock. He came from it. The angels who were above the cloud nourished him. He received glory and power there. And thus he came to the water.”

The “cloud” could reference Sofia. Alternately another interesting angle is that it could reference the soul desiring earthly experience--leaving out a feminine reference to the deity. See the tenth kingdom for another ‘cloud’ reference. The ‘cloud’ maybe references a degree of earth consciousness that angels in higher dimensions can minister to. The god, Mithras, was born from a rock and was a Christ—a divine man typology popular in the Roman military in the first centuries of the Common Era. The religion derived from Persia and probably took off after the state visit of the Parthian Armenian king, Tiridates, to Nero in 63 CE. Its mysteries were always celebrated secretly in caves. The initiate endured trials of cold and fasting. The mythology of Mithras killing a bull would have represented the victory over the physical body. The seven

initiate levels would have represented soul travel through planetary spheres. Members feasted in reenacting the feast of Mithras with the Sun. Since Tiridates referred to Nero as the sun, the celebration could be regarded acceptably in the Roman context as a celebration of soldierly sacrifice of their bodies on the material plane and celebration with the Roman Emperor in the spiritual world. The visit of Tiridates to Nero with his magi is widely considered to have inspired the story of Matthew of the visit of the Magi to Jesus in Bethlehem. The water sprouting from the side of Jesus corresponds to the myth of Mithras sprouting water from a rock by shooting an arrow at it. Jesus, indeed, does Mithras one better in making water into wine in the ‘Marriage of Cana’.

“And the ninth kingdom says of him that from the nine Muses one separated away. She came to a high mountain and spent (some) time seated there, so that she desired herself alone in order to become androgynous. She fulfilled her desire and became pregnant from her desire. He was born. The angels who were over the desire nourished him. And he received glory there, and power. And thus he came to the water.”

The “ninth kingdom” is clearly the Sophia Mythos of one of the aeons who loved God so much she wanted to create just like Him—without her male counterpart. The twist here is that it was Jesus who was born rather than the malevolent demiurge son who was identified as Jehovah. In the Sophia Mythos, of course, Jesus is her male counter-part who comes to redeem her. Although the tradition was, also, that she birthed him as well.

“The tenth kingdom says of him that his god loved a cloud of desire. He begot him in his hand and cast upon the cloud above him (some) of the drop, and he was born. He received glory and power there. And thus he came to the water.”

The “tenth Kingdom is the Roman Christian viewpoint where God “begot him in his hand” so that the Son pre-existed and then was born god and man or “drop” and man. The “cloud of desire” could reference Sophia or alternately it could refer to the soul—leaving out a female reference to the deity. Notice he seems to be the only and unique “drop”.

“And the eleventh kingdom says that the father desired his own daughter. She herself became pregnant from her father. She cast [herself into a] tomb out in the desert. The angel nourished him there. And thus he came to the water.”

The “eleventh kingdom” is another defective Sophia Mythos stanza but incorporates the elements of Simon-Jesus birthed from Wisdom and out in the desert (Egypt). The tomb is an analogy for the material world in a Platonic image.

“The twelfth kingdom says of him that he came from two illuminators. He was nourished there. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water.”

The “twelfth Kingdom” can refer to Simon coming from Adam and Seth—a defective Samaritan viewpoint.

“And the thirteenth kingdom says of him that every birth of their ruler is a word. And this word received a mandate there. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water, in order that the desire of those powers might be satisfied.”

The “thirteenth kingdom” refers to the Jewish idea of the reincarnation of holy men as Jesus was thought to be the reincarnation of Elijah. There are thought to be thirty-six hidden tzaddiks or spiritual masters who uphold the world or at least ten living ones who preserve the earth from destruction. Note that he came from “powers” or from the demiurge which would be a deity short of ultimate divinity.

The ‘thirteen kingdoms’ refer to the powers of the demiurge referenced in other Nag Hammadi texts and makes the generalized point that there just isn’t one holy tradition regarding Simon but many defective viewpoints. The correct answer for Apoc. Adam follows in a few paragraphs: “But the generation without a king over it says that God chose him from all the aeons. He caused knowledge of the undefiled one of truth to come to be in him.” The “generation without a king” is considered a gnostic phrase but it can also be considered a polemical point of the Samaritans against the kings imposed by Rome and Jerusalem. This last sentence would lend itself to the interpretation of the Dialogue of the Savior and the Second Treatise of the Great Seth that Simon-Jesus was over-shadowed by ‘The Son of Man’ or ‘Seth’.

Very soon Apoc. Adam begins describing the Gentile Roman Christians (“the peoples”): “We have done every deed of the powers senselessly. We have boasted in the transgression of (all) our works.” The telltale paragraph reads:

“...Micheu and Michar and Mnesinous, who are over the holy baptism and the living water, why were you crying out against the living God with lawless voices and tongues without law over them, and souls full of blood and foul {deeds}? You are full of the works that are not of the truth, but your ways are full of joy and rejoicing. Having defiled the water of life, you have drawn it within the will of the powers to whom you have been given to serve them.”

The “living water” was probably what was used by Samaritans instead of the communion wine by the Romans. The “waters of life” could refer to desecrating the sacraments of baptism and communion by doing the will of the archons and demiurge or “powers”. The emphasis on “lawless” can be read as Pauline. “Foul {deeds}” also references Paul and his Herodian relatives who were part of his community. The “full of joy and rejoicing” seems very descriptive of the Pauline love feasts and gifts of the Spirit worship. The three personages whose names begin with “M” perhaps were Samaritan collaborators in the Pauline communities. The following paragraph even accuses this probable Pauline community of persecuting others which goes on to

refer to the Samaritan oral tradition that was not written down or put into a book—implying their difference from the Pauline communities.

The Apoc. Adam ends with the ‘generation without a king’ being “on a high mountain, upon a rock of truth” which is a description of the higher self that is comparable to the “drop” used earlier.

#### Footnotes

- (1) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, pp. 220-243
- (2) Robert Eisenman, ‘The New Testament Code’, p. 174
- (3) John P. Turner, Sethian Gnosticism: A Literary History ([www.jdt.unl.edu/lithist.html](http://www.jdt.unl.edu/lithist.html))
- (4) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, pp. 277
- (5) Ibid. p. 278
- (6) G. R. S. Mead, *Simon Magus: An Essay*, p. 8
- (7) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, pp. 279
- (8) Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*
- (9) Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician*, p. 58
- (10) Ibid., pp. 46-49
- (11) James Robinson, ed., ‘The Nag Hammadi Library’, pp. 129
- (12) Ibid., p. 244
- (13) Peter Levenda, *Stairway to Heaven: Chinese Alchemists, Jewish Kabbalists, and the Art of Spiritual Transformation*, see for lengthy discussions

## 12. THREE CENTURIES SUMMARY

170 BCE

The Samaritan Temple is forcibly re-named Zeus Xenios in accord with 2 Maccabees 6:2 by Antiochus IV Epiphanies shortly before he desecrates the Jerusalem Temple leading to the Maccabean revolt. The forced assimilation with Greek culture may have eventually led to the Platonic tone of the work: 'Eugnostos the Blessed'.

170-110 BCE

The Nag Hammadi work called 'Eugnostos, the Blessed' is probably crafted as a scholarly work in Egypt as a Platonic-Samaritan effort at harmonization or in competition with Greek philosophy. Much of it is utilized in an early Egyptian Christian work of two centuries later called 'The Sophia of Jesus Christ'.

110 BCE

Destruction of the Samaritan Temple on Mt Gerizim along with the slaughter and enslavement of the population by John Hyrcanus became a Jewish holiday. The Samaritans had been more willing to assimilate to the Greek Seleucid Empire along with their philosophies and religion than Jerusalem.

82-81 BCE

Roman law on magicians in effect until 529 CE that is summarized by the jurist Paulus Ca early 200's according to Morton Smith ('Jesus, the Magician', p 99-100):

"...It is the prevailing legal opinion that participants in the magical art should be subject to the extreme punishment, that is, either thrown to the beasts or crucified; but the magicians themselves should be burned alive. It is not permitted for anyone to have in his possession books of the magic art. If they are found in anyone's possession, when his property has been expropriated and the books burned publicly, he is to be deported to an island, or, if he is of the lower class, beheaded. Not only the practice of this art, but even the knowledge of it, is prohibited."

65 BCE

Honi the Circle-Drawer, the miracle-working holy man and probable grandfather of John the Baptist through a daughter and James the Just through a son, is stoned to death while refusing to condemn the proto-Zealot Jewish forces combatting Greek collaborationist Pharisees. John the

Baptist is called 'Hanan the Hidden' in Rabbinical literature while James is referred to as 'Abba Hilkiyah'.

34 BCE

James the Just is born in this year according to Epiphanius in Panarion 78:14:5-6 since he is claimed to have lived to be 96 years old when martyred in 62 CE. He is called Abba Hilkiyah in Rabbinical literature and indications are that he was a direct lineal descendant of King David's High Priest. This might explain why he had access to the Holy of Holies at least once. This might also help explain some of the status of his first cousin, John the Baptist, through a daughter of Honi the Circle-Drawer who is called Hanan the Hidden in Rabbinic literature.

Ca 20 BCE

Queen Helen of Adiabene was born as a high-ranking daughter of King Izates I of Osroene which had its Western capitol at Edessa and Eastern capitol at Adiabene near the head of the Tigris river. Because her family supported wars against Rome as a client state of the Persian Empire, Queen Helen's identity was masked as 'Mary Magdalene' by Christians, 'Helen, the prostitute' by those satirizing Simon Magus, and as 'Nakdimon ben Gurion' in rabbinical literature who was a fabulously rich person supplying enough grain for Jerusalem for 21 years (the number of years Queen Helen put herself under a nazirite oath). He was also a miraculous 'rainmaker'. The name 'Nakdimon' is the same as 'Nicodemus' in Greek. Nicodemus in the Gospel of John provided all the expensive spices for the body of Jesus and can be considered a stand-in for Queen Helen. In the Synoptics, it is not Nicodemus but Joseph of Arimathea who is the very rich person and secret believer with a tomb who has enough personal standing to claim the body of Jesus and is the stand-in for Queen Helen who was well known for the massive tomb she had built that is extant to this day. The approximate birth year of Queen Helen is arrived at by understanding that her second son was born about 1 CE, her oldest son a few years earlier, and her marriage possibly around the age of eighteen.

Philo of Alexandria lived from 20 BCE to 50 CE was a Jew who identified Wisdom-Sophia with the Greek Logos paving the way for later Roman Christians to identify Wisdom with Jesus. Philo used allegory to understand Jewish Scripture to conform it to Greek philosophy. Simon Magus, on the other hand at roughly the same time—and probably place, according to the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions and Homilies allegorized Jewish Scripture but also as a Samaritan asserted the Jewish Creator was not the highest god, replaced Jerusalem with Mt Gerezim where Samaritans assert the original Temple of Solomon was, and denied the resurrection of the dead.

Ca 15 BCE

The birth year of Simon/Jesus was ca 15 BCE since Eusebius claims Jesus was over fifty at the time of the Crucifixion while Mark has a questioner argue that Jesus is 'not yet fifty' and this commentator holds the Crucifixion happened in 36 CE.

That Simon-Jesus was born out of wedlock to a Roman soldier is a reasonable supposition. The Gospel of Mark, notes Morton Smith, in 6:3 quotes the townspeople who reject him as referring

to Jesus as ‘the son of Mary’—indicating his father is uncertain. The Gospel of John in 8:41 references these attacks. The Babylonian Talmud makes these assertions as well as the Roman philosopher Celsus. Celsus (ca 185 CE) summarizes his Jewish sources saying that Jesus was the son of a poor woman who made her living by spinning after she was thrown out of her house by her carpenter husband for adultery with a Roman soldier named Panthera. Wherever he was born, Jesus grew up in Galilee. He went to Egypt and worked as a hired laborer. After learning some magic he returned to Palestine with high hopes of great things from his new powers and proclaimed himself a god. (P.77)

Matthew and Luke defensively provide long genealogies as well as propose the virgin birth scenario. This scandalous birth situation would also explain the multitudinous Egyptian and ‘desert’ references and where Simon became well-educated enough to author several books which were entitled ‘Four Quarters of the world’ and ‘Sermons of the Refuter’. The first title indicates he was probably well-educated regarding world religions as indicated by the Pseudo-Clementine’s that he studied Greek literature in Alexandria. The second title would indicate his religious differences with Jerusalem.

Justin Martyr and the Pseudo-Clementine’s agree that Simon was born in Gitta near present-day Nablus that is thirty-nine miles from Jerusalem and between Mt Ebla and Mt Gerizim. Acts of the Apostles also locates Simon practicing magic in Sebaste, Samaria which is twelve kilometers Northwest of Nablus. An interesting fact is that Sebaste is where the tomb of John the Baptist is. The Pseudo-Clementine’s name the parents of Simon as Antonius and Rachel but these names can be taken with a grain of salt since the Pseudo-Clementine’s were edited by multiple hands and in tune with Roman sensibilities to possibly cloak the truth.

Ca 2 BCE

Queen Helen is married to her half-brother King Monobaz I of Osrhoenia.

Ca 1 BCE

Monobaz II, oldest son of Queen Helen and Monobaz I who held the throne open for his brother at his father’s death and later assumed it himself after the death of his brother was born in Adiabene and was also a convert to Judaism and funder of Jerusalem.

John the Baptist according to the Slavonic Josephus is fully engaged in his mission ca 0. Slavonic Josephus says he was confronted by Archelaus who was ethnarch of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea from 4 BCE to 6 CE. It only makes sense with the popularity and respect of John that he had a long career. If Jesus was over fifty at the crucifixion it makes sense that John was even older.

Robert Eisenman notices John may be called covertly in the Talmud ‘Hanan the Hidden’ since an English name for ‘Hanan’ is ‘John’. He was the grandson through a daughter of Honi the Circle Drawer, a famous holy man and miracle ‘rain-maker’ who was stoned to death in 63 BCE in a war between the Sadducees and Pharisees: “not only is the individual called ‘John the Baptist’ in the Gospels and in Josephus often identified with ‘Hanan the Hidden’, but some texts

have Elizabeth, John the Baptist's mother, as the daughter of one 'Anon', that 'Onias' or 'Honi'."

One of two death stories for Honi has him falling asleep for seventy years and then waking up. This would correspond to the period of time between the death of Honi and the mission of John and correspond to belief of many, then, of holy men coming back to life such as Elijah returning from the dead. The relationship to Honi may help explain the high status of John in the popular mind.

John was probably the first cousin of James the Just who was another grandson of Honi.

1 CE

King Izates II—also known as Lazarus in the Gospels--and second son and favorite of his father, is born to Queen Helen and soon placed in a neighboring kingdom for protection. He is also parodied as Queen Kandake's eunuch (The Roman world saw circumcision as a form of mutilation like becoming a eunuch) steward and as Agabus in Acts and known covertly in the Talmud as Ben Kalba Sabua (translated means 'son of the Sabaeen bitch') who was fabulously rich and provided famine relief. He is known to Eusebius as Abgarus or Agbarus. This birthdate is why the birth of Jesus was placed at this time as an over-write if to say 'Jesus is your king, not a Jewish monarch in the Parthian Empire'.

6 CE

Archelaus was deposed as ethnarch of Samaria and Judea for killing the majority of 3,000 Pharisees by crucifixion in a minor uprising when both Jews and Samaritans complained to Rome. His full brother, Herod Antipas, who was also a son of Herod, the Great and a Samaritan woman named Malthace succeeded him. Antipas, called a 'fox' by Jesus in the Gospels spent a lot more time trying to look Jewish by going to festivals in Jerusalem but ordered the Crucifixion according to the Gospel of Peter.

After the Syrian governor Quirinius imposed a census which was linked with taxation that was resisted by Jews as a religious issue, Judas the Galilean and Zadok the Pharisee led another uprising. This for Josephus is the beginning of the theocratic Zealot movement. The over-write for the violent, anti-Roman, fundamentalist Judas the Galilean movement seems to be the birth of the peaceful, get-along-with-Rome, Jesus the Galilean era for the Roman gospels.

Annas ben Seth is appointed the first High Priest by Rome in the new Roman province of Judaea and serves for a decade before being deposed for non-approved executions but is still 'the power behind the throne' in the Crucifixion period.

This is the period when John the Baptist who had crossed the Jordan according to Slavonic Josephus to escape the wrath of Archelaus could have returned to Palestine.

