

## 1: Last Teaching at Pella

*Aristo of Pella [a.d. ] Though his work is lost, alike the original and the Latin translation of one "Celsus," it seems to have been a popular tract among Christians of Cyprian's time, and the Latin preface is often suffixed to editions of that Father.*

Download Entire Audio Book He preached every afternoon to the crowds and each night answered questions for the apostles and certain of the more advanced disciples residing at the camp. Not since the feeding of the five thousand had anything occurred which so aroused the imagination of the people. And thus it was at the very height of the second phase of the public ministry of the kingdom that Jesus planned to teach this one short week at Pella and then to begin the tour of southern Perea which led right up to the final and tragic experiences of the last week in Jerusalem. He is a friend of publicans and sinners; he receives the ungodly and even eats with them. He is a blasphemer; he talks about God as being his Father and thinks he is equal with God. He is a lawbreaker. He heals disease on the Sabbath and in many other ways flouts the sacred law of Israel. He is in league with devils. He works wonders and does seeming miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. But I have come to show you that, while you are seeking to find God, God is likewise seeking to find you. Many times have I told you the story of the good shepherd who left the ninety and nine sheep in the fold while he went forth searching for the one that was lost, and how, when he had found the straying sheep, he laid it over his shoulder and tenderly carried it back to the fold. And when the lost sheep had been restored to the fold, you remember that the good shepherd called in his friends and bade them rejoice with him over the finding of the sheep that had been lost. Again I say there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. The fact that souls are lost only increases the interest of the heavenly Father. You are all like sheep which have gone astray, and I have come to seek and to save those who are lost. And I tell you this story to impress upon you that the Father and his Son go forth to search for those who are lost, and in this search we employ all influences capable of rendering assistance in our diligent efforts to find those who are lost, those who stand in need of salvation. And so, while the Son of Man goes out in the wilderness to seek for the sheep gone astray, he also searches for the coin which is lost in the house. The sheep wanders away, unintentionally; the coin is covered by the dust of time and obscured by the accumulation of the things of men. You recall that the sheep strayed away without intention, but this youth left his home with premeditation. It was like this: Now these two brothers did not get along well together; they were always quarreling and bickering. The younger lad was cheerful and vivacious, but indolent and unreliable; the older son was steady and industrious, at the same time self-centered, surly, and conceited. The younger son enjoyed play but shunned work; the older devoted himself to work but seldom played. This association became so disagreeable that the younger son came to his father and said: And when he had spent all, there arose a prolonged famine in that country, and he found himself in want. And so, when he suffered hunger and his distress was great, he found employment with one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into the fields to feed swine. And the young man would fain have filled himself with the husks which the swine ate, but no one would give him anything. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no more worthy to be called your son; only be willing to make me one of your hired servants. This father loved this son and was always on the lookout for his return, so that on the day he approached his home, even while he was yet afar off, the father saw him and, being moved with loving compassion, ran out to meet him, and with affectionate greeting he embraced and kissed him. And when he came up to the back door, he called out one of the servants and inquired as to the meaning of all this festivity. And then said the servant: When his father heard of his resentment of the welcome of his younger brother, he went out to entreat him. He answered his father, saying: I have remained here to care for you all these years, and you never made rejoicing over my faithful service, but when this your son returns, having squandered your substance with harlots, you make haste to kill the fatted calf and make merry over him. You could have had a kid at any time you had made friends to share your merriment. Think of it, my son, your brother was lost and is found; he has returned alive to us! He presented the story of the lost sheep to show that, when men unintentionally stray away from the path of life, the Father is mindful of such

lost ones and goes out, with his Sons, the true shepherds of the flock, to seek the lost sheep. He then would recite the story of the coin lost in the house to illustrate how thorough is the divine searching for all who are confused, confounded, or otherwise spiritually blinded by the material cares and accumulations of life. This parable and the story of the good Samaritan were his favorite means of teaching the love of the Father and the neighborliness of man. If you were unjust and often unfair, you were nonetheless prudent and farseeing in that you transacted your business with an eye single to your present profit and future safety. Likewise should you now so order your lives in the kingdom as to provide for your present joy while you also make certain of your future enjoyment of treasures laid up in heaven. If you were so diligent in making gains for yourselves when in the service of self, why should you show less diligence in gaining souls for the kingdom since you are now servants of the brotherhood of man and stewards of God? I have not the strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do to make certain that, when I am put out of this stewardship, I will be welcomed into the houses of all who do business with my master. And so did this dishonest steward seek to make friends for himself after he would be discharged from his stewardship. Even his lord and master, when he subsequently found out about this, was compelled to admit that his unfaithful steward had at least shown sagacity in the manner in which he had sought to provide for future days of want and adversity. I say to you who profess to be acquiring treasure in heaven: Take lessons from those who make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and likewise so conduct your lives that you make eternal friendship with the forces of righteousness in order that, when all things earthly fail, you shall be joyfully received into the eternal habitations. If you have not shown foresight and integrity in the affairs of this world, how can you hope to be faithful and prudent when you are trusted with the stewardship of the true riches of the heavenly kingdom? You cannot serve God and mammon. These unfriendly hearers sought to engage Jesus in unprofitable argumentation, but he refused to debate with his enemies. When the Pharisees fell to wrangling among themselves, their loud speaking attracted large numbers of the multitude encamped thereabouts; and when they began to dispute with each other, Jesus withdrew, going to his tent for the night. The Master has spoken, and you do well to ponder his words. And this is no new doctrine which he proclaimed to you. Have you not also heard the allegory of the Nazarites concerning the rich man and the beggar? Some of us heard John the Baptist thunder this parable of warning to those who love riches and covet dishonest wealth. And while this olden parable is not according to the gospel we preach, you would all do well to heed its lessons until such a time as you comprehend the new light of the kingdom of heaven. The story as John told it was like this: And then, presently, this rich man also died and was buried with great pomp and regal splendor. When the rich man departed from this world, he waked up in Hades, and finding himself in torment, he lifted up his eyes and beheld Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And then Dives cried aloud: But now all this is changed, seeing that Lazarus is comforted while you are tormented. And besides, between us and you there is a great gulf so that we cannot go to you, neither can you come over to us. Although both the apostles and his disciples frequently asked Jesus questions about the parable of Dives and Lazarus, he never consented to make comment thereon. At the time Jesus lived on earth and taught in the flesh, the people of Urantia knew mostly of kings and emperors in the governments of the nations, and the Jews had long contemplated the coming of the kingdom of God. For these and other reasons, the Master thought best to designate the spiritual brotherhood of man as the kingdom of heaven and the spirit head of this brotherhood as the Father in heaven. Never did Jesus refer to his Father as a king. In his intimate talks with the apostles he always referred to himself as the Son of Man and as their elder brother. He depicted all his followers as servants of mankind and messengers of the gospel of the kingdom. He never asked men to believe in his Father; he took it for granted they did. Jesus never belittled himself by offering arguments in proof of the reality of the Father. His teaching regarding the Father all centered in the declaration that he and the Father are one; that he who has seen the Son has seen the Father; that the Father, like the Son, knows all things; that only the Son really knows the Father, and he to whom the Son will reveal him; that he who knows the Son knows also the Father; and that the Father sent him into the world to reveal their combined natures and to show forth their conjoint work. From the life of the Master you may each assimilate that concept of God which represents the measure of your capacity to perceive realities spiritual and divine, truths real and eternal. The finite can never hope to comprehend the

