

1: JESUS CHRIST AND THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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This kind of passage will require understanding the ideas involved and not so much the kind of miracle that Jesus might do. Here our study will be helped a good deal by getting behind the text to learn more about the culture in which Jesus ministered. As will be obvious from a straight reading of the passage, the controversy between Jesus and the leaders of his day are becoming sharper and sharper with each conflict. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit. First there is the challenge by the teachers and the response to them by Jesus. Then there is the report that Jesus turned to teach the crowd on the real source of uncleanness. Third, the disciples ask about offending the Pharisees, and Jesus answered them with a parable that then had to be explained. In effect, then, the teachers raise the question, and Jesus answers them, explains his answer to the crowds, and explains his dealings with the teachers to the disciples. There was one occasion, but Jesus has three separate audiences to address, with separate issues. In the study it will be important to learn about the traditions of the elders on the subject of washing or purifying the hands. For this you may start with a good book on the backgrounds to the Gospel, but may in fact go to the primary source, the Mishnah. A second important issue to be studied in this passage concerns the citation from Isaiah. The meaning of the passage is clear, and certainly appropriate here. But in what way did Isaiah prophesy about them, and not his own generation? This will open up your thinking on the way prophecy was used. Was he making a radical break here from the laws of the Bible, or was he looking at the spirit of the law and not just the letter? Once again, though, you will see that some of the main principles of Bible study will be brought forward and used in this passage as well. Here we will not see so much interplay between story and speech, since this is mostly speech. But the content of the speeches will show how they relate to the story line, and the speeches reflect the culture and teaching of that century, as well as the message of the Old Testament. There will be some key words that will need clarification here: Of course the words for the different sins should not be too hard to study at this point. The Parallel with Mark 7: Matthew omits the material that we have in Mark 7: In general, it looks like according to Matthew Jesus disagrees with one Jewish teaching about the Law, whereas in Mark it appears that he is annulling the Law. These issues will be best discussed as they come up in the passage. The Old Testament Background The two issues from the Old Testament that will need some clarification will be the laws on cleanness and uncleanness from Leviticus, and the citation from Isaiah about hypocrites. These too will be best treated in the context as they come up. The Analysis of the Passage I. For easier study purposes, it can be further broken down into sections: First, the accusation 1, 2. The men who bring the accusation are from Jerusalem, meaning that they were the best trained and most highly respected teachers in the land. They also had a good deal of zeal to be this far away from home. Their appearance here must be a deputation or mission of some kind. Whatever the reason for their presence, they were the source of the most direct confrontation and personal attack that Jesus had to endure. Their attack came because of the activities of the disciples but see, the disciples were doing what Jesus did [Luke]. The whole section is abbreviated, more so than in Mark, because Matthew is a Jew writing to a Jewish audience. They know what all this means. Matthew does not list all the array of Pharisaical traditions see Mark 7: The point of their accusation is telling: What this means is that the traditions of men had been elevated to the status of Scripture, so that one could be guilty of violating them. But some of those views are applications and not what the Bible actually teaches. Second, the Rebuke of Jesus. The reply of Jesus is more a counterattack than a reply to their question. He first accuses them of breaking the commands of God in order to keep their traditions. To press his point he reminds them of their tradition of getting around the law of God. Thus, they could use their traditions to get out of taking care of their father and mother which the Law required. Then, they might find a way of nullifying the vow so they ended up keeping the money. A clever tradition of swearing or taking oaths

had grown up as a way around a clear cut teaching of the word of God. This, Jesus says, is hypocritical, and thus they fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah. Here is the first place that He called them hypocrites. Here he quotes Isaiah. In both contexts, Isaiah and Matthew, the people spoken to are Jews from Jerusalem who had a religion that was characterized by externals that often crowded out truths. They said all the right things, giving the impression they were pious; but their hearts and wills were not obedient at all they would not honor father and mother, for one example. They had a religious form, but not the reality that goes with it. The quotation from Isaiah generally follows the shorter form of the verse found in the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint. The point is very clear: Jesus was saying to his audience what Isaiah said to his, that their worship was vain because they were far from God in their hearts. The Old Testament had a lot to say about clean and unclean for which see the discussions in commentaries or in word study books. Everything was classified as either clean or unclean, and what was unclean was not allowed in the temple. So defilements, diseases, sins, contaminations, discharges and the like made a person unclean. The Pharisees were rigid in observing the laws of cleanness as well as the sabbath observances and the tithes. In the process they were so concerned with the outward observance of these defilements and contacts with things unclean that they failed to realize that the real defilement was sin. The diseases, discharges, and defilements that made a person unclean were things in life that were the result of the presence of sin and death. To observe the outward rituals and miss the connection with sin was a waste of time. The real source of uncleanness was the human heart, as Jesus will say shortly. To harbor sin such as hatred and murder for Jesus and wash hands with ritual washing was hypocritical. The ceremonial laws, including the dietary laws, were given to keep Israel distinct from the nations, but in the coming of the Messiah the believers from the nations would be united with believing Israel in the new covenant. Here Jesus would address the real source of uncleanness, which got to the heart of the matter. They were holding to externals and missed the real spirit of the law and the reason for the washing. The question of the disciples showed that the Pharisees must have understood what Jesus had said and taken offence at it. The people held these teachers in high regard, and so the disciples were worried that Jesus was too hard on them. The basic issue was their misunderstanding of the Law—they dwelt on the externals as the source of uncleanness and did not realize that the source of the defilements was sin in the world, so uncleanness originated in the human heart. God legislated rituals to deal with the defilements and the death as a way of reminding Israel of the fact that they were defiled by sin. And Jesus often healed people as a way of showing that He could deal with the cause of the sickness, sin, as well as the results. To answer the disciples Jesus used a couple of images. The first was that any plant that the Father had not planted would be rooted up v. Jesus was not saying that false teaching would be rooted out, but false teachers. This is a theme that gets clearer and clearer in the book. The second image is that the teachers of Israel saw themselves as guides for the blind as Isaiah described the ignorant people of the land; Isa. The leaders were blind because they failed to understand the Scriptures that they taught, and so majored on externals and missed the reality. And, since they were so weak in spiritual understanding, they also failed to perceive who Jesus was and failed to follow Him—that is the ultimate spiritual blindness see John 5: Therefore, as leaders they will lead people away from Christ, because they do not rightly discern the Scriptures. The disciples have faith in Jesus, but are still weak in their understanding of all that Jesus taught. So Jesus explains in some detail what it is that defiles a person. What someone eats goes in the mouth and is cast out into a latrine eventually. That in one sense is eventually unclean, either the wrong foods being eaten, or what is excreted. But Jesus is saying that the real issue is not what enters the mouth but what comes out, because that comes from the heart. And what are the products of the heart or will? The point that Jesus is making is that it is what a person actually is that brings defilement. The external laws of cleanness and uncleanness if properly understood to reflect the effects of sin in the world were helpful for a devout Israelite to avoid the impurities as a way of following a life of purity. But as is so often the case, it was easier to focus on the external rituals and forget the spiritual reality behind them. Jesus is teaching that true religion must deal with the true nature of men and women, not just the outer performances. The teachers would have known this if they had been concerned about inner purity. Jesus finally ends this teaching by saying that eating with unwashed hands does not make a man unclean, but what comes from the heart does. This is a radical departure from not only the traditions of the elders but also the

