

The Fruits of Monotheism

Week 6: December 10, 2018

The Aftermath of Jewish Apocalypticism

Having looked at Ehrman's argument that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet, we now get the chance to read the Gospel of Mark. We'll look at the way the text presents Jesus and his disciples.

We'll finish up by considering the treatment of Satan and cosmic dualism by the Roman Catholic Church and by Rabbinic Judaism.

Reading:

The Gospel of Mark in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV); here from *The Annotated Jewish New Testament* [[pdf](#)]

Please read the gospel as you would a novel asking yourself the same questions you'd pose about a novel: what motivates the protagonist, what is his relationship with the other characters, etc.

The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (as abridged by me) [[pdf](#)]; if interested, the unabridged version [[pdf](#)].

We are particularly interested in the second section and its explanation of the fallen angel "Satan". As the doctrine of original sin, hinted at by Paul but not developed until Augustine (d. 430), has nothing to do with Jewish traditions, you can consider the first and third sections as optional but we'll spend a few minutes trying to unpack the explanation.

Because it's such a good story and illustrates superbly the process of biblical scholarship, I'm adding two final readings. We'll discuss them according to the enthusiasm of the group.

Bart Ehrman, "The Forgery of an Ancient Discovery? Morton Smith and the Secret Gospel of Mark" from *Lost Christianities* [[pdf](#)];

Helmut Koester, "Was Morton Smith a Great Thespian and I a Complete Fool?" from *Biblical Archeology Review* [[pdf](#)];