Infinite except as the Infinite was focalized in the time-space personality of the finite experience of the human life of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus taught his apostles that, while they never could fully understand God, they could most certainly know him, even as they had known the Son of Man. You can know God, not by understanding what Jesus said, but by knowing what Jesus was. Jesus was a revelation of God. And when the Master made reference to his Father as God, he usually employed the Hebrew word signifying the plural God the Trinity and not the word Yahweh, which stood for the progressive conception of the tribal God of the Jews. With the one exception – the declaration that "God is spirit" – Jesus never referred to Deity in any manner other than in terms descriptive of his own personal relationship with the First Source and Center of Paradise. When the word Father is employed to denote God, it should be understood in its largest possible meaning. The word God cannot be defined and therefore stands for the infinite concept of the Father, while the term Father, being capable of partial definition, may be employed to represent the human concept of the divine Father as he is associated with man during the course of mortal existence. Jesus accepted the concept of Elohim and called this supreme group of beings God. In the place of the concept of Yahweh, the racial deity, he introduced the idea of the fatherhood of God and the world-wide brotherhood of man. He exalted the Yahweh concept of a deified racial Father to the idea of a Father of all the children of men, a divine Father of the individual believer. And he further taught that this God of universes and this Father of all men were one and the same Paradise Deity. He never declared that he was a revelation of Elohim God to the worlds. He never taught that he who had seen him had seen Elohim God. But he did proclaim himself as the revelation of the Father in the flesh, and he did say that whoso had seen him had seen the Father. As the divine Son he claimed to represent only the Father. As regards the character of the other persons of the Paradise Trinity, we shall have to be content with the teaching that they are altogether like the Father, who has been revealed in personal portraiture in the life of his incarnated Son, Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, he taught only two things: On this evening Jesus made the final pronouncement of his relationship with God when he declared: The God of universes rules the far-flung creation, but it is the Father in heaven who sends forth his spirit to dwell within your minds. He is your elder brother who, in the flesh, makes known to you a Being of infinite attributes whom not even the celestial hosts can presume fully to understand. But all of this must consist in the personal experience of the individual believer. God who is spirit can be known only as a spiritual experience.

### 2: BBC iWonder - What do the lost gospels tell us about the real Jesus?

*Information on Aristo of Pella. Celsus and Origen mention this non-extant tractate, "The Disputation of Jason and Papiscus," which records the exchange of a Jewish-Christian and a Jew.*

For there it had been built, that is, in the part of Zion that was kept from the destruction, and the blocks of houses around Zion itself, and seven synagogues, which stood alone like huts, one of which remained until the time of Maximona the bishop and Constantine the king, "like a booth in a vineyard," as it is written. Therefore Hadrian decided to build the city, but not the temple. Vespasian did indeed already pity the calamities these men were in June 70] "As Josephus was speaking thus with a loud voice, the seditious would neither yield to what he said, nor did they deem it safe for them to alter their conduct; but as for the people, they had a great inclination to desert to the Romans; accordingly, some of them sold what they had, and even the most precious things that had been laid up as treasures by them, for every small matter, and swallowed down pieces of gold, that they might not be found out by the robbers; and when they had escaped to the Romans, went to stool, and had wherewithal to provide plentifully for themselves; for Titus let a great number of them go away into the country, whither they pleased. But here a worse fate accompanied these than what they had found within the city; and they met with a quicker dispatch from the too great abundance they had among the Romans, than they could have done from the famine among the Jews; for when they came first to the Romans, they were puffed up by the famine, and swelled like men in a dropsy; after which they all on the sudden overfilled those bodies that were before empty, and so burst asunder, excepting such only as were skillful enough to restrain their appetites, and by degrees took in their food into bodies unaccustomed thereto. However, the Romans could not but pity the affliction he was under, and wonder at his conduct. But for John, and those that were with him, they were but the more exasperated against the Romans on this account, and were desirous to get Josephus also into their power: Tobin "the unhappy Jews, when they were not able to bear the devastations which the robbers made among them, were all under a necessity of leaving their own habitations, and of flying away, as hoping to dwell more easily anywhere else in the world among foreigners" Antiquities, Book XX, ch. Here those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea; the divine justice, for their crimes against Christ and his apostles finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of these evildoers from the earth. On migrating from it they settled at Pella, the town already indicated, across the Jordan. It is said to belong to Decapolis de Mens. For thence it originated after the migration from Jerusalem of all the disciples who resided at Pella, Christ having instructed them to leave Jerusalem and retire from it on account of the impending siege. It was owing to this counsel that they went away, as I have said, to reside for a while at Pella" Haer At first their abode was Kochaba, a village in the district of Carnaim, Arnem, and Astaroth, in the region of Basanitis, according to the information we have received. But I have spoken, in other connections and with regard to other heresies, of the locality of Kochaba and Arabia Haer That is where the sect began, when all the disciples were living in Pella after they moved from Jerusalem, since Christ told them to leave Jerusalem and withdraw because it was about to be besieged. For this reason they settled in Peraea and there, as I said, they lived. This is where the Nazoraean sect began. For when all those who believed in Christ settled at that time for the most part in Peraea, in a city called Pella belonging to the Decapolis mentioned in the gospel, which is next to Batanaea and the land of Bashan, then they moved there and stayed.. It is said to belong to Decapolis " On Weights and Measures 15 Eutychius of Alexandria 10th C "Qistus, governor of Jerusalem, died and the city was without any authority or sovereign to govern it. Then they harassed a group of disciples and expelled them from the city. The Christians abandoned Jerusalem, crossed the Jordan and settled in those places Informed of this fact, Nero Caesar sent word to the commander stationed in the East, named Vespasian, to rally his troops and go to Judea with orders to kill all the inhabitants, sparing none, and to destroy the houses. Henry Alford "I own that, considering the analogies and the language used, I am much more disposed to interpret the persecution of the woman by the dragon of the various persecutions of the Jews which followed the ascension, and her flight into the wilderness of the gradual withdrawl of the church and her agency from