details of the Law. But Jesus has already made it clear see Matt. Not only had Jesus rejected the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law as the authentic teachers of his day, but he had assumed that role for himselfâ€”he is the teacher.

The footprints of Jesus' twelve in early Christian traditions: a study in the meaning of religious symbolism by Heinz O. Guenther starting at. The footprints of Jesus' twelve in early Christian traditions: a study in the meaning of religious symbolism has 0 available edition to buy at Alibris.

See Defining Christian Traditions. Catholic The Catholic Church has 1. Most of the countries with the largest Catholic populations have Catholic majorities. There are 67 countries in which Catholics make up a majority of the population. The Protestant Reformation, which split Western Christianity and gave birth to Protestantism, took place in Europe in the 16th century. Today, however, only two of the 10 countries with the largest Protestant populations are European. Protestants form a majority of the total population in 49 countries. Ethiopia has the second-largest number of Orthodox Christians and more than three times as many Orthodox as Greece. Although Turkey is the seat of the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, one of the highest archbishops in Orthodox Christianity see Defining Christian Traditions for details , its Orthodox population is relatively small about , See spotlights on Ethiopia and Egypt. Orthodox Christians make up a majority of the total population in 14 countries. The Orthodox Christian population is heavily concentrated in Europe, which, for the purposes of this report, includes all of Russia. Other Christian Traditions There are about 28 million Christians in the world who do not belong to the three largest Christian traditions. Defining Christian Traditions Catholic The Catholic Church includes the international body of churches in full communion with the bishop of Rome, the pope. These churches include the Western or Latin church and 22 Eastern Catholic churches. The Western Latin church is the largest of these autonomous churches. Peter, possesses a unique authority in the church. Protestant Protestants are broadly defined in this report to include three groups. This category refers to Christians who belong to churches with historical connections to the Church of England or have similar beliefs, worship styles and church structures. Independent Christians have developed ecclesial structures, beliefs and practices that are claimed to be independent of historic, organized Christianity. Orthodox Christian Orthodox Christians are members of self-governing churches that belong to the Eastern Christian tradition. This formalized a cleavage that had been growing for centuries. The Eastern insistence on ecclesial autonomy persists: Orthodox Christianity has two main branches: Eastern Orthodox churches and Oriental Orthodox churches. The Oriental Orthodox churches are therefore also called non-Chalcedonian churches. For example, the canon of the Mormon church includes four texts: Her book, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, is one of its central texts, along with the Bible. Barrett, editor, World Christian Encyclopedia: Johnson and Kenneth R. Many councils were convened to address specific theological disputes. For example, the First Council of Nicaea was convened in to resolve disagreements concerning the relationship between Christ and God the Father; the First Council of Constantinople was convened in to ratify the work of the Council of Nicaea and definitively end ongoing controversy concerning the relationship between Christ and the Father; and the First Council of Ephesus was convened in to resolve emerging disagreement concerning the nature of Christ and the relationship between his humanity and divinity. The Council of Chalcedon was convened in to resolve disagreements concerning the nature of Christ.

3: Are many practices and traditions in Christianity actually pagan in origin?

Jesus and the Twelve The Footprints of Jesus' Twelve in Early Christian Traditions: that if Paul and a Jesus tradition both have something there is good.

By Editor The inspired writers used various figures to illustrate the meaning and importance of the church in the eyes of God and the esteem of men. The church is plainly said to be the body of Christ. Therefore when speaking of the church we necessarily are speaking of the body, or, when using the term body we mean the church. There are many other passages that state or infer this fact. The church or body of Christ is a physical organization. Generally speaking the world does not view Christ the head of the church in His exalted position and Divine character. I fear it is because the body of Christ is not esteemed as highly as it should be. We see the result in the careless manner that people frequently leave the church as well as the lack of interest that others take in the welfare and prosperity of the church. Generally speaking we estimate the worth and efficiency of a body by its head. A human body may be strong, well organized and healthy, but if its head be idiotic, we attach but little importance to that body. The same is true of organized society; we look to the head for honor and efficiency of the body. What esteem then should we put upon the church as it is declared in sacred writ to be the body of Christ? To be a member of the church is an exceedingly high position that each member of the body should prize. It is a relationship that the body has to the Head that all the powers of the universe cannot sever. How then we should strive with all our being to maintain the health and well-being of the body. To speak of the greatness of the Head is a reflection of the greatness of the body. A word of caution to our readers. These things apply to the church of Christ, the body that He shed His blood for, not just any church or religious organization. Many well-intended persons are members of some church that is not mentioned or taught in the New Testament. Such work and maintenance is a vain effort. Some believe and express that Christ is the head of all the denominations in the world. Such a monstrosity is not only unscriptural it is an illogical contention. Therefore it behooves each of us to acquaint ourselves with the word of God and then seek out the church according to the due order. The church is a unit because the body can be only one. The first time the word church is used in the New Testament gives emphasis to this truth. Rather He had reference to all congregations wearing the same name, worshipping in the same way, with the same organization. The only difference between them was in geographical location. If one visited the church in Jerusalem, then proceeded to a congregation in Antioch or Ephesus he would find them all the same in teaching and in practice. There is evidence that Paul did not persecute a single congregation so he was using the term in a general sense to refer to the church wherever faithful disciples were found. The church in the references is used in a general sense of the unit—the unit of which Christ is Head—the body or church of Christ. We read of the church at Corinth and Galatia and Philippi, etc. In addition we have the Lord walking among the churches of Asia. It must be kept in mind that these were not different denominations teaching different doctrines, with peculiar organizations from the others and worshipping in ways not found in Apostolic write. On the contrary, when there was a difference they were reprov'd and threatened that their relation to the Lord would be severed. Each congregation is presented as a body because unity must exist among the members. We have seen that the church is a unit as each congregation is likened to every other congregation—to see one is to see all. Presently we will crawl over the wall of a single congregation to observe the working of each member is so constituted and joined that unity prevails to accomplish all the good possible. When one understands this unity he will have a correct vision of why Christ descended to this earth. We are not to understand that division ceased because the ever-working Devil knows that the cause of Christ prevails where Christians are united, therefore he kindles the heart of some to promote discord. How closely knit and precious is the unity between the Father and the Redeemer and how closely are disciples united if and when we resemble that union. That unity can exist only when we conform our very nature to express the nature of the Heavenly Father. The unity of Christians is often illustrated in Apostolic teaching by the unity that exists between members of the natural body. Read along with me a few of these passages. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another. If we are able to conceive the nearness