Aside from Sebaste where the final resting place of John is or some other town in Samaria or the vicinity of the Jordan river, another likely area of activity is the ‘Cave of St John at Suba’ that is in Samaria but only fifteen miles West of Jerusalem. Oddly enough the closest town is Ein Kerem that is the birthplace of John the Baptist. This may indicate that John, as Hanan, the Hidden as he is called in the Talmud according to Robert Eisenman, is being referred to for his activity in the cave. It may also indicate the family of Honi may have had a long history officiating in that cave since the cave goes back seven hundred years to the era of Isaiah.

The Suba cave is an amazing find that was professionally carved out of solid rock that appears from other corridors to be a huge complex. It is too far away and not constructed to be a storage reservoir for water or cistern. Water is channeled into pools for ritual bathing. Thousands of little pottery flasks for oil from the first century were found ritually broken. A carved out space to place a foot was found with a channel above it that could have had the oil flow on to the foot. This is all reminiscent of sacraments of either the Therapeutae’s ‘unction of incorruption’ and of the foot-washing done by Jesus at the last supper.

The ‘seventh kingdom’ in the Apocalypse of Adam may be replaying the experience Simon had in the Suba cave:

“And the seventh kingdom says of him that he is a drop. It came from heaven to earth. Dragons brought him down to caves. He became a child (an experience of the primal adam/higher self). A spirit (The ‘Son of Man’?) came upon him and brought him on high to the place where the drop (the transparent dew drop of the soul) had come forth.”

Ca 10 CE

Simon may have been familiar with the Therapeutae described by Philo ca 10 CE in ‘De Vita Contemplativa’ who were Hebrew contemplatives living individually away from cities but who gathered every Sabbath for worship. They included both men and women but practiced strict sexual abstinence while engaging in fasting, prayer, and the allegorical study of scripture like Philo and Simon but also had some of their own literature. They utilized the pentecontad calendar where every month had fifty days. They would meet every forty-nine days for a banquet and all-night antiphonal singing and dance. The meal which they served each other would consist of pure water, bread with salt relish and hyssop (which was a sweetener).

The Hebrew population of Egypt in this period was estimated at not less than one million “men”. There had even been a Hebrew Temple at Elephantine from 650 BCE to ca 400 BCE that had co-existed with Egyptian religion and included Samaritans and Babylonian pantheism. Alexandria had a heavy Jewish population in two of its five districts. In the second century BCE an exiled priest from Jerusalem named Onias IV built another Jewish Temple in the ‘Land of Onias’ on the Nile Delta at Leontopolis to serve the large Hebrew population that was based on the Jerusalem design which lasted until 73 CE. His family served as generals in the Egyptian army.

The book called 'Joseph and Asenath' is a later work but related to this Egyptian milieu and should be classed as a Hebrew-Christian allegory since it refers to Joseph as "the first born son of God" in Chapter 21—a decidedly un-Jewish concept. It also refers to a "heavenly bridal chamber" like early Christian Nag Hammadi literature and "your wedding robe, the ancient robe, the first that was stored away in your room" as in the Dialogue of the Savior. What is really interesting, though, are the sacramental references which give a trajectory from the bread and water feasts of the Therapeutae to Chapter 15 of 'Joseph and Asenath': "eat the bread of life, drink the cup of immortality, and be anointed with the unction of incorruption". There is no indication that the "cup" is anything but a later-referenced "pure water from the spring". There is even a reference to a magical honeycomb representing Wisdom that when touched became "like blood". Though probably published late in the first century in Joseph and Asenath we have a full-blown mystery religion using allegory and transiting, perhaps from a mystical experience of the divine manna and miracle springs a century earlier to the assumption of the body and blood of the androgenous primal Adam incarnate in them.

Paul, the Apostle is born as Saul of Tarsus—give or take five years. From his Herodian relatives, Roman citizenship from birth, the Herodian genealogy, and his troublesome history in the Pseudo-Clementines it is clear he is probably the grandson of Herod the Great through his Idumaeen wife, Costobarus whose son was Antipater. Antipater married Cypros. A daughter, Cypros, married into the Temple Treasurer family. A son, Costobarus, accompanied Saul on some of his adventures according to the genealogy presented by Robert Eisenman.

Ca 15 CE

Simon-Jesus turns thirty about this time. The pagan philopher, Celsus, from his seemingly well-informed Jewish sources claims Jesus went to Egypt, worked as a laborer and studied magical techniques which he brought back to Palestine. The tradition of Simon is that he became the favorite of the thirty leading disciples of the Baptist. It is clear from both Jewish and Christian sources that his main focus was on healing and channeling activities. In the Gospel of Mark Jesus is constantly driving out demons from others. This is, no doubt, some of what he did but was also a rebuttal that he was actually possessed himself by the likes of the demon, Beelzebul.

Jesus is accused of channeling Beelzebul in Mark 3:22 and Matthew 10:25 and channeling John the Baptist in Mark 6:14. Morton Smith charts the many instances where the odd behavior consistent with the channeling activity is noticed in the Gospels. In Mark "his family came out to seize him, for they said, 'He's out of his mind'". In John 7:22 and 8:52 Jesus is accused of having a demon. In Luke 4:23 Jesus goes to his home town and is told 'Physician heal thyself' as if they think he is crazy but Luke finesses the context to make out that the people are referring to generally healing in his village rather than a comment about his person.

The third mini-sermon of four which composes the Dialogue of the Savior encounters in a group visionary activity a figure called 'the Son of Man' who could have been who Jesus channeled:

Then he [took] Judas and Matthew and Mary [to] the edge of heaven and earth. And when he placed his hand upon them, they hoped that they might [see] it. Judas raised his eyes and saw an

exceedingly high place, and he saw the place of the abyss below. Judas said to Matthew, "Brother, who will be able to climb up to such a height or down to the bottom of the abyss? For there is a tremendous fire there, and something very fearful!" At that moment, a Word came forth from it. As it stood there, he saw how it had come down. Then he said to it, "Why have you come down?"

And the Son of Man greeted them and said to them, "A seed from a power was deficient, and it went down to the abyss of the earth. And the Greatness remembered it, and he sent the Word to it. It brought it up into his presence, so that the First Word might not fail."

‘The Second Treatise of the Great Seth’ could be referring to the Samaritan mythological Seth, the son of Adam as ‘The Son of Man’ or, literally, ‘The Son of Adam’ which is being referred to in the Dialogue of the Savior. Treat. Seth has three depictions of the Crucifixion but begins with Seth and/or Jesus supposedly talking in the first person: “I visited a bodily dwelling. I cast out the one who was in first, and I went in. And the multitude of the archons became troubled. And all the matter of the archons as well as all the begotten powers of the earth were shaken when it saw the likeness of the image, since it was mixed. And I am the one who was in it, not resembling him who was in it first. For he was an earthly man, but I am from above the heavens. I did not refuse them even to become a Christ, but I did not reveal myself to them in the love which was coming forth from me. I revealed that I am a stranger to the regions below.”

This period after the crucifixion of the Pharisees and the defeat of the Census revolt early in the century must have marked a very low point in the morale of the Jewish fundamentalists which would, correspondingly, have proved a growth environment for the inward-turning, mystical John the Baptist movement and his stable of renunciates plying village paths to beg for food and heal the sick. This would have been especially true for a cosmopolitan man such as Simon-Jesus experienced from birth to survive as a ‘black sheep’ who must have thrived in the multi-cultural Egyptian scene and who could equally party and socialize with the Herodian upper-class, lead a Samaritan pilgrimage up Mt Gerizim, or confront and heal the mentally ill on his village wanderings.

18 CE

Joseph Caiaphas, who played a central role in the Crucifixion, becomes the High Priest in Jerusalem in year 18. He may have been somewhat of a figure-head since his father-in-law was the High Priest Annas ben Seth who was high priest from 6 to 15 CE and was followed as High Priest by not only Caiaphas but five sons of Annas. Annas may have derived some authority from the fact that High Priests had normally served until death. Jesus was first sent to the house of Annas in the Gospel of John and Annas chaired the Sanhedrin in Acts of the Apostles.

Annas was the first High Priest to be appointed by Rome to serve during the Census of 6 CE when Judaea had first become a Roman province. He served for ten years but was deposed at the young age of thirty-six by the Roman Prefect Gratus, ominously, for “imposing and executing

capital sentences which had been forbidden by the imperial government.” Philo reported that the High Priests of the family of Annas were without mercy in imposing judgment.

19 CE

Egyptian and Jewish religious rites are banned in Rome by Tiberias with Sejanus as his agent since they were becoming too popular in converting native Romans. Four thousand young Jews born in Rome who have citizenship and couldn't be banned from Rome were conscripted into the army and sent to Sardinia.

Ca 20 CE

Prince Izates is probably married about his time to Samacho, daughter of King Abinergaos I of Characene downstream from Adiabene on the Persian Gulf at the capitol city of Charax Spasinoue. Izates was given a province of Characene as a dowry to the future king. The revenue was probably used to begin developing his harem as well.

Ca 25 CE

Helen the Queen of Adiabene turns forty-five years old in this period and probably has more free time being past the peak of youth and beauty while her husband, perhaps, spends more time with his younger harem. The conversion of Queen Helen to Judaism preceded that of Izates which occurred in 29 CE. ‘Helen, the prostitute from a bordello in Tyre’ became one of the 30 top disciples of John the Baptist—all the rest of whom were male--before supposedly becoming the consort of Simon. The rationale, supposedly, was that since women were only a percentage of a man that this twenty-nine plus contingent symbolized the moon cycle. This conversion of Queen Helen which did not put importance on circumcision would most obviously have been initiated by the mystical Baptist group—especially since Judas Thomas, a disciple of Jesus, was involved. The initiation probably included the psychomantium technique.

27 CE

Herod Antipas who had made the Romans happy by marrying Phasaelis, daughter of King Aretas of Nabatea visits Rome and persuades Herodias who was his niece and was currently married to his half-brother Herod Philip I to join him in the his new capitol of Tiberias built on a Greek model that he had just completed. Phasaelis got wind of the arrangement and fled to her father. This leads to John the Baptist publicly complaining about the incest and adultery.

29 CE

Prince Izates is converted in Characene to Judaism in a non-circumcision missionary effort by a merchant named Ananias who, later, threatens to leave Izates if he gets circumcised since the merchant's life would be at risk from the non-Hebrew population. Ananias, first, converts Samacho, apparently, and others of the harem. A person named Ananias is also involved with the conversion of Paul, the Apostle.

Izates is recalled back to Adiabene by his aging father where he learns of his mother's conversion. Izates is sent by his father to govern the Western frontier which is the province of Harran that is near the Western capitol of Edessa. Interestingly, Harran is the birthplace of Abraham who figures so prominently in the imaginations of all concerned in this time period.

31 CE

King Monobaz I of Osroene dies. Queen Helen refuses to kill her son's rivals for the throne but acquiesces to having them rounded up for the decision of Izates. She appoints her older son, Monobaz, the interim king. Izates refuses to kill his half-siblings upon arrival as was the normal practice in the Parthian Empire but sends them off as hostages to Parthia and Rome.

It was probably in this period that a fundamentalist Jew from Galilee named Eleazar convinced Izates from Scripture that he was not a good Jew unless he circumcised himself. The circumcision of Izates is parodied in the story of 'Queen Kandake's eunuch in Acts.

32 CE

Flaccus is appointed Egyptian Prefect by Emperor Tiberias who tries to ingratiate himself to his successor, Caligula, in 37 CE by putting statues of Caligula in the Jewish synagogues which enrages Jews and leads to a horrendous massacre of Jews in 38 CE in Alexandria. It can only be speculated about what other tensions were created in the 30's by Flaccus and if they resulted in un-wanted migrants to Samaria and Judaea adding to the existing tensions between King Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate, and King Aretas.

About this time Queen Helen decided that things were quiet enough in the Kingdom with her son as King that she decided upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. She took with her five of Izates children and was well-funded enough to begin building palaces and a huge tomb that is still extant that she and Izates were later buried in.

Ca 34 CE

King Herod Philip dies and this is probably when the official marriage of Antipas and Herodias takes place and when John the Baptist is imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus for complaining about the incestuous marriage to a niece.

Ca 35 CE

John the Baptist is executed in the frontier fortress of Machaerus in a pre-emptive move against a populist uprising as preparations for war with King Aretas begin. And, as it turns out, troops from the dead King Herod Philip I will help Aretas defeat Antipas.

Simon-Jesus returns from Egypt upon hearing of the death of John where he had probably been doing writing and research on several books of which only the titles are known: 'Four Quarters of the World' and 'Sermons of the Refuter'. Simon is 'christened' as head of the Baptist movement by Queen Helen/Mary Magdalene as reported in Mark: "And being in Bethany at the

house of Simon the Leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then poured it on his head.” Notice that the name of the woman was obscured but the location is in Bethany that is the home of Mary and Martha. Simon was thought a ‘leper’ by many observant Jews or ‘unclean’ eating as he did with ‘publicans and sinners’. Notice how much descriptive emphasis is placed upon the oil as a significant event.

Queen Helen, also, probably begins in this year her first of three seven year-long nazirite vows in support of her son’s involvement in an impending Parthian war in Armenia.

Ignatius, the third bishop of Antioch is born .

36 CE

The Sadducees in Jerusalem are upset at the prospect of Simon-Jesus leading the Baptist movement with his blatant use of magical techniques and invective against them as followers of the demi-urge—the Samaritan theological stance—and his alliance with the royal house of Osroene with its Queen Mother being a chief disciple. The High Priest Joseph Caiaphas, his father-in-law Annas, and the scribal contingent enlist Antipas since Simon-Jesus had Galilean roots and a presentation is made to Pontius Pilate that an armed group was massing on Mt Gerizim. This is the incident described by Josephus as the Samaritan Massacre that is consistent with the Samaritan interpolation into Josephus known as the ‘Slavonic Josephus’. The conspirators probably made the Mt Gerizim Pilgrimage out to be a fundamentalist, Qumran-type effort that had long seen the Roman-imposed High Priest as illegitimate and were hoping they would be replaced by the newly converted King Izates, in the client-state of the Parthian Empire.

Pontius Pilate falls for their ‘intelligence report’ finds a large group gathered in a town on Mt Gerizim in preparation for the ascent and massacres a large number, round ups the leaders, and crucifies some leaders. Some of those who are Jewish rather than Samaritan with connections in Jerusalem probably get released like possibly Barabas, James the Just or his brother, Judas Thomas.

Jesus-Simon probably evaded the first round-up but was arrested in a later dragnet or otherwise he may have been crucified with few questions asked. Pontius Pilate in his interrogation of Jesus, found out that he had been had by Caiaphas and that the mass gathering was just a peaceful, Samaritan pilgrimage up Mt Gerizim for Passover led by an Egyptian-trained mystic who was not very Jewish, hated by the Temple and the Jewish fundamentalists, and was going nowhere in terms of armed revolt. He was released according to the Slavonic Josephus.

The Temple authorities and/or Antipas put out another dragnet and captured Jesus again upon informant information and demanded that Pilate sentence him to death. Pilate ‘washes his hands’ but accepts a bribe of thirty gold coins to allow the Crucifixion according to the Slavonic Josephus. The Gospel of Peter is consistent in saying it was the priestly and scribal gathering who pushed for the Crucifixion and Antipas who actually gave the order to execute Jesus. Antipas may have chosen crucifixion as if to blame Pilate.

Queen Helen under her alias of 'Nicodemus' is registered as arguing with the chief priests (the plural that always seems to be used may refer to the power that Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, wielded) in the run-up to the arrest of Jesus. She argues in response to his unpopularity among the rulers that according to the Law that Jesus should not be judged until he is heard out. They attacked her in asking if she is part of his group (from 'Galilee', hence having revolutionary implications). She makes her first appearance in the Gospel of Peter with the remarkable introduction that she is both "the friend of Pilate and of the Lord" to request the body of Jesus. This is possibly why Pilate was so reluctant to condemn Jesus. Queen Helen was not only a follower and funder of Jesus, and a large funder of the Temple, but held the gravitas of being the Queen Mother of the king of a powerful and nearby kingdom which was a client state of the next-door, mighty Parthian Empire which contested Rome for Armenia during the first century. Pilate was understandably leery of creating an international incident for which he would be blamed. The responsibility of the Temple leadership for the Crucifixion ('hanging') for sorcery, the push-back from Pilate and Queen Helen, and the delay in the execution are reflected in the Babylonian Talmud (43 A):

It is taught: On the eve of Passover they hung Yeshu and the crier went forth for forty days beforehand declaring that "[Yeshu] is going to be stoned for practicing witchcraft, for enticing and leading Israel astray. Anyone who knows something to clear him should come forth and exonerate him." But no one had anything exonerating for him and they hung him on the eve of Passover. Ulla said: Would one think that we should look for exonerating evidence for him? He was an enticer and God said (Deuteronomy 13:9) "Show him no pity or compassion, and do not shield him." Yeshu was different because he was close to the government.

