

# Religious Studies 2203

## Life of Jesus

### Lecture Questions

#### Part One

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Fall Semester 2008-2009

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# Sources and Method

## 1. Selective Bibliography

## 2. Introduction

## 3. The Synoptic Gospels

How do the synoptic gospels relate to one another literarily? How does this affect the historian's use of them in the task of historical reconstruction?

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## 4. The Gospel Tradition before the Synoptic Gospels

How does the fact that the synoptic tradition has its origin as oral tradition affect the use of the synoptic gospels in historical reconstruction? What are the valid and the invalid assumptions of form criticism?

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## 5. The Gospel of John

How should the historian use the Gospel of John in conjunction with the synoptic gospels in reconstruction the life of Jesus?

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#### 6. Redaction Criticism

What is Redaction Criticism and does it make any contribution to the reconstruction of the life of Jesus?

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# Jesus' Birth

## 1. Selective Bibliography

## 2. Introduction

## 3. Jesus as Born in Bethlehem

Why is it significant that Jesus was born in Bethlehem?

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## 4. Jesus as from the Line of David

Why is it significant that Jesus was of Davidic descent?

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## 5. Jesus as Born of a Virgin

What was unusual about Jesus' conception? How does Matthew interpret Jesus' virginal birth as a fulfilment of prophecy? What did Jews believe about the pre-existence of the Davidic Messiah? What would the phrase "son of God" mean for Jesus' contemporaries?

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# John the Baptist

## 1. Selective Bibliography

## 2. Josephus' Portrayal of John the Baptist

What is Josephus' description of the message of John the Baptist?

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## 3. John the Baptist in the Synoptic Gospels

What is the message of John the Baptist according to the synoptic gospels and how does it differ from Josephus' description of it?

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#### 4. John the Baptist as Elijah in the Synoptic Gospels

What is the eschatological role assigned to the prophet Elijah in Jewish expectation and according to the gospels in what sense is John the Baptist the Elijah who is to come?

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#### 5. John the Baptist in the Gospel of John

How is John the Baptist portrayed in the Gospel of John and does the portrayal of John the Baptist in the Gospel of John differ from that in the synoptic gospels? If so, how?

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#### 6. Death of John the Baptist

Why did Herod Antipas put John the Baptist to death?

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# Jesus Baptism and Temptations

## 1. Jesus' Baptism

Why does Jesus seek baptism from John? What extraordinary event happens at Jesus' baptism? What is the significance of this event?

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## 2. Jesus' Temptations

Why does Satan tempt Jesus? What are Jesus' three temptations and how does he respond to them?

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# Jesus and the Law

## 1. Selective Bibliography

## 2. Introduction

## 3. Jesus' Criticism of the Pharisaic / Scribal "Tradition of the Elders"

What is the Pharisees' "tradition of the elders"? On which grounds does Jesus criticize the Pharisees' "tradition of the elders"?

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## 4. Jesus' View of the Law

What does Jesus view as the center of the Law? What is Jesus' view of the relation between the "heart" and what a person does?

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5. The Possibility of Breaking the Law in Order to Uphold the Law

Under which conditions does Jesus allow for the violation of a commandment?

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6. Jesus' Assumption of Authority over the Law

What is Jesus' view of the Sabbath? In which ways does he assume authority over the Law?

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7. Jesus' Commendation of the Scribes and Pharisees as Interpreters of the Law

What does Jesus say about the role of the scribes and Pharisees in Jewish society?

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8. The Validity of the Law

How does Jesus view the Law in relation to the Kingdom of God?

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9. Jesus and the Temple

What is Jesus' view of the Temple?

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# Jesus as Miracle Worker

## 1. Selective Bibliography

## 2. Introduction

## 3. The Purpose of Jesus' Miracles in the Gospels

How does Jesus intend that his "miracles" function? How do people respond to Jesus' miracles?

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## 4. Specific Miracles of Jesus in the Gospels

What are the kinds of "miracles" that Jesus performs?

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### 3. Jesus as Miracle Worker in Historical Context

How could Jesus' contemporaries have explained his ability to perform "miracles"? Are Jesus' miracles consistent with and supportive of his being the Davidic Messiah?

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### 4. Jesus' Criticism of Those Who Demand Signs

Why does Jesus sometimes criticize those who ask him for a sign?

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### 5. John's Explanation of Continuing Unbelief

How does John explain the fact that Jesus' contemporaries did not respond positively to his "signs"?

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# Jesus as Healer

## 1. Selective Bibliography

## 2. Jesus' Healings in the Gospels

What are the kinds of healings that Jesus performs?

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## 3. Healing in the Ancient World

How could Jesus' healings have been interpreted by his contemporaries?

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#### 4. The Significance of Jesus' Healings

How does Jesus interpret his healing ministry?

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#### 5. Faith as a Condition of Healing

What is the condition that Jesus requires in order to be healed?

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#### 6. Satanic Cause of Illness

What is Jesus' view of the connection between Satan and human illness?

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