of the relation existing between members of our physical body, then this is but a figure of the holy union that should exist among all members of the church, the mystical BODY OF CHRIST. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. The parts composing the joint all adapted to each other; and these are joined together by ligaments that hold the members in a very near relation to one another. Then by the outside membranes they are all compacted together. By each member doing its part, seen or unseen the body increases. In this same way the members of the body of Christ are united. Then by the effectual working of every part of every member, whether preacher, elder, deacon and various members each working in its respective sphere for the general good, the body or church will increase in moral power as it grows. The Apostle Paul goes to even greater length on the same subject to the brethren in Corinth. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink in that one Spirit, For the body is not one member, but many if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: Each member of the church must regard itself mutually dependent on every other member of the body, which results in a bond of peace. Continuing we are informed in verses That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all members rejoice with it. And if the most remote or smallest member of the natural body is pained, all the members of the body sympathize with it. If one member is diseased, the whole body becomes enfeebled. Why should a sound member of the body be deprived of strength by a disease in another member? It is because all the members have the same care one of another. The forces and power of all the members are concentrated at that part of the body attempting to overcome the disease and save the afflicted member. If one member is honored because of devotion to and usefulness in the church, the whole body is honored by having such a worthy member. Therefore no one should be jealous of the influence of another member, nor envious at the success of that member in doing good. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. It is not the individual good that a particular member may benefit for himself, it is the good of the body that counts. None doubt or would contend otherwise. Yet the same people who affirm there is but one head will propagate the false idea that this one head is over many bodies or churches. I contend that there is but one head and he is the head of but one church. Furthermore, in all physical bodies, that have life, the head governs the body it is attached to. This being true, in the human body which is referred to in a figure by the Apostle, the head is the seat of judgment and will and by it all the members are controlled. One body one head one will is Heavens order One body with two heads would be a monster as would be one head with many bodies. No body can act efficiently if the members are governed by different and conflicting wills. This is the secret cause of all the divisions among professed followers of Christ, when too many wills are consulted, too many heads are listened to, and too many lawmakers are in the mix. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: Anything done in the body is felt in the head. In our physical body the sympathetic nerves which connect with the head divides itself into thousands of fibers running throughout the body carrying the sensation of the lightest touch of the most remote member to the head in the twinkling of an eye. Barney Owens With good and evil all about us it is necessary that we distinguish between them. The issue is so great that we cannot afford to make a mistake.

4: Early Christian Art (article) | Khan Academy

the early christian church The heart of Christian tradition and the Christian way of life is Jesus Christ. The Church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians , Colossians) and provides continuity for the Word of God.

Burial of Jesus The synoptic gospels agree that, as the evening came after the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, and that, after Pilate granted his request, wrapped it in linen cloth and laid it in a tomb. In the Gospel of John, it is recorded that Joseph of Arimathea was assisted in the burial process by Nicodemus , who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes and included these spices in the burial clothes per Jewish customs. Empty tomb and Myrrhbearers Women at the empty tomb, by Fra Angelico , " Although no single gospel gives an inclusive or definitive account of the resurrection of Jesus or his appearances, there are four points at which all four gospels converge: According to Mark and John, Jesus appeared first in Mark. All three synoptics repeatedly make women the subject of verbs of seeing, [27] clearly presenting them as eyewitnesses. Post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus After the tomb was found empty, the gospels indicate that Jesus made a series of appearances to the disciples. He was not immediately recognizable, according to Luke. Sanders concluded that although he could appear and disappear, he was not a ghost. Writing that Luke was very insistent about that, Sanders pointed out that "the risen Lord could be touched, and he could eat". The first two disciples to whom he appeared, walked and talked with him for quite a while without knowing who he was, the road to Emmaus appearance. As historical event[edit] New Testament scholar and theologian E. Sanders argues that a concerted plot to foster belief in the Resurrection would probably have resulted in a more consistent story, and that some of those who were involved in the events gave their lives for their belief. Sanders offers his own hypothesis, saying "there seems to have been a competition: What the reality was that gave rise to the experiences I do not know. He contends that the more detailed accounts of the resurrection are also secondary and do not come from historically trustworthy sources, but instead belong to the genre of the narrative types. Wright argues that the account of the empty tomb and the visionary experiences point towards the historical reality of the resurrection. Summarizing its traditional analysis, the Catholic Church stated in its Catechism: Peter Kirby, the founder of EarlyChristianWritings. Price , Christian "apologists love to make the claims He concludes that there are eight possible theories to explain the resurrection of Jesus. Vermes outlines his boundaries as follows, I have discounted the two extremes that are not susceptible to rational judgment, the blind faith of the fundamentalist believer and the out-of-hand rejection of the inveterate skeptic. The fundamentalists accept the story, not as written down in the New Testament texts, but as reshaped, transmitted, and interpreted by Church tradition. They smooth down the rough edges and abstain from asking tiresome questions. The unbelievers, in turn, treat the whole Resurrection story as the figment of early Christian imagination. Most inquirers with a smattering of knowledge of the history of religions will find themselves between these two poles. Vermes states that none of these six possibilities are likely to be historical. Paul is a firm believer in bodily resurrection. He stands with his fellow Jews against the massed ranks of pagans; with his fellow Pharisees against other Jews. And 3 In Philippians 3: According to Habermas, if Paul meant that we would change into a spiritual body then Paul would have used the Greek pneuma instead of soma. But they say that it was a true resurrection nonetheless. This passage mentions John the Baptist and Jesus as two holy men among the Jews. For example, the number of other historical figures and gods with similar death and resurrection accounts has been pointed out. Price claims that if the resurrection could, in fact, be proven through science or historical evidence, the event would lose its miraculous qualities. On this theory, the women who visited the tomb Sunday morning mistook its vacancy. In Christian theology, the resurrection of Jesus is a foundation of the Christian faith. They form the point in scripture where Jesus gives his ultimate demonstration that he has power over life and death, thus he has the ability to give people eternal life. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile". For this and other reasons, it is widely believed that this creed is of pre-Pauline origin. He is the first of all those who will rise. Death came because of what a man did. Rising from the dead also comes because of what a man did. Because of Adam, all people die. So because of Christ, all will be made alive. Today, Lorenzen finds "a strange silence