Jerusalem and Judea, finally consummated by the flight to the mountains on the approaching siege, commanded by our Lord Himself. Notes on Revelation This space of time is reckoned in manner from that last and most grievous rebellion of the Jews, to the destruction of the city and temple, for their defection or falling away, began in the twelfth year of Nero, before the beginning of which many signs and predictions were shown from heaven, as Josephus wrote, lib. In the feast of Pentecost not only a great sound and noise was heard in the Temple, but also a voice was heard by many out of the Sanctuary which cried out to all, Let us depart from here. Now three and a half years after this defection by the Jews began, and those wonders happened, the city was taken by force, the temple overthrown, and the place forsaken by God: George Peter Holford "And it is with reason supposed, that on this occasion many of the Christians, or converted Jews, who dwelt there, recollecting the warnings of their divine Master, retired to Pella, a place beyond Jordan, situated in a mountainous country, whither according to Eusebius, who resided near the spot they came from Jerusalem, and settled, before the war under Vespasian began. Other providential opportunities for escaping afterwards occurred, of which, it is probable, those who were now left behind availed themselves; for it is a striking act, and such as cannot be contemplated by the pious mind without sentiments of devout admiration, that history does not record that even one CHRISTIAN perished in the siege of Jerusalem. But you will say, How could this be propounded as an argument of patience to the godly Hebrews that Christ would come and destroy the temple and city? His counsel was wisely remembered, and put in practice, by the Christians afterwards. Josephus informs us, that when Cestius Gallus came with his army against Jerusalem, "many fled from the city, as if it would be taken presently: It is probable that there were some Christians among these, but we learn more certainly from ecclesiastical historians, that at this juncture all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan: Of such signal service was this caution of our Saviour to the believers. Spurgeon "The Christians in Jerusalem and the surrounding towns and villages, "in Judea", availed themselves of the first opportunity for eluding the Roman armies, and fled to the mountain city of Pella, in Perea, where they were preserved from the general destruction which overthrew the Jews. There was no time to spare before the final investment of the guilty city; the man "on the house-top" could "not come down to take anything out of his house", and the man "in the field" could not "return back, to take his clothes. See tribulation, as had not been from the beginning of the world to that time; no, Lit. Nor was there, perhaps, nor ever should be. Eusebius and Epiphanius say, that at this juncture, after Cestius Gallus had raised the siege, and Vespasian was approaching with his army, all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem and fled to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan; and so they all marvellously escaped the general shipwreck of their country: See on Matthew Which that they did accordingly appears by this, that when Titus came some months after and besieged the city, there was not one Christian remaining in it" H. Marcellus Kik "One of the most remarkable things about the siege of Jerusalem was the miraculous escape of the Christians. It has been estimated that over a million Jews lost their lives in that terrible siege, but not one of them was a Christian. Before its fall the Christians had left the doomed city. While the greater part retired beyond the Jordan and founded Christian colonies at Pella and the neighborhood, the principle leaders of the church -- the surviving apostles and other personal disciples of the Lord -- sought a new home in proconsular Asia. Henceforward we find the headquarters of Christendom no more at Jerusalem, nor even at Antioch but, for the time at least in Ephesus. Here John fixed his abode after his temporary banishment in Patmos. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp; first published; Pub. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman: No wiser choice could have been made. Judaea, Idumaea, Perea, and Galilee were in insurrection; Samaria and the coast were in a very unsettled state owing to the war. Thus Scythopolis and Pella were the nearest neutral cities to Jerusalem. Pella, by its position beyond the Jordan, must have offered much more tranquillity than Scythopolis, which had become one of the Roman strongholds. Pella was a free city like the other towns of Decapolis, but apparently it had given allegiance to Agrippa To take refuge there was openly to avow horror of the revolt. The importance of the town dated from the Macedonian conquest. Pella was captured by Alexander Jannaeus, and the Greek inhabitants, who refused to be circumcised, suffered much from Jewish fanaticism. The pagan population doubtless took new root, for, in the massacres of 66, Pella was

considered a Syrian town, and was once more sacked by the Jews. It was in this anti-Jewish town that the Church of Jerusalem found refuge during the horrors of the siege. The community lived on their savings; it was believed that God himself took it upon him to feed them, and many saw in such a lot, so different from that of the Jews, a miracle predicted by the prophets. No doubt the Galilean Christians had for their part betaken themselves to the east of the Jordan and the lake into Batanaea and Gaulonitis. The territories of Agrippa 11, thus formed an adoptive country for the JudeoChristians of Palestine. Josephus the eyewitness, himself an unbeliever, chronicles this fact, and admitted his inability to account for the cessation of the fighting at this time, after a siege had begun. Can we account for it? The Lord was fighting against Jerusalem Zechariah The Lord was besieging that city. God was bringing these things to pass against the Jewish state and nation. Therefore, the opportunity was offered for the disciples to escape the siege, as Jesus had forewarned, and the disciples took it. Charles Finney "From the connection of this passage, some have inferred that the apostle had his eye immediately upon the destruction of Jerusalem. They suppose this great and fearful event to be alluded to in the language, "For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? A reference to the event is possible and even probable. We know that when Jerusalem was destroyed, not one Christian perished. They had timely notice in the signs Christ had already given them, and perceiving those signs in season, they all fled to Pella, on the east of the Jordan, and hence were not involved in the general destruction. Neil Hamilton "We may conclude then that, shortly before the rebellion against Rome, the Jerusalem church was an integral part of Judaism. The next notice of the activity of the Jerusalem church was intended by its author to indicate that separation had begun. This event is the flight of the Jerusalem church to Pella reported by Eusebius in connection with the rebellion against Rome that began in AD. As such it assumes the complete separation of Christians from Jews. A certain Jesus, the son of Ananias, had predicted the destruction of the city throughout the four years preceding it. It is said that eleven hundred thousand [i. This timely retreat was made to the small town of Pella. In this situation they were forbidden to return to Jerusalem. Languishing for sixty years deprived of revisiting the place of their dearest hope, they evaded the law, directed against Jews, by electing Mark, a prelate of the Gentile race for their bishop. Thus, they were permitted entrance into the city, and the standard of Christianity, A. A considerable part of the Jewish Christians, however, for various reasons remained behind at Pella. Hurlbut "In the fall of Jerusalem, few if any Christians perished. From the prophetic utterances of Christ, the Christians received warning, escaped from the doomed city, and found refuge at Pella, in the Jordan valley. It is a large site, and the accumulated debris of the main tell is some thirty-one meters in depth. At the foot of the mound is a stream fed by a spring and in the valley lie the remains of a Greco-Roman temple and a Roman theater. Ruins of two large basilicas are also quite evident. Coins indicate the existence of a Nymphaeum and the prevalence of the worship of Apollo, Heracles, Athena, Thychae, and Nike. Eusebius of Caesarea notes that in A. The early settlers were steeped in the Hellenistic and Roman cultures which prevailed in the area, and Pella became a member of the Decapolis. Finds there date from the first century of this era and include public halls, one or more temples and a small theater with its stage and orchestra in the creek-bed of the Wadi Jirm. Building the theater near the stream facilitated the task of flooding the stage for aquatic performances. On the eastern hill overlooking the central mound is a small Temple Complex dating back to the same era. In the West Church in , Smith discovered a sarcophagus that may originally have been the last resting-place of one of these early Christians. The testimony of the burial is not entirely clear, since no inscription remains.

