

ANCIENT EXORCISTS, DEMONS, AND THE NAME OF JESUS PART ONE

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INTRODUCTION

Acts 19:11-19 contains a story about seven Jewish exorcists who tried to cast a demon out of a man by using the names of Jesus and Paul. The demon attacked the seven exorcists, who are said to have been the sons of a Jewish priest named Sceva, and caused them to flee “naked and wounded.” While there is no specific historical documentation for this event apart from the New Testament, there are various elements in the story which fit perfectly with what is known about ancient exorcists/exorcisms and also with what the vast majority of ancient people believed about demons at the time of Christ.

The use of the names of Jesus and Paul in an attempt to cast out a demon fits very well with what is known about ancient exorcism. As will be seen below, the use of their names in the context of casting out a demon clearly suggests that both Jesus and Paul were considered by these seven Jewish exorcists to be either some sort of a divine power (Jesus) or to be a special agent of divine power (Paul). This does not mean that the seven sons of Sceva were Christian believers, but what it does mean is that they thought that Jesus and Paul were spiritual power tools that could be used against demons. As will be seen below in this paper, there is historical evidence of non-believing Jews using the name of Jesus in performing magic and conducting exorcisms.

It is the purpose of this paper to review samplings of the historical and archaeological information which directly relate to the story of the demon in Acts 19:11-19 and its attack upon the seven sons of Sceva. The amount of primary source material, archaeological evidence, and secondary literature on ancient exorcisms and demons has exploded in recent decades, and it is not possible in this short paper to cover all of the evidence. As a general rule, this paper will concentrate on representative samplings of primary historical sources and on archaeological evidence. Secondary literature, which is vast, will only be selectively reviewed when deemed relevant.

This paper will first review what was generally believed and practiced in the ancient world as related to magic, demons, and exorcisms. Second, more specific studies focusing on ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian beliefs on demons and exorcisms will be undertaken. And third, these beliefs will then be compared to and contrasted with Christian exorcisms of demons as found in the New Testament. This paper will also attempt to answer the question: Was Jesus truly an exorcist?

One final point before beginning this study, it is very clear that the magical practices that existed at the time of Christ—including exorcisms—had a very long history in the ancient Middle East and clearly predated Christ by centuries--and also postdated him by centuries. For centuries, if not millennia, before the Christian Era the ancient Mesopotamians believed in and feared demons. In addition, the ancient Egyptians made and used clay “voodoo” dolls and special magical bowls in order to curse their foreign enemies at least as early as the Middle Kingdom Period. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to trace the full historical background and development of the magical beliefs that existed in the ancient world at the time of Christ. Nevertheless, it should be noted that magical beliefs, rituals, and practices remained remarkably the same for centuries both before and after the time of Christ.

PAGAN MAGIC, DEMONS, AND EXORCISMS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

While there are some distinctions between what pagans in the ancient Near East believed about magic, demons, and exorcisms and what most Jews and Christians believed, there are far more similarities than there are differences. There are so many similarities in beliefs and magical practices that it is sometimes difficult to determine if a particular ancient magical/exorcism document is pagan, Jewish, or Christian. When it comes to magic, spells, curses, potions, demons, exorcisms, etc., pagans, Jews, and Christians were extremely syncretistic. Hans Dieter Betz points out this syncretism in his book *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* when he writes of ancient itinerate magicians of the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods:

This type of wandering craftsman seems keen to adopt and adapt every religious tradition that appeared useful to him, while the knowledge and understanding of what he adopted was characterized by certain superficiality. This type of magician no longer understood the old languages, although he used remnants of them in transcription. He recited and used what must at one time have been metrically composed hymns; but he no longer recognized the meter, and he spoiled it when he inserted his own material. In the hands of magicians of this type, the gods from the various cults gradually merged, and as their natures became blurred, they often changed into completely different deities. For these magicians, there was no longer any cultural difference between the Egyptian and Greek gods, or between them and the Jewish god and the Jewish angels, and even Jesus was occasionally assimilated into this truly “ecumenical” religious syncretism of the Hellenistic world culture. **1**

The seven sons of Sceva were “wandering craftsmen” much like those described by Betz. It should be noted that Acts 19:13 uses a participial form of the Greek word *perierxomai* “traveling or wandering” to describe the seven sons of Sceva. This same verse uses the Greek noun *eksorkistes* (exorcists) to describe this group of itinerate Jewish exorcists. Incidentally, the English word exorcist is directly derived from the Greek word *eksorkistes*.

Pagan magicians of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods called upon or conjured up a variety of ancient deities, angels, demons, and spirits of the dead to help them work their magic. Their magic could include: curses on enemies, love spells, the seeking of prophecy, the seeking of lost/stolen goods, and requests for wealth, health, good luck, victory in athletic contests, good business, a baby, musical ability, hair restoration, etc. And in addition, very frequently in pagan magical documents there were provisions for summoning, controlling, or casting out demons.

To work their magic and to bring demons under their control, Hellenistic and Roman Period magicians would call upon or use the names of a variety of pagan deities, angels, the God of the Bible, and even Jewish and Christian saints. Old Testament saints mentioned in pagan magical texts include Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, David, Jeremiah, the three friends of Daniel, etc.

Among the Egyptian deities the most frequently summoned were Osiris, Isis, Horus, Maat, Anubis, Re, Seth, Thoth, and Ammon. Among the Greek deities the most

common were Hekate, Hades, Hermes, Persephone, Artemis, Selene, Aphrodite, Apollo, Dionysus, Helios, the Moirai, Zeus, and Kronos. Of the Greek deities, Hekate, the goddess of witchcraft, was probably the most popular. Even the Mesopotamian goddess of the underworld, Ereshchgal appears with some frequency in the Greek magical papyri from Hellenistic Egypt.

