

The Cross Questioned Part 2

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Outline of the Course

1. Jesus and disciples on the way to Jerusalem
2. John's narrative and style
3. Jesus and the Jews
4. The Passover Banquet
5. John's account of the supper arranged for Jesus
6. The coming of another comforter
7. What is taken from the above verses
8. Jesus' Seemingly Blasphemous Statements
9. Jesus' arrest and trial
10. Doubts besetting the story
11. The theological drift as reflected in the writing about the crucifixion

Course Objectives:

1. To be able to prove the existence of biblical discrepancies as regards the crucifixion
2. To be able to explain the factors that influenced Christianity in its formative period
3. To be able to speak about the circumstances that beset the compilation of the Bible

QUESTION & ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions

Match the Columns

True or False

COURSE DURATION

Video	–	2 hours 30 min
Study Guide	–	30 min
Assessment	–	15 min
Total Duration	–	3 hours 15 mins

Lesson 1: The Cross Questioned Part 7

1. Jesus and disciples on the way to Jerusalem

According to Mark: 11:1-16, when they came night to Jerusalem, and to Bethpage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, and said unto them:

Go your way into the village over against you. And as soon as you have entered into it, you shall find a colt tied there until you will see that no man has sat, loose him and bring him and if a man says to you, what are you doing, say unto him, our Lord has need of Him. And straightaway he will send it here. And when they went the way they found the colt tied at the door post, at a place where the two ways meet and loosed him. Some of the men that were standing there said, What are you doing loosing this colt, and they said unto them, that Jesus had commanded that they should let them go. And they bought the colt to Jesus, and cast garments on it, and he sat upon him. And many spread the garments on the way, and others cut down branches of trees, and threw them on the way. And they were many that went before shouting out Hosanna; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; blessed is the kingdom of the father, David, who come up in the name of the Lord, and Hosanna in the highest. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and entered into the temple. And when he looked around about upon all these things, and now the eventide had come, and he went out with Bethphage to Bethany with the twelve.

And on the morrow, they came to Jerusalem, and Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out those who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers. And he sent them out those who sold doves, and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessels through the temple.

In this regard, the gospels differ in the following aspects:

- i. The type of animal Jesus rode, whether it was an ass or a colt.
- ii. whether Jesus went straight to the temple
- iii. whether he pushed the tables of the money changers and the other sellers
- v. whether he was received warmly

2. John's narrative and style

John's peculiar style is characterised with:

- i. Disagreeing with the synoptic gospel writers
- ii. Inclination to give elaborate details. He comes up with things that are not found in any of the other writers' writings.
- iii. Making his own narrative and features. Whenever he found Jesus portrayed as a normal human being, he portrayed him as a superman.

Furthermore, it should be noted that by the time of writing his gospel, Christianity had become a distinctly separate religion, and had broken its links with Judaism. During the time of Matthew, Mark, and Luke's writings, it was still very much a part of the Jewish faith. It still had its link with Judaism. But by the time John was writing, that link had longtime been broken.

At this time, Christianity had become the religion of the Gentiles, the non-Jews, and the doctrinal debates had been going on between the different congregations within Christianity.

Because on these theological developments, John's accounts are different. For example,

- i. According to John, Jesus made a number of separate journeys to Jerusalem rather than just one as reported in the other gospels.
- ii. John tries his best to make Jesus to look mighty and powerful, with no fears or any such human weaknesses.
- iii. John was trying to take Jesus' mission into the world exceeding the "lost sheep of the house of Israel", contrary to Matthew:10: 6-7.

Lesson 2: The Cross Questioned Part 8

3. Jesus and the Jews

On entering the temple during the Passover time, Jesus turned over tables and chased the sellers out of the temple. The Jews got upset with him. There is a very strong reason why they arrested the Prophet Isa peace be upon him. He just arrives in the city. He goes into the temple during the most sacred month, and he turns over the tables; he chases people out; he is screaming; he's telling people that they are a brood of vipers; he is pushing over money changers.

And so, there was a conflict that started to develop between the Jews and Isa, peace be upon him. And the Jews accused him of breaking all rules and breaching the Sabbath, and even accused him of claiming equality with God.

Biblical contradictions in the events preceding the crucifixion

i. Jesus makes the claim in John chapter five, verse 18, that the father does not judge anyone, but has given full jurisdiction to the son. Obviously, when anyone makes a statement like this, the Jews will surely get upset because they are strict monotheists.