### 3: The Lost Gospel According to Peter – The Lost Books of the Bible

*The Lost Gospel According to Peter [In the valley of the Upper Nile, on the right bank of the river, is the mysterious town of Akhmim. It was called Panopolis in ancient times when it was the capital of the district.*

Retrieved February 8, Andrew in the leading role. What they were is uncertain. Fabricius supposes that Merinthus and Cerinthus are the same person and that Cerinthus was changed into Merinthus by the way of banter or reproach. Although Epiphanius makes them into two different persons, yet in the heresy of the Cerinthians, he professes himself uncertain. Retrieved June 18, Archived from the original PDF on March 5, Retrieved June 11, The gospel purports to be an old manuscript found in an old Alexandria Library giving a graphic and detailed account of Jesus as a friend of Jesus. The gospel states that Jesus did not die on the cross but died six months later. The gospel references the Essenes a lot and is allegedly written by an elder of the Essene order who was a close friend of Jesus. The document was discovered in a building in Alexandria but since then the document has disappeared. This information was retrieved from 4Enoch. The gospel is in the form of thirteen lectures. The book contains Zoroastrian themes along with Christian themes. Steiner states that the Gospel can be read at Akashic Record. From the Akashic Record. The Gospel of Jesus. He said he found the manuscript at the St. Unlike other biblical hoaxes Mendes presented the manuscript. The manuscript was written in Old Latin that the Romans had used. However the manuscript was quickly proved to be a hoax as it was written by Mendes. The gospel is an infancy Gospel attributed to the Apostle Peter. It was originally written in Latin by Mendes but was eventually translated into French by Mendes. He claimed to get it from various eastern mysterious sources. The book was first published in with the title Yehoshua Nazir; Jesus the Nazarite; life of Christ. The book is accepted as scripture by the Mazdaznan followers. The text is available on the Internet Text Archive. The gospel was allegedly inspired by the Aquarian Gospel. The book is a collection of records about Jesus retrieved from the ancient monasteries of the Essenes and the Rosicrucian Order. Lewis allegedly went with a staff of researchers through Palestine and Egypt visiting holy sites and obtaining information. The book states that Jesus entered priesthood and secret priesthood and talks about the doctrines and secret facts about the resurrection. A preview of the book can be read on Amazon. The book has not been translated into English and the full text in German is available at the internet text archive under the title:

### 4: April | | Grace Notes

*The gospel of Jesus is good news. We have the cure for spiritual cancer for those who are dying in their sins in our community and we need to be telling them, and more effectively showing them, this good news.*

The shortest ending is found in the oldest manuscripts, all of which stop at verse 16. Most later manuscripts contain some additional verses, not always the same, which were apparently added to the gospel at later points in time. Excluding minor variations, these later additions created three new endings. Several theories have been put forward to explain the different endings: The original ending beyond verse 16. Later readers noticed the abrupt cutoff in the story, and several of them tried to finish it by inventing new endings. The original ending was intentionally removed by cutting the manuscript at verse 16. Several later readers, unaware of what had happened, created new endings. The original author was interrupted or died before he could finish the gospel, and had reached verse 16. The original author actually did intend to stop at verse 16. The possible loss of the original ending is especially unfortunate because many biblical scholars consider Mark to be the earliest and most reliable gospel. These women had just been told that Jesus was alive and on his way to Galilee, and that the disciples would see him there. But any account of what happened next, if it ever existed, is now lost. One popular theory is that the original ending beyond verse 16. In fact some scholars think that a portion of verse 16. If true, this would provide strong support for the theory of an accidental break off. But there is another way to interpret verse 16. If this interpretation is correct, it would mean that the cutoff occurred between sentences, which goes against the theory of an accidental severing of the manuscript. Another argument against the accidental-loss theory is that an ancient scroll was normally rolled up with the ending on the inside where it would be unlikely to break off. Another theory is that someone intentionally destroyed the original ending because it was inconsistent with some basic Christian beliefs. Of course this is merely speculation, since there is no direct evidence to support such an idea. For example, verse 16. If the original ending really was lost or destroyed, it probably happened within a few years after the gospel was written. Otherwise the authors of Matthew and Luke, who most likely used copies of Mark as a source, would have included versions of his original ending in their gospels. Also, a longer time period would have allowed many copies of the gospel to be made, and this would increase the chance that the original ending would survive. Some scholars think that the author of Mark stopped at verse 16. This is certainly possible. Another possibility is that the author was interrupted or died before he could finish writing the gospel. However, if this had happened, other people would have probably known about it, and someone likely would have mentioned it in other early writings. The ending chosen for most modern bibles is known as the Longer Ending or Apocryphal Addition. It consists of twelve additional verses Mark 16:7-8. In one of these added verses Mark 16:7-8. The discovery is a possible copy of an ancient letter written by Clement of Alexandria, in which he quotes two passages from a previously unknown version of Mark. Although questions have been raised about the authenticity of this letter, most scholars believe that it is genuine. According to the letter, this other version of Mark was called the "Secret Gospel of Mark", and only a small number of people had seen it. Because it contained extra passages, it was apparently a longer version of the gospel. In fact some scholars think that it was actually the original version. If so, the New Testament version could be a shortened form with some passages, including the ending, intentionally removed. Thus, if a complete text of the secret version could be found, it might reveal the true original ending. All of the main theories involve conjectures, and all of them have deficiencies. As a result, the uncertainty about the true ending is one of the biggest unsolved problems in biblical scholarship.