The Gospel of Peter discovered in the nineteenth century was an early gospel circulating among Jewish Christians written independently of the Synoptics but used some of their sources and was not accepted into the Roman Canon due to its mystery school implications. The first suspicious thing other gospels do not emphasize that Gospel of Peter does is that Jesus was silent as if not experiencing any pain. This is consistent with other mystery school interpretations that he was having an out-of-the-body experience—even standing over the scene laughing over it. The next clue that would have made the Roman canon makers uncomfortable is the cry of Jesus at the end: "My power, o power, you have forsaken me." Simon Magus was famous for claiming that he was incarnation of the Great Power of God. Even Acts of the Apostles reflects this in calling Simon: "This man is the great power of God." Notice in the Gospels the exclamation of Jesus is framed as a question as if to show human weakness but not here. What follows next is that Jesus "was taken up" rather than that he 'died'. This was just too 'docetic' or 'gnostic' as well.

It was the Queen Mother of Osroene who had the gravitas to request and receive the body of Jesus under the cognomen of 'Joseph of Arimathea', lay him in her 'new tomb' or another she requisitioned, and was prepared to dress his body with expensive ointments as 'Nicodemus'. Oddly, 'Nicodemus' does not make an appearance until the Gospel of John. This is most obviously because its equivalent, 'Nakdimon', had just come into use for Queen Helen in Rabbinical literature when John was being written.

The Gospel of Peter has a more fulsome rendition of the resurrection scene than any of the Gospels. It lends itself to a visionary interpretation even though the guards supposedly see the events and tell Pilate. The male angels come down from heaven, the stone rolls away on its own, and the two angels exit flanking Jesus and supporting him out. The first odd thing (as if this isn't odd enough) is that the two angel heads reach into the heavens reflecting their spiritual bodies but the head of Jesus reaches beyond the heavens (which is really hard to visualize). This would reflect that the angels are apparently coming from a higher astral plane but the Jesus is coming from higher being outside of time and space as we know it.

The second odd thing in the resurrection scene is that the three exiting the tomb are followed by a cross that spoke affirming the good news having been proclaimed to those who sleep. This could reflect the consciousness that Jesus still had of the cross that was perceived by those with sight to see and hear and the purpose of it and is consistent with his consciousness of needing to be supported. The 'those who sleep' is a mystery school viewpoint of divine souls who have become encumbered with materiality in their earthly adventure and have forgotten their divine and immaterial source.

The Gospel of Peter ends like the original ending of Mark—without any real other physical appearances. These witnesses along with the rather implausible claim of Paul that Jesus appeared to five hundred people gives the sense that the appearances were charismatic experiences which people had—though, arguably, nonetheless 'real'.

Mid 36 CE

The war between King Aretas and Antipas comes to the flash-point with Aretas defeating the forces of Antipas which is seen as divine retribution for the death of the Baptist. Aretas takes Damascus and other territories. This is when the Apostle Paul famously escapes Aretas in Damascus by being let down in a basket over a wall so he doesn't become a hostage in being a relative of Antipas.

During this time, the Samaritans prepare a delegation to the Syrian Governor Vitellius to complain about the massacre by Pilate of a large number of their citizenry who were peacefully gathering to celebrate their Passover on Mt Gerizim. Vitellius may have held his own hearing on the matter before he reported his findings to Rome.

James the Just succeeds Jesus as the first Bishop in Jerusalem. His election is parodied in Acts where he, as 'Joseph Barsabas Justus', lost the election to Matthias as they cast lots to replace Judas Iscariot. This happens before Pentecost, even. The name 'Joseph' refers to his relationship to the Samaritans. The name 'Barsabas' relates to the Sabaeans 'Daily Bathing' groups like the Essenes who revered James. The surname 'Justus', of course relates to him being called 'James, the Just'. After the death of John the Baptist and Simon, James is regarded for the next several decades until his death in the popular mind as the most holy person in Palestine. Eisenman quotes Jerome as insisting that James wore the breast-plate of the High Priest that said 'Holy to God' on it—rather as a popular 'alternative High Priest' and went into the Holy of Holies at least once. (p37). He spent so much time in the Temple interceding for the people it is said his knees were as hard as camel hide. Robert Eisenman identifies the Rabbinical character

of 'Abba Hilkiah' who was also a grandson of Honi the Circle Drawer with James since both were contemporaries, were 'rain-making' miracle workers in the time of drought, and who awed both their friends and foes.

### 37 CE

Early in 37, Vitellius relieves Pontius Pilate of his position and sends him back to Rome for judgment on the Samaritan massacre. Vitellius also visits Jerusalem and attempts to win the goodwill of the populace with such things as easing some restriction on priestly vestments but sends a message that inciting murder will not be tolerated by deposing the long-time High Priest, Joseph Caiaphas, who must have been held chiefly responsible for inciting the massacre. Pilate and Caiaphas were probably viewed as very disposable in sending a message but Antipas who already had his hand slapped in the war was maybe not so much.

Early in 37, also, the judgment comes down from Rome after the appeal of Antipas that Governor Vitellius should punish Aretas for his incursions. Vitellius dutifully mobilizes his Roman Legions but has them troop off on a circuitous march while he attends a festival in Jerusalem. During the festival, word came that Emperor Tiberias had died on March 16. Vitellius immediately decides he has no authorization to go to war and goes home. Aretas withdraws his forces from conquered territory.

Also in 37, Artabanus comes roaring back from exile and drives the Parthian King out who was viewed as a Roman puppet. The Parthians choose another, however, as King so Artabanus flees to King Izates. Josephus describes how Izates negotiates the return of Artabanus to the throne with his personal guarantee of no retributions. Izates is given the major city of Nisibis which is on the major trade route between Edessa and Adiabene as a reward and other privileges. Judah ben Bathyra was a Rabbinic teacher and sage before the War of '66-'70 who operated a famous college in Nisibis who Izates and Monobaz very well might have been the benefactors of.

Josephus is born of a rich and royal Sadducean family.

Followers of John the Baptist who later become known as the gnostic Mandaeans decided they had had enough and flee Palestine after the death of John and the Samaritan Massacre. They view Jesus as a heretic but it isn't entirely clear whether it is the first century Jesus or the Roman Jesus they are referring to. Roman Historian Pliny the Elder records that Parthian King Artabanus III gives the 'Mandani' as Pliny calls them sanctuary. King Izates, no doubt, would have interceded for them.

### 38 CE

After Tiberias dies in 37, the Roman Governor of Egypt tries to ingratiate himself with Emperor Caligula by putting his statue in the synagogues of Alexandria. This enrages Jews who have a prohibition on graven images. Violence escalates as Jews are forced from two sections of the city to one small section. Jews become legally regarded as aliens who can be killed and have their property stolen. A widespread slaughter of thousands of Jews ensues.

Ca 40 CE

Paul and his gang of thugs are commissioned by his Herodian family to persecute what are, according to Robert Eisenman, members of 'The Way' mentioned in Acts which may be messianists but also are Jewish, Qumran fundamentalist dissenters from the Temple in Jerusalem who have established camps on the other side of the Jordan River which are military in their order and discipline.

Annas ben Seth dies in this period who was High Priest from 6 CE to when he was deposed in 15 CE and was probably a 'power behind the throne' since his son-in-law and five sons served as High Priest after him. Annas may have chaired the Sanhedrin in his 'retirement'.

41 CE

Emperor Claudius expels Jews from Rome since they were "at the instigation of Chrestus, repeatedly rioting". This probably reflects the conflict between Jews loyal to the Temple cult in Jerusalem against those messianist Jews who believed in the resurrection of Simon/Jesus or were more cosmopolitan in their outlook in being receptive to the Sophia Mythos and magical practices.

Ca 42 CE

The end-of-the-century Pseudo-Clementine 'Recognitions' which has a Jewish-Christian slant and covers the same material with similar sources as Acts records an attack by Paul on James in a Temple scene where debates are taking place. Paul arrives with his gang of thugs beginning a murderous riot. At one point Paul hits James with a club who falls headlong down the Temple steps and is left for dead. James is picked up and carried to his home in Jerusalem. The next morning he is carried off to Jericho by 'five thousand' supporters. Eisenman points out that this is the exact number of the Essenes that Josephus lists. Meanwhile, Paul gets letters from the High Priest to pursue James but loses them in Jericho since the Essenes make a side trip to Qumran. These details are verified by Jerome hearing it from Hegesipus that James broke both legs when he was "cast down" from the Temple Mount. This incident and the stoning of James twenty years later, according to Eisenman, are the conflated reality behind the 'Stoning of Stephen' story in Acts which Paul participated in. In Recognitions a month later Peter is sent out on his first missionary mission by James from somewhere near Jericho and reports that James is still limping on one leg. This is actually a visit by the Zealot for the Law Simon who Eisenman says wants to ban King Agrippa I from the Temple and who is head of his own assembly in Jerusalem to the Palace of King Agrippa I to see if he is doing anything that is contrary to the Law. Agrippa mollifies him in sending Simon-Peter away with gifts. The non-Zealot vision of Peter in Acts 10 to "Get up, Peter, kill and eat" preparatory to his visit with the Roman Centurion, Cornelius, is the reverse over-write for this visit. Josephus also records that Simon wanted to bar Herodians in general from the Temple as foreigners. This is the period, also, where the debates supposedly between Simon Magus and Peter take place that are really between Peter and Paul. While Acts records they happen in Samaria the Pseudo Clementines are probably more accurate that they take place in the big Roman seaport city of Caesarea where Agrippa I had his palace.

The conversion of Saul to Christ probably takes place after the Temple debacle fails to kill James. It is certainly a high profile conversion with being struck blind on the road with a vision of Christ and it is certainly striking to apparently have the same person who converted Izates and his family to officiate at his first steps in Christianity. It could not have been scripted better.

Paul could have had an experience of Jesus or he could have given up on a failed strategy after the death of Annas, the survival of James, and realizing that he was actually out-numbered by the Essenes: 'If you can't beat them, join them.' The danger now that James had succeeded Jesus and John was that the messiah movement was once again going in a conservative Jewish direction that could pull in all the fundamentalist militant dissidents on both sides of the Jordan to overthrow the Herodian power structure and replace it with, perhaps, a member of the family of King Izates. The solution that Paul consciously or unconsciously attempted was to replace the next messiah who would save Israel with an incorporeal one who would not. Second Thessalonians sets up the next Jewish savior as the anti-Christ who will show up before Jesus will: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God." It sounds like a perfect description of the reincarnation of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Honi, John the Baptist, or Jesus in the next Jewish messiah to come along—be it James or Judas Thomas or whomever. In fact, one successor of Simon Magus, Menander, did think himself the next incarnation of God. Dositheus, the Samaritan contemporary disciple of John the Baptist could also be seen in that light as well. Paul spends little time in Jerusalem. It was three years later and, then, some years later after that before his trips there. He, perhaps, spent most of his time in 'Antioch' or Edessa building his Roman-friendly church and, possibly, keeping an eye on King Izates on behalf of his family interests. This is where he records conflicts with Peter over eating with Gentiles.

Queen Helen begins her second seven year nazirite vow period since she was ritually contaminated by the body of Jesus a few years earlier.

Ca 43 CE

Vardanes I, son of Artabanus and King of the Parthian Empire, threatens war against Rome over Armenia but King Izates, knowing his mother and five sons were hostages in Jerusalem, spent a lot of time talking Vardanes out of this idea. Vardanes is soon assassinated and the nobles of Osroene are so impressed with the God of Izates who seemed to have saved them from what could have been a devastating war that many begin converting to Judaism.

Paul may be spending a lot of time in Antioch-Edessa keeping track of developments for his Herodian family.

44 CE

The severe three year drought and famine begins in Judaea.

45 CE

The famous Jerusalem conference takes place between the ‘Pillars’ of the church and Paul who dispute over whether Gentile Christians need to get circumcised. The report from Acts is that the compromise that was brokered was that James allowed converts to go uncircumcised but wrote a letter to the foreign communities to “abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood”. This involved abiding by Jewish food purity and other laws. The letter was delivered by four men: Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Judas Barsabas. ‘Judas Barsabas’ was a code name for Judas Thomas relating to his ascetic ‘daily bather’ groups such as the Essenes and Nazoraeans and being a brother of James the Just whose code name in Acts was ‘Joseph Barsabas Justus’. This latter character supposedly lost the election to Mathias to replace Judas among the Twelve. This, though, was the over-write to cover the truth of James being elected as the first Bishop of Jerusalem to succeed Jesus. James makes this ruling all by himself but Judas Thomas is his representative. Barnabas probably represents the Samaritan Christians since he is called a “Cypriot” in Acts 4:36 which is a code word for Samaritan. Paul represents the local Herodian power structure. Silas is probably to be identified as the Silas who was the commander of the bodyguard for Agrippa I in Caesarea before Philip, the Commander under Agrippa II. He could have provided a security detail but since he defected to the revolutionaries during the Roman War he could have had an affiliation with Herodians the other side of the Jordan. (He was killed later fighting the Romans.) The implications are that James was recognized as the key spiritual leader—probably of the Essene movement--on all sides of the Jordan by the local Herodians, the Samaritans, the Jewish fundamentalists, Jews the other side of the Jordan, and converts in the kingdom of Izates who all wanted some common agreement they could live with regarding common religious practices. This letter from James is probably the one to be identified as the one in the Dead Sea Scrolls called MMT that was sent to a foreign pious king who Eisenman believes was Izates. In fact, the correspondence that Eusebius finds between Izates and Jesus in the Royal Archives of Edessa is probably this same confabulated and embroidered correspondence between James and Izates. Eusebius thinks it was Judas Thomas who sent Addai and Thaddeus. In reality, Eisenman thinks Addai and Thaddeus (a contraction of Thomas Judas) are just other names for Judas Thomas. Mani of the Manicheans also lists Addai and Thomas as their earliest prophets. The name of James was probably under-played early with his politically sensitive position. Judas Thomas was the main emissary with Ananias, who shows up in Josephus and Acts, acting as his courier.

The trip Paul makes with food aid to Jerusalem for the great famine is probably combined with this trip.

Queen Helen and King Izates conduct a major famine relief effort for Jerusalem by purchasing grain from Egypt that is parodied in Acts by the Ethiopian ‘Queen Kandakes’ episode with her eunuch steward. ‘Ethiopian’ refers to her being Arabic which was considered ‘black’. The ‘eunuch’ refers to the circumcision of Izates. She is called the extraordinarily wealthy ‘Nakdimon ben Gurion in the Talmud (Talmudic Tractate Gittin) who supposedly promises to supply enough grain to Jerusalem for twenty-one years. This was the number of years of the nazirite vows of Queen Helen. Izates is called ‘Ben Kalba Sabua’ or ‘son of the Sabaeen dog’ which relates to the ‘Daily Bather’ Essene groups. He promises to provide food for twenty-two years. The Encyclopedia Iranica affirms that Izates actually accompanied his mother on the drought-relieving pilgrimage.

In this time frame is probably the arrest of Simon Peter (after the beheading of Theudas which is noted as the beheading of 'James' in Acts), his release and escape, and when he moves to Antioch and becomes their first bishop serving for seven years. Exactly which Antioch is meant is confusing in the early years—in Syria or East in Oshrenia which is Edessa—but the Antiochian Patriarchate lists Peter as its bishop from 45 to 53 CE in Syria. This Antioch was the third largest city in the Empire, had a large Jewish population, and spoke Aramaic in every-day language.

46 CE

The severe drought and famine continue and Josephus describes how a 'charlatan' named Theudas convinced a multitude to gather up their belongings and follow him to the Jordan River where he would miraculously divide the River and let them pass. The Roman Procurator of Judaea, Cuspius Fadus, sent out his horse men, massacred many, and beheaded Theudas. Acts of the Apostles speaks of this following of Theudas being 'four hundred men'. This could be a reference to the four or five thousand Essenes. The name 'Theudas' is identified by Eisenman as probably a contraction of (Th)omas J(udas). This incident was probably over-written in Acts by the beheading of James (who Eisenman claims doesn't exist), the brother of John. The 'charlatan' description and 'reverse Exodus' motif is a key similar to 'magician' that he belonged to the Simon-Jesus school. The demonization of 'Judas' and the deprecation of 'Thomas' in the Roman Gospels may be the indication that Judas Thomas led this failed effort to cross the Jordan. The truth is that this was probably just a drought relief effort of desperately poor people suffering in the drought who had to evacuate and probably had some other reasonable plan to cross the Jordan. The Procuratorship of Fadus ends this year and it may have been due to his use of excessive violence.