about the resurrection in many pulpits". He writes that among some Christians, ministers and professors, it seems to have become "a cause for embarrassment or the topic of apologetics". Resurrection and redemption[edit] Emperor Constantine and bishops with the Creed of In the teachings of the apostolic Church , the resurrection was seen as heralding a new era. Forming a theology of the resurrection fell to the apostle Paul. It was not enough for Paul to simply repeat elementary teachings, but as Hebrews 6: But Christ really has been raised from the dead. The Apostolic Fathers , discussed the death and resurrection of Jesus, including Ignatius 50â€™" , [82] Polycarp 69â€™" , and Justin Martyr â€™" Following the conversion of Constantine and the liberating Edict of Milan in , the ecumenical councils of the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries, that focused on Christology helped shape the Christian understanding of the redemptive nature of resurrection, and influenced both the development of its iconography, and its use within Liturgy. And nowhere was it argued for more strongly than in North Africa.

5: The Diversity Of Early Christianity | From Jesus To Christ - The First Christians | FRONTLINE | PBS

We believe God has provided us a series of footprints that lead us through the Torah to Jesus Christ What Bible study is mentioned twelve times in one book of the Bible, was given on seven different occasions by seven different people, and is hardly ever offered today?

The evidence is not clear the Bar Kochba scrolls from CE sometimes use all three languages for the same document, but who knows what the situation was years earlier when Jesus lived? In Luke Jesus "reads" from Isaiah in synagogue setting, but even if the account is relatively accurate, it could mean he was reciting a memorized text. In the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Jesus is in school studying and he chews out the teacher. Mark calls him a carpenter 6. Herod Jewish leader upset at Jesus. Pilate Roman leader upset at Jesus. Pilate was a non-native, non-Jewish, Roman put there by the emperor, and he stayed for a relatively long time -- 11 years from CE. The "terminus a quo" earliest possible date is sometime before the death of Herod in 4 BCE i. So a widely accepted conclusion, based on uniting these different traditions, is that Jesus was crucified when he was about Birth -- Luke places the birth of Jesus after a census, but the only external evidence we have from other sources of such a census is in 6 CE, which conflicts with the claim in both Matthew and Luke that Jesus was born before the death of Herod the Great in 4 BCE. Some think that an earlier census is referred to in Luke, and from this one reference, some have formulated theories such as the Romans took a census every 10 years, etc. There is no corroborating evidence of this. Another item looked at for dating the birth is the occurrence of a large celestial event to explain the "star in the east," which some scholars have used to push the birth date back to 7 BCE. Some scholars suggest the influence of two different Jewish calendars here see the Dead Sea Scrolls and the discussion below. Ehrman, Kraft, Schweitzer, etc. What became the traditional Jewish calendar luni-solar, adjusted would have Jesus executed at one time while the solar calendar very symmetrical calendar attested by most of the relevant Dead Sea Scroll texts suggests a slightly different time. In John, Jesus on the cross is portrayed as the Passover Lamb himself, removed from the cross at about the time the Passover lambs are being slaughtered -- see G. Because the traditional Jewish calendar is lunar based with a solar adjustment every third year, holidays move to different days of the week from year to year. Trying to match the days as mentioned in the Gospels, some have concluded that the events could have taken place only in 27, 30, or 33 CE during the term of Pilate. We also have indications, however, of an alternate solar Jewish calendar of days divisible by 7, for equal 52 weeks -- divisible by 4 for seasons of 91 days, each season 3 months of 30 days plus a one day holiday between. Early "Catholic" tradition came to maintain the continued perpetual virginity of Mary, interpreting the "brothers" of Jesus as half-brothers by Joseph in a previous marriage. This is also similar to the view of the Eastern Orthodox Church. By the 4th and 5th centuries, some Catholic interpreters extended perpetual virginity also to Joseph, and in that context "brothers" became cousins. Catholic traditions also extended the idea of a pure birth, untainted by original sin, back to Mary, which is referred to as the "immaculate conception" of Mary; not the same as the "virgin birth" of Jesus. Protestants tend to hold that Mary had other children by Joseph after the birth of Jesus -- the passage in G. This would seem to imply that Mary and Joseph did have relations later, but those for whom Mary is "ever-virgin" offer other interpretations of this passage. What language did Jesus speak? Matt 6, the word "trespasses" King James Version; see also G. Luke 11 can also be rendered "debts" Revised Standard Version. Probably a Semitic word with both meanings lies behind the Greek. Different translators with different backgrounds may have different understandings of ambiguous words. Others are classified as extra-canonical or apocryphal, such as the Sayings Gospel of Thomas. John or with specific groups G. The "gospels" are written in a Greco-Roman literary style. It is in the genre of epic-like storytelling of heroes, presented as a semi-biography Sources: The Gospel of Thomas the sayings of Jesus MAY have been related to this "Q" material or stratum in some way How did the materials we now have get to be written? How did the sayings of Jesus come to be preserved? Those focusing on narrative about Jesus e. Mark Those concentrating on the last days "passion" of Jesus e. Comparisons of chronologies e. John and the synoptics can be revealing. A more obvious comparison is that of content. Comparison of similar Jesus stories that differ only in details such as