The vast majority of these pagan deities--and the demons controlled by them--were in some way associated with the dead or death. Betz writes of this tendency:

The underworld deities, the demons and the spirits of the dead are constantly and unscrupulously invoked and exploited as the most important means for achieving the goals of humans life on earth: the acquisition of love, wealth, health, fame, knowledge of the future, control over other persons, and so forth. In other words, there is a consensus that the best way to success and worldly pleasures is by using the underworld, death, and the forces of death. ²

It was also very common in pagan magic, when trying to curse an enemy, to place written curses or *defixiones* in tombs or graves so that the spirits of the dead could be used as agents of harm. The spirits of dead people were commonly seen as one type of demon. Ancient pagan exorcisms of demoniacs and/or of places were frequently intended to remove such curses and/or to drive out or drive away the malevolent spirits associated with such curses.

While there was a vast array of ancient deities whom magicians used to work their magic in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods, nevertheless, by far the most common deity named or called upon in the extant pagan magical documents is the Jewish God Yahweh, whose name generally appears in the form of Iao. Variations of other Old Testament Hebrew names for God are also commonly used such as Adonai and El. In addition, the name Sabaoth (see Lord Sabaoth in Joshua 5: 15) is also frequently used either as an alternative name for God and/or at times possibly as the name of an archangel. Variations of the names Iao and Sabaoth were used by pagan, Jewish, and Christian magicians and exorcists throughout the Hellenistic, Roman, and early Byzantine Periods.

Jewish angels, especially archangels, are also frequently summoned in magical texts, as can be seen in the magical text given below where Michael, Gabriel, and Abrasax are all mentioned. According to ancient Jewish sources, Abrasax was the archangel who told Abraham about the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, at times in these magical documents the name Abrasax also seems to be used as another magical name for the God Yahweh.

The syncretism in these magical papyri can be disconcerting. For example, a poetic portion of one pagan magical document, which was to be used for summoning a demon, reads as follows:

O lord Apollo, come with Paian.
Give answer to my questions, lord. O Master
Leave Mount Parnassos and the Delphic Pytho
Whene'er my priestly lips voice secret words, /
First angel of [the god], great Zeus. IAO
And you MICHAEL, who rule heaven's realm,

I call, and you, archangel GABRIEL.
 Down from Olympos, ABRASAX, delighting
 In dawns, come gracious who view sunset from
 The dawn, / ADONAI. Father of the world,
 All nature quakes in fear of you, PAKERBETH.
 I adjure God's head, which is Olympos;
 I adjure God's signet, which is vision;
 I adjure the right hand you held o'er the world;
 I adjure God's bowl containing wealth;
 I adjure eternal god, AION of all;
 / I adjure self-growing Nature, mighty ADONAIOS;
 I adjure setting and rising ELOAIOS:
 I adjure these holy and divine names that
 They send me the divine spirit and that it
 Fulfill what I have in my heart and soul.
 / Hear blessed one, I call you who rule heav'n
 And earth and Chaos and Hades where dwell
 [Daimons of men who once gazed on the light].
 Send me this daimon at my sacred chants,
 Who moves by night to order 'neath your force.
 From whose own tent this comes, and let him tell me /
 In total truth all that my mind designs,
 And send him gentle, gracious, pondering
 No thought opposed to me. And may you not
 Be angry at my sacred chants. But guard
 That my whole body comes to light intact,
 For you yourself arranged these things among
 Mankind for them to learn. / I call your name,
 In equal number to the very Moirai,
 ACHAIPHOTHOTHOAIEIAEIA
 AIEAIEIAOTHOTHOPHIACHA 3

This magical poem was clearly intended to be used as a spell to gain divine aid for summoning and controlling a demon. Spells of various types appear in nearly all ancient magical texts. It should be noted that this spell was to be chanted at night.

There are three significant syncretistic features that are found in the pagan magical document studied above. First, the Greek god Apollo is called the "First angel of [the god], great Zeus." In other words, the Greek god Apollo has become an angelic messenger for Zeus. Second, it should be noted that the Greek god Zeus appears to be equated to the Jewish God Iao/Yahweh. And third, it also appears that the angel Michael is being equated to the god Apollo. Later, in both Jewish and Christian magic, the names of angels frequently appear where the names of pagan deities or demons earlier appeared in pagan magical texts. The above pagan document seems to indicate that the substitution of angels for pagan deities may have first taken place in pagan magic.

A common feature in spells/chants like the one above is the use of magical words and magical names. The two lines of Greek alphabetic letters that end the magical poem

above are really two parts of one long magical word which forms a palindrome. It is fairly common for magical words to take the form of palindromes. It should be noted that the name of the Egyptian god Thoth appears twice in this long “abracadabra” magical word. Such magical words--and also special magical symbols-- were thought to be useful in controlling or obtaining help from some divine power. It is fairly common for these “abracadabra” words to be the supposed magical, secret names of powerful deities, angels, or spiritual beings, but some magical words appear to have been just that, magical words that supposedly had their own magical powers.

The chant and palindrome in the above magical document is followed by the statement:

When he (the demon) comes, ask him about what you wish, about the art of prophecy, about divination with epic verses, about the sending of dreams, about obtaining revelations in dreams, about / interpretation of dreams, about causing disease, about everything that is a part of magical knowledge. 4

The central goal of this magical document was to summon and control a demon. While this may seem to be very different from casting out or exorcizing a demon from a demoniac, it is nearly certain that ancient peoples did not make such a distinction. The original pagan meaning of the Greek work *eksorkistes* (exorcist) meant someone who could conjure and control demons and deities. In the case of demons, conjuring included not just exorcizing or casting out but also summoning, controlling, using, and/or binding.

The Greek verb *eksorkizo*, from which the noun *eksorkistes* is derived, basically means to conjure, adjure, or to bind with a divine oath. For example, in Matthew 26:63 the High Priest says to Jesus: “I bind you by an oath [*eksorkizo*] to the living God that you tell us if you are the Christ the Son of God.” The High Priest’s use of *eksorkizo* suggests that he was treating Jesus as if he were a demoniac. The modern use of the word exorcist exclusively for someone who casts out demons was almost certainly not the ancient understanding of this word.

The ancient meaning of *eksorkizo* does not automatically suggest the casting out of a demon, but rather controlling a demon by divine oath(s), spells, or chants. As was noted above, controlling could entail summoning, conjuring, using, binding, or casting out. The modern definition of exorcism as only the casting out of a demon comes from ancient Jews and Christians, who cast out demons far more frequently than did ancient pagans.