Ca 48

The four mini-sermons and the sayings collection which comprise the Dialogue of the Savior from Nag Hammadi circulate probably only in oral form to an initiated group because of the overt references to the psychomantium technique which would have been considered sorcery by the Romans and the Temple authorities. The final editing of it occurred after the Gospel of John was published. The text is fragmentary but can be reconstructed very suitably and to a much greater extent than scholars have known. The first sermon focuses on soul travel and is signified by referring to Jesus as 'Savior'. The second sermon speaks of the psychomantium technique used and reprises Genesis. The third sermon takes disciples on a soul journey and, very interestingly, speaks about the union of 'twin souls' or the male and female souls divided in the Adam and Eve episode as well as making a distinction between Jesus who led the journey and the 'Son of Man' which they encounter. Next, comes a saying collection. The final sermon which is fragmentary at the end is a summary speaking about the 'Son of Man', the 'archons', and giving up 'the works of womanhood'.

49 CE

Suetonius reports Jews were banned from Rome again under Claudius about this time due to the 'disturbances' by a 'Chrestus'. Acts of the Apostles reports this ban and the Jewish

Encyclopedia attributes it to ‘dissension’ over differing Jewish viewpoints on the arrival of the messiah.

Queen Helen begins her third seven year nazirite vow about 49 CE—possibly caused by ritually impurity if she came near the body of Judas Thomas in 46 CE or others of the massacre.

King Gotarzes II of Parthia was challenged in 49 because of his cruelty and luxurious lifestyle by a prince held hostage in Rome. Izates wined and dined the naïve prince in Edessa all summer, then led him on a circuitous route and abandoned him until he was easily captured by Gotarzes who had his ears cut off so he would not be eligible to be the Parthian king.

Ca 50

In the later Acts of the Apostles in this era after the discussion of Peter in Palestine and execution of James (which is the over-write for the execution of Theudas—Thomas Judas—Judas Thomas) about 45 CE and before the discussion of the mission trip of Paul, we find an interesting list of the founders of Church in Antioch. This would be the Antioch which is Edessa since Paul was probably there keeping an eye on Izates and it was a focus for the ‘non-circumcision’, Baptist, Simon movement. Those listed as “certain prophets and teachers” were “Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.” Notice Paul is still being called ‘Saul’ as if the author wants to emphasize his Herodian past. The ‘tetrarch’ is Herod Antipas who is, maybe, being rehabilitated from the allegations in the Gospel of Peter by his connection with Manaen. At least the Herodian connection is being played up as a selling point to the intended audience. ‘Manaen’ is an unknown name so it could be an over-write for Paul who might have grown up with Antipas. It could be an over-write for Ananias who should be listed as one of the founders since he evangelized Paul and Izates—but is not. This person also could have been a Samaritan cousin of Antipas since the mother of Antipas was Samaritan. Barnabas, also, could be a Samaritan from Acts 4:36: “And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, a levite, and of the country of Cypress.” Eisenman believes that ‘Cypress’ can be a code word for ‘Samaritan’. “Lucius of Cyrene” is, perhaps, Luke, the Evangelist. ‘Cyrene’ is another code word for ‘Samaritan’. “Simeon who is called Niger” is probably the ‘Niger of Perea’ from Josephus who is from the area across the Jordan where the Baptist was active who is later a top leader in the Roman War but who is executed by the Zealots after legendary war exploits since he wasn’t Zealot enough. ‘Niger’ means ‘black’ as in a reference to being Arab like Izates. Whether Acts is accurate in its history or not it seems to be appealing to a Samaritan, Herodian, and anti-Zealot base.

51 CE

King Izates survives a treacherous conspiracy of his governors against him who were alarmed at his family’s conversion to Judaism. Izates defeats King Abia anyway.

52 CE

Dositheus, colleague of Simon Magus in the Baptist movement, is crucified in Lydda with four others during armed conflict between Samaritans and Jews. After Jews had been attacked and killed on their way to Jerusalem by Samaritans, Procurator Cumanus was bought off by Samaritans so an army of Jews massacred Samaritans in retaliation. This brought Syrian Governor Quadratus who began crucifying combatant leaders. Some Samaritans blamed the Galilean 'Dortus' for inspiring it all which led to his death. Dortus is called by Josephus a Jew from Galilee rather than a Samaritan but Acts of the Apostles in its wicked parody of the event would seem to identify Dortus as Dositheus. Acts 9: 31-43 begins with "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified"! Peter goes to Lydda and heals Aeneas who had been paralyzed and bed-ridden for eight years. It so happened, though, that the Jewish High Priest named Ananias and his governor of the Temple, Anan were both sent to Rome to answer for Jewish aggression—and, later, deposed. Peter, then, goes to nearby Joppa and raises from the dead "Tabitha which is translated Dorcas" using the phrase "Tabitha, rise". So, instead of Ananias and Dortus fighting we have Aeneas and Dorcas healed and raised! The Talmud at this point also has an important messianic figure called 'Messiah ben Joseph' being crucified here. The Samaritan messiah was called 'The Taheb'—here apparently transformed into 'Tabitha'.

It is clear from the 'Three Steles of Seth' found at Nag Hammadi that purports to be authored by Dositheus and other sources that Dosithians were very close to the beliefs of Simon Magus. They were very Neoplatonic in not looking for any resurrection of the body but to a spiritual ascent. They affirmed a Father-Mother/Holy Spirit-Son trinity. One big difference was that Dositheus was viewed as the incarnation of the Son. The Dosithian branch of the Baptist movement may have originally arisen in Samaria prior to the first century in a reaction to the Jerusalem Temple and refused to recognize the Prophets or celebrate feast days according to the calendar used by Jerusalem, hence having a more fundamentalist Samaritan and Qumran-type perspective than the Simonians. With Samaritans they viewed themselves as descendants of Seth. Hegesippus does affirm that Dositheus lived later than Simon. Like followers of Simon, Epiphanius affirmed that some lived loose lives while others were vegetarians and kept strict Levitical purity laws. He says they were influential until the sixth century. Josephus in the Lydda incidents constantly makes references to Romans being worried about 'innovations'. It's the above theological 'innovations' leading to social stress which seemed to give the Romans and itchy 'trigger finger' with crucifixions.

Paul, the Apostle, writes First Thessalonians to a Gentile community reassuring them that those who die will be the first to be raised up from the grave when "the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God".

53 CE

Josephus is sixteen years old and spends a three year novitiate with a James the Just-like person called 'Banus' in the wilderness where they dress in linen, eat only food off of trees, take only cold baths frequently. This is like an Old Testament version of the Rechabites who only lived in tents and probably considered that since the Temple sacrifice (with the Roman-appointed High Priests) was polluted that the allowance for people after Noah to eat meat had been rescinded. Scholars have not been able to detect where the name 'Banus' came from but it most likely

relates to 'Artabanus'. Both he and James were supported materially by Izates, both had miraculous survivals and comebacks, both had lengthy careers, both lived in pressure cooker situations with difficult and competing constituencies, and both died—and, maybe, both were killed at the top of their game. It is hard to believe that a sixteen year old from an upper-crust family like that of Josephus would have been allowed him to wander off like that. More likely, Josephus was beginning his career as an intelligence agent for the elite to keep track of what James and his associates were thinking. After this period, Josephus becomes a 'Pharisee', but is still entrusted, later, at the age of twenty-six with an important mission to Rome. The timing of this first intelligence mission by Josephus follows upon the history of the worrisome activities of John the Baptist, Simon, Dositheus, Judas Thomas (or Theudas), Menander, the massacre of Jews in Egypt, the upsets in Rome, and the massacres in Palestine.

Second Thessalonians is penned by Paul to reassure people not to worry, that the Last Day will come soon since the "falling away" comes first when "the man of sin is revealed" who "sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God". Could this be James? It is written roughly a decade before James is stoned to death. Certainly, there is anger with Jewish Christians: "it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

About this time the governors of King Izates conspire again resulting in King Vologases I of Parthia who was interested a Zoroastrian revival to bring an over-whelming array of forces against Izates who was resigned to fasting, praying, and going down fighting. At the last minute Vologases got word that nomads were attacking his Eastern frontier so he withdrew from the impending battle. Izates miraculously survives once again.

Peter leaves Antioch on missionary journeys—perhaps in competition with Paul—which will end in Rome.

In this era Menander is mentioned by Justin Martyr as the successor to Simon Magus. Menander was a Samaritan who resided in Antioch. It is assumed to be in Syria but Edessa was in the safer realm of Queen Helen in Osroene so that one is possible. He opposed the resurrection of the body, taught the transcendent God over the powers, and how to free ones-self from the archons.

In this era, as well, is Cerinthus who is the opponent of John the Evangelist in the area of Ephesus and Smyrna farther off the beaten track than Antioch. Cerinthus upholds the Jewish Law and uses the Gospel According to the Hebrews. Like the Samaritan position he held that the supreme God did not make the world, that Jesus was not divine, that Christ came to Jesus at baptism, guided him, and left at the Crucifixion. Where he seems to have become innovative is that he agreed Christ would come again with standard Roman orthodoxy but asserted—I am sure with the antinomian Simonians wildly applauding—that the coming Christ would institute a thousand year period of sensuous pleasure. The General Resurrection would follow after that. It is thought possible that the Book of the Revelation was written by Cerinthus. It is not clear whether that resurrection would be into the physical world, into astral or spiritual bodies, or into

the higher self. The Simonian idea was not necessarily to experience sensual pleasure for its own sake but to rid ones-self of the desire for it to be able to move on in the spiritual life.

54 CE

Emperor Claudius dies and Jews are allowed back into Rome under Nero.

Paul writes 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians in defining and corralling Pauline Christianity. Worship is constrained and women are told to keep silent in defiance of the long history of women being the original supporters of the Church. The brilliant and charismatic Alexandrian Apostle Apollos who was a disciple of John the Baptist as well is treated with kid gloves but his focus on Wisdom is side-stepped to be replaced with the 'Spirit'. The Wisdom of Apollos is identified with "the rulers of this world"—as if referring to the minions of the demiurge—whereas the wisdom of Paul is a charismatic "demonstration of the Spirit and of power". Paul denies the Philo or Greek thinking that rejects the resurrection of the body but goes on to refine resurrection as to be to a "celestial" body in 1Cor 15:44. The more sexually libertine 'Simonian' followers of Jesus are booted out of the Church as well as those more cosmopolitan members who frequent pagan temples. Paul appeals to his hard work, asceticism, unity, and that the time is short. A long dissertation on speaking in tongues and prophesying is given with Paul bragging: "I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than you all." (I Cor 14:18)

55 CE

King Izates of Osrhenia dies in Adiabene of natural causes. His brother, Monobaz, succeeds him. Queen Helen returns from Jerusalem to Adiabene.

The High Priest, Jonathan, is assassinated by 'sicarii'. (who, perhaps, were upset at losing King Izates.)

Aristobulus of Chalcis who is mentioned in Paul's letter to the Romans is appointed King of Armenia Minor. He was a great grandson of Herod the Great who married Salome, the supposed requester of the head of John the Baptist who was also descended from Herod the Great. One of their three children was Herod IV called Herodion and would have to be the "littlest Herod" in Romans 16:11. Aristobulus was the product of a first cousin marriage and his wife, Salome, was his first cousin. Salome had been previously married to her uncle, Philip the Tetrarch who died childless in 34 CE.

56 CE

Queen Helen/Mary Magdalene dies in Adiabene. Her body and that of her son, Izates, are taken to Jerusalem to be interred in her tomb. The allegory called 'Joseph and Asenath' could have been published as an in-group mystery school memorial to Queen Helen since it discusses her conversion, her two children, the disguised Samaritan Massacre, the fate of Herod Antipas as the usurping 'the son of Pharaoh', and her forgiveness of the Herodians. Joseph's brother 'Simeon' represents the fundamentalists who want to take vengeance where brother 'Levi' represents the mystic disciple of Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the Dialogue of the Savior who doesn't. It

presents a Jewish Christian point of view along with mystical sacraments of water, wine, and oil but also “a heavenly bridal chamber”. It shows Joseph and Asenath becoming one person in the Primal Adam with Joseph being the ‘Son’ part and Asenath representing Wisdom/Holy Spirit in bee and honey symbology. It also sends a clear message to the power structures that Christians are not interested in theocracy since Joseph gives back the throne of Egypt to the grandson of Pharaoh—a key message in the run-up to the War of ’66-70’.

Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is written in Corinth before his trip to Rome. His opening in 1:4 betrays an adoptionist interpretation: “And declared himself to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”—He was the Son of God only from the resurrection? He goes on to attack both the Gentile and Simonian lifestyles and Jewish-Christian circumcision party but saying he isn’t against the Law or Judaism. Paul betrays his fundamentalist perspective: “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness” as he lambasts homosexuality: “those who practice such things are deserving of death”. He is unkind as well to the devotees of Wisdom: “professing to be wise, they became fools”. He argues that Abraham was justified before circumcision but that Christians are the saved ‘remnant’ like Isaac. Breaking again with Judaism, Paul affirms his Roman prejudice: “let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God...” This would have been certainly ‘good news’, indeed, to some of his Herodian family the letter was addressed to: “those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodian, my countryman” who are advised “the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly”. The ‘Aristobulus’ mentioned would have to be the Roman ruler of Lesser Armenia which abutted the kingdom of Izates and Monobaz according to Eisenman. His son was the “Littlest Herod”. The father of Aristobulus was Herod of Chalcis who was a brother of Agrippa I and first cousin of Saul/Paul.

The Apostle Paul visits the ‘pillars’ in Jerusalem and is told by James to do a nazirite penance in the Temple and pay for four others to do it as well. He starts a riot when he is recognized by Jews who know him in ‘Asia’. Roman soldiers rescue Paul and put him in protective custody where he spends two years with Procurator Felix in the palace of King Agrippa II in Caesarea before appealing as a Roman citizen to Procurator Festus (who replaced Felix) to be sent to Rome. This is the period in Acts where Paul evangelizes Felix and Drusilla in a chatty manner. About this year 56 is when Felix divorces his first wife and Drusilla divorces her husband and they marry each other. This was a scandal since Felix was a pagan and Drusilla was the Jewish daughter of King Agrippa I. Josephus records that Simon Magus who was referred to as Jewish rather than as Samaritan was enlisted to talk Drusilla into the marriage but it is much more likely that those verbal gymnastics were accomplished by Paul who was Hebrew, a relative of Drusilla, visited with her and Felix in Acts, and had Roman views on religion. Josephus was probably so disgusted by Paul’s machinations resulting in Drusilla becoming an apostate to Judaism that either he tried to slander Paul with the magician tag or tried to not blow his cover as a Roman agent—or both. Paul, also, pens his letter to the Galatians berating them for wanting to be circumcised and lambasting Peter and Barnabas for their hypocrisy after previous supposed agreements had been reached with the ‘Pillars’: “even if we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” Paul puts forward Abraham who was justified by faith and not by circumcision. Paul lists “sorcery” as one of the evil “works of the flesh” which makes it clear he partakes in no secret mystery school practices.

57 CE

Aristobulus of Chalcis mentioned in Romans and had become the Roman client-king of Armenia Minor two years earlier is now given the tetrarchy of Chalchis where he reigned until 92 CE

Monobaz (styled V) in Osrhoenia is succeeded by Monobaz VI. Sometime in the century following Monobaz V—possibly right after with the dissension over the lavish gifts of Monobaz to the Jerusalem Temple--the monarchy reverts to Babylonian worship of Sun, moon, and stars with sacred pillars, stools, pools, and ceremonial meals but not before the scholarship has been put in place by Izates and Monobaz to completely translate both Old and New Testament into Syriac.

58 CE

Paul writes 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians which is at least his fourth letter (the third unknown one being a very negative one) to them after several visits where he is still defending himself against being weak in his physical presence and corrupting the Jewish-Christian faith. He pulls out all the stops in criticizing his opponents who compare themselves to him: “such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works”. This diatribe may reflect Paul’s belief in a demiurge since he references “the ruler of this age” in 2 Cor 4:4. Throughout he boasts about his own weakness making the implicit argument that God is saving him: “in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I have received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned...” At the end he talks about being caught up to the third heaven: “I know such a man” and gives a sense of his charismatic worship process: “If we are in ecstasy, it is for God, if in our right mind, for you” (2 Cor 5:13)

59 CE

Festus become Procurator of Judaea. Paul appears before him as well as King Agrippa and his sister, Berenice, and appeals to Rome and is sent there.