### 5: Lost Gospels of Jesus: Gospel of Mathew Chapter Four

*Gerd LÃ¼demann, in a thoughtful analysis of the flight to Pella tradition, sought to falsify it suggesting that the tradition was an invention of Jewish Christians at Pella aiming to link their origins back to an apostle and the original Jerusalem congregation in order to legitimate their form of Jewish Christianity (LÃ¼demann ).*

It was an awesome event passing out tracts and witnessing to the locals, and people that traveled far to attend this annual gathering. This year was quite different and with Jon Niefert, our fearless Captain and new friend at the helm, he made it a year we will not forget. Jon did an impressive job not only supplying the tracts, but also writing, designing, and printing tracts specific to the Pella Tulip Time Festival. One in particular talked about the founding of the town and the first church which was started by persecuted Christians from Holland seeking refuge in the new world. He invited some very special guests to teach at the start of each day and give lessons on how to witness and share our faith. Not only did they speak, but they also went out with us at the festival to share Christ along side us, which was really awesome. Tony Ramsek Tony has worked for Answers In Genesis since and leads numerous gospel outreaches for the ministry. This includes the annual evangelism outreach to the NEA convention for public school teachers. He also brought with him an assistant, Brandon Bailey to aid in the gospel efforts and was a key figure in helping us reach the lost at Pella. Allen has trained churches in evangelism and led weekly street witnessing teams for years. Grace also enjoys arranging witnessing events in her home town, which has led to a ministry called, Bright Lights, focusng on encouaging young girls to be radiant in godliness, holiness, and their testimony. She also gave her newest book out to us that attended the training and witnessing event. On The Streets Without going into specifics, it was a fantastic couple of days. After the teaching every day we paired into teams of two and hit the streets to share Christ with people at the festival. We also were out passing out tracts to those who waited for the morning and afternoon parades. Since Pella was founded by persecuted Christians, you would think that it would be a huge waste of time to share with those who were possibly Christians. But we ran into MANY people from all over surrounding states to come and enjoy the day. I personally witnessed to those from Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, and even Illinois. We all carried tracts that Jon had specifically made for the event, and they were great tools to help start conversations. The crazy thing is that we gave out so much, that most of us were overlapping each other and offering tracts to the same persons. I have been studying it for years and was curious to what you thought. They agreed to read the tract if I agreed to watch one a video by one of their BYU Professors about grace. I kept my end of the bargain, but pray they keep theirs. One of the best things about this trip was meeting new Evangelists, talking shop with them, and sharing ideas on reaching the lost for Christ. We talked to each other in our two-by-two pair-ups, and then when we got together at lunch and during the parades, we shared our testimonies in larger groups on how the Lord opened our hearts. The fellowship between us all was amazing and how we worked together even through our different backgrounds, denominations, and styles. I would much rather do one on ones. But in reality, we all need to pass out tracts and open those doors so that we can. The entire event went well, and by the end all our energy was spent on gardening, tilling, and planting those seeds of the gospel.

### 6: Pella – Pursuing Truth

*It is Tony's heart's desire to exalt Christ, equip the saints, and evangelize the lost. He also brought with him an assistant, Brandon Bailey to aid in the gospel efforts and was a key figure in helping us reach the lost at Pella.*

Paper Last Teaching at Pella He preached every afternoon to the crowds and each night answered questions for the apostles and certain of the more advanced disciples residing at the camp. Not since the feeding of the five thousand had anything occurred which so aroused the imagination of the people. And thus it was at the very height of the second phase of the public ministry of the kingdom that Jesus planned to teach this one short week at Pella and then to begin the tour of southern Perea which led right up to the final and tragic experiences of the last week in Jerusalem. He is a friend of publicans and sinners; he receives the ungodly and even eats with them. He is a blasphemer; he talks about God as being his Father and thinks he is equal with God. He is a lawbreaker. He heals disease on the Sabbath and in many other ways flouts the sacred law of Israel. He is in league with devils. He works wonders and does seeming miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Parable of the Lost Son But I have come to show you that, while you are seeking to find God, God is likewise seeking to find you. Many times have I told you the story of the good shepherd who left the ninety and nine sheep in the fold while he went forth searching for the one that was lost, and how, when he had found the straying sheep, he laid it over his shoulder and tenderly carried it back to the fold. And when the lost sheep had been restored to the fold, you remember that the good shepherd called in his friends and bade them rejoice with him over the finding of the sheep that had been lost. Again I say there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. The fact that souls are lost only increases the interest of the heavenly Father. You are all like sheep which have gone astray, and I have come to seek and to save those who are lost. And I tell you this story to impress upon you that the Father and his Son go forth to search for those who are lost, and in this search we employ all influences capable of rendering assistance in our diligent efforts to find those who are lost, those who stand in need of salvation. And so, while the Son of Man goes out in the wilderness to seek for the sheep gone astray, he also searches for the coin which is lost in the house. The sheep wanders away, unintentionally; the coin is covered by the dust of time and obscured by the accumulation of the things of men. You recall that the sheep strayed away without intention, but this youth left his home with premeditation. It was like this: Now these two brothers did not get along well together; they were always quarreling and bickering. The younger lad was cheerful and vivacious, but indolent and unreliable; the older son was steady and industrious, at the same time self-centered, surly, and conceited. The younger son enjoyed play but shunned work; the older devoted himself to work but seldom played. This association became so disagreeable that the younger son came to his father and said: And when he had spent all, there arose a prolonged famine in that country, and he found himself in want. And so, when he suffered hunger and his distress was great, he found employment with one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into the fields to feed swine. And the young man would fain have filled himself with the husks which the swine ate, but no one would give him anything. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no more worthy to be called your son; only be willing to make me one of your hired servants. This father loved this son and was always on the lookout for his return, so that on the day he approached his home, even while he was yet afar off, the father saw him and, being moved with loving compassion, ran out to meet him, and with affectionate greeting he embraced and kissed him. And when he came up to the back door, he called out one of the servants and inquired as to the meaning of all this festivity. And then said the servant: When his father heard of his resentment of the welcome of his younger brother, he went out to entreat him. He answered his father, saying: I have remained here to care for you all these years, and you never made rejoicing over my faithful service, but when this your son returns, having squandered your substance with harlots, you make haste to kill the fatted calf and make merry over him. You could have had a kid at any time you had made friends to share your merriment. Think of it, my son, your brother was lost and is found; he has returned alive to us! He presented the story of the lost sheep to show that, when men unintentionally stray away from the path of life, the Father