Besides the use of magical names and words, there are three other characteristic features generally found in ancient Hellenistic magical texts that can be seen in the above document. First, there is the use of magical symbols; in this case seven magical symbols are given. This document orders, while summoning “the heavenly gods and chthonic daimons,” that these seven magical symbols be written on the leaves of a “seven-leaved sprig of laurel,” one symbol on each leaf. While it does not seem to have been true of this text, it was fairly common for a special magical ink to be used in writing these symbols; the most frequent substances used in making such magical inks were blood and myrrh.

Magical numbers are also found in ancient magical texts. The number 7 was especially considered to have magical properties, as can be seen in the 7 magical symbols

and 7 laurel leaves mentioned above. It may be for this reason that Acts 19:11-19 mentions the fact that there were seven sons of Sceva. Since seven was a magical number, the seven sons of Sceva may have consequently claimed to have special powers that other magicians would not have. There were many other magical numbers, but the number 7 appears with the most frequency. The magical text discussed above then warns about these 7 laurel leaves:

But be careful not to lose a leaf [and] do harm to yourself, for this is the body's greatest protective charm, by which all are made subject, seas and rocks tremble, and daimons [avoid] the characters' magical power which / you are about to have. For it is the greatest protective charm for the rite so that you fear nothing. 5

It is clear that this laurel leaf and its magical symbols were intended to protect the magician from possible harm by the deities and/or demons that he was summoning. In other words, the sprig of laurel, on which the seven magical symbols were written, was supposed to serve as a protective amulet. Amulets, which were intended to protect against dangerous demons, the spirits of the dead, and/or deities, were a very common feature in ancient pagan magic. Demons could be dangerous to the exorcist, as can be seen in the attack of the demon on the seven sons of Sceva.

Only amulets with proper spells, chants, symbols, words, etc. could provide protection against an exorcised demon. The frequent repetition of the same magical symbols or magical words on an amulet or in a magical document was apparently thought to increase their potency. Incidentally, one common symbol is the Ouroboros or the heavenly snake swallowing its own tail, a symbol frequently found inscribed on ancient pagan Egyptian monuments. Some magical symbols represented signs of the zodiac, while others seem to have been identified with a variety of pagan deities.

The second characteristic found in most pagan magical documents is the use of magical rituals. For example, the same magical text given above for summoning and controlling a demon dictates the following ritual:

Take a lamp which has not been colored red and fit it with a piece of linen cloth and rose oil or oil of spikenard, and dress yourself in a prophetic garment and hold an ebony staff in your left hand and / the protective charm in your right (i.e. the sprig of laurel). But keep in readiness a wolf's head so that you can set the lamp upon the head of the wolf, and construct an altar of unburnt clay near the head and the lamp so that you may sacrifice on it to the god. And immediately the divine spirit enters. 6

It appears that this demon was summoned to enter into this ritual lamp. If so, this may suggest an early version of later Arab myths of jinn or genies being trapped in magical lamps.

The third characteristic found in pagan magical documents from the Hellenistic, and Roman Periods is the use of some sort of magical offering or magic potion. Generally offerings were intended to work magic on a demon or deity; potions were used to work magic on humans. Magical offerings or potions were used in these rituals in order to induce a deity, divine being, demon, angel, or human—alive or dead-- to do the

will of the magician. For example, in this same document, the following special sacrifice is to be offered on the abovementioned altar of unburnt clay:

The burnt offering is a wolf's eye, storax gum, cassia, balsam gum and whatever is valued among the spices, and pour a libation of wine and honey and milk and rainwater, [and make] 7 flat cakes and 7 round cakes. These you are going to make completely [near] the lamp, robed and refraining from all / unclean things and from eating of fish and from all sexual intercourse, so that you may bring the god into the greatest desire toward you. 7

The general pagan belief was that magical rituals, chants, spells, words, etc. had to be perfectly executed to be effective, as can be seen in the above quotation.

PAGAN BELIEFS ON DEMONS

Before leaving the discussion on pagan exorcists and magic, it is necessary to make a brief study of what ancient pagans believed about demons. First, it is not at all clear from pagan magical texts as to the origin of demons. Most pagan magical texts suggest that they are the spirits of the dead, but others seem to place them, or at least some of them, in their own separate category of spirit beings or minor deities. Later Jewish and Christian traditions tended to see demons as either fallen angels or as the spirits of the antediluvian children born of male angels and human women (see Genesis 6:1-3). The nephilim giants of Genesis 6:4 were frequently seen as the children of male angels and female humans, and some ancient Jews and Christians believed that is was the souls of dead nephilim giants who became demons. Some pagan magical texts syncretistically adopted Jewish and Christian ideas on the origin of demons, and consequently contain references to "giants." The word "giant" in ancient magical texts means a demon.

Second, ancient pagans believed that there were different types of demons with differing powers, specialties, and abilities. With the syncretistic introduction of Jewish angels into pagan magic, they too were thought of as being of different types with differing powers, abilities, and specialties. Hierarchies of angels and demons were even constructed. However, in pagan texts, the most common distinction that is made for demons is between good and evil demons. Good demons are frequently called "assistants" in the pagan magical texts. Good demons or "assistants" were sought after and frequently summoned in pagan magic. These spiritual assistants seem to have much in common with the spirit guides which modern mediums claim assist them. However, bad demons were handled differently in ancient pagan magic. Efforts were frequently made to bind bad/evil demons, and there are a number of ancient magical documents picturing them wrapped in chains and surrounded by magical spells, words, diagrams, divine beings, divine names, sounds, symbols, etc.

