

Handout for "The Jewish Jesus Lesson Part 4"

When did Jesus become the Son of God?

Why did the Romans crucify Jesus?

The first books of the New Testament were written by Paul; therefore he was the first to provide his answer to the above question.

Did the authors of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John disagree with Paul and write to correct his error?

Paul's answer was written about 60 CE and is found in Romans 1:4 -- "And declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead."

It is important to understand that Paul has a vested interest in this and it is directly related to the power struggle that was taking place between him and the apostles that were in Jerusalem. It would mean that everything Jesus did or taught before then was done without the authority of the king, including the calling of the other apostles.

The first of the three Synoptic Gospels to be written was Mark, about 72 CE; two years after the Temple was destroyed by the Roman army. According to Mark 1:9-11 Jesus became the "Son of God" at his baptism. This would mean that everything Jesus did from that moment on was done with the authority of kingship, including choosing the twelve apostles.

According to Luke 1:30-32, God announced that Jesus would become the "Son of God (the Highest)" when he was still in his mother's womb. Luke, however, agrees with Mark, that it was at the baptism that he became the king. Matthew agrees with Luke.

The last gospel to be written was John about five years later. John wrote:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . .
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-2, 14)

From John's point of view (1:1-2, 14), Jesus was the "Son of God" at the very beginning of creation.

So when did Jesus become the Son of God in the New Testament? The answer is that it depends on which book you read. The New Testament is a collection of books that were written by authors at different times from communities that held different beliefs.

It wouldn't be until 325 CE, over two centuries after the books were written, that Emperor Constantine the Great would provide the authority, power and wealth that would lay the theological foundation that modern forms of Christianity are based on.