60 CE

King Agrippa II becomes upset at the Lower Priesthood of the Temple constructing a wall in the Temple that obstructs the view of the King being able to view the sacrifices in the Temple as he reclined and dined with guests. Both sides appeal the issue to Rome. Eisenman sees this ‘Temple Wall Affair’ signaling to the Herodian elite that the Lower Priesthood wants to ban even their gifts and sacrifices in the Temple that so alarms the elite leading to the conspiracy to kill James as the spiritual leader of the Zealots within two years.

Ca 61 CE

A Roman client king in Armenia invades Adiabene which precipitates into Parthian and Roman war preparation.

Paul pens Philippians eloquently while in prison in Rome but still picks on Jewish-Christians: “Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains...” Later on he adds: “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of mutilation!” (circumcision in the Roman mind). He prophesies about them: “many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame...” (Paul is referring to dietary rules and circumcision.) He sends them Epaphroditus who had been sick “almost unto death” who had ministered to him. Paul ends with “All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.”

The Gospel of the Hebrews (not the Letter) is written about this time while Paul and Peter are evangelizing in Rome according to Irenaeus. It is the only gospel written in Hebraic script but in the Aramaic language and probably in Edessa or Syrian Antioch by Matthew who is called Levi in Luke and probably has a role in the Dialogue of the Savior and First Apocalypse of James. It was used widely in the early church and by groups like the Ebionites descending from the followers of James, the Nazarenes who adhered to the Jewish Sabbath and Law into the fourth century. This must have been the gospel written in Hebrew that Pantaenus found being used in India when he visited. It was almost as long as the canonical Matthew and the ancients claim it was the original Matthew but only fragments have been pieced together. Other early and similar gospels have been mentioned but it is not known if they are different or variant. One key difference is that there are at least three versions of the Baptism of Jesus which differ from the Roman Gospels. The Gospel of the Hebrews has the Adoptionist theology of: “You are my beloved Son. This day have I begotten thee.”

62 CE

Parthian and Roman conflict over Armenia is resolved peacefully by the agreement that the ruling dynasty in Armenia will be Parthian but they will become a Roman client kingdom. Adiabene (or Osroene) remains Parthian, of course.

James the Just and some companions are stoned to death in a conspiracy of King Agrippa and his interim High Priest Ananias, son of Ananias, who call together a sanhedrin and illegally execute James without permission of the new Roman governor on his way to Jerusalem who fear James is the spiritual leader of the revolutionists and, probably in part, in retribution for the assassination a few years previously of High Priest Jonathan.

Events devolve quickly with the now former High Priest, Ananias, still causing problems by bribing the new High Priest and the Roman governor—according to Josephus—and sending his henchmen into the Temple to violently steal the tithes from the lower priesthood allied with James to the point where some of the elderly priests starved to death. Queen Helen is no longer around as a philanthropic buffer to fund the lower priesthood. Revolutionaries begin kidnapping

members of the households of the High Priestly families including the son of former High Priest Ananias for release of their colleagues from prison.

63 CE

It is most likely that when Paul heard the news of the death of James in Rome he volunteered to be of service to the empire to help investigate whether James was part of a revolutionary conspiracy since he knew the principle people around James. Eusebius does testify that Paul goes free after his first imprisonment in Rome. Josephus reports that Saul and his brother Costabarus got together a band of “wicked wretches” and “used violence with the people” and “plundered those who were weaker than them” in the 63-64 CE time period. It is clear that Josephus does not like Saul/Paul who he considered the disciple of a magician. Paul, no doubt, had authorization from his relative, King Agrippa, and the High Priests to do an aggressive investigation of the fundamentalist Jewish messianists who Paul hated and were causing so much trouble to his Gentile communities, to the High Priestly establishment, and worry to the Romans.

At the age of 26 Josephus is sent to Rome by the High Priestly establishment to negotiate for the release of Temple priests held hostage in the ‘Temple Wall Affair’.

64 CE

The Apostle Peter is crucified in Rome among many others when they are blamed by Nero for setting fire to Rome. While the historian, Suetonius, in his ‘Life of Nero’ mentions magic briefly: “Penalties were imposed on the Christians, a kind of men (holding) a new superstition (that involved the practice of) magic”, the historian, Tacitus, writing about 116 CE does not do so but sounds an even deeper and more ominous tone: “The founder of this movement, Chrestus, had been executed in the reign of Tiberias by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Repressed for a moment, the deadly superstition broke out again, not only throughout Judaea where the disease had originated, but also throughout Rome where, from everywhere, all things atrocious or shameful flow together and are practiced. Accordingly, those admittedly (Christian) were first seized, then, by their information, a huge multitude were convicted, not so much of arson as of hatred for the human race.” A key phrase is “flow together” which reflects the syncretism of Simon’s movement in philosophy and practice. It appears the more fundamentalist followers along the bent of the Apostle Peter who were fervent believers in the Resurrection were grabbed first and tortured which led to a dragnet arrest of a large number of those probably a lot more interested in philosophy, magic, and syncretistic religious practice. Morton Smith makes the argument that the last mysterious phrase about “hatred of the human race” has to do with the practice of magic but not very convincingly. Why didn’t Tacitus just say so then? The phrase more logically would relate to the theological stance of Simon’s mystery school that Jehovah, the god of the Jews, was a demiurge and that humans were bio-engineered, so to speak, from his servants, the archons. The goal of human life was not to live forever resurrected in a human body but to return to the godhead, hence “hatred of the human race”.

The Gospel of Peter was probably produced around this time. It has no material special to Matthew or Luke and would be more embarrassing to the Herodians than Mark since it blames Herod Antipas for ordering the Crucifixion after Pilate washes his hands. It has more primitive

and visionary elements in the Resurrection scene. It was used alongside The Gospel According to the Hebrews by Jewish Christian groups. It could have been published after the death of James so as not to embarrass him. The huge angelic figures and soul of Jesus extending into the heavens and beyond clearly show this gospel on the trajectory taken by the Elchasites who show up in Rome a century and a half later with the dimensions of Christ being ninety-six miles high and sixteen miles broad whose sister is the Holy Spirit with similar dimensions. This is clearly related to Simon-Jesus and Queen Helen who were thought to channel the Son and the Holy Spirit. Epiphanius even defines 'Elkesai' as meaning 'Hidden God'. They reject Paul and the Prophets like the Samaritans but pray towards Jerusalem and accept the Law and circumcision. They accept the natural birth of Jesus, his pre-existence, and the reincarnation of Christ. They condemned virginity and made marriage obligatory as one might think the royal family of Adiabene would do. Two of their saints were Martha and Marthana which meant 'mistress' and 'our mistress' which could have referred to the wife of King Izates and her daughter or even, possibly, Queen Helen and King Izates wife, Samacho. They declared a 'new remission of sins' for the year of 100 CE which would have been the one hundredth birthday of King Izates and be related to the Biblical Jubilee which forgave all debts every fifty years.

65 CE

Epaphroditus, the Greek Letters Secretary to Nero, after being convinced by his wife, reveals a murder plot against Nero by Senator Piso. Piso, the philosopher Seneca the Younger, many senators, and others are forced to commit suicide. Epaphroditus gained military honors and became quite wealthy. Scholars are skeptical he is the Epaphroditus mentioned in Paul's letters or the sponsor by the same name of Josephus but there is no reason to be doubtful since Josephus was well-known in royal circles and Paul was as well with greetings in his letters to the "Littlest Herod" and Aristobulus and we know there were well-placed Christians in the households of the emperors of the first century. We know that Paul was extremely grateful to an Epaphroditus as one would be to a wealthy sponsor. It is known for sure that Epaphroditus owned as a slave the famous Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, when Epictetus was young and funded his Stoic education. Josephus describe Epaphroditus as "a man who is a lover of all kind of learning" (*Ant.* 1.8

, *Life* 430, *Against Apion* 1.1; 2.1, 296).

66 CE

King Agrippa II flees from Jerusalem along with his sister, Berenice, as tax and Temple protests that are badly handled escalate, the Roman garrison is overwhelmed, and the Zealots gain control of the Temple. Paul/Saul and his brother Costobarus flee Jerusalem. A Roman legion sent from Syria is stymied and then ambushed by militias reinforced by volunteers from Adiabene which wipes it out. Two of Queen Helen's descendants or relatives were martyred in this engagement who were named Monobazus and Kenedaeus. Nero sends Vespasian and four legions. Josephus records that Saul along with Costobarus and a Philip who was commander of the bodyguard of Agrippa II enter Jerusalem and become intermediaries on behalf of the Peace Party made up of Herodians, Sadducees, and leading Pharisees, but ends up in custody in Agrippa's palace again where he appeals to Caesar and is sent to Nero who is in Corinth. (RE, p498) Tradition holds that his luck runs out at this point and is beheaded by Nero. Aside from Nero having turned

against the Christians two years earlier, Paul/Saul's activities may have been linked with the outside revolutionary forces invading Jerusalem as well. The odd thing about Philip, Agrippa's Commander, is that he synchronizes with Philip, the Evangelist. He had two daughters who escaped a massacre by crawling into a cave like the Evangelist had 'four virgin daughters who prophesied'. They both lived in Caesaria. Paul stayed at Agrippa's palace where Philip, the Commander was. The Commander was part of the 'Peace Party' with Paul. Both Paul and he had to appeal to Caesar to justify their actions in 66 CE.

Scholars widely believe that the visit of the Parthian King Tiridates to Nero in celebration of their peace deal in Armenia inspired Matthew's story about the Magi. Tiridates was reported to have exclaimed to Nero: "I have come to thee, my god, to worship thee as I do Mithras." He brought the sons of three other Parthian kings. The priests who accompanied them were magi as was Tiridates. In addition, Tiridates "did not return by the route he had followed in coming" according to Cassius Dio.

67 CE

Vespasian's army moves into Galilee wiping out all opposition. Josephus as a commander of a Jewish garrison is trapped in a cave by Romans. He organizes a suicide pact for his troop of soldiers from which he emerges alive with one other person. When captured he survives the threat of crucifixion by prophesying from Hebrew Scripture that General Vespasian would become the 'ruler of the entire world'. Rabbi Yohanon ben Zakkai escapes from Jerusalem by pretending to be dead in a casket and his followers carrying him out persuade the Zealot guards and Romans not to pierce the casket with their swords by including some foul-smelling dung in the casket. He, later, obtains permission from the Romans to establish a school for Jewish Law in Yavni/Jamnia. This is where the Sanhedrin also relocates too and thus begins Rabbinical Judaism.

68 CE

Nero commits suicide with the help of his Greek Letters Secretary and servant, Epaphroditus, and four rivals vie for power. Roman armies patiently close in on Jerusalem as defenders fight amongst themselves. The Zealots take the Temple but are opposed and surrounded by militias loyal to the former High Priest Annas ben Annas. Twenty thousand Edomites (Idumaeans) come to the rescue of the Zealots but leave—and leave them in charge—after finding out they have been lied to and that Annas had not struck a deal with the Romans. Rumors were that Nero had resurrected, had been seen alive, and was raising an army in Parthia to conquer Rome. Three imposters in Parthia even claimed to be Nero.

Jewish Christians/Nazarenes/Ebionites could have fled to Pella earlier but it is possible they could have waited as long as Vespasian delaying his attack on Jerusalem to await the outcome of power struggles in Rome. Jewish rebels had destroyed the Hellenistic Pella that was several miles the other side of the Jordan and seventeen miles south of the Sea of Galilee about 66 CE. Pella had lots of water, greenery, and caves for habitation—and apparently a de-populated city.

69 CE

The Zealots and Sicarii crucify and kill all those who urge peace or are not purely Zealot enough including Idumaeen Southern war leaders like Niger of Perea. Niger had been a commander of the forces initially invading Jerusalem and killing the Temple and city elite. He had fought the initial Roman incursions and stories from his life may have gone into the crafting of the Gospels according to Eisenman. He had jumped off a burning building and was left for dead but three days later was found in a cave miraculously alive. The Zealots also forced him to carry his cross before his execution. Zealots also burn grain supplies to make people fight as they starve rather than wait for peace. Romans crucify all those who try to escape Jerusalem in sight of the city.

Vespasian becomes Roman Emperor and un-chains Josephus who has made himself useful by trying to convince Jerusalem to surrender and helping to interrogate prisoners.

Titus Flavius Sabinus, whose father by the same name was brother to Vespasian and died in 69 CE in the attempt to make Vespasian Emperor, survived as a general and became consul this same year. The father is one candidate for 'Theophilus' to whom Acts of the Apostles is addressed but a more likely candidate is the son alive in the 80's who is father of consul Titus Flavius Clemens who was executed on the charge of 'atheism' by Domitian. Domitian, also, executed Sabinus, the father of Clemens when Sabinus happened to be saluted by someone as 'Imperator' which is only a prerogative of the Emperor. Three generations in a row paid with their lives for Vespasian's dynasty.

Polycarp is born and become one of the three 'Apostolic Fathers' having been ordained bishop of Smyrna in Asia by the Apostle John. He is martyred in 155 CE.

70 CE

Titus, son Vespasian, breaches the walls of Jerusalem, destroys the Temple, and either kills, enslaves, or drives into exile all the inhabitants. Josephus claims a million Jews died over all in the war since many pilgrims were caught in the city while ninety-seven thousand were enslaved.

Josephus has completed his first edition in Aramaic of 'Conquest of Jerusalem' which has not been discovered but from which, probably, the 'Slavonic Josephus' derives.

Emperor Vespasian, according to Eusebius, orders all descendants of David to be hunted down and killed in the Empire to prevent more Jewish insurgencies. His reign is marked by an increase in supernatural stories about the Emperor, buying off historians he favors, punishing those who criticize him, and censoring official histories.

Vespasian institutes Fiscus Judaicus which is a tax that all Jews in the Empire including women and children must pay of two denarii per head to replace the tithe adult Jewish men had paid to the Jerusalem Temple.

71 CE

Titus travels and visits Antioch in Syria confirming the ancient rights of the Jews in that city, visits Egypt, and returns to Rome. The Greek translation of Josephus' 'Conquest of Jerusalem' was finished in time for the triumphant victory march in Rome in June—which has not been discovered but, probably, Eusebius abstracted from it to create the 'Slavonic Josephus'.

About this time the 'Second Apocalypse of James' is published as an in-group devotional piece that responds to the letters of Paul by uplifting James and is published probably after the destruction of the Temple with the prediction of its demise and before the publishing of Mark. It betrays no knowledge of--or bitterness towards--the Roman Gospels but rejects the Pauline mission in the voice of Jesus speaking of James: "you are not the redeemer or a helper of strangers" in uplifting James as a redeemer figure. It has James challenging the Temple and High Priestly establishment as productions of a malevolent demi-urge. The Holy Spirit makes a brief appearance as the 'Virgin'. Just prior to this Jesus is explained as the 'milk brother' of James. It is possible this is a metaphoric experience arising when James is "deliberating" with the milk being that of the Holy Spirit, the Mother.

Ca 74 CE

The Gospel of Mark is published for only the initiated as a very sophisticated and extensive literary effort that includes 'Secret Mark' in response to the 'Second Apocalypse of James'. Jesus comes in the mode of a Greek mystery school teacher and divine man rather than a Hebrew renunciate revealer. None of the Jewish associates and family of Jesus understands him. The mystic kiss that Jesus gives James in 'James' becomes the kiss of Judas in Mark. The first witness to the divinity of Jesus is a Roman centurion. The names of the first two witnesses after the resurrection after the appearance to Mary Magdalene who were walking in the country are missing so as not to give any publicity to James the Just. There is no mention of the Hebraic Wisdom/the Mother/the Virgin as the Holy Spirit. Herod Antipas is left out of the Passion week in contrast to the Gospel of Peter which lessens the embarrassment for the Herodian relatives. The resurrection happens on the first day of the week in contrast to the previous day for the Gospel of Peter so as not to coincide with the Jewish Sabbath.

75 CE

King Agrippa and his sister, Berenice, move to Rome where he is made a praetor (magistrate) and Berenice once again becomes the lover of Titus who she had been the lover of during the War. Berenice had used all her influence and wealth to help make Vespasian the emperor but Josephus reported that Agrippa and Berenice had had an incestuous relationship and that rumor may have delayed their move to Rome. Berenice was at the height of her power for a few years but public pressure made Titus send her away from Rome.