the story of his birth usually indicate multiple traditions. By drawing such comparisons, we see that the Gospels are not first-hand accounts but rather compilations of materials from different sources. This is explicit in Luke, but nearly as obvious when a passage like "the Sermon on the Mount" G. Matt is considered, which appears to be a collection of popular sayings attributed to Jesus. Possible locations of the synoptic authors: Perhaps Luke was in Asia Minor preaching to the Gentiles while Matthew was in the area outlying Palestine. The People who wrote the Gospels and their motives An illuminating parallel in our own day is to be found in the translation of religious texts. Theology thus influences interpretation. A similar phenomenon is evident in the different versions of the Jesus stories. One was the influence of scriptural expectations on the Jesus traditions -- Jesus often plays a role in a story that "just happens" to fulfill some prophecy of old. Such stories were probably invented, or at least emended, to "prove" that Jesus was the Messiah. The Gnostics and Mystics viewed Jesus as one who spoke mysteries of personal salvation. Some others viewed Jesus more as a political rebel or reformer. Some saw him as an apocalyptic preacher. The role of "faith" in Christian tradition: When did people start to use the gospel materials? There are a lot of claims about the date, but there are no unambiguous materials for precisely dating the composition of the gospels. The year 70 CE is a pivotal point for dating the gospels. It is the year when the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman forces. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus "predicts" the destruction of the Temple. Both within the Gospels and in other sources, it is clear that early Christians focused on recording the teachings of Jesus -- particularly with the earliest impetus of end of world expectations. Thus many events in the Gospels may have been reconstructed from sayings, because little attention was paid at the time to record the actual sequence of events. As waiting for the end subsides, push for different kinds of materials grows -- to provide a history, a textbook, etc. Themes found in the Gospels: The author of Luke-Acts claims to have used sources; to what extent are earlier sources visible to us, looking back through the preserved accounts? They align similar accounts. See the link at RelSt to a web based synopsis. By studying the synoptic problem: Even for people with a traditional Christian background, the problems are there in the texts, showing the human aspect of the gospel accounts and their transmission. Modern scholarship tries to handle the Synoptic Problem now as a scholarly pursuit without the theological involvement. Examples of Synoptic Problems 1. The Birth of Jesus: Starts with the genealogy of Jesus claiming he is the descendant of David and Abraham. Jesus was born in Bethlehem but was taken to Egypt for fear of Herod. An angel appeared to Mary and told her she would bear a son named Jesus. Mary went to aid Elizabeth during her pregnancy. The Emperor Augustus decreed that a census be taken. Mary delivered Jesus in a Bethlehem manger. In two different places G. Matthew has Jesus teach that divorce is not permissible, except under certain conditions of sexual impropriety. Perhaps the author of Matthew came from a community that was more sympathetic toward divorce. John have different accounts of when Jesus was crucified relative to Jewish Passover. There were at least two different Jewish calendars in the 1st century CE [see above for details]. Judas refuses the pieces of silver. Judas bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. This field became known as Akeldama Hakel-dama , Field of Blood. Judas swells up from an illness and dies in his home. Instructions at the Empty Tomb see separate file: Abrupt ending in the oldest manuscripts which makes it difficult to get the full picture. The women came to the tomb. Perhaps the original gospel ended here. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man Mark - in one of the endings to this gospel, says that later Jesus was eating with them and after speaking to them was taken into Heaven Matthew - the 11 disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had ordered them - Jesus then gave the "great commission" literally, "when you go, make disciples of all nations Nicod - Jesus and his disciples were sitting in Galilee on Mount Mamilch - while he spoke to them, he was taken into Heaven 7. Gospel Parallels Sermon on the Mount plain: There are major differences, in time and place, in these writings - this is less noticeable in popular Christian use, where they all tend to be harmonized Jesus first appeared in Jerusalem, then went to Galilee, etc. This probably represents early geographical rivalry between followers in Galilee which is where Jesus and his first followers apparently came from and followers in Jerusalem, whence Luke may have derived much of his information on these matters There is also a question between the time of the appearance and the disappearance - how long Jesus remained with his followers after he rose from the dead.

Matt has strong connections to Jewish Traditions; G.

6: Jesus And The Traditions Of The Elders (Matthew) | www.enganchecubano.com

Early "Catholic" tradition came to maintain the continued (perpetual) virginity of Mary, interpreting the "brothers" of Jesus as half-brothers by Joseph in a previous marriage. This is also similar to the view of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Gentile mission and St. Paul Saul, or St. Paul as he was later called , was a Pharisee who persecuted the primitive church. Stephen the first Christian martyr and who regarded Jesus as a spiritual reformer sent to purge the corrupt worship of Jerusalem. While on a mission to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus, Paul was suddenly converted to faith in Christ and, simultaneously, to a conviction that the Gospel must pass to the non-Jewish world under conditions that dispensed with exclusively and distinctively Jewish ceremonies. Paul was disapproved by Christian Jews and remained throughout his career a controversial figure. He gained recognition for the converts of the Gentile mission by the Christian community in Jerusalem, but his work was considered an affront to Jewish traditionalism. He saw clearly that the universal mission of the church to all humanity, implicit in the coming of the Messiah, Christ, meant a radical break with rabbinical traditions. Because of the preservation of 13 weighty letters seven of which are accepted by a majority of scholars as authentic , Paul is the only vivid figure of the apostolic age 1st century ce. The crucifixion of Jesus he viewed as the supreme redemptive act and also as the means of expiation for the sin of humankind. But Paul linked this doctrine with his theme that the Gospel represents liberation from the Mosaic Law. The latter thesis created difficulties at Jerusalem, where the Christian community was led by St. James , the brother of Jesus, and the circle of the intimate disciples of Jesus. James, martyred at Jerusalem in 62, was the primary authority for the Christian Jews, especially those made anxious by Paul; the canonical letter ascribed to James opposes the antinomian anti-law interpretations of the doctrine of justification by faith. A middle position seems to have been occupied by St. All the Gospels record a special commission of Jesus to Peter as the leader among the Twelve Apostles. Jewish Christianity declined and became the faith of a very small group without links to either synagogue or Gentile church. A different emphasis appears in the Gospel According to John , written according to 2nd-century tradition at Ephesus. The history is treated symbolically to provide a vehicle for faith. In antiquity, divine presence had to be understood as either inspiration or incarnation. The tension between these two types of Christology doctrines of Christ first became acute in the debate between the schools of Antioch and Alexandria in the late 4th century.