Third, pagan magic almost always saw demons as either males or females, and not as sexually neutral spiritual beings. The sex and sexuality of demons is especially evident in magical documents from Mesopotamia, with female demons called "Liliths," being looked upon as especially evil. Liliths were generally seen as female demons who murdered infants and toddlers. However female Liliths were also thought of—at least by Mesopotamian Jews-- as dangerous, sexually seductive spirits that visited men at night in

their sleep and stole their semen. There were also male “Lilith” versions of demons who were thought of as seducing women at night in dreams. Incidentally, it was generally believed that demons, especially Lilith demons, could sexually reproduce other demons after their own kind. For pictures of ritually bound/ chained Lilith demons in Jewish magical texts, see John Gager’s book Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World. ⁸ For additional ancient pictures see also Dan Levene’s article in BAR, “Rare Magic Inscription on Human Skull,” ⁹ and also his book A Corpus of Magic Bowls.¹⁰

And fourth, pagan magic tended to divide demons into four –sometimes five or six--basic groups depending upon where they were normally thought to dwell or exercise their power. For example, there were land demons, water demons, air demons, and chthonic or netherworld demons. A fifth category of demons was strangely called “heavenly demons.” While these categories are present in ancient pagan magical documents, it seems to have mattered little as far as the magical rituals are concerned that were performed for summoning, controlling, binding, or expelling demons. However, chthonic or netherworld demons do appear to have been thought of as being especially dangerous and/or evil.

AN EXAMPLE OF A PAGAN OR JEWISH EXORCISM TEXT

Before looking specifically at Jewish and Christian beliefs on demons and exorcisms, let us look at one more papyrus document that was intended for use in exorcizing a demon. The exorcism document given below is extremely syncretistic and is supposed to have been handed down from a famous pagan Egyptian magician named Pibechis. Even though its contents appear to be far more Jewish than pagan Egyptian, it may be pagan in its origin. If it is Jewish in its origin, its author was clearly a heterodox Jew, who may have been a follower of Sethian Gnosticism.¹¹

A tested charm of Pibechis for those possessed by daimons.

Take oil of unripe olives with the herb mastigia and the fruit pulp of the lotus, and boil them with colorless marjoram / while saying “IOEL OS SARTHIONI EMORI THEOCHIPSOITH SITHMEMEOCH SOTHE IOE MIMIPSOTHIOOPH PHERSOTHI AEEIOYO [Greek vowels] IOE EO CHARI PHTHA, come out from NN (add the usual).

The phylactery: On a tin lamella write / “IAEO ABRAOTH IOCH PHTHA MESENPSIN IAO PHEOCH IAEO CHARISOK,” and hang it on the patient. It is terrifying to every daimon, a thing he fears. After placing [the patient] opposite [to you] conjure.

This is the conjuration: “ I conjure you by the god of the Hebrews, / Jesus, IABA IAE ABRAOTH AIA THOTH ELE ELO AEO EOU IIBAECH ABARMAS IABARAOU ABELBEL LONA ABRA MAROIA BRAKION, who appears in fire, who is in the midst of the land, snow, and fog, TANNETIS: let your / angel, the implacable, descend and let him assign the daimon flying around this form, which god formed in his holy paradise because I pray to the holy god, [calling] upon him AMMON IPSENTANCHO (formula). I conjure you, LABRIA IAKOUTH / ABLANATHANALBA [a palindrome] AKRAMM (formula) AOTH IATHABATHRA CHACHTHABRATHA CHAMYN CHEL ABROOTH OUABRASIOLOTH HALLELOU IELOSAI IAEL. I conjure you

by the one who appeared to Osrael in a shining pillar and a cloud by day, / who saved his people from Pharaoh and brought upon Pharaoh the ten plagues because of his disobedience. I conjure you, every daimonic spirit, to tell whatever sort you may be, because I conjure by the seal / which Solomon placed on the tongue of Jeremiah, and he told. You also tell what sort you may be, heavenly or aerial, whether terrestrial or subterranean, or netherworldly Ebousaeus or Cherseus or Pharisaeus, tell / whatever sort you may be, because I conjure you by god, light-bearing, unconquerable, who knows what is in the heart of every being, the one who formed of dust the race of humans, the one who, after bringing them out of obscurity, packs together the clouds, waters the earth with rain / blesses its fruit, [the one] whom every heavenly power of angels and archangels praises. I conjure you by the great god SABAOTH, through whom the Jordan River drew back and the Red Sea, / which Israel crossed, became impassable, because I conjure you by the one who introduced the one hundred and forty languages and distributed them by his one command. I conjure you by the one who burned up the stubborn giants with lightning, / whom the heaven of heaven praises, whom the wings of the cherubim praise. I conjure you by the one who put the mountains around the sea [or] a wall of sand and commanded the sea not to overflow. The abyss obeyed, and you obey, / every daimonic spirit, because I conjure you by the one who causes the four winds to move together from the holy aions, [the] skylike, sealike, cloudlike, light-bringing, unconquerable [one] I conjure [you] by the one in holy Jerusalem, before whom the / unquenchable fire burns for all time, which his holy name, IAEOBAPHRENEMOUN (formula), the one before whom the fiery Gehenna trembles, flames surround, iron bursts asunder and every mountain is afraid from its foundation, / I conjure you, every daimonic spirit, by the one who oversees the earth and makes its foundations tremble, [the one] who made all things which are not into that which is. And I adjure you, the one who receives this conjuration, / not to eat pork, and every spirit and daimon, whatever sort it may be, will be subject to you, and while conjuring, blow once, blowing air from the tips of the feet up to the face, and it will be assigned. Keep yourself pure, for this charm / is Hebraic and is preserved among pure men. 12

While this exorcism seems to be Jewish in origin, and while it clearly gives proof that its author was someone with knowledge of the Old Testament and extra-Biblical Jewish literature, there are several features that may suggest that it was pagan in origin. First, it should be noted that among the magical abracadabra words used, the names of two Egyptian deities, Ammon and Thoth, appear. In addition, it is also likely that the magical word SOTHE is only a version of the name of the Egyptian god Seth. Second the reference to Jesus as God is clearly not Jewish, or at least not traditionally Jewish. It might be argued that this is an early Jewish Christian document, but this seems very unlikely since the reference to Jesus is the only Christian element in this magical text. And third, the basic demonology, rituals, magic words, conjuration, etc. used to cast out a demon all clearly come from a pagan background.