Ca 76

'The Sophia of Jesus Christ' is probably published around this time in Egypt by the Samaritan community as a non-confrontational response to Mark and probably before the publishing of John. The work opens with "his twelve disciples and seven women" in trying to meld the Roman story and the mystic tradition. In the body of the work is mentioned "the interpreter"

who was sent in seemingly to refer to Christ. This may have been where “the Comforter” came from in John that actually was a neutral way of referring to the feminine Holy Spirit. This would date the work before about Ca 97 CE. This work stands squarely in the Bridal Chamber Christianity tradition in utilizing the Sophia Mythos, referring to souls as “drops” from the light, details that the divine pattern is androgeny and “unclean rubbing”—physical sex is the problem, refers to gnosis, and uses verbiage like: “(the) untraceable (wealth of the Great) Invisible (Spirit)”.

Ca 77 CE

The First Apocalypse of James is produced as a response to Mark and takes no prisoners unlike the earlier Apocalypse of James which merely tries to distance James from Judaism. This work forthrightly denies that Jesus and James are brothers in the flesh and rejects the entire heritage of Judaism: “Leave Jerusalem. For, it is she who always gives the cup of bitterness to the sons of light.” However, it is devotional in having hymns and Hebraic in its uplifting of James and open discussion of Wisdom and the Sophia Mythos and, so, is probably Samaritan. This work denies the suffering of Jesus upon the cross who, then, appears to James and kisses him. It discusses the transmission of information that will go from James to Addai (who would be Judas Thomas) to Levi (who would be Matthew). The women disciples are complimented and encouraged but James rebukes “the twelve”. The text is corrupted at this point but it is clear that a minority of the disciples conspire to kill James. The rest say: “We have no part in his blood for a just man will perish through injustice” which is transposed to the hand-washing of Pilate when Matthew is published.

78 CE

Josephus publishes ‘The Jewish War’ in Rome.

79 CE

Emperor Vespasian dies of a fever but his legendary wit is intact. His last words are: “O my! I think I am becoming a god!” His son, Titus, succeeds as Emperor. He brought Jewish Queen Berenice back to Rome as his consort but had to send her away quickly after public criticism. He did away with the law of treason that involved slander and libel as well and tried to revive the imperial cult. Upon realizing he had spent a day without benefitting anyone, Titus stated “Friends, I have lost a day”.

81 CE

Titus discovers his brother, Domitian, was plotting against him but refuses to have him killed. He dies suddenly of a strange fever at the age of 41 and his brother, Domitian, succeeds him. The last words of Titus were “I have made only one mistake”. Philostratus claimed that Titus was poisoned by his brother. Suetonius reports that Domitian was the first emperor who demanded to be addressed as “master and god”. He moved the seat of government away from the Senate to his court and began to micro-manage every aspect of life as if he were a divine monarch. His chief gods were Minerva and Jupiter.

Ca 82

The Gospel of Matthew is the first of the Roman Gospels published with the public in mind to re-write and put its own spin on the 'Gospel According to the Hebrews' with which the Gentile converts are being confronted with. The author could very well have been Epaphroditus in Rome who constructs a genealogy and the virgin birth theology to counter Jewish accusations that Jesus was born out of wedlock to a Roman soldier. Jesus is spun in the direction of a Greek god, also, to avoid the Roman perception of his being a magician. The mystic kiss in the two previous works of James are transposed in the kiss of Judas. The "thirty pieces of silver" Judas is bribed with are transposed from the bribe to Pilate in the Gospel of Peter so as not to embarrass the Romans. The hand-washing incident where Pilate says: "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" is taken from the First Apocalypse of James where disciples of Jesus hear of the plot to kill James involving other disciples and say: "We have no part in this blood, for a just man will perish through injustice".

85 CE

Domitian nominated himself to be a 'perpetual censor' whose job it was to regulate the morals of the Empire. Adulterers could be exiled, divorce punished, libel and satire of the government was prohibited, but corruption was also prosecuted.

Marcion of Sinope is born about this year and was the son of a bishop on the Black Sea who became bishop himself with a large following that challenged Orthodoxy in Rome before he was excommunicated about 143 CE. He rejected the deity of the Old Testament and accepted as canon only a version of the Gospel of Luke and ten of the letters of Paul. He accepted the 'Substitutionary Atonement' of Christ for human sins but held to a docetist view of Christ that he only appeared to have a human body.

Ca 86

The Gospel of Luke is the second Roman Gospel published for the general public. It was possibly issued in the alarm over Domitian beginning to micro-manage religion and morals as the 'perpetual censor'. It became the great universal gospel uplifting women, Samaritans, and all other constituencies of the Roman Empire. It spun the Gospel away from Judaism in taking the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam rather than just to David. So effective was this that the heretic Marcion in 150 Ca accepted only Luke among the Gospels. Its companion book, Acts of the Apostles, documents how much magic was being practiced in the early churches before Church held sway: In 19:19, enough magical books were burned in Ephesus to total what Morton Smith estimated in 1978 to be \$320,000.00.

88 CE

The granddaughter of Vespasian, Flavia Domitilla by consul Titus Flavius Clemens, grandson of Vespasian's brother, gave birth about this year and two years later to two sons who were adopted by Domitian as his heirs. They named both of them Titus Flavius. One of them, most likely, was the grandfather of the first great theologian of Christianity in Alexandria, Clement of Alexander,

who was born Titus Flavius Clemens about 150 CE. Flavia Domitilla has always been regarded as a Christian saint with the catacombs associated with her name. The charge against her and her husband of 'atheism' a half dozen years later is a dead give-away for being charged with either adherence to Judaism or Christianity. Clemens also is considered a Christian saint and is, possibly, Clement I who succeeded Peter and maybe succeeded Pope Linus. At least the Pope Clement who wrote the letter, Clement I, is erudite and eloquent in making extensive use of the Old Testament which speaks of an excellent education. Eisenman thinks as well that Titus Flavius Clemens is to be associated with the Clementine literature or is at least the hero of it.

89 CE

General Saturninus with two legions in a German province revolts and is quickly put down by the loyal General Trajan who purposely destroys the evidence of any wider conspiracy involving Roman Senators.

Ca 90 CE

The Gospel of Thomas was probably conceived around Edessa about a half century after the Crucifixion, maybe crafted carefully for a few years, and published after the Synoptics which it utilizes to make its own points and before the Gospel of John which scholars agree was produced to counter Thomas. Picknett and Prince summarize analysis of its language to conclude it was composed between 75-100 CE. Thomas stands in the line of 'Bridal Chamber' works beginning with the sermons making up the Dialogue of the Savior which are followed by 'Joseph and Asenath'. Following Thomas in this line are 'The Gospel of Philip' and the 'Odes of Solomon' among others. The First and Second Apocalypse of James should be included in this trajectory although they do not mention the Bridal Chamber. They all descend from a Samaritan milieu utilizing a meditation technique involving water or a mirror called the psychomantium which they termed 'the Bridal Chamber'. Thomas uses conventional Synoptic Roman thought-forms to make its point about inner knowledge of the higher self which is conceived as an ecstatic dew drop of divine consciousness outside of space and time as we know it. It accepts the Sophia Mythos and the Holy Spirit as the Mother in Logoi 4, 101, 105, and 107. In fact, L 30 and 50 are clearly abstracted from the one soul travel story in the First Apocalypse of James. It talks about the archons and the demiurge (Jehovah) in Logoi 7, 30, 40, 50, and 109. It refers to Simon in L 60 that is a funny parody on the 'Good Shepherd' with a Samaritan going to Jerusalem with a lamb around his neck intending to eat it. Queen Helen is referred to in L 21 which represents her twenty-one years of nazirite vows and references her grain-buying: "When the grain ripened, he came quickly with his sickle in his hand and reaped it." Although conventional scholarship views Thomas as a hodge-podge collection of wise sayings it was actually intricately crafted to be understood with a handful of simple and logical protocols. The context convention means that every saying can be interpreted by the one after it—believe it or not. The number convention means that numbers generally have a dimension of meaning. Logoi 1, 2, 11, 22, and 111 all relate to each other, for example. The doublet convention refers to the many different kinds of doublets interspersed throughout which refer to the higher and lower selves. The Jubilee

convention refers to the pentacontad calendar structure and overall design of Thomas where extended discussions are spaced forty-nine sayings apart.

The great heterodox and Gnostic theologian, Valentinus, is born about this year in Egypt. He believed Primal Being gave birth to thirty aeons (which, oddly, corresponds to John, the Baptists' thirty disciples). They existed in fifteen pairs or complementary syzygies. One of the lowest, called Sophia, fell into matter and, along with her demiurge Sakla, ended up trapping the immortal light in matter. He held that there were three basic kinds of people. Spiritual people would return to the Pleroma from which they came. Psychic Christians would survive the body but not be able to return to the Pleroma. Material people would perish. He moved to Rome in 136 CE and was almost elected Pope. Failing that he retired to Cypress after ten years and started his own very successful church. The Nag Hammadi text called 'The Gospel of Truth' is undoubtedly his gospel or at least Valentinian.

92 CE

King Agrippa dies.

Aristobulus of Chalcis apparently dies as his reign in Chalcis ends.

93 CE

Christian tradition has it that Domitian began a persecution of Christians in this period but it was only a purge of relatives, twenty Roman Senators, and others which may have been related to the Saturninus conspiracy. A number of these prominent people were Christians killed for that reason as one reason, perhaps, among others but these were probably executed in year 96 CE.

94 CE

Josephus pens 'Antiquities of the Jews' and shows by his satire in the stories about Queen Helen that her 'husband' named 'Saturnilus' in the Pontius Pilate section is already the real life prominent successor to Menander in Syria or Edessa. The joke is that while Queen Helen was lampooned as being part of a harem that Saturnilus was, apparently, the first to reject sex and marriage altogether for those in his group—the Saturnilians. He taught the usual mystery school teachings that there is an unknown Father God behind the great angelic hierarchy, seven creative spheres or dimensions, that lower angels engineered the human body but the Power Above sent a life spark to each person.

Basilides in Egypt was a contemporary of Saturnilus in Egypt and also a student of Menander. They both could have been born roughly around 60 CE and assuming Menander lived a normal lifespan from roughly 15 CE to 90 CE. We only know of Basilides in his later decades of 117-136 CE. He wrote two dozen commentaries on the Christian Gospel but Orthodoxy was successful in destroying them all except fragmentary quotes. His movement survived for two centuries.

Ca 94 CE

Acts of the Apostles is published by the same author who wrote Luke in a time when memories are fading away, principal witnesses to events are passing away, and there may be increasing anxiety about persecutions since it falsifies history. Acts may have been written by Epaphroditus about this year since he probably had access to a manuscript of 'Antiquities of the Jews' by Josephus which he apparently used. The journeys and theology of Paul conflict a bit with the letters of Paul. James is cut out of the history pretty thoroughly with no mention of his election to succeed Jesus or his stoning. Queen Helen and King Izates are satirized in the 'Queen Kandake' episode. Peter is transformed into a Pauline Christian. No mention is made of the death of Paul who, also, hobnobs with the 'rich and famous' such as Festus, Felix and Drusilla in arguing that Christians are no threat to the Empire.

95 CE

Fiscus Judaicus was a tax of two drachmas a head in the Empire that Jews paid that included women and children but Christians did not until it was expanded by Domitian to include 'those who lived a Jewish life' to include Christians and to include those even older than sixty-two.

Domitian executes a cell of highly placed Christians in his inner circle. Those executed include Epaphroditus who was a secretary to Domitian but a probable sponsor of both Josephus and Paul. Paul calls him his "brother, co-worker, and comrade-in-arms" in Philippians 2:25. The cagey Domitian must have gotten wind of this small, secret cell of Christians and decided to wipe them out. It includes the consul Titus Flavius Clemens, grandson of Vespasian's brother, married to Vespasian's granddaughter, Flavia Domitilla whose two children had been groomed as heirs to the throne. The charge was 'atheism'. Dio Cassius claims it was for "Judaizing tendencies" which may have related to not paying the Fiscus Judaicus tax. She and the children were exiled. Clemens's father had also been executed by Domitian. Clemens is probably the Apostolic Father, Clement of Rome, who wrote the First Epistle of Clement to the church at Corinth. The letter is dated between 95-97 CE referencing the persecutions of Domitian: "by reason of the sudden and repeated calamities and reverses which have befallen us".

96 CE

Domitian is assassinated in September in a sophisticated plot by servants of Epaphroditus and Clemens who stab him to death. An advisor named Nerva succeeds Domitian as emperor but declines to execute the offenders until his own life is threatened. Nerva did abolish the Jewish tax except for those practicing Judaism. He even had printed on his coins "abolition of malicious prosecution in connection with the Jewish tax".

Saint Narcissus of Jerusalem is born who became Metropolitan after age 80 and lived to be 117 years old.

Ca 97 CE

The Gospel of John is published about now according to scholars although it could have been in the early 90's since the First letter of Clement does make one similar comment to John 14:15. It was likely published around the Antioch in Syria as a response to the Gospel of Thomas, specifically, and the Samaritan mystery school teachings in general. In contesting the Samaritan knowledge and viewpoints it admits that John the Baptist evangelized among the Samaritans in Aenon and that Jesus had an early and large number of Samaritan disciples—which supposedly arose from the 'Woman at the Well' incident. The 'disciple that Jesus loved' mystery might be a secret bow to Mary Magdalene or to those who knew it was her. John plays up correspondences with Moses who Samaritans revered. Thomas in contrast to the Synoptics shows up in John not believing in the physical resurrection but then is made to confess upon seeing Jesus. Jesus then snubs Thomas "blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed." The spiritual ascent—higher-self theology of Thomas is countered with the Logos Theology in John that is absent from the Synoptics and is so lofty as to say that disciples cannot follow Jesus. Disciples need not seek after Wisdom. All they need to do is believe and they are saved automatically.

Ca 98

Revelations is published sometime in the 90's many scholars think. The author appears to be a Jewish-Christian from the fixation on the number seven and half of seven who seems to be in Asia Minor. Obscure Jewish Christian sources and an early theologian in Rome named Caius assert that the author was a Jewish Christian teacher named Cerinthus who supposedly was contemporaneous with and contended with John, the Apostle, in Asia Minor. Like Simon he held there was a God above the Old Testament God but, however, who was not evil. Cerinthus held to the Jewish law, maintained Jesus was not divine but that a divine Son of Man-type being came at his baptism and left at his crucifixion. Irenaeus describes Cerinthus as "a man educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians" which resonates with Simon. The interesting thing about both Revelations and Cerinthus is that they both believe in a thousand years of a peaceful reign of Christ before the final ascension into heaven.

Ca 99

The allegorical Shepherd of Hermas is published in this era which betrays an adoptionist viewpoint but was very popular and regarded as scripture by many.

100 CE

The Elcesaites allege that in this year a new remission of sins is announced—which would correspond, actually, with the second fifty Jubilee celebration of the birth of King Izates.

About this year it is estimated by scholars that the Dialogue of the Savior is produced. This writer assesses that it is composed of four much earlier sermons and a sayings collection that are collated with several Johannine paragraphs added about faith in the 'Only Begotten Son'.

103 CE

Justin Martyr, the Christian Apologist, is born in Samaria and later claims that all Samaritans follow after Simon Magus.

104 CE

The first bishop of Erbil (Arbela), capitol of Adiabene, was Pkidha or Paqida who served until 114 CE. This line of bishops developed into a leading center of Syriac Christianity and became the Metropolitanate of Hadyab in 410 CE which stretched as far as Nisibis.

Ca 105 CE

The Gospel of Philip is published sometime probably after the Gospel of John which is quoted and sometime before Trajan invades the East in 113 CE in the full-throated confidence of a well-developed Bridal Chamber Christianity mystery school. In fact the true title of this work should be ‘Sermon on the Mirrored Bridal Chamber’. It opens with the Romans (“Gentiles”) being informed that they are just beginners and don’t really understand the reality behind the theological terms they bandy about. The archons are discussed who have malevolently interfered in our religious as well as human affairs. The Holy Spirit is identified as Sophia and the Sophia Mythos is affirmed. The Virgin Birth is denied and a distinction is subtly made between Jesus, the man and Christ who overshadowed him. Next, comes the long argument for the Bridal Chamber without which it isn’t possible to “see the King”. The many references to water and mirrors are the most clearly defined references in all the Bridal Chamber literature of the psychomantium meditation technique that was used. The Bridal Chamber is explicitly referred to as “the mirrored Bridal Chamber” and again: “None can see himself in water or in a mirror without light. Nor again can you see in light without water and mirror.” The purpose of the bridal chamber is both to unite with one’s spirit and to unite the female and male twin souls whose separation is symbolized by the creation of Adam and Eve. The author makes quite a number of sophisticated arguments for celibacy such as that our genetics come from interference of the Demiurge which led to adultery and murder; that we need to give up sexuality to unite with our higher selves to really see God; that the truly holy receive “conception” from each other “with a kiss”, and “spiritual love is wine and fragrance. All those who anoint themselves with it take pleasure in it”. The goal is to unite with who is like ourselves as in our twin soul rather than with someone who is different. The author emphasizes the importance of the Bridal Chamber sacrament as doorway to the Bridal Chamber of the higher self that is outside of the time stream so that after death a person isn’t wandering lost in the astral plane of their old thoughts or the “Middle Way” and that they are not ‘detained’ by the archons—helpers of the Demiurge-- and prevented from accessing higher realms.