7: THE JESUS TRADITIONS

Jesus in India? The Myth of the Lost Years by Acharya S/D.M. Murdock. Over the centuries, the claim has repeatedly been made that Jesus Christ not only walked the earth but also spent his early and post-crucifixion years in a variety of places, including Egypt, India, Great Britain, Japan and America.

Visit Website When he was around 30 years old, Jesus started his public ministry after being baptized in the Jordan River by the prophet known as John the Baptist. For about three years, Jesus traveled with 12 appointed disciples, teaching large groups of people and performing what witnesses described as miracles. Some of the most well-known miraculous events included raising a dead man named Lazarus from the grave, walking on water and curing the blind. Some of the main themes that Jesus taught, which Christians later embraced, include: Love your neighbor as yourself. Forgive others who have wronged you. Ask God for forgiveness of your sins. Jesus is the Messiah and was given the authority to forgive others. Repentance of sins is essential. The Kingdom of God is near. According to the Bible, Jesus was arrested, tried and condemned to death. Roman governor Pontius Pilate issued the order to kill Jesus after being pressured by Jewish leaders who alleged that Jesus was guilty of a variety of crimes, including blasphemy. Jesus was crucified by Roman soldiers in Jerusalem, and his body was laid in a tomb. Authors in the Bible say the resurrected Jesus ascended into Heaven. The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament, which is also recognized by followers of Judaism, describes the history of the Jewish people, outlines specific laws to follow, details the lives of many prophets, and predicts the coming of the Messiah. These letters offer instructions for how the church should operate. The final book in the New Testament, Revelation, describes a vision and prophecies that will occur at the end of the world, as well as metaphors to describe the state of the world. Most of the first Christians were Jewish converts, and the church was centered in Jerusalem. Shortly after the creation of the church, many Gentiles non-Jews embraced Christianity. Early Christians considered it their calling to spread and teach the gospel. One of the most important missionaries was the apostle Paul, a former persecutor of Christians. Paul preached the gospel and established churches throughout the Roman Empire, Europe and Africa. In addition to preaching, Paul is thought to have written 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament. Persecution of Christians Early Christians were persecuted for their faith by both Jewish and Roman leaders. Many were brutally tortured and killed during this time. Under Emperor Domitian, Christianity was illegal. If a person confessed to being a Christian, he or she was executed. Starting in A. This became known as the Great Persecution. During this time, there were several groups of Christians with different ideas about how to interpret scripture and the role of the church. He later tried to unify Christianity and resolve issues that divided the church by establishing the Nicene Creed. The Catholic Church In A. Catholics expressed a deep devotion for the Virgin Mary, recognized the seven sacraments, and honored relics and sacred sites. When the Roman Empire collapsed in A. The Crusades Between about A. In these battles, Christians fought against Muslims to reclaim holy land in the city of Jerusalem. The Christians were successful in occupying Jerusalem during some of the Crusades, but they were ultimately defeated. The Reformation In, a German monk named Martin Luther published 95 Theses—a text that criticized certain acts of the Pope and protested some of the practices and priorities of the Catholic church. As a result, Protestantism was created, and different denominations of Christianity eventually began to form. Christian Denominations Christianity is broadly split into three branches: Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox. The Catholic branch is governed by the Pope and Catholic Bishops around the world. The Orthodox or Eastern Orthodox is split into independent units each governed by a Holy Synod; there is no central governing structure akin to the Pope. There are numerous denominations within Protestant Christianity, many of which differ in their interpretation of the Bible and understanding of the church. Some of the many denominations that fall under the category of Protestant Christianity include:

8: When and how did the Twelve Apostles die? - Amazing Bible Timeline with World History

Jesus' resurrection has been a central theme in early Christian tradition.1 Our leaves no footprints on the ground, and once pulls John's beard. The duplication of Jesus that also oc-

This page reviews the transmission of the Christian faith from Jesus Christ and the Apostles through the Traditions of the early Christian Church and the formation of the Canon of the New Testament of the Bible. God chose to reveal himself to us so that we may become partakers of his divine nature 2 Peter 1: God first made himself known by creating our first parents, Adam and Eve, in his image and likeness Genesis 1: In preparing for the redemption of the human race, God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses and the people and prophets of Israel. Our appropriate personal response in our relationship with Christ Jesus is what St. Paul calls "the obedience of faith" Romans 1: There were three stages in the formation of the Gospels: The first twelve Apostles followed him from the beginning, hearing his words and seeing his deeds Luke 1: He taught them through parables and performed miracles. Christ Jesus is the mediator and fullness of all revelation. Following his Resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days instructing his Apostles and speaking about the Kingdom of God Acts 1: He informed them that they will "receive power from the Holy Spirit" to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth Acts 1: For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Gospel of Luke Gospel of John The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. There were about one hundred and twenty persons gathered together in the Upper Room. This community of disciples of Jesus was the beginning of our Church. The oral tradition of the Apostles was established in the infancy period of the Church, from the time of Jesus to the written Gospels. During this period the Christian faith was transmitted by word of mouth Romans The Levant, the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, served as the cradle of Christianity. The Acts of the Apostles describe the emergence of Christianity beginning with the mission in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and spreading throughout the Mediterranean world. Luke portrays the actions of the Apostles, focusing primarily on Peter, upon whom Jesus founded his Church, and Paul, who was converted when he saw the risen Christ. Following his conversion Acts 9: Peter and Paul met in Antioch Galatians 2: Peter then went to Rome, while Paul made three missionary journeys from Antioch, traveling as far as Dalmatia or "Illyricum" Romans Heeding the message of Jesus Christ to Go therefore and make disciples of all nations Matthew James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, is believed to have preached in Spain; he is the only Apostle to have his martyrdom recorded in the Bible Acts John, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James, was the "one Jesus loved. Christ on the Cross entrusted his mother Mary to John John James, son of Alphaeus, played an important role as head of the Church of Jerusalem and writer of the Letter of James in the Bible. According to the historian Flavius Josephus, he was stoned to death in 62 AD. Thomas traveled through Chaldea and Persia all the way to India! Acts of the Apostles And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: Do this in remembrance of me. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians It is believed that the first Christian Letters were composed by St. Paul in the mid-first century AD. Apostolic writings were considered Scripture in the early Church. Since no original manuscript by the author of a biblical book has yet been discovered, we cannot truly say when Apostolic writings were actually composed. An important observation is that not one Christian writer recorded the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It is noted that Acts ended abruptly with St. Paul under house arrest around 62 AD, with no mention of his trial or his subsequent activities. Furthermore, Luke did not mention the Roman persecution of Christians or the martyrdom of Peter and Paul in the mids, the leading figures in Acts. Mention of Apostolic writings began to appear with the approach of the second century. The Apostolic Fathers were the next generation of Church leaders who received the Faith directly from the Apostles. Ignatius of Antioch wrote seven Letters circa AD on the road to martyrdom in Rome and was one of the first to distinguish between the writings of the prophets and the Gospel; he often referred to the sayings of