The above instructional document for conducting an exorcism of a demon is also very interesting for another feature. It may contain one of the oldest, if not the oldest, non-New Testament reference to Jesus being considered God. This reference to Jesus as

God appears to date to the mid first century AD. It should be noted that the above document contains a reference to “the unquenchable fire” that “burns for all time” before God in Jerusalem. As a footnote provided by the translator of this document, W. C. Grese, states, this is almost certainly a reference to the Golden Menorah or Seven-branched Candlestick that burned before God in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. **13** Since the Jewish Temple was destroyed in 70 AD and consequently the Golden Temple Menorah no longer burned in the Temple of God in Jerusalem, it appears very likely that this document dates before 70 AD, and so then also must this reference to the deity of Christ. This is a highly significant reference to Christ which will be discussed later in this paper.

JEWISH BELIEFS ON DEMONS AND EXORCISMS

Before beginning our study of what ancient Jews in the Near East believed about magic, spells, demons, exorcisms, etc, it should at this point be noted that this paper will generally make no attempt to distinguish between the magical beliefs of Jews and those of Samaritans. Both will be called Jewish. However, there are good archaeological and textual reasons for believing that the Samaritans were more deeply involved in magic than were traditional Jews, for example see Simon Magus in Acts 8:9-24. **14** In addition, no effort will be made to distinguish between possible differences in beliefs about demons and exorcisms as held by the three traditional Jewish denominations--Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.

The best existing examples of ancient Jewish exorcisms come from Mesopotamia. The most common ritual used by Jews in Mesopotamia to exorcise a demon or demons from a person or a dwelling generally involved the use of special magical bowls. On the inside of these bowls, magic spells, words, pictures, symbols, etc. were written that could be used to expel, control, or chain a demon(s). Generally the Hebrew and Aramaic texts written in these bowls were written in a spiral from the bottom of the inside of the bowl to the top edge. Mesopotamia Jews unquestionably borrowed the use of magical bowls from Mesopotamian pagans. The basic demonology found in Jewish exorcism bowls was also adopted directly from Mesopotamian pagans. Dan Levene translates one Jewish exorcism bowl as follows:

(1) This writing to bind, and muzzle, and lock up, (2) and take out, and remove all sheds, and dews, and howlers, and lils, and tormentors, (3) and evil spirits, and wicked charms, male idols and female idols, (4) male and female, and all plagues, necklace charms and ban, and tormentor, and barren spirit, (5) and barren Lilith, male or female.

All of you hear this adjuration and receive this adjuration and receive this oath. (6) Go out and remove yourselves from Mahlafta daughter of Imai and from the foetus in her belly, and from her house in which she lives, and from her dwelling. (7) Again, may you not come against her, and may you not appear to her, not in her house and not in her dwelling from this day and this time and forever.

By seal engravers (8) by seal engravings by seal of seal, by YNZH by YNZP by YN(..)H by SS by QS by NP by (LZ) by LN by NYZPY by LN by TS

by YHW YHW (9) HY HW HWH and by the great signet ring of which none of the rings are like.

And all lils and tormentors and every evil spirit, male and female who will obey (10) and go out from Hahlafta daughter of Imai, and from her entire house. May he go on his way in peace. And whosoever shall not obey will be banished to TA'SS YHWH God of Israel. To him (11) and to the crown of his head and to the throne of his glory and to the law court of above and to the law court of below and to all the host of the law court of heaven.

In the name TYTYNWS HY HY MS bodies of commotion and bodies (12) of tumult, sound of bodies of commotion, sound of words of words TYGLH (SLS)YA'H QYSTS PSMSYN NYA'SYN. *Upon her head jars* and upon the top of her hair he sealed HZYT(YH) LBR STY STY PNDY (13) SKSYN SQ(S)WN QA his name.

Barren one, we called you! This is the great name from which the angel of death flees. Amen amen selah. 15

While the above bowl is clearly Jewish, it reflects many of the same ideas and ritual practices found in pagan magic. Note the use of magical words and the magical name of YHWH God of Israel that are used to cast out the demons. According to Levene who translated this bowl, the Hebrew/Aramaic word used to bind demons suggests that they were being ritually chained. The idea of performing a ritual to chain a demon(s) is directly derived from ancient pagan sources in Mesopotamia; so too is the belief in the various kinds or types of demons that are mentioned in the above text, for example “sheds, and dews, and howlers, and lils, and tormentors, and evil spirits.” However, while this bowl was clearly influenced by pagan concepts of demons and magical exorcisms, it is by way of comparison a little less syncretistic than most other Jewish exorcism bowls found in Mesopotamia.

About 2000 such Jewish exorcism bowls have been found in Mesopotamia, and generally they are found buried upside down either near the door of or in the house of the demon possessed or obsessed person. The actual magical rituals associated with these bowls are not known, but it is nearly certain that these bowls were buried to serve as amulets to protect a house or people in the house from demons. In other words, such bowls served not only as magical objects to accomplish an exorcism, but also as amulets to protect against the return of the exorcised demon. As several scholars have suggested, the use and burial of such bowls during an exorcism were almost certainly accompanied by some sort of an elaborate magical ritual, but all that survives today are the bowls.

Some scholars have suggested that water or some other liquid substance was placed in these bowls and then the demons were ritually cast into the liquid. There is textual evidence from Egypt of demons being summoned into magical bowls of water. It does seem likely that these Mesopotamian bowls contained some sort of magical water or possibly a magical liquid potion. The water/liquid in these bowls was probably poured out on to the ground as these bowls were being turned upside down and ritually buried; thereby exorcizing and chaining the offending demons. Pictures on some of these exorcism bowls clearly show demons in chains. A few scholars have called such bowls “demon traps” and while this phrase may not be completely accurate, it is very

descriptive. As was noted above, after burial these bowls clearly were intended to serve as protective amulets.

While there are some differences between the magical exorcisms performed by Jews in Mesopotamia and those performed by pagans in Egypt, there are also many striking similarities. For example, the powerful divine name YHWH Sabaoth, which is found on Jewish exorcism bowls from Mesopotamia, is duplicated on pagan magical documents from Hellenistic Egypt, where as was seen above, the phrase IAO Sabaoth frequently appears.

