

Class Objectives – After this class you will be able to:

- Discuss various aspects of the *Gospel of Thomas*.
- Identify issues regarding the historicity of the contents of the *Testimonium Flavianum*.
- Identify some key features in the Gospel of Mark.

Key Terms:

- Gnostic
- *Gospel of Thomas*
- Logion
- *Testimonium Flavianum*

“The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” — Theological Themes in Mark

I. The Gospel of Thomas:

A.

The Gospel of Thomas

Translated by: Thomas O. Lambdin in James M. Robinson (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988).

These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down.

(1) And he said, “Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.”

(2) Jesus said, “Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the all.”

(3) Jesus said, “If those who lead you say to you, ‘See, the kingdom is in the sky,’ then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.”

(4) Jesus said, “The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are first will become last, and they will become one and the same.”

(9) Jesus said, “Now the sower went out, took a handful (of seeds), and scattered them. Some fell on the road; the birds came and gathered them up. Others fell on rock, did not take root in the soil, and did not produce ears. And others fell on thorns; they choke the seed(s) and worms ate them. And others fell on the good soil and it produced good fruit: it bore sixty per measure and a hundred and twenty per measure.”

(112) Jesus said, “Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul; woe to the soul that depends on the flesh.”

(113) His disciples said to him, “When will the kingdom come?”

<Jesus said,> “It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying ‘here it is’ or ‘there it is’. Rather, the kingdom of the father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it.”

(114) Simon Peter said to them, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.”

Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.”

1. Date

2. Critique

3. Gnosticism

II. Recommended Reading:

1. Blomberg, Craig L. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987.
2. Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990.

III. The *Testimonium Flavianum*:

A.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.64-65 (“The *Testimonium Flavianum*”)

(translation by Whiston)

3. Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, (9) those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (10) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

B. Could a First Century Jewish person have written this?

1. Yes – all authentic
2. No – all inauthentic
3. Interpolations

C. Method

D. Application

IV. Distinctive versus Commonality:

V. Mark:

A. Mark 1:1

1. Gospel
2. Christ
3. Son of God

B. Mark 1:2-2:12

1. Amazement
2. Son of God
 - Authority to teach
 - Authority to cast out demons
 - Authority to heal
 - Authority to forgive sins

VI. Questions for Consideration:

1. How does reading the *Gospel of Thomas* affect your confidence in the canon?
2. What do you think about the historicity of the contents of the *Testimonium Flavianum*?
3. How should the authority of Jesus, as the Christ and the Son of God, impact Christian life?