Matthew. A disciple of the Apostle John, St. Justin Martyr placed the memoirs of the Apostles on equal footing with the writings of the Prophets in AD. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. Second Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 2: We are writing this so that our joy may be complete. First Letter of John 1: The Church is the Body of Christ Ephesians 5: But it was the powerful witness of Christian martyrdom that led to continued expansion of the faith. The fish became a symbol of the Christian faith, adorning the catacombs and early Christian Churches. In a time when professing the Christian faith was an invitation to death, the fish became a secret code to introduce one Christian to another. One Christian would draw a curve representing half of the symbol, and the other one would complete the cryptic symbol by drawing the second curve see image. Who Christ is, the Son of God, and His mission, Savior, are both expressed by the ancient symbol of the fish. Ignatius of Antioch, Syria circa AD described the transmission of the Christian faith through the bishop, priest presbyter , and deacon, who received their authority through Apostolic succession. The possession of sacred texts in times of persecution could mean discovery, imprisonment, and death. Also, it was common for people of that time to be illiterate. In addition, production of written Scripture was a monumental task in itself, as each page of any text had to be hand-written on papyrus scrolls Luke 4: Written Scripture was in the hands of only a few. Persecution of Christianity under Roman rulers lasted for years, until the Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in , which mandated complete toleration of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Thus the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery of Christ by which He accomplished the work of our salvation. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Justin Martyr described the Memorial of the Last Supper on Sunday, one that would be called the Divine Liturgy in the East and the Mass in the West, an event which has remained essentially the same for nearly years. The Church assembly would first have the Liturgy of the Word with readings and then a homily or sermon. This was followed by giving thanks in the Liturgy of the Eucharist: For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks in Greek: The Sacrament of Baptism followed the instruction of Jesus to his disciples to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Matthew In accordance with this, the person about to be baptized was asked three questions: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his Son our Lord? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church? On the way to martyrdom to Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote in his Letter to the Ephesians He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water. Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in living water. The word "Creed" comes from the Latin word Credo, which means "I believe. They are also known as symbols of faith. The Creed, or rule of faith, was also an important guide to presbyters as well in interpretation of Scripture. I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to hell.

9: Jewish and Early Christian Art | Art History Teaching Resources

In the sixteen essays gathered in Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory, Werner Kelber explores the verbal arts of early Christian word processing operative in a media world that was separated by two millennia from our contemporary media history.

Some of the symbols and simple images found could have been Christian, but no evidence exists to confirm these assumptions. The earliest confirmed Christian artworks date to the third century and consist of simple symbols, such as a fish or an anchor. Most would traditionally associate Christianity with the symbol of the cross, but this image was very rare, and the first artwork with a cross does not appear until CE—much later than the other symbols. Death on the cross was given only to the worst and most wretched perpetrators. The anchor and the fish are such symbols. In this way the fish symbolizes Jesus, and, by drawing this symbol, one could identify oneself as His devotee. This shows that the Bible becomes the primary source of pictorial decoration for the early Christians. During the pre CE period, when Christianity was still illegal in the Roman Empire, these symbols were safe marks that allowed Christians to recognize each other and avoid persecution. Pagans would not be familiar with the metaphorical meaning of these symbols as they were based on the Bible which they did not read. Peter and Marcellinus, Rome. The richest source of early Christian art are the catacombs in Rome. The catacombs are an intricate network of galleries and burial chambers cut out from tufa soft volcanic rock in the area of Rome and Tuscany beneath the city level. Jews, Christians, and pagans all buried the bodies of their dead in these corridors and chambers. Even though they were used to bury illegally practicing Christians, these catacombs survived and were not banned or destroyed, since Romans viewed the tombs as sacred. In addition, the cemeteries were legally registered and protected by Roman law even during the periods of severe persecution. Later, in the late third and fourth centuries, Christian and Jewish tombs became separate. There were two basic options of burial in the catacombs, depending on the amount of money one was willing to spend. The cheapest option was a burial in niches called loculi. Loculi were just simple openings in walls of long excavated corridors, enclosed by slabs or tiles, and sometimes plastered over. They varied in size from one to four or more bodies. Cubicula could be covered with wall paintings according to the will of the owner. The Good Shepherd ceiling decoration from the catacomb of St. Peter and Marcellinus, is such an example. In this painting, note the framing device of circles, lunettes, and lines, into which are inscribed small figures and narrative scenes. This type of structuring of the pictorial field is a type of decoration commonly found in contemporary private homes, for example in Pompeii and Ostia. Moreover, the way that the figures are painted, frontal, with only simple highlights in the draperies and emphasis on gestures, is typical for late Roman art—again, no distinctive Christian style exists at this point but the subject matter is Christian. The overall message of the images is optimistic and focused on salvation. An image of the Good Shepherd is in the central circle, which was one of the most popular subjects of early Christian art. The image of a shepherd in itself, however, is not particularly Christian. In fact, it has a long Graeco-Roman heritage: Yet, for Christians, the image of the shepherd had a metaphorical meaning. In other words, the image in itself is not a Christian invention but was reinterpreted in biblical terms. In Psalm 22, God is described as a shepherd and in the New Testament, Christ calls himself a shepherd as well. The image serves as a reference to a textual source the Bible and a metaphor for the meaning that lies beyond what is simply shown in the pictorial plane. The lunettes on the sides of the Good Shepherd show the key episodes from the Old Testament story of Jonah and the Whale in a clockwise direction. Jonah was thrown from the ship on the left, swallowed by a whale and sitting in his belly largely missing now, emerging from the whale on the third day right, safe on the ground resting under a gourd, and contemplating salvation bottom. Moreover, Jonah is also seen here as prefiguration, reflecting the death and resurrection of Christ. Comparisons between the Old Testament and New Testament are a very common way of reading scriptures. In this catacomb painting, we can see that typology searching for types of Christ was not exclusive to textual interpretation, but also occurred in art. Such typological viewing is a uniquely Christian way of interpreting images, a comparative method not found in pagan or Jewish art. In this way, early Christian art is Roman in style but Christian in subject matter. The

Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus represents another type of funerary art from the early Christian period. In contrast to common belief, Christians were not the instigators of preserving the body. Already in times of Emperors Hadrian and Trajan early second century AD, Romans rejected cremation in favor of inhumation. The wealthiest of Christians, largely patricians but also wealthy freedmen, imitated their pagan counterparts in ordering sarcophagi, which were much more expensive than a *loculus* or even *cubiculum* in the catacombs. Sarcophagi could be placed either in the fancy arched niches *arcosolia* in the *cubicula* of the catacombs or in specially built mausolea above-ground funerary structures meant specifically to house the bodies of the deceased. This particular sarcophagus belonged to Junius Bassus, a patrician and prefect of the city of Rome, son of a consul, who was baptized as a Christian only on his deathbed. At this point, Christianity is legalized but is still largely the religion of those with lower social standing. Bassus was probably one of the first patricians to convert, but openly expressing his beliefs would have probably hindered his career and family relations—his father was a consul and a well-known donor of pagan art. This is probably why Bassus chose to be baptized only on his deathbed at which point he could also blatantly display his Christian beliefs in his sarcophagus. The sarcophagus is decorated with a selection of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, set in individual niches in two tiers. From top left to bottom right the scenes are: The viewer is meant to contemplate the mix of stories from both Old and New Testament and search for typological connections between them. For example, Adam, in the Adam and Eve niche, caused the fall of humanity. In contrast, Christ in the Trial of Jesus can be seen as the new Adam—one who sacrifices himself in order to redeem humanity. The use of the aristocratic or imperial Roman visual vocabulary is appropriate here for two reasons. First of all, Bassus, who had close ties to senate, emphasizes this connection and therefore his social standing. Second, this is already a post CE artwork, when the emperors ruling in Constantinople are Christian to the regret of conservative pagan aristocracy in Rome. Therefore, it is appropriate to model Christ on the Roman emperor since now the Emperor is Christian. Such comparison would be hugely offensive in the pre years, when Christianity was illegal or actively combated. This is why, in the catacombs and other pre CE artworks Christ is shown as a poor shepherd at the periphery of the empire—just like many of his adherents at that time. For example you can compare Adam and Eve with the reliefs from column of Trajan or the Hadrianic roundels from the Arch of Constantine. Sarcophagus of Constantina represents yet another type of early Christian funerary art, one fit for the imperial family. This sarcophagus was placed in the center of a large round mausoleum built for Constantina, daughter of Emperor Constantine and a devout Christian. The sarcophagus is massive in size: Since the time of Augustus, the use of porphyry and the color purple was reserved by law only for the imperial family. What about the subject matter? The sarcophagus, in fact, shows no conspicuous Christian message and is decorated with scenes of winged putti harvesting grapes to make wines, framed by acanthus scrolls. This type of imagery was a common decorative trope already in Pompeian houses and could easily be interpreted within the Greco-Roman tradition as Bacchus and the harvest. Christians, however, could associate both the purple color and grape-harvesting with the wine of the Eucharist, as well as Christ himself who called himself a true vine in John. Similarly the peacocks could be seen as symbols of eternal life in paradise or sheep as members of the Christian flock, again based on biblical references. Such Christian interpretation, however, would require knowledge of the scripture and therefore would not be available to an average pagan viewer. In fact, if we did not know who the patron was, her religious identity would be questionable. Positioning herself in the Roman imperial lineage, she made more conservative choices than Junius Bassus. The building was discovered in a Roman military and trading town called Dura Europos modern day Syria, situated on the peripheries of the empire and on the borderline with Sasanian Persia. In CE, the town was attacked by Persians, captured and soon abandoned. In preparation of the attack, inhabitants hastily filled the defense-walls with gravel and sand. The excavators who conducted the study were amazed to find such a vibrant and varied array of religious paintings in Jewish, Christian, and pagan temples. One of such exceptional findings was a regular Roman style house along the defense wall. The building was small and looked pretty much like a typical house since Christianity was illegal at the time. If Dura had survived after this meager building would have been replaced with a much more impressive structure. The best-preserved part of the complex is the baptistery room a place with a font used for baptism. The paintings covering its walls are rather crude

compared to the ones in the neighboring pagan temple and a synagogue. The wall paintings on the sides focus on the life of Christ and his miraculous events Christ and Peter walking on water, Christ healing paralytic, Maries visiting tomb of Christ , all of which send a positive message for converts. Note, however, that all viewers had to be familiar with the Scriptures in order to interpret the scenes. The most interesting, but worst preserved painting appears in the arch above the baptismal font. It shows an image of the good shepherd carrying a sheep on his shoulders surrounded by his flockâ€”which reinforces the borrowed symbolism discussed earlier. Below the Good Shepherd, one can barely notice a tree flanked by two silhouetted figures that represent Adam and Eve. Paired with the good shepherd, it is the earliest instance of typology used in visual art. This is especially significant since this is a poor community far from large citiesâ€”showing the breadth of this imagery across long distances. Even more surprising, however, was the discovery of a synagogue in the same town. Synagogue from Greek meaning to gather together was a place of assembly for Jews and not a house of God the House of God was the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. The Dura Synagogue was situated nearby along the same defense wall as the Christian building, but was much more elaborate and grand, indicating that the Jewish community was larger and wealthier than the Christian one also Judaism was legal, so they could afford more prominence. Shocking the archaeologists who excavated the synagogue, its main room used for housing of the Torah first 5 books of the Hebrew Scriptures was entirely covered with images. Until then, scholars thought that Jewish culture was aniconic does not accept images in agreement with one of Mosaic Commandments. Here, however, very skillfully executed frescoes were arranged on the walls in three bands of fifty-eight individual scenes. They portray a variety of themes such as narratives of Jewish heroes Crossing of the Red Sea, Drowning of the Pharaoh and scenes of liturgical significance Menorah in the Temple of Solomon, Temple of Aaron. The Dura images are the earliest discovered Jewish paintings to date. Similar to the images in the baptistery the message is positive and encourages devotion.

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