As was true in pagan magical texts from Hellenistic Egypt, there are also frequent references in Babylonian exorcism bowls to angels. A whole panoply of angelic names is given in Babylonian texts, but the most common were, as in Egyptian magic texts, Michael, Gabriel, and Abrasax. Another feature found in these Jewish exorcism bowls from Mesopotamia is the names of demons. For example, in Mesopotamian demonology the king of the demons was named Ashmedai.¹⁶ It should be noted that the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by “Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons,” whom Jesus identified with Satan (Matt. 12:24-27).

There is one distinctive feature commonly found in many Jewish exorcism bowls from Mesopotamia that is basically missing from exorcism texts found in Egypt and Greece. Many Jewish exorcism bowls from Mesopotamia treat the exorcism of a demon as a “get” or in other words as a divorce. Demon possession in Mesopotamia frequently was seen in sexual terms. It should be remembered that in the ancient world demons were considered to be male or female and were also thought to be able to have sexual relations with humans in dreams and consequently to be able to reproduce. Lilith demons especially, both male and female, were thought to have sexual relations with humans in dreams at night.

It appears that sexual dreams were seen as indications of demonic seduction, and as a result at least some Jews believed that sexual relations with a demon in a dream constituted some sort of marriage that could only be broken by a divorce. Interestingly, contrary to Jewish law at that time, not only Jewish men but also Jewish women could initiate a get or divorce against a demon. Hence to exorcize such a sexual demon, a divorce was necessary, and in some Jewish exorcism bowls found in Mesopotamia the demon is exorcised by a magical divorce text which is written on the exorcism bowl.¹⁷

Let us look at one more Jewish magical text from Mesopotamia, in this case a buried bowl that was used for cursing an enemy. According to Dan Levene, who translated its Aramaic text, such Jewish curse bowls are rare. While the magical text on this bowl is intended to be used for cursing an enemy and not for exorcising a demon, its religious syncretism is relevant to our discussion.

Since the magical text on the bowl is long, all of it will not be given here. But it should be noted that it begins with a conjuration addressed to “Samis the king of the gods.”¹⁸ Samis is almost certainly to be identified with the Semitic sun god whose name is more commonly transliterated as Shamash. In other words there is clear evidence of pagan polytheism in this Jewish curse. According to Levene, the name Shamash, sometimes called “Lord Shamash” also appears on a number of pagan curse bowls in Mesopotamia.¹⁹

In another section of the text on this Jewish curse bowl, there is a reference to the “seven sons of gods” who used seven magical words-- which are of course given in the

text-- “by which the heavens and the earth are pressed,” i.e. “formed.” The inscription on the bowl continues by mentioning the magical names of several angels, one of whom is named Amudiel, “the angel who pressed the column of the earth.” ²⁰ It should be noted that the creation of the heavens and of the earth is here attributed to angels and not to God. The phrase the “seven sons of gods” is also interesting since it seems to parallel the seven sons of Sceva.

The next section in the curse text mentions three demons—possibly groups of demons-- named A‘ZA’L, A‘ZA’L and A‘ZZYA’L, “who transgressed the command of their lord” and against whom angels were sent from God to punish them. The angels sent from God are said to have confined these demons under mountains, “and their faces were turned towards the face of darkness.” The turning of the faces of the demons “towards the face of darkness” may explain why Jewish exorcism bowls were buried turned upside down.

In another section of the curse, we find the names of two Jewish brothers, Mihlad and Baran, who had the bowl written as a way of placing a curse on their enemy Isha son of Ifra Humiz. Levene translates the curse as follows:

And just as the house of Korah and Dathan and Abiram was pressed—just so may this Isha son of Ifra Humiz, by every name he has, be crushed and trod under. And may his lot and fortune and star signs and stars and magical acts and idols and commands and hateful words and evil thoughts be pressed and trod under the feet and command and authority of this Mihalad and (this) Baran, sons of Mirdukh.²¹

It appears that Isha son of Ifra Humiz was slandering Mihalad and Baran. The curse portion of this bowl also contains a section which calls on an angel named Balmier to gag the mouth of Isha.

In the name of Balmier who is the one that gags humans within their hearts. And in the name of ...these angels who pressed and brought to rest and struck dumb the primal war. You! Press, bring to rest, and strike dumb the heart and strong desires and hateful thoughts and all hateful words that he [i.e. Isha] thinks about this Mihalad and (this) Baran....²²

It is the end portion of the curse text that is of special interest for our study. Levene translates it as follows:

In the name of I-am-that-I-am YHWH Sebaoth and in the name of Jesus who conquered the height and depth by his cross and in the name of his exalted father and in the name of the holy spirits forever and eternity, Amen Amen Sela. This press is true and established. ²³

It should be noted that the above Jewish curse text syncretistically calls upon the names of the sun god Shamash, the Jewish God YHWH, and Jesus Christ to make the curse effective. I also should be noted that this curse text calls upon “the holy spirits” and not the Holy Spirit. As Hans Dieter Betz has noted, ancient magic was extremely

syncretistic, and pagans, Jews, and Christians all borrowed from one another when it came to magic.²⁴ In other words, when it came to magic, ancient magicians—even Jewish magicians-- tended to use any divine name, ritual, amulet, potion, etc. that they thought would work. This fact matches very well with the practices of the seven sons of the Jewish priest Sceva who, although they were not Christian believers, nevertheless attempted to use the name of Christ to cast out a demon, as is mentioned in Acts 19:11-19.

Before leaving our brief study of Jewish magic/exorcism, there are a few examples where human skulls were used in ancient Jewish magic. Levene in his article titled “Rare Magic Inscription on Human Skull” gives one example of such a magical skull. The skull studied by Levene was found inside of two bowls which formed a protective case around the skull. There was an inscription written on the skull, but none on the bowls. According to Levene the writing on this skull is very difficult to read. However, Levene writes that the inscription on the skull “contains many of the features common to magic bowl inscriptions that we have seen were used in Jewish exorcisms.”²⁵ Pagan Greek magic is known to have employed human skulls for necromancy/divination, and it is possible that this was a practice that at least a few ancient Mesopotamian Jews also adopted from pagans.²⁶

Part Two of this article, which will appear in the next issue of Artifax, will examine early Christian beliefs on demons, exorcisms, and magic. It will also refute statements made by some modern scholars who maintain that Jesus was just another ancient magician who used the same magical practices in dealing with demons as those used by pagans.

