



Rembrandt, Christ Preaching (detail)

Session 10: April 22: Luke; Thomas; Gnosticism

Assignment:

Ehrman, ch. 10 (Jesus' Other Teachings)

Luke ch 1-4:30; 5:1-11; 6:17-49; 10:29-37; 13:10-17;

14:7-14; 15:11-32 (mostly L)

The Gospel of Thomas, PBS intro [\[link\]](#)

Ehrman on The Gospel of Thomas, p. 55-65 [\[link\]](#)

Gospel of Thomas, scan according to interest [\[link\]](#)

Ehrman on Gnosticism, p. 113-126 [\[link\]](#)

Thomas v. NT, table [\[link\]](#)

Questions on Matthew and Q (Session 9)

Please review your reading and be ready with answers to these questions. We'll cover them rather quickly!

Why does Matthew provide a genealogy which traces Jesus to Joseph whom Matthew clearly believes was not Jesus' father? (see Bruce Chilton's *Rabbi Jesus* for some fascinating speculation about the effect of his indeterminate paternity on Jesus)

Why was Matthew so intent on showing that Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy?

Was Matthew's presentation of Jesus as a "new Moses" another aspect of fulfillment? Note that, like Moses, Jesus had a miraculous birth, escapes death as an infant, goes to and comes out of Egypt, enters the water (baptism), is tempted in the wilderness for 40 days, and preaches from a mountaintop.

Can you think of a passage in which Matthew was other than dismissive of the Jewish leaders?

Why did Matthew describe Jesus as born of a virgin?

In what city did Mary and Joseph live at the time of Jesus' birth?
What accounts for the details of: birth in Bethlehem, flight to Egypt, resettling in Nazareth?
Why did the Baptist refuse to baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees?
Did Jesus give a persuasive reason why he should be baptized by his inferior?
Unlike Mark's and Luke's "You are . . .", Matthew has God say "This is my son . . ." after the baptism. There is no indication whether Matthew's onlookers heard this. What would your guess be?
With the temptation, have we finally arrived at "the Devil" (the personification of the evil force)?
Compare the beatitudes in Matthew and Luke.
How do the Antitheses demonstrate the new way in which Jesus demanded following the Law?
What is the precise technical definition of Q?
Is it a leap to propose that there was at one time an actual document (in several copies) of the contents of Q?
How can we distinguish between M and L and the parts of a hypothetical Q which were adopted by only Matthew or Luke?
What credence can you give to the division of Q into three chronological stages? Why?

Questions on Ehrman ch 10

How were Jesus' followers to live until the Kingdom arrived?
Ehrman asserts that most of Jesus' ethical teachings related to Mosaic law. Do you agree or not? Why?
Does Ehrman's phrase "the real meaning of the Jewish law" to describe what Jesus preached sound accurate? Can you cite an example?
What did Jesus consider the irreducible heart of the Mosaic law?
Does Jesus' indifference to the traditional observance of the commandments relate to his apocalyptic worldview? In what way?
Can you argue that Jesus preached "family values"?
Why was Jesus anti-family?
Is there any plausible Pharisaic response to Jesus' claim that if following the law would cause (or fail to relieve) suffering then the law should not be followed?
How can we best reconcile the statements of Jesus that the Kingdom of God is in the future and those which suggest that it is present now.

Is Jesus' claim that faith (i.e., trust) in God will cause them to be given what they need now (before the coming of the Kingdom) insistent with the apocalyptic view that evil is now temporarily in control of the world?

Is Ehrman correct to characterize Jesus' miracles (exorcisms, curing, raising the dead) as "parables of the Kingdom"?

Questions on Luke

[Lukan themes: emphasis on the Temple; rejection of Jesus by Jews]

Is there any rationale for Gabriel's annunciation to Zechariah rather than to Elizabeth?

Can you find any overlap in the two nativity stories?

In Matthew, John turned away the Pharisees and Sadducees while in Luke he admonished the crowds in the same terms but then told them to share what they had and (apparently) baptized them. Why the difference? (Note that Luke later (7:30) states that the Pharisees had refused to be baptized by John.

Compare Luke's Sermon on the Plain with Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. What are the takeaways?

Questions on Thomas & Gnosticism

If Ehrman is correct that Thomas presupposes a Gnostic worldview, in what ways is that worldview similar to apocalypticism. What are the biggest differences.

Our goal is to understand Gnosticism as a competing "Christianity" since it was very widely embraced, perhaps the chief rival of Jewish and Pauline Christianity until Marcion (mid-second century) who also distinguished between the benevolent God of the New Testament who sent Jesus and the malevolent creator God of the Hebrew Bible.