107 CE

Trajan annexes the kingdom of Nabataea (S. Jordan, NW Saudi Arabia)

108 CE

Ignatius, the third bishop of Antioch, is martyred in the Roman Colosseum by being thrown to wild beasts: “I am God’s wheat, and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts so that I may

become the pure bread of Christ.” (letter to the Romans) He emphasized the one human and divine nature of Christ, the importance of the Eucharist being the real body and blood of Christ, and the importance of having one bishop in each city. He mocks the docetist view that Christ only appeared to suffer in ‘Letters to the Trallians and Smyrnans’.

Ca 110

Valentinus is initiated by Theudas into a secret initiation which Theudas received from Paul.

Ca 111 CE

Pliny the Younger, Governor of Bithynia-Pontus corresponds with Emperor Trajan about how to treat those accused of being Christian in letters between 110 CE and 112 CE (probably Pauline Christians). Trajan responds by saying they should not be sought out and not persecuted based on anonymous accusations but can be punished-killed if accusations are verified by refusing to curse Christ. Christian back-sliders may be released. The correspondence indicates no widespread persecution up to this time and that the Christians met very early on a certain day before the sun was up for worship and simple meals worshipping Christ ‘as a god’. Pliny executes those convicted of being Christian but sends those who are Roman citizens to Rome. Trajan bans ‘clubs’ or ‘political associations’ like these Christian meetings and Christians seem to have complied. It is clear from the Pliny’s interrogation of Christians that he had a Pauline one before him but expected ones involved with magic: “What this I hear of nocturnal meetings? ‘We’re working people, so we have to meet before dawn. Like all working people, we have to be at work before sunrise.’ What are the spells you sing? ‘They aren’t magical spells, they’re hymns.’ Do you evoke, as a demon, that crucified criminal? ‘No, we worship him as a god’”.

113 CE

Trajan begins an Eastern campaign, attacks Armenia and deposes the Parthian-appointed monarchy.

114 CE

King Abgar VII sends envoys to Trajan placating him with gifts and, then, entertaining him in Edessa where Trajan was given two hundred and fifty mailed horsemen. Trajan moves on to Nisibis and the conquering of the capital of Parthia.

Bishop Pkidha (Paqida) of Erbil, Adiabene dies with no known replacement until 120 CE

115 CE

Trajan takes over Nisibis.

Roman writer, Tacitus, from about 110 CE to about this year in ‘The Annals of Imperial Rome’ mentions the Christian founder having been crucified by Pontius Pilate as well as documenting the Christians scapegoated for the burning of Rome and crucified under Nero in 64 CE as “a

huge multitude...convicted, not so much of arson but as of hatred of the human race". Morton Smith concludes this "is most plausibly understood as referring to magic" However, it is even more reasonably understood to refer to elements of the Sophia Mythos where the androgenous Adam was seen as divided by the demiurge into human embodiments and where the object is to reject child-bearing and return to the primordial light. Some renditions of the Sophia Mythos say humans were bio-engineered by the archon minions of the demiurge using what would be archon DNA, so to speak.

116 CE

Trajan attacks Adiabene, Babylon, the capitol of Parthia, and Charax in order. Adiabene becomes the Roman client state of 'Assyria'. Trajan places a Roman hostage, Parthamaspatas on the Parthian throne. Parthians and Jews—including the Abgar dynasty-- counter-attack in Mesopotamia and Armenia and succeed in wiping out Roman garrisons while Jewish rebellions break out in Libya, Egypt, and Cypress where several hundred thousand Greeks and Romans are massacred apiece. General Quietus puts down the Parthian rebellion mostly as Abgar the VII perishes and Edessa is ravaged in the tumult and moves on to defeating the rebels in Lydda.

117 CE

Trajan's health deteriorates, he travels back West, and dies on August 9 but not before he martyrs the second bishop of Jerusalem and cousin of James, Simeon.

Carpocrates about this time through about 161 CE taught in Alexandria the doctrine that Jesus was not divine but remembered his past lives and soul lessons from the 'unbegotten God' which he used to free himself from the demiurge and archons that normally bind a soul to the material world. This is similar to the idea of 'anamnesis' or remembering of the soul employed by Socrates and Plato. Carpocratians believed that to escape rebirth one needed to experience every aspect of earthly life so they were noted for their licentious lifestyle, use of magic in which they were alleged to utilize bodily fluids, and the holding of money and property in common. Clement of Alexandria claimed that 'unclean demons' taught Carpocrates who stole a copy of 'Secret Mark' and perverted the meaning. Consequently, Clement advises that "one must never yield to them as they expound their lies, nor concede that the secret gospel was written by Mark, but deny it even under oath."

118 CE

New Emperor Hadrian abandons Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Osroene to Parthia under Roman suzerainty. Parthian King Parthamaspatas is deposed in Parthia, flees to Rome, and is installed as joint ruler in Osroene with Yalur until 122 CE.

120 CE

Valentinus about this year receives a vision of the risen Christ and begins teaching in Alexandria.

Bishop Samson in Erbil (Arbela), Adiabene is elected.

Tatian is born in Adiabene about this time who wrote the Diatessaron—a harmony of the Four Gospels used exclusively in Eastern Churches for centuries. He moved to Rome, was a pupil of Justin Martyr, followed Valentinus, and opened his own school. Irenaeus (Haer.,I.,xxvlii.1 Antenicene Fathers,i-353) says he was expelled from Rome for his encratic (ascetic) views. Later, Aphrates in Syria (270-345 CE) reflects Tatian in holding that baptism should involve taking a vow of celibacy. Tatian returned to start a school in Mesopotamia that influenced a wide area including the Antioch in Syria. He believed the Fall put us under the power of demons but humans have the choice of who to serve.

Ca 121 CE

The Second Treatise of the Great Seth is published when it is still possible to remember the Samaritan cultic cultural context in the era of Simon/Jesus and events of his life are still fresh in oral tradition since the Crucifixion is described three different times. Treat.Seth stands squarely in the Bridal Chamber tradition in explicating the Sophia Mythos and referring to a “new and perfect bridal chamber of the heavens” and in the voice of Jesus: “It was my going to the revealed height which the world did not accept, my third baptism in a revealed image.” Presumably, the other two baptisms were of water and of fire (Holy Spirit) and the three images would be the physical, the astral-dream body, and the dew drop of the higher self which is the image of God. The author speaks in the voice of the “Son of Man” who was commissioned by the great assembly of the Majesty and took over the body of the human “Simon, who bore the cross on his shoulder”. The Son of Man didn’t suffer in the Crucifixion but just laughed at the foolishness. Treat.Seth also describes a period after the Crucifixion as well when the mystery school is persecuted “not only by those who are ignorant but also by those who think they are advancing the name of Christ, since they were unknowingly empty, not knowing who they are, like dumb animals.” As early as the Fifties CE, Simonians and those who were open minded enough to also frequent pagan temples were booted out of Roman Churches. Women who played a big role in the mystery schools were told to keep silent. The voluminous writings of Basilides, Valentinus, and others of this era were all destroyed. Treat.Seth goes on to refer to the Romans in general: “you will become victorious in everything, in war and battles, jealous division and wrath. But in the uprightness of our love we are innocent, pure, and good, since we have a mind of the Father in an ineffable mystery.” This could refer to Trajan’s recent incursions into Osrhoene.

122 CE

Parthamaspates becomes sole ruler of Osrhoene.

Roman historian Suetonius after this date writes about either “a new and maleficent superstition” or “a new superstition (that involved the practice of) magic” in referencing Christians crucified by Nero supposedly for burning down Rome in 64 CE. Either verbiage connotes magic since the former version is similar to the accusation in John 18:30 of “a doer of evil”. (S,p33)

123 CE

Parthamaspatēs dies and the traditional monarchy is restored to Osrhoene in Edessa under Ma'nu VII. Bishop Samson dies and no known bishop is elected until 135 CE. The Abgar kings have probably lost control of Adiabene at this point for good.

130 CE

Emperor Hadrian visits Judaea and plans to make Jerusalem a pagan city.

131 CE

Construction begins on a pagan temple on the Jewish Temple site and Hadrian bans circumcision.

132 CE

The Bar Kochba revolt begins touched off by Hadrian's visit as Rabbi Kosiva suggests Simon Bar Kosiba should be called "bar Kockhba" in fulfillment of the messianic Star Prophecy of Numbers 24:17.

Ca 134 CE

The Odes of Solomon could have been published about this time using a Jewish Old Testament format and revealing a complete rejection of the Pauline Church in appealing to the populace of Palestine, Syria, and Osrhoene angry at Rome for repressing the Bar Kochba revolt. It stands squarely in the lineage of Bridal Chamber Christianity with its Trinitarian and Sophia Mythos theology, reference to the use of mirrors in Ode 13, and use of Bridal Chamber terminology and imagery in Ode 42. It lays out a scathing critique of Paul and the Roman Church as imitating the true Church and being the "Corruptor" in Odes 33 and 38. The Odes resonates with the Gospel of Thomas a great deal throughout, utilizes the Gospel of John, and shows familiarity with the context of another Bridal Chamber work called "The Second Treatise of the Great Seth".

135 CE

Bishop Isaac of Erbil (Arbella), Adiabene serves until 148 CE and is followed by Bishop Abraham who serves until 163 CE.

136 CE

The most prominent Gnostic teacher and theologian, Valentinus, moves to Rome. Clement of Alexandria says that Valentinus claims to have received the secret gnosis from a Theudas who claimed he was one who received it in secret transmission from Paul, the Apostle.

The Bar Kokhbar Revolt is finally put down with Jews and Jewish-Christians barred from Jerusalem and Judaism is transformed into a religion centered around the synagogue. Some Jewish religious leaders are flayed or burned alive with the intent of extending their torture as long as possible.

142 CE

Marcion of Sinope visits Rome and makes a large donation but it is returned after his theology is rejected and he is excommunicated. His movement which rejects the Old Testament deity is a robust challenge especially in Asia Minor to the Roman Church. The rejection of many books in the Bible prompted the Church to create the 'canon' of acceptable books.

Ca 143

Valentinus loses the election for Pope and continues to teach in Rome.

Ca 150 CE

Clement of Alexandria is born who is the first great theologian of the Church. He very well could have been the great-grandchild of Titus Flavius Clemens who was executed by Domitian as a Christian.

Pope Anicetus of Rome is elected about this year and the Gnostic Valentinus, probably having lost this election for the papacy, departs for Cypress to set up a competing church. Pope Anicetus bans long hair for priests (like gnostics wore) and became the first Roman Bishop to forbid heresy by banning Montanists.

154 CE

The famous heterodox Christian and philosopher, Bardaisan, is born in Edessa. He is raised with a thorough knowledge of Babylonian astrology and educated with the future King Abgar IX. He marries and has three sons.

155 CE

Justin Martyr within a two year period pens his First Apologia to Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius arguing that Christ is the incarnation of the Logos and that anyone—even non-Christians before Christ such as Socrates and Heraclitus—who have spoken with reason are connected to Christ and are, therefore, Christians. Only evil-doers should be punished. He argues against the Simonians: "Whether those legendarily evil works they perform—overturning the lamp, unrestrained sexual intercourse, and feasting on human flesh—are true we do not know, but they are neither persecuted nor put to death by you on account of the doctrines they hold..." (Apologia 26.2,6,7.) 'Overturning the lamp' is a euphemistic phrase referring to the psychomantium meditation process.

Polycarp, one of the three 'Apostolic Fathers' is martyred in very old age.

Ca 160

Justin Martyr pens 'Dialogue with Trypho' in defending Christianity against a fictional Jewish opponent.

Valentinus, teaching in Cypress, dies.

Tertullian, the great opponent of Gnosticism, is born in Carthage.

165 CE

King Ma'nu VIII is replaced in Edessa by a loyalist of Parthia as they war with Rome. Roman forces besiege Edessa, the pro-Roman populace in Edessa slaughters the Parthian garrison, and the Roman forces are admitted to the city.

Justin Martyr was tried by a Roman urban prefect about this year and beheaded.

Tatian, the student of Justin Martyr who had established his own school in Rome is kicked out of the Roman Church for his ascetic/encratic/celebrate views and support for Valentinus.

166 CE

King Ma'nu VIII is re-instated on the throne.

Ca 170

Julius Cassian flourishes in Alexandria and is later reported by Clement of Alexandria (see Stromateis iii. 13, seq. and VII. xvii) to have been the originator of Docetism that preceded Tatian. Cassian rejected marriage and child-bearing in saying that humans had spiritual bodies that preceded our "coats of skin". His view of Christ was that Christ only appeared to incarnate.

Lucius, A Roman essayist and lecturer, characterized Christianity: "They still reverence that man who was put on a stake in Palestine because he introduced into (human) life this new initiation."—pagan essayist, Lucian, in 'Life of Peregrinus', Ca 170 CE who is probably referring to what is known as the Bridal Chamber sacrament.

Ca 172

Tatian probably composes the Gospel harmony he called the Diatessaron in Syrian before this date which was widely used rather than the individual gospels which probably facilitated Orthodoxy in its acceptance of the Roman viewpoint.

Ca 175

Heracleon, the most prominent follower of Valentinus, teaches around this time and is the first exegete of the four Gospels who Clement of Alexandria quotes sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. Heracleon teaches that the Son of Man and Savior are two different beings and the God of the Jews is a demiurge not hostile to the Father of all but ignorant. He moves from Sicily to become a leading figure in Rome.

Axionicus, a famous gnostic at Antioch, is active until roughly 225

Ca 176

St Narcissus became Bishop of Jerusalem after this year and at the age of eighty and died at 117 years of age.

177 CE

Abgar IX, called Abgar, the Great, becomes King of Osroene. Bardaisan joins the Court of King Abgar. Bardaisan, apparently, only speaks Syriac and writes his philosophical treatises in that language.

Celsus, A Platonist, about this date wrote 'The True Word' which was an anti-Christian book saying Jesus was the illegitimate son of a woman who was a spinner and a Roman soldier name Panthera. Jesus went to Egypt, learned some magic, and returned proclaiming himself a god.

178 CE

Pope Julian of Alexandria becomes the Metropolitan, serves for eleven years, and ordains Clement of Alexandria to the priesthood during this time.

179 CE

Bardaisan converts to Christianity upon hearing the sermon of Bishop Hystaspes of Edessa. He becomes a presbyter and begins the conversion of King Abgar IX to Christianity. Abgar corresponds with Pope Eleuterus about becoming Christian. This letter is later mistakenly attributed to a 'King Lucius' in 'Britanio' or Britain but Adolf von Harnack is the first to realize it came from Lucius Aelius Septimus Megas Abgar IX whose fortress in Edessa is named 'Britio'. The letter can be no later than the period from 189 CE when the papacy of Eleuterus ends. King Abgar is credited with the Christian conversion of Edessa. Bardaisan composes a book of one hundred and fifty hymns in imitation of the Psalms in pentasyllabic meter and set to folk tunes which were used for many generations of Christians in Osroene until they were purposely over-written by St Ephrem in the next century. Only the allegorical 'Hymn on the Soul' survives. The voluminous writings of Bardaisan have been destroyed but he held to a version of Valentinianism although he wrote against both Valentinus as well as Marcian. He believed in an almighty deity who was creator of heaven and earth and that humans have free will to work out their salvation in this world which is a mixture of light and darkness. We learn from his hymnody that the 'Father of Life' and the 'Mother of life' brought forth the Son who is identical with the Word and the Logos. However, from St Ephrem we learn he believed Jesus to be a child from the sexual union of his human parents. Since he, apparently, held the docetist view that Jesus did not suffer on the Cross and that he was "clothed in the body of an angel" Bardaisan must hold the Jewish-Christian belief that the Son of Man came upon him at Baptism. The body of Christ was a special dispensation of resurrection and humans would not be resurrected into a physical body. Human life is a mixture of nature, fate, and free will since he believed the sun, moon, and planets were alive and mediated divinity. From 'The Book of the Laws of the Countries' about Bardaisan we learn "The spirits undergo changes when descending to the soul; and the souls while descending to the bodies." Bardaisan believed the spirit and soul

can ascend at death into “the Bridal Chamber of Light” so he is to be classed in the trajectory of Bridal Chamber Christianity beginning with Dialogue of the Savior though the Gospels of Thomas and Philip and others. Since he has a positive view of sexual relations in great contrast to the rest of Christianity he is to be classed with the Jewish-Christian group called the Alchasautes from Parthia that are contemporaneous with him and which arose in the tradition of the Gospel of Peter.