is mindful of such lost ones and goes out, with his Sons, the true shepherds of the flock, to seek the lost sheep. He then would recite the story of the coin lost in the house to illustrate how thorough is the divine searching for all who are confused, confounded, or otherwise spiritually blinded by the material cares and accumulations of life. This parable and the story of the good Samaritan were his favorite means of teaching the love of the Father and the neighborliness of man.

**Parable of the Shrewd Steward** If you were unjust and often unfair, you were nonetheless prudent and farseeing in that you transacted your business with an eye single to your present profit and future safety. Likewise should you now so order your lives in the kingdom as to provide for your present joy while you also make certain of your future enjoyment of treasures laid up in heaven. If you were so diligent in making gains for yourselves when in the service of self, why should you show less diligence in gaining souls for the kingdom since you are now servants of the brotherhood of man and stewards of God? I have not the strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do to make certain that, when I am put out of this stewardship, I will be welcomed into the houses of all who do business with my master. And so did this dishonest steward seek to make friends for himself after he would be discharged from his stewardship. Even his lord and master, when he subsequently found out about this, was compelled to admit that his unfaithful steward had at least shown sagacity in the manner in which he had sought to provide for future days of want and adversity. I say to you who profess to be acquiring treasure in heaven: Take lessons from those who make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and likewise so conduct your lives that you make eternal friendship with the forces of righteousness in order that, when all things earthly fail, you shall be joyfully received into the eternal habitations. If you have not shown foresight and integrity in the affairs of this world, how can you hope to be faithful and prudent when you are trusted with the stewardship of the true riches of the heavenly kingdom? You cannot serve God and mammon. These unfriendly hearers sought to engage Jesus in unprofitable argumentation, but he refused to debate with his enemies. When the Pharisees fell to wrangling among themselves, their loud speaking attracted large numbers of the multitude encamped thereabouts; and when they began to dispute with each other, Jesus withdrew, going to his tent for the night.

**The Rich Man and the Beggar** The Master has spoken, and you do well to ponder his words. And this is no new doctrine which he proclaimed to you. Have you not also heard the allegory of the Nazarites concerning the rich man and the beggar? Some of us heard John the Baptist thunder this parable of warning to those who love riches and covet dishonest wealth. And while this olden parable is not according to the gospel we preach, you would all do well to heed its lessons until such a time as you comprehend the new light of the kingdom of heaven. The story as John told it was like this: And then, presently, this rich man also died and was buried with great pomp and regal splendor. When the rich man departed from this world, he waked up in Hades, and finding himself in torment, he lifted up his eyes and beheld Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And then Dives cried aloud: But now all this is changed, seeing that Lazarus is comforted while you are tormented. And besides, between us and you there is a great gulf so that we cannot go to you, neither can you come over to us. Although both the apostles and his disciples frequently asked Jesus questions about the parable of Dives and Lazarus, he never consented to make comment thereon.

**The Father and His Kingdom** At the time Jesus lived on earth and taught in the flesh, the people of Urantia knew mostly of kings and emperors in the governments of the nations, and the Jews had long contemplated the coming of the kingdom of God. For these and other reasons, the Master thought best to designate the spiritual brotherhood of man as the kingdom of heaven and the spirit head of this brotherhood as the Father in heaven. Never did Jesus refer to his Father as a king. In his intimate talks with the apostles he always referred to himself as the Son of Man and as their elder brother. He depicted all his followers as servants of mankind and messengers of the gospel of the kingdom. He never asked men to believe in his Father; he took it for granted they did. Jesus never belittled himself by offering arguments in proof of the reality of the Father. His teaching regarding the Father all centered in the declaration that he and the Father are one; that he who has seen the Son has seen the Father; that the Father, like the Son, knows all things; that only the Son really knows the Father, and he to whom the Son will reveal him; that he who knows the Son knows also the Father; and that the Father sent him into the world to reveal their combined natures and to show forth their conjoint work. From the life of the Master you may each assimilate that concept of God which represents the measure of your capacity to perceive realities spiritual and

divine, truths real and eternal. The finite can never hope to comprehend the Infinite except as the Infinite was focalized in the time-space personality of the finite experience of the human life of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus taught his apostles that, while they never could fully understand God, they could most certainly know him, even as they had known the Son of Man. You can know God, not by understanding what Jesus said, but by knowing what Jesus was. Jesus was a revelation of God. And when the Master made reference to his Father as God, he usually employed the Hebrew word signifying the plural God the Trinity and not the word Yahweh, which stood for the progressive conception of the tribal God of the Jews. When the word Father is employed to denote God, it should be understood in its largest possible meaning. The word God cannot be defined and therefore stands for the infinite concept of the Father, while the term Father, being capable of partial definition, may be employed to represent the human concept of the divine Father as he is associated with man during the course of mortal existence. Jesus accepted the concept of Elohim and called this supreme group of beings God. In the place of the concept of Yahweh, the racial deity, he introduced the idea of the fatherhood of God and the world-wide brotherhood of man. He exalted the Yahweh concept of a deified racial Father to the idea of a Father of all the children of men, a divine Father of the individual believer. And he further taught that this God of universes and this Father of all men were one and the same Paradise Deity. He never declared that he was a revelation of Elohim God to the worlds. He never taught that he who had seen him had seen Elohim God. But he did proclaim himself as the revelation of the Father in the flesh, and he did say that whoso had seen him had seen the Father. As the divine Son he claimed to represent only the Father. As regards the character of the other persons of the Paradise Trinity, we shall have to be content with the teaching that they are altogether like the Father, who has been revealed in personal portraiture in the life of his incarnated Son, Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, he taught only two things: On this evening Jesus made the final pronouncement of his relationship with God when he declared: The God of universes rules the far-flung creation, but it is the Father in heaven who sends forth his spirit to dwell within your minds.