Yet on another occasion, in John chapter 12, verse 47, Jesus is quoted as saying, "I have not come to judge the world". This is a clear contradiction.

ii. In John (7:8-9), "The Jewish Feast of tabernacle was close at hand, and his brothers wanted him to accompany them to Jerusalem". But Jesus said to them, go to the feast yourselves. I am not going up to this feast, because the right time for me has not yet come.

But as soon as they left, then he reportedly went, not openly, but in secret. So, either of the two accounts is not correct.

iii. Although shown to be afraid of and avoiding the Jews, John reports that the minute he got there, he started teaching.

And now we have the impression that the Prophet Isa peace be upon him, is afraid; he's scared of what the Jews will do. He has to hide in the middle of the night. He is traveling around in secret; all these types of things reveal his fear. But it is on one of these trips that he was brought a woman caught in adultery. According to the law of Moses, she should be stoned. Jesus told the people to let the one among them who is faultless to stone her. The question that arises here is: since Jesus was the sinless among them, why did he not stone the woman according to the law?

To avoid answering the question, many modern versions simply delete this passage from the Bible.

iv. In John, Jesus was then made to come to Jerusalem again in winter for the festival of dedication. So, John likes to move Jesus around backwards and forwards; he likes to make him come to Jerusalem a lot. None of the other versions have this; he only comes once and that's through the crucifixion.

iv. The festival of Passover, and unleavened bread were only two days off when Jesus was in Bethany outside of Jerusalem, in the house of Simon, who was a leper. And a woman comes in carrying a very small bottle of very costly perfume, pure oil and nard. She breaks it open and pours the oil over Jesus's head. (Mark 14: 33-35).

According to Mark, some of those that were present there, were very angry. Matthew and Mark had a different account, whereas Luke had nothing to say about the event. In fact, he doesn't even mention that the event even took place.

According to John, this happened on the sixth day before that Passover, not two days before as is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

v. Additionally, the earlier story was a story of a woman bringing perfume and pouring it over the head of Jesus. This is how simple it is. In John it reads,

“As supper was given in his honour, at which Martha served. And Lazarus -- one of those guests with Jesus, and one of those who was raised from the dead -- Mary, brought in a pound of very costly perfume, pure oil and nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair. So, the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Judas Iscariot was with them there. He was one that was going to betray him and said, “Why would this perfume not be sold for 30 pounds and given to the poor?”

In the first account, she was a woman, and it was a small amount of oil. In John's account she was Mary, and it was a pound of perfume. The difference also includes the use of 'feet' in one account, and "head" in the other.

Lesson 3: The Cross Questioned Part 9

4. John's account of the supper arranged for Jesus

In John's account, he adds more characters into the story and narrates the story in such a way as to suit his doctrines. For example, Lazarus was thrust into the story as a kind of physical proof of the one who had been resurrected from the dead. And he was now eating with Jesus, and proving that he was not just a ghost or an apparition or spirit, but really a real person.

Perhaps in the same way, Jesus is going to die as well, and he is going to be resurrected as well. And he is going to eat food as well, just like Lazarus is doing. In all these, John is the only person who records such elaborate story with such extra characters (Lazarus, Mary and Martha) added in.

According to John, the only man that was angry at the waste of perfume was Judas Iscariot, who would betray Jesus, and who was the treasurer, and the one in charge of the common purse. He sells Jesus to the Jews for only 30 pieces of silver, rather than skimming money off them by means of keeping Jesus alive. By keeping Jesus alive, he could have continuously had an income by stealing money off the common treasury.

While the Synoptic Gospels are quite happy to say, one of the twelve will betray Jesus, and stop there, John must add that the disciple he loved, was reclining close to Jesus. Simon Peter nodded to him and said, "Who is it that Jesus means?"

And that disciple, the one who Jesus loved, leaned close to Jesus and asked Jesus, Lord, who is it? And Jesus replied, The Man Who I give this piece of bread, and dips it into the dish with me (John: 13: 26, onwards).

Now here is a big contradiction in itself: John stated before the Passover in John chapter 13, verse 2 that the devil had already been put into Judas, son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. But according to verse 18, it is only when he dips in the bread.

In John chapter 11, verse 51, and 52, it says the following, he did not say this of his own account. But as the high priest in office of that year, he was prophesying that Jesus would die for the nation. So, John likes to throw in spiritual prophecies whenever possible.