ANCIENT EXORCISTS, DEMONS, AND THE NAME OF JESUS

PART TWO

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CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ON DEMONS AND EXORCISMS

Generally in our study of Christian beliefs on demons and exorcisms, no distinction will be made between the beliefs of traditional/ Orthodox Christians and those of Gnostic Christians. Both will be called Christian. However, Gnostic Christianity does seem to have been much more influenced by and to have had a greater influence on ancient magic/exorcisms—at least in Egypt-- than did Orthodox Christianity. Early orthodox Christianity was opposed to the use of magic. The *Didache*, a clearly orthodox document which dates to the late 1st century AD, has in it several prohibitions against Christians practicing magic, sorcery etc. One passage in the *Didache* reads:

You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not corrupt children; you shall not be sexually immoral; you shall not steal; **you shall not practice magic; you shall not engage in sorcery**; you shall not abort a child or commit infanticide. **27**

It is clear that the unknown writer of the *Didache*, who appears to have known some of Jesus' apostles, saw the use of magic as a terrible sin. Another passage in the *Didache* reads:

My child, **do not be an augur**, since it leads to idolatry. **Do not be an enchanter or an astrologer or a magician**, or even desire to see them, for all these things breed idolatry. **28**

The phrase “all these things breed idolatry” strongly suggests that the author of the *Didache* knew about the syncretistic nature of ancient magic and its association with pagan deities. While the *Didache* seems to reflect the very negative views of the early orthodox church on magic, it appears that rather quickly there developed a disconnect between what was taught in the New Testament and the *Didache* about magic and what was practiced by many later Christians, especially Gnostic Christians. One final point, early Egyptian Christianity, which eventually evolved into Coptic Christianity, also appears to have been more tolerant of the use of magic than was orthodox Christianity.

Let us now look at an exorcism document written in both Greek and Coptic which its translator Marvin Meyer has dated to the fourth century AD. While it is clearly Christian, it borrows heavily from earlier pagan magic.

Excellent spell for driving out demons: Formula to be spoke over his [the demoniac's] head: Place olive branches before him and stand behind him and say, "Greetings, god of Abraham; greetings, god of Isaac; greetings, god of Jacob; Jesus the upright, the holy spirit, the son of the father, who is below the seven, who is within the seven. Bring Yao Sabaoth; may your power issue forth from N, until you drive away this unclean demon Satan, who is in him. I adjure you, demon whoever you are, by this god Sabarbarbathioth Sabarbarbathiouth Sabarbarbathioneth Sabarbarbaphai. Come out demon, whoever you are, and stay away from N., hurry, hurry, now, now! Come our, demon, since I bind you with unbreakable adamantine fetters, and I deliver you into the black chaos in perdition." **Procedure:** Take seven olive branches. For six of them tie together the two ends of each one, but for the remaining one use it as a whip as you utter the adjuration. Keep it secret; it is proven. After driving out [the demon], hang around N. an **amulet** which the patient puts on after the expulsion of the demon, with these things written on a tin metal leaf: BOR PHOR PHORBA PHORR PHORBA BES CHARIN BAUBO TE PHOR BORPHORBA PHORBABOR BAPHORBA PHABRAIE PHORBA PHARBA PHORPHOR PHORBA BOPHOR PHORBA PHORPHOR PHORBA BOBORBORBA PAMPHORBA PHORPHOR PHORBA, protect N. 29

It should be noted that a whip made from an olive branch was to be used to drive out the demon. While this text does not so state, it is likely that this whip was used to ritually strike the demoniac.

In the introductory notes to his translation of the above exorcism, Meyer suggests that most of the BOR and PHOR magical words, which were to be written on the amulet mentioned in the text, are permutations of the name of the Egyptian god Horus. In addition, the name of the Egyptian god Bes also appears among the magical names/words used to protect the "patient" from demons. Meyer also suggests that the magical S shaped symbol at the end of the amulet inscription "...is linked to the syncretistic Egyptian deity Chnoubis (or Chnouph)." Chnoubis is a variation of the Egyptian god Anubis. This syncretistic exorcism thus contains pagan, Jewish, and Christian elements.

Let us look at one further Christian exorcism document that illustrates the syncretistic nature of such documents. This document was written in Coptic and was found neatly folded, which indicates according to its translator Richard Smith that it was probably worn as an amulet. Smith gives no date, but the exorcism seems to come from the early Byzantine Period. It is rather long and only selected portions of Smith's translation will be given here, along with summaries of some of its other portions. Even though it is almost certainly a Christian document and Christ is called upon along with a variety of angels, the primary divine power being summoned to expel and control the demons troubling a pregnant woman is Yao Sabbaoth, whose name—as was seen above—frequently appears in Jewish and pagan magical texts. The adjuration that begins the exorcism is addressed to Yao Sabbaoth.

I adjure you by your name and your power and your figure and your amulet of salvation and the place where you dwell and your light-wand in your right hand and your light-shield in your left hand and your great powers standing before you.