Ca 180

Clement of Alexandria arrives in Egypt to study under Pantaeus after studying under other Christian teachers such as Tatian.

Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyon and great opponent of Gnosticism, writes ‘Against Heresies’. He argues against the Apostolic Succession of the Valentinians that no bishops have been Gnostic. He was a hearer of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in Asia and one of the three ‘Apostolic Fathers’ who had been ordained by John, the Apostle.

Marcus was an important follower of Valentinus from Alexandria who moved to Lyon and came into conflict with Bishop Irenaeus. He had a vision of the divine feminine in the form of Silence.

Ptolemy, the Gnostic writer of Italian or Western Valentianism, is alive to at least this year and taught that the demiurge created the material world and is just but not good like God or evil like the lower devil. The Monad, God, has emanated 30 aeons from which we have fallen. He was the most important successor of Valentinus in developing Valentinian concepts into a system.

184 CE

The great theologian, Origen, is born who believed in the pre-existence of souls and universal reconciliation. He also had a subordinationist view of the Son in relation to the Father which Arius centuries later argued in his support. He did not, apparently, believe in reincarnation but that souls were born in life circumstances in relation to how far they had fallen from the divine vision in their pre-existence. Origen believed in a resurrection similar to the Pauline idea of a resurrection into a spiritual body and that because of the infinite number of worlds created by the Logos that spirits had lots of opportunity to be totally reconciled or grow progressively into unity with God in future existences. His interpretation of Scripture was both literal, allegorical, and that there was secret teaching: “...that certain doctrines not revealed to the majority are attained after the public ones is not unique to the teachings of Christians only, but also to that of the philosophers for whom some things were public teachings, but others private.”

Ca 185

Tatian dies.

Marcus, a prominent leader of the Valentinian Western gnostics, was mentioned by Irenaeus as an older contemporary. He believed we would be united in heaven by an angelic counterpart.

189 CE

Pope Victor I begins his decade as Pope and excommunicates Theodotus of Byzantium for his Adoptionist theology that Jesus was a man born of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit but who only became divine at baptism.

Clement of Alexandria is ordained to the priesthood and soon takes over from Pantaenus leadership of the Catechetical School. In his published works he affirms secret oral and written Christian transmission. He holds that below the Godhead are seven protostists or dimensional beings, then a level of archangels, then a level of angels, and then our material level which all evolve up a level every thousand years.

Ca 190 CE

Serapion of Antioch condemns the Gospel of Peter for its docetic tendencies which seems to suggest Jesus did not suffer.

191 CE

Serapion of Antioch is ordained Patriarch. He ordained Palut as bishop of Edessa to act against Gnosticizing tendencies of Bardaisan. Christians adhering to Roman views were so much in the minority in Edessa they were called 'Palutians'. Serapion had ordained and was supported by Pantaenus, the first head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria. The Catechetical School of Alexandria begun by Pantaenus and later made famous by Clement of Alexandria and Origen developed the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture—which is probably the only way they could combat Basilides and other mystery school descendants of Simon Magus-Jesus who were more honest and open about affirming the Old Testament God as a malevolent demiurge while the Orthodox Church kept their secret doctrines in oral transmission and in their own private copy of a longer edition of the Gospel of Mark. This allegorical method was also later opposed by the School of Antioch which was also more open about the two natures of Christ in their Adoptionist theologies.

194 CE

Abgar the Great in company with 'the King of Adiabene' lays siege to Nisibis but is defeated by the Roman Septimus Severus. The Romans appoint a procurator over Edessa but Abgar returns to the throne having thrown in his lot with the Romans. He took Roman names, sent his sons as hostage to Rome, and gave the Romans some archers.

195

St Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem, presides jointly with others over a synod of Palestinian bishops that decides Easter will always be celebrated on a Sunday rather than on Passover. Within a few years he retires from his office after some unjust criticism but is brought back to serve after the tenure of three other bishops.

Ca 196 CE

Jesus is spoofed on a graffito in Carthage with a figure in a toga with donkey ear and hoof of Seth and carrying a book: “The god of the Christians (is) a donkey who beds (with his worshipers)”

197 CE

Parthia besieges Nisibis, Edessa refuses to support them, and the Parthians are defeated. Osrhoene is declared a client state of Rome and Abgar is confirmed as the ‘the King of kings’ by the Romans.

Ca 198

Tertullian is converted to Christianity in Carthage.

199 CE

Pope Zephyrinus begins his seventeen year papacy in which he supports his flock persecuted by the Romans and suppresses the heresies of Marcion, Valentinus, and the charismatic-type Montanists.

200 CE

Paul of Samosata, Adoptionist Patriarch of Antioch, is born.

About this date was etched in a schoolroom on the Palantine hill in Rome a graffito of a donkey-headed Jesus in the image of Seth, the ‘son of Adam’ with the inscription: “Alexamenos reveres God”. Another bone crucifix found in Italy with date uncertain shows an ape crouching at the base of a living tree with a donkey crucified on it. This very well contrasts the animality of human life with the true life of the spiritual path.

202 CE

Clement of Alexandria because of the persecutions of Severus leaves Alexandria for Palestine where he gets a letter of recommendation from Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem in 211 CE to the Patriarch of Antioch where he probably dies around 215 CE

203 CE

Emperor Severus forbids conversion to Christianity.

Origen at about the age of nineteen, probably the most brilliant theologian in the first six hundred years of the Church, succeeds Clement as head of the Alexandrian Catechetical School after his

father is martyred the previous year. It is possible because of the young age of Origen, because of the brief interregnum in leadership of the School, or because of the current persecution that Origen may not have been initiated into the full secret oral and written tradition Clement had been privy to (Although his father may have been since the name 'Origen' seems to mean 'child of Horus' and could betray a syncretistic religious perspective that would have been common to Simon Magus.) Origen is unaffected in his various Christian ministries possibly because the persecution only affects converts.

Ca 205

King Abgar visits Rome and is given the most elaborate reception since the days of Nero.

Ca 207

Church Father Tertullian supports the Montanist heresy which began in the middle of the previous century in Asia Minor and involved ecstatic prophesying and women bishops and presbyters in what would seem a further development from Paul, the Apostle. He penned five books against Marcion in this period. As the founder of 'Latin theology' he was the teacher of Cyprian and predecessor of Augustine.

Ca 210

Clement of Alexandria writes Stromata in which he affirms secret teaching from Christ.

211 CE

Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem and Cappadocia who had studied with Origen under Clement at the catechetical school in Alexandria writes a letter of recommendation for Clement of Alexandria to the Bishop of Antioch. Bishop Alexander, the first bishop of Cappadocia, had visited Bishop Narcissus in Jerusalem and was compelled to stay and serve because of the extreme age of Narcissus.

212 CE

Abgar the Great dies and is succeeded by Abgar Severus.

Origen converts Ambrose of Alexandria from Valentinianism to Orthodoxy. His popularity grows to such an extent he has to hand over the teaching of catechumens (beginners) to his top student named Heraclas.

Bishop Alexander writes a letter stating Bishop Narcissus is 116 years old.

213 CE

Bishop Narcissus dies in prayer while on his knees. He is reported to have performed many miracles and striven for peace and unity in the Christian flock.

214 CE

Abgar Severus and his son are captured and sent off to Rome and probably executed by Roman Emperor Caracalla—one of the most vicious of Roman emperors—and Osrhoene becomes a colony where a few of members of the Abgar dynasty rule in name only.

Caracalla allows his soldiers to plunder Alexandria and Origen moves to Caesarea for two years where he is allowed to preach in Church by Theoctistus of Caesarea and Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem even though he is a layman. Upon returning to Alexandria, his wealthy funder, Ambrose, provided him with seven stenographers to take dictation in relays, scribes to make long-hand copies, and a number of girls to make multiple copies of his commentaries.

215 CE

Origen visits Caesarea and Jerusalem where is allowed to preach and interpret Scripture by Bishop Theoctistus and Bishop Alexander though he is not ordained.

216 CE

Origen is recalled to Egypt by his Bishop Demetrius.

217 CE

Bardaisan flees to Armenia and continues missionary work.

Pope Calixtus is elected in Rome and begins admitting members of sects and schisms who had not done penance. Alcibiades from Syria shows up with a book by the Elchesaites who were a Jewish-Christian sect from Parthia that had a relationship to the Gospel of Peter. This group probably is related to the Agbar kings of Osrhoene since they disapprove of celibacy just as Bardaisan from Edessa also had a positive view of sexual relations in saying it worked towards the purification of the soul and especially for women—all of which would have resonated positively amongst a royalty which probably still maintained harems.

222 CE

Bardaisan dies at the age of 68 but his hymnody lives on for a century and a half in the hearts and on the lips of Christians in Osrhoenia until the brilliant scholar from Nisibis, Ephrem the Syrian, in the middle of the next century makes it his mission to over-write Bardaisan hymnody with his own theology and setting them to the same folk tunes. Bardaisan's followers gradually devolved from Valentinianism to Manichaeism but to as late as the twelfth century.

229 CE

Candidus, the most important Valentinian teacher in Athens, debates Origen

230 CE

Origen, head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria, passes through Caesarea on a mission and is ordained a priest since his preaching in Church without being ordained a priest had been opposed by his Bishop Demetrius on his previous trip. Bishop Demetrius takes offense at the infringement of his authority, convenes a synod of priests and local bishops which banishes Origen from Alexandria, and convenes another which annuls his ordination. Heraclas, the aide to Origen becomes head of the Catechetical School and, later, Bishop of Alexandria when Demetrius dies within a few years.

Hippolytus, the Orthodox theologian, writes 'Refutation of all Heresies'

231 CE

Origen move to Caesarea where he is warmly received and becomes the house guest of the Bishop Firmilian who was his former student. He also provides instruction in Christianity to Julia Avita Mamaea from Antioch who is the Empress Dowager of the Roman Empire after her son, Alexander, ascends the throne in 222 CE. She becomes the Imperial Consort in accompanying him on military campaigns. They are both murdered by their troops in 235 CE who considered them militarily incompetent. Origen focuses his work on physics, ethics, and metaphysics in a comprehensive effort to challenge the Hellenistic world view of his time. A series of attacks from Alexandria occurred but only Rome paid any attention to them. Palestine, Phoenicia, Arabia, and Achaia ignored the attacks.

Ca 235 CE

Beron and Helix were two Valentinians who caused controversy among Valentinians by holding that the human nature of Jesus shared in divinity while the divine nature of Christ shared in human suffering. This inspired Hippolytus to write 'Against Beron and Helix'.

Ca 240 CE

Lucian of Antioch, a disciple of Paul of Samosata, is born and educated in the School of Macarius in Edessa. He is an important theological link between the Adoptionist Paul of Samosata and the later Arius.

About this year Origen converts Beryllus, bishop of Bostra from his Adoptionist viewpoint.

248 CE

Origen writes Contra Celsum in which he admits there was secret oral teaching in the Church.

250 CE

Emperor Decius publishes an edict requiring all citizens to make sacrifices to the Roman gods. Many Christians are martyred including Pope Fabian. Origen is tortured and dies three years later of injuries.

251 CE

Pope Cornelius is elected defeating Novatian who held that re-baptism was necessary for major sins like sacrificing to Roman gods. Only the bishop of Antioch supports Novatian. A plague breaks out lasting until 266 CE which is probably small-pox, Christians are blamed for it since they were not sacrificing to the Emperor as a god and practicing magic instead, and persecuted to the death. Rome has about fifty thousand Christians with one hundred and fifty clergy attending the Pope. About fifteen hundred people are fed a day. An office of exorcism is mentioned for the first time.

Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem and Cappadocia who had been imprisoned a half century early under Severus is imprisoned again in a new persecution of Christians and dies a martyr of his injuries in prison.

253 CE

This year or the next, Origen, the greatest scholar in the first six centuries of Christianity, dies at the age of 69 of injuries suffered under torture in the Decian persecution three years previously.

260 CE

Paul of Samosata becomes Patriarch of Antioch.

269 CE

A synod of seventy bishops and presbyters are convened in Antioch and attempt to depose Paul for his Adoptionist theology and using his supposed luxurious lifestyle and questionable behavior as excuses as well. The validity of his deposing is questionable since it is not done by the members of his own churches. Antioch had been one of the three great patriarchates with Rome and Alexandria. The Patriarchate of Constantinople was not established as the fourth great patriarchate until the First Council of Constantinople in 381 CE. The importance of Antioch is shown by the fact that it often appointed the Patriarch of Constantinople. Although Jerusalem had an unbroken line of bishops, they were appointed by the Metropolitan of Caesarea until 325 CE, then by the Patriarch of Antioch as well until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE when they were accepted as the fifth great patriarchate. Nevertheless Paul is forced to appeal to a secular authority and is re-instated by Queen Zenobia of Syria but Roman Emperor Aurelian holds his own trial and finally decides against Paul based on the arguments of the supposed neutrality of the Roman Presbyters present in 274 CE. Paul believed Jesus was a sinless man who attained unity with God.

270 CE

Antioch, Syria's status as a great theological center dates from this period when the School of Antioch is formed by Lucian of Antioch, the city had ten congregations, and was recognized as one of the five great Patriarchates. The School emphasized the two distinct natures of Christ

which had derived from the adoptionist theology and led into Nestorian schism of the fifth century when Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople was condemned by the Western Church. The Church of the East (Assyria, Mesopotamia, Persia) never accepted this condemnation. The Alexandrian Presbyter Arius who was condemned and exiled at Nicaea in 325 CE apparently studied under Lucian. Arius argued there was a difference between the Father and the Son from John 14:28: "The Father is greater than I" and was supported by twenty-two bishops in an argument that lasted for several months. The controversy was finally settled for good by Emperor Theodosius I in 381 CE at the Second Ecumenical Council which banned Arianism for good and destroyed all of his writings.

274 CE

Paul of Samosata, Patriarch of Antioch, is deposed by an ecumenical synod and Roman Emperor Aurelian.

275 CE

Paul of Samosata is exiled and dies. Lucian of Antioch is excommunicated but is finally reconciled to the Roman Patriarch in 285 CE.

280 CE

Papa is ordained bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (the old capitol of Parthia) by two visiting bishops. One is from Erbil (Arbella), the capitol of Adiabene. The bishops of Erbil (Arbela) later in 410 CE become the Metropolitanate of Hadyab which extends as far as Nisibis. Erbil becomes the Nestorian see, as well, in the sixth century. Nestorius was the Arch-bishop of Constantinople who had studied in the School of Antioch but was condemned in the fifth century for affirming the two natures of Christ and, specifically, for refusing to affirm the "Theotokos-Mother of God" label for Mary. He was mainly concerned it would lead to goddess worship. The Church of the East which extended all the way to India refused to condemn Nestorius.

Ca 285 CE

Lucian of Antioch is reconciled with Roman Orthodoxy.

312 CE

Lucian of Antioch dies a martyr

325 CE

The First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea declared Jesus was co-eternal with the Father. Bishops supporting Arius waned under threat of exile and excommunication by the Emperor. Finally, only Arius and two supporting bishops were excommunicated and banished to the western Balkans. All the works of Arius were burned and anyone caught possessing them were under threat of the death penalty.

355 CE

Julian, the Apostate, before he became the last pagan emperor of the Roman Empire, studied Christianity under Bishop George of Cappadocia but in this year was initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries despite meeting and knowing the famous bishops St Gregory of Nazianzus and St Basil, the Great also in this year. Later, as Emperor he was known for his Neo-Platonism and famously saying: “No wild beasts are as dangerous to man as the Christians are to one another.” (Julian’s *Against the Galileans*, 32) (p.288)

363 CE

St Ephrem, the Syrian, from Nisibis flees to Edessa as a refugee and begins over-writing the hymnody of Bardaisan with his own Nicene Christian theology. At that time in Edessa the Christians who adhered to the doctrinal positions of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea of 325 CE were in such a minority that St Ephrem says they were referred to as ‘Palutians’ after a bishop.

374-75 CE

Epiphanius of Salamis composes the *Panarion* concerning eighty sects or heresies. It is an important source for Jewish Christian gospels, Gospel of the Ebionites, and Gospel of the Hebrews among others.

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