At this point, he must have realised that this might not be the right time to bring this in because there was a Jewish nation that was busy growing at this point; he must have realised that this meant not only the Jewish nation, but he had to include also the Gentiles while he was writing for the Gentiles as well. So, he smartly adds in this extra line.

Lesson 4: The Cross Questioned Part 10

5. The coming of another comforter

This Comforter is repeatedly mentioned in John. For example, John: 14: 15-17: “I will ask my father, and he will give you another, to be your advocate, who will be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth.” This person is translated differently in different versions. It is translated as ‘Advocate’, ‘Comforter’, ‘Helper’, the ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘Helper’ ‘Counsellor’.

John: 14: 26: ‘The advocate’, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything, and He will call to your mind all that I have told you”.

John: 15: 26: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.

John: 16: 7: If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John: 16:14: “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ... I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”

6. What is understood from the above verses

i. If the words were really said by Jesus, then they depict a feeling of leaving behind unfinished work. It means that Jesus did not complete his work, and hence the need for another.

ii. The disciples were not qualified to bear the responsibility of spreading the message.

Remember, many times in the New Testament, every time Jesus speaks, his disciples look at him and go; not knowing what he's saying,

iii. Just as John the Baptist was replaced by Jesus, Jesus will be replaced by the spirit of truth.

iv. Since another comforter will complete the message, there is no point to the rest of the crucifixion scene; there is no point to the resurrection of the dead; there is no point of being dead for three days and rising from the dead because you have not completed your task; that creates big problems

Problematic Questions

A number of questions arise with reference to the prophesised comforter:

- i. Who was the comforter that Jesus prophesised? Is he a more powerful Messiah, meant to keep the hope of the Jewish nation alive?

- ii. If Jesus said this, how is it possible that all the other three gospels did not even give a hint about it?

- iii. What was the need for Jesus then to be raised from the dead again, if there was this comforter, who will lead you into all truth?

Lesson 5: The Cross Questioned Part 11

7. Jesus' Seemingly Blasphemous Statements

Jesus is reported in Luke to have made this statement, "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'". And likewise the cup, after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'". (Luke 22:19–20)

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So, Jesus said to them,

"Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."
(John: 6:52–58)

The Jews were angry because to them, this was absolute blasphemy. Some of the protestants said that Jesus never offered for food his real blood and his real flesh. He is just using an analogy. The Catholics believe that the bread turns into the real body of Christ, and the wine turns into the real blood of Christ.

When people heard Jesus making statements like, "eat my flesh", "drink my blood", people started asking him, "Are you a Samaritan"? "Are you possessed?" Many the disciples according to John: 6: 59 - 60, said, "This is more than we can stomach", and many of them parted with him.

But John (6:64) insists that Jesus knew the faith of them that would keep going with him, and those of them that would betray him.

8. Jesus' arrest and trial

According to Mark: 14: 32-36,

"From the Mount of Olives, Jesus and his disciples went to the place called Gethsemane. He said to His disciples, "Sit here, while I pray". And he took Peter, and James, and John with him. Horror and dismay came over him. And he said to them, "My heart is ready to break in grief, stop here and stay awake". Then he went forward a little, and threw himself on the ground and prayed that if it was possible for this hour, that it might pass by him, Abba, "Father, He said, All things are possible for Thee, take this cup away from me, yet, not as I will. But as you will".

This helpless state does not befit a person believed to be the saviour, the son of God and the prophet of God. And therefore, this vitiates the crucifixion claim.

Soon after this. Jesus was arrested, tried and crucified, according to the story.

9. Doubts besetting the story

So, who was the one who heard his prayer? Could it be that Jesus was praying in such a large voice, that the others heard him at a distance about a stone's throw away, even though the Bible records that they all fell fast asleep? Why were they asleep? Were they asleep because as Paul would like us to believe they were all ignorant? Luke (22:43-44) gives an account, which none of the other two Synoptic Gospels give us, that in such critical time appeared to them an angel from heaven, bringing him strength in his anguish, and he prayed more urgently, and He sweated what looked like clots of blood that fell to the ground.

This is clearly a huge plot of imagination in as much as there was no one around to see that any of this happened in that very dark night. They didn't have torches. They didn't have headlamps. They carried flames. And they were all fast asleep according to the Scriptures; So, this brings into question Who Was it that saw all this?

To John, Jesus was more than flesh; he was a deity, a demigod. So, he does not want to leave things the way the other writers write. So, he does not talk about the sleeping, the crying, and the drops of blood.