### 7: the lost books of bible? | Yahoo Answers

*Late on Monday evening, March 6, Jesus and the ten apostles arrived at the Pella camp. This was the last week of Jesus' sojourn there, and he was very active in teaching the multitude and instructing the apostles.*

Presented by Peter Owen Jones, Writer and broadcaster. 1. *Gospels unearthed* Presented by Peter Owen Jones, Writer and broadcaster. In , a group of farm hands digging for fertiliser in the Egyptian desert made a discovery that would dramatically change our understanding of the early church. They had unearthed several early Christian texts including gospels of Thomas, Philip and Mary that had been buried away for around 1, years. They had been side-lined by the early church as it worked out what became the official version of Christianity. The Jesus in these texts was radically different from the one in the accepted gospels of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Instead of the suffering, human, Son of God, they depicted a divine being whose mysterious sayings revealed the secrets to immortality. The hidden Jesus. Click on the image below to find out how Jesus was portrayed in the lost gospels. This content uses functionality that is not supported by your current browser. Consider upgrading your browser. Why were the lost gospels thrown out? Getty Jesus Christ and the Emperor Constantine. In the 2nd-3rd Centuries there were attempts to work out which of the gospels should be read as scriptures. The four gospels of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - were already being used as scriptures in early church services in Rome and perhaps other places too. These gospels were probably written in the mid to late 1st Century. Some of the lost gospels were written significantly later, in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries - and this would have counted against them. No mass appeal. In comparison to what became mainstream Christianity, which was open to all who believed, the lost gospels were sometimes elitist. One possible reason they were not included in the emerging New Testament is they were not meant to be part of a wider canon or to be read as scripture in church - instead each one was meant to be read by an elect few. Roman Empire. When the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in , he wanted to use it as a way of unifying his fragmented Empire. There was then a concerted effort to standardise Christian doctrines and to promote an agreed canon of New Testament scriptures. But the vast majority simply stopped being reproduced. By the end of the 4th Century, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were widely accepted as integral to the 27 texts which constitute the New Testament. Together with the Old Testament, these form the canon of Christian sacred scriptures. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are the four books that recount the life and work of Jesus that eventually made it into the New Testament. Click below to reveal more about them.

### 8: Iowa Seed Sowers: Pella Tulip Time

*"Gossiping the Gospel" The Why and How of Personal Evangelism. Wednesday, April 2nd pm. -Who Should Come to This Conference? â€¢ Any Christian who is concerned about their lost neighbors.*

That post highlighted the persecution and murders carried out by the Zealots against anyone who advocated for peace instead of war, and against anyone they even suspected of wanting to defect to the Romans. During the height of that persecution 66 AD â€” 70 AD , were Christians in Judea and Jerusalem, and did they get caught up in the midst of it? Or did they all flee to Pella in late 66 AD? According to Daniel 7: Revelation 13 gives some clues as to where these 3. So Israel would be the geographical center of this persecution. However, neither Josephus nor Tacitus specifically said that Christians were killed there during that time. The claim has been made that no Christians were killed when Jerusalem was destroyed, because they had all escaped to Pella in modern Jordan. Who first made that claim, and what information was it based on? Or does it mean, more broadly, that no Christians were killed in Jerusalem after the war began in 66 AD? Wikipedia Pella, Jordan Since Daniel 7: This is especially true if one is open to the idea that this persecution was carried out by the Zealots. For a while, the Zealots persecuted and killed their opponents in Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Idumea, and perhaps elsewhere as well, but eventually they were isolated to Jerusalem as the Romans gradually captured those territories. Once the Zealots were isolated to Jerusalem, Josephus is clear that they continued to oppose and kill their opponents there as well see the previous post. Were Christians among them? Here are the words of Jesus warning His followers of a time when they would need to flee: So Luke equates the abomination of desolation with Jerusalem being surrounded by armies. When this happened, Christians were instructed to leave not only Jerusalem, but all of Judea, and not to go back in. On migrating from it they settled at Pella, the town already indicated, across the Jordan. For thence it originated after the migration from Jerusalem of all the disciples who resided at Pella, Christ having instructed them to leave Jerusalem and retire from it on account of the impending siege. So the earliest known testimony about the Christians fleeing to Pella seems to belong to Eusebius, who wrote approximately years after the flight took place. Some speculate that his reports were based on the writings of Hegesippus AD , whose writings are now mostly lost. Here are a few things to note from these testimonies: Remigius revealed that Agrippa, who protected the Christians at Pella, was under the dominion of the Romans, and that the Jews he watched over were also under the dominion of the Romans. He behaved wickedly toward the Jews, causing the Zealots to gain the upper hand in Judea. The earliest major attack of Jerusalem by the Romans took place in November 66 AD when Cestius Gallus led an army toward Jerusalem to try to put down the rebellion there Wars 2. Cestius and his army approached from the northeast of Jerusalem, first observing the city from Mount Scopus , one of the seven mountains of Jerusalem Wars 2. It appears that Cestius approached Jerusalem and entered it from one direction, rather than surrounding the city. This also took place several months after the war had begun. According to Eusebius, the believers were warned to flee before the war began. In order to reconcile the account of Eusebius with the words of Jesus, Jerusalem needed to be surrounded by armies prior to the war, which began in August 66 AD, according to Josephus. Was there an earlier instance of Jerusalem being surrounded, which prompted the believers to flee? Did Christians flee Jerusalem and Judea at that time? This would have been a dangerous environment for any remaining Christians. In other words, the Zealots were a danger and a threat to the people of Jerusalem well before the Romans were. Instead, the Zealots resumed their courage and began to attack the armies of Cestius Gallus, soon achieving a resounding victory. Presumably, Christians in Jerusalem also had an opportunity to flee Jerusalem during those several days when Cestius Gallus was retreating from Jerusalem and most of the Zealots were pursuing his forces. It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world. Immediately after this defeat of Cestius Gallus, Josephus speaks of more Jews fleeing from Jerusalem: Aside from the armies in the clouds which were seen surrounding cities in April â€” May 66 AD, there were also armies of Zealots roaming throughout Judea and Jerusalem. This is

