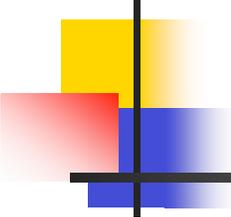


# Receding Eschaton

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April 11, 2006

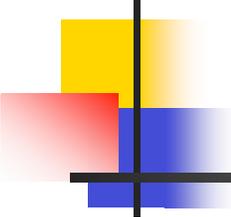
- News Flash! Gospel of Judas!
- Eschatology and Disappointment
- Parousia and expectation
- Revelation
- Receding Eschaton: Institutionalization and morality



# News Flash! Gospel of Judas!

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- Discovery
- Images of codex
- Historical Significance
  - “Gnosticism”—and the inversion of ***Christian*** Scripture
  - Historical Jesus/Historical Judas?
  - History of ***Christianity***?



# Gospel of Judas: Discovery

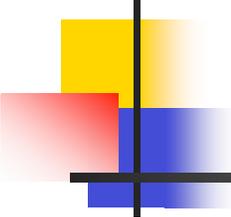
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- Discovered in the 1970s, provenance unknown. Presented to scholars for sale in 1983; not acquired from private owner until 2001
- [Problem of antiquities market]
- Will now be turned over to Coptic Museum in Cairo (Egypt).



Images of codex  
(<http://www9.nationalgeographic.com>)

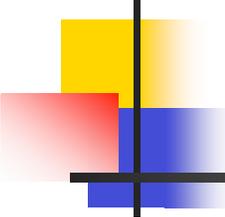




# Historical Significance

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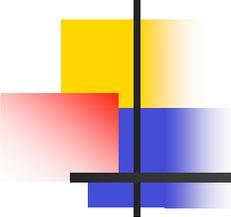
- “Gnosticism”—and the inversion of ***Christian*** Tradition
  - Analogous cosmology to other Gnostic texts
  - Significance of inversion of roles of ***disciples***: the 12 are under the archons
  - In a roundabout way, perhaps a confirmation of growing significance of “canonical” gospels?
- Historical Jesus/Historical Judas?  
Probably ***none***
- History of ***Christianity***?
  - If scholars are correct, a second-century document in origin
  - Significant enough to be translated and copied and in 3rd-4th C. (Like Nag Hammadi)



# Eschatology and Disappointment

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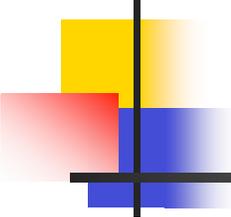
- “New Religious Movements” and eschatological cycle (Festinger)
  - Eschatological (e.g., messianic) expectation failed
  - Cognitive dissonance
  - Groups that survive overcome by reinterpreting *and* proselytizing, convincing selves of necessity of disappointment
- Applications to earliest Christianity: John Gager, Alan Segal
  - The messianic event expected by the disciples did not take place
  - Reinterpretation: Scripture predicts that Christ will die
  - Proselytizing: Go out and preach the good news to all humanity
- Part of the long-term heritage of Christianity



## Parousia and expectation

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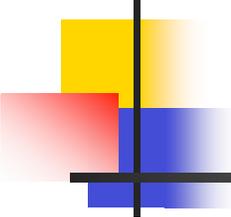
- Paul (1 Thessalonians) and John (beloved disciple), expectation that ***parousia*** (aka “second coming”) would come soon
- Persecution (“perceived” or “real”) can promote wave of expectation (e.g. Revelation)



# Revelation

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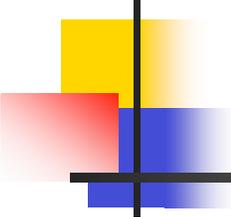
- Tension: “Jewish” or “Gentile” text?
  - “Those who say they are Jews but are not”
  - Motif of Temple, Israel, Jerusalem opposed to Rome
  - But Israel also “universalized”: e.g. 7:3–10:  
Twelve tribes of Israel = “a great multitude ... from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues
- Crisis: Connected with Emperor Cult (next slide)
- A two-phase eschatology
  - Time is near—for the temporary victory of Satan and reign of beast (Rome)
  - Followed by a thousand-year gap
  - Final resurrection and judgement



# Revelation and Emperor Cult

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- Satan (serpent)
- Whore of Babylon (Rome)
- “Prophet”
- Marking for the beast (13:16)
- Worship of the beast (mandatory sacrifice?)
- Christ (lamb)
- Woman (ekklesia? Zion?)
- Marking: 7:3
- Worship of the Lamb



# Receding Eschaton: Institutionalization and morality

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- Receding eschaton means longer horizon. Greater attention to:
  - Conformity with the life of the community, and institutions and church rituals
  - **States** of penalization or reward, rather than on age of triumph
- Apocalypse of Peter
  - Final resurrection and day of God
  - Place of delight, place of suffering
  - Penalize endangering of martyrs, lending at interest, homosexuality, abortion, non obedience (children, slaves)
- Apocalypse of Paul
  - NB: In its present form NO EARLIER than end of 4th C.
  - Imagines a geography
  - Note penalizing of bishops presbyters, deacons, readers (ch. 33–37)
  - Penalties for those who end the fast early

