

The Brother of Jesus

And the Lost Teachings of Christianity

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Part 4 The Nature of Orthodoxy

Chapter 8 Orthodoxy and Heresy: James and the Quest for the Historical Jesus

Part 3 works present us with two possibilities:

1. The Jewish Christian writings accurately portray Jesus' earliest followers as thoroughly Jewish and opposed to Paul.
2. The Jewish Christian writings are the attempt of a later generation of Jewish Christians to portray the apostles in a Jewish light to support their Jewish understanding of Jesus.

A Parallel from John

John's gospel portrays Peter negatively in favor of the "Beloved Disciple." Yet "BD" is absent from the synoptic gospels. But who is the "BD?" The gospels and epistles of John reveal the struggle of one Christian community in tension with other earlier Christian communities. Because Jesus revealed "secrets" to "BD" John's gospel and epistles had a Gnostic flavor and was scrutinized for "orthodoxy." Churches in the second and third centuries were separate and with differing and competing theologies. Constantine's Nicaea in 325 declared orthodoxy. John was accepted as orthodox before Nicaea. The debate about Matthew 5: 17-20. The epistle of James was the most disputed as "orthodox" because of its Jewish Christian theology and opposition to Paul's teaching of salvation by faith alone. Eusebius coopted James by tying James to the apostles.

Jesus and Judaism

Tradition: Later movements in Christianity (i.e.: Ebionites) were re-Judaizing sects lapsing back into Judaism. Apparently implausible and anti-Semitic – but the tradition. New paradigm is the third quest for the historical Jesus: Jesus (and James and his disciples) is thoroughly Jewish with no designs on starting a new religion. Pauline Christian gospels written 50 years after Jesus' death introduced denigrating material about the apostles. To counteract the influence of the "Jerusalem Church." The purpose of almost all Paul's letters was to counteract the authority of James and the "Jerusalem Church." Acts 10: 9-15 attempts to put a Pauline face on (thick-witted) Peter.

The Legacy of F. C. Baur

Early 19th century New Testament scholar: First to "see the forest through the trees" the first century historical reality of Christian origins. However, his views were biased by a deep-rooted anti-Semitism. Fell back on traditional re-Judaization and the know-nothing disciples. Baur's theories, while on the right track, is derailed by his anti-Semitic understanding that Christianity was God's superior replacement for inferior Judaism.

The First Orthodoxy

The obvious first orthodoxy was that of the Jerusalem Assembly. Jesus, his family and his followers were all Jews. But not necessarily easily obvious for those inside Christian tradition. Christian scholars subconsciously do not want to know the truth. The emerging catholic church labeled Jewish Christians as heretics for adherence to the Law of Moses, reverence for James and adoptionist christology. Jewish Christians, rooted in the teachings of James and the apostles, thought the Pauline churches as heretics. There was no uniform concept of orthodoxy – only different forms of Christianity competing for the loyalty of believers. Orthodoxy is merely the most successful heresy. Again, it was only until Constantine's Nicaea that orthodoxy was defined. The flight to Pella before the sack of Jerusalem could explain how the Jewish Christian "heresy" spread beyond Palestine. Irenaeus was one of the first heresy hunters, railing against Ebionites in *Against Heresies*. Crossan: That both brothers, Jesus and James are done away by Caiaphas and his brother-in-law Ananias is more than mere coincidence. Complete devotion to the Temple and criticism of Temple policy seems to be the thread that runs throughout. The parallel career of James moves us to view the activities of his brother Jesus in terms of the Jewish Temple.

Hyam Maccoby on pages 166-167. Eisenman on page 167. A revolutionary (heretical) paradigm.