when the Zealot leader Manahem and his followers were slain in the temple and other parts of the city: What about the fate of Christians during this time when Jerusalem was in the grip of the Zealots? Whether this claim is true or not, it seems to refer only to the siege of Titus beginning in mid-April 70 AD. In other words, they claimed that Jerusalem was empty of Christians by spring 70 AD, but they did not seem to claim that Jerusalem was empty of Christians by fall 66 AD. According to these commentaries, not all of the Christians went to Pella. The language of Daniel 7: Based on the descriptions given by Josephus, it was difficult, but not impossible, for local people to enter and exit Jerusalem during that time. Later in the siege Josephus said this: Outsiders continued to travel to Jerusalem from far and wide for the annual festivals all the way up to April 70 AD, and many of these pilgrims were killed because of the fighting between the Zealot factions Wars 5. On the other hand, the testimony of Remigius actually dismisses the idea that Nero fulfilled Revelation This took place in the first half of 68 AD while Nero was still alive. If Nero was intent on killing Christians throughout the Roman Empire, then why did the Christians remain protected in Pella during this time when the Romans specifically targeted Perea and captured all of it? The far greater threat to their safety came from the Zealots who controlled Judea until most of that country was captured by the Romans, and who controlled Jerusalem for the entire first half of the Jewish-Roman War. All of the posts in this series can be found at this page.

### 9: List of Gospels - Wikipedia

*Gnostics, Gnostic Gospels, & Gnosticism. A one-sentence description of Gnosticism: a religion that differentiates the evil god of this world (who is identified with the god of the Old Testament) from a higher more abstract God revealed by Jesus Christ, a religion that regards this world as the creation of a series of evil archons/powers who wish to keep the human soul trapped in an evil.*

The Nazarenes After Jesus ascended to heaven, many of his followers stayed in Jerusalem and gathered into a closely-knit group that became known as the Nazarenes. According to Acts 1: The two main leaders were Simon Peter and the oldest brother of Jesus, who was called James the Just. During an early meeting a man named Matthias was chosen to replace the traitor Judas Iscariot in the inner circle of the twelve primary disciples. The Nazarenes were the original core group from which Christianity grew and spread. But initially they still considered themselves to be Jews. They prayed in the temple at Jerusalem, and they followed most of the traditional Jewish religious practices. Other people in the city regarded them as a new Jewish sect. But the Nazarenes differed from other Jewish sects in a fundamental way, for they believed that Jesus was the Messiah. They boldly took this message into the streets of Jerusalem and soon began to attract many new converts. They also spread the message to friends and relatives who lived in other places, and within a few years small groups of believers were established in several other cities. At first most of the new converts were other Jews, many of whom were already interested in the prophesies about the Messiah. But then the apostle Paul began to convert many non-Jews Gentiles. This led to a controversy when some Nazarenes from Jerusalem visited a community of new believers in Antioch and told some Gentile converts there that they would have to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul strongly disagreed with this, and he made a special trip to Jerusalem to try to resolve the issue. When he reached Jerusalem, a meeting was held to discuss the matter. Although some of the Nazarenes argued against Paul, Peter apparently took his side. This important meeting, sometimes called the Council of Jerusalem, is described in Acts During these early years the converts in other cities regarded the Nazarenes in Jerusalem as the final authority for deciding important issues. This was mainly due to the presence of Peter, James the Just, and other original believers. They were granted a special status because they had known Jesus personally. But Peter eventually left Jerusalem. For these reasons, the Nazarenes began to lose their influence. As the years passed, their continued adherence to the old Jewish religious practices left them increasingly out of touch with newer believers, many of whom came from outside Judaism. The casualties were enormous, especially among civilians, but most of the Nazarenes were able to save themselves by abandoning their homes and fleeing from Jerusalem. According to the church historian Eusebius, many of them fled to a place called Pella east of the Jordan River. But although most of them escaped, they had suffered a terrible blow. By then Christianity had begun to separate from Judaism, and the Nazarenes quickly lost any remaining influence they might have had. Perhaps partly for this reason, they gradually became isolated from the main Christian movement, and had little effect on the subsequent history of the church. By this, they apparently meant their way of life. According to Acts 4: All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything that they had. In addition to their insistence on sharing, the Nazarenes put a high value on devoutness, non-violence, and a very simple lifestyle. All of these ideas could have come directly from the teachings of Jesus. But theories about possible connections between the two groups are difficult to prove. The origin of the name "Nazarenes" is uncertain. Because Jesus himself was sometimes called "the Nazarene", one frequent suggestion is that the name was derived from "Nazareth". Some of the uncertainty stems from the fact that ancient writers spelled the name in several different ways, including "Nazirenes", "Nazaraeans", and "Nazoreans". Persecution of the Nazarenes Even in the early days, when the Nazarenes were still a small group, they were already being persecuted by the local Jerusalem authorities. The stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, is starkly described in Acts 7: The threat of further executions caused others in the group to temporarily go into hiding. Later, during another flareup of persecution, James the son of Zebedee was put to death with a sword. Peter would have probably also been executed, but an angel came during the night and

helped him escape from jail. Apparently he avoided further trouble until his later years, but finally, according to church tradition, was killed in Rome. James the Just also managed to survive the early persecutions, but was eventually killed in 62 AD. The Fate of the Nazarenes After they fled from Jerusalem, the Nazarenes gradually became isolated from the main Christian movement. Despite this isolation, they still managed to survive for several centuries as an independent sect. Their survival was mentioned by several later writers, including Saint Jerome, who reported that he visited a community of them in the Syrian desert in about AD. Many scholars think that another group of them survived under the name Ebionites. These Ebionites recognized Jesus as the Messiah but considered him to be of normal human parentage. They adhered to the old Jewish laws, had their own gospel, and disapproved of the teachings of Paul. For these reasons, the fourth-century Bishop Epiphanius declared them to be heretics. Quite possibly both groups completely died out soon after the fourth century. However, a few scholars think that small communities may have survived for a longer period in remote areas. There has also been speculation that some late survivors were progenitors of medieval heretical groups such as the Cathars. But unless new information is uncovered, the final fate of the Nazarenes will remain a mystery. According to legend, a modern group of Christians known as the Nazarenes of Malabar India was founded by the disciple Thomas in 52 AD, and thus could be an offshoot of the original Nazarenes of Jerusalem. Another modern group, the Nazarenes of Mount Carmel, claims to be a "modern resurrection" of the ancient Nazarenes.

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