The supper prayer is recorded by John as "Father, the hour has come glorify Thy Son. This is eternal life to know Thee, who alone are truly God, that Lord Jesus Christ to whom thou hath sent". After this discourse and prayer, Jesus went out with his disciples across the river to another place where they settled.

People after that got together and moved towards the point where Judas would actually suddenly meet them. Suddenly, he meets and with him with him is a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests, lawyers, and the elders. Judas the traitor colluded with them to identify Jesus for them with a kiss, saying, "the one whom I kiss is your man. Seize him, and gets him away safely. (Mark: 14:4-46)

To recap, Paul and John are trying to make the disciples look like imbeciles. We see that Matthew, Mark and Luke have portrayed Jesus as someone who is uncertain, a bit afraid, not very godlike, in fact, not even very Prophetlike. But we see John is projecting Jesus as this triumphant person with no fear because he is trying to project him as a deity.

Lesson 6: The Cross Questioned Part 12

10. The theological drift as reflected in the writing about the crucifixion

Paul was a Pharisee, and he converted to Christianity. So, he believed that whatever he said was to be accepted above what the other people around the time of Jesus were **saying**.

Based on this, he goes against the teachings of Jesus, and he separates himself from the early disciples, maybe because there is residue of his old life that followed him into Christianity, to which he has been only for three years.

And it was in those days that laws were actually given and judgments were given from this very same seat. And when a chief or an elder presat in Moses' seat spoke, it was received as the final word. So, Paul being a Pharisee, wanted to exercise the same power, and change Christianity.

And as usual, John does not want to leave out any opportunity to advance his own type of doctrine, or perhaps, Paul's doctrine. Remember, John was writing long after the other gospels were written, and Paul's writings had been a long time in circulation.

In John's accounts, there are many things that are typically Pauline, which makes it possible that it had been written in imitation of Paul's writings or perhaps written by Paul himself.

For example, in the context where Judas came with the authorities to arrest Jesus, John raises the number of the people coming to him to a whole detachment of soldiers. This is suspicious.

Who could they see where he was since it was dark at night? Why did Jesus not slip into the darkness away from them to avoid being caught? How did anyone know that there was sweat of blood dropping out of his skin to the ground?

Jesus, according to John, goes out to the soldiers and when he comes to know that they are looking for him, he reveals his identity. And they drew back and fell to the ground, because they were terrified (John chapter 18, verses six to eight).

In another account, when they came to arrest Jesus, one of the people that was with Prophet Isa peace be upon him, drew a sword and struck the high priest's servant cutting off his ear. In the account of John this person is identified and named as Simon Peter, and in the accounts of both John and Luke, the ear that was cut was identified as the right ear.

So, being the latest, how could John get details that the Synoptic Gospel writers did not get?

Question and Answer Bucket

1 Who were the pharisees, and what authority did they assume?

Ans. the Pharisees were people who sat on the seat of Moses. This is found in Matthew chapter 23, verses one to four, where Jesus speaks to the multitude, and to His disciples, and he says that the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat and they pass judgments and rulings that we must obey. However, he commanded his followers not to do what they do for they did not practise what they preached.

If Matthew did record the words of the Prophet Isa peace be upon him, as he said them, then he's telling people to obey anyone who sits on Moses' seat. Conversely, at a later point, he commanded people not to obey them. This is a clear indication to a flagrant contradiction in the biblical text, which cannot be the words of the Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him.

2. Two decisive factors had a great impact on Christian scriptures and creed, what are they?

Ans. These two factors are:

i. The books that formed the Bible today were selected by voting, and by strange table appearances, where the books which were found on the table went to the Bible whereas those which remained down where they were put did not qualify to be part of the Bible.

ii. Paul came into the church and started to change some of the beliefs of the church, and globalised the message to include even the Gentiles, contrary to the teachings of Jesus, peace be upon him.

3. Is there a tangible example illustrating how the doctrinal developments within Christianity overshadowed the writing of John's gospel?

Ans. John's writing was a reflection of the religious scenario. John was writing his gospel at a time when Christianity had become a far stronger religion amongst the Gentiles than it had amongst the Jews. This is reflected in his report of Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman, although the Samaritans were considered unclean by the Jews. John reports that Jesus's dialogue with a Samaritan woman took place and this gives the impression that he conveyed his message even to the Samaritans. So, he is trying to prove that the message that the Prophet

Isa, peace be upon him, came with was not exclusively for the Jews, which is contrary to what Matthew had recorded in his gospel that it is restricted to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel”.