Do not hold back and do not ignore, until you find it worth your while to descend upon your figure. 30

It should be noted that Yao Sabbaoth is here being summoned to descend upon a magical drawn figure. It was very common in pagan Egyptian magic from the Hellenistic Period for deities and demons to be summoned into service by being called to descend upon images, symbols, or magical substances/liquids. The magical picture upon which Yao Sabbaoth is called to descend shows a stylized man whose head seems to be encircled by some type of garment or hood and also by what looks like a halo. In his left hand is a stylized “light shield” with symbols, and in his right he holds a highly stylized “light-wand.” Beneath the figure there is a list of magical words/ sounds: OHI SHAOHI SHASHAOHI SHAOHI SHA AAAO OOOOOO. 31

The exorcism text continues:

Yao Sabbaoth Atonai Eloei Elemas Miksanther, Abrasakks Michael Gabriel Raphael Suriel Raguel Asuel Saraphuel Yao Atonai Eloei Elamas Sabaoth, I adjure you by your holy powers. Watch and protect the four sides of the body and the soul and the spirit of N. daughter of N., her and the child with whom she is pregnant, whether it is male or female. Cast forth from them every chill and every fever and every trembling and every Aberselia and every doom, every devil, and every Apalaf and every power of darkness and every demon and <.....>. Cast them forth from all her dwellings and from every place to which she moves, immediately and quickly. Yea, yea, now, now, at once, at once. 32

There are three slightly differing repeated versions of this same adjuration to be found in this exorcism document; the one quoted above is the second. In the third, there is a reference to “male and female demons.” But let us return to the second adjuration which is followed by the name of Jesus repeated 8 times along with 8 crosses. After a few more magic sounds/words the name Christ is repeated 7 times along with 7 crosses. Next comes a magic word—probably a magic name associated with Yao Sabbaoth--written in a “wing formation” pattern:

ABLANATHANNABLAN
ABLANNATHANABLA
ABLANNATHANABL
ABLANNATHANAB
ABLANNATHANA
ABLANNATHAN
ABLANNATHA
ABLANNATH

ABLANNA
ABLANN
ABLAN
ABLA
ABL
AB
A

Variations of this same magic word/sound can be found in both Jewish and pagan magical documents. After these magical words in wing formation, there is list of 14 magical names, at least two of which are clearly recognizable as variant spellings of the names of two of the three friends of Daniel who survived the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3. An alpha-omega wing formation diagram follows these powerful names, and it is unquestionably Christian. 33

AAAAAAA	1	OOOOOOO
AAAAAA	2	OOOOOO
AAAAA	3	OOOOO
AAAA	4	OOOO
AAA	5	OOO
AA	6	OO
A	7	O

This exorcism document ends with a list of seven archangels, which includes Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, etc., followed by the third and last adjuration. The third and last adjuration ends with the following magical names:

Susunkus, also Barpharankus Ablanathanalba Agramachamario Marioth Yao Yoman Acam, by the great name of god, Nahperaneue, the one who is called Papeu, who is hidden in the place of light. Watch and protect Sura daughter of Pelca her and the child who is in her womb. 34

It is likely that these last magical names were thought of as being associated with Yao Sabbaoth, but it is not certain. It should be noted that the name of Christ seemingly does not appear in this list of magical names, but as was seen above, it does appear earlier in the document.

It is likely that this exorcism document is only a Christianized version of an older pagan exorcism that may have also been reworked by a Jewish magician. Nevertheless, it still contains a reference to the Greek god Helios. Most of the names of old pagan deities have apparently been dropped, and Christian features have been added; however, the basic format, attitudes, and beliefs reflected in the document have deep roots in pagan magic.

Before ending this brief study of Christian exorcism, just a few observations about Christian magic during the Roman and Byzantine Periods in Egypt. First, it is clear that divine names may have changed from the pagan Hellenistic Period, but the basic

format, concepts, mind set, rituals, etc. have not changed. As far as form and function are concern, there is little difference between pagan, Jewish, and Christian magic.

Second, even the requests made in Christian magical documents do not change that much. Christian magic covers all of the same basic areas that the older pagan magic in Egypt did, including adjurations for controlling demons and also for obtaining love, money, good business, health, healing, curses on enemies, etc. There is even one magical document written by a homosexual, which calls upon both Yao Sabbaoth and Christ to harass his male lover “until I satisfy with him the desire of my heart.”³⁵ There is another Christian cursing document in which a mother places a curse upon her son’s hated girlfriend.³⁶

Third, the amount of magic being practiced in Egypt does not seem to have substantially declined in the transition from the pagan Hellenistic Period to the Christian Byzantine Period. Magic of all types seems to have been very popular with many Christians in Egypt for centuries after the time of Christ.

And fourth, as was noted above, the belief in demons or spirits (both good and bad) was very widespread and held by almost everyone in the ancient Near East for centuries. While it is beyond the scope of this paper, as a general observation, it appears that a few pagan intellectuals,³⁷ some Orthodox Christians, and a few rabbinic Jewish scholars were the only ones who spoke against the use of magic in the ancient world.

And fifth, Christ, angels, Mary, and Christian saints seem to have assumed many of the characteristics of the old pagan deities and demons who were earlier summoned by pagans to work magic. For example, there is one picture of the angel Gabriel on one Christian magical document who is shown holding in his hand the feather of Maat, the ancient Egyptian goddess of justice.³⁸ There is also a pagan document which seems to show an early stage in the transition from pagan magic to Christian magic. In this pagan document, an angel—not a demon--named Zizaubio is called upon to possess a person, and the form, rituals, magic words, etc. that are used are very similar to those used earlier by pagans in summoning an “assistant” demon for possession.³⁹ Nevertheless, there is no evidence indicating that Christians—or Jews--summoned angels for possession. However, there is a great deal of evidence indicating that Christians and Jews summoned angels to do many of the things for which pagans earlier summoned demons.

How then did Christian—and also to a large extent Jewish—magic differ from pagan magic? First, Christian magic tried—but not always successfully—to remove the names of pagan deities from magical documents. Second, Christian magic greatly de-emphasized or eliminated the summoning of demons as magical assistants. Third, Christian magic does not seem to have distinguished between good and evil demons, as was true of pagan magic. For Christians, and also seemingly for Jews, all demons seem to have been considered by definition to be evil. While demons were not to be summoned by Christians, angels were substituted and were frequently summoned. This was also true for Jewish magic. Fourth, Christian magic—and also Jewish magic--placed much more stress on the casting out of demons than did pagan magic. And fifth, necromancy and the use of dead people and graves in magic were greatly de-emphasized in Christian magic and also in Jewish magic, but there are examples.

THE EXORCISMS OF JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is very clear in saying that Jesus Christ cast out demons, and for many modern Evangelical Christians the exorcisms of Jesus are somewhat embarrassing. For the most part, with a few exceptions, Evangelicals have avoided the topic of Jesus and his exorcisms that are reported in the New Testament. While evangelicals have tended to avoid the topic of the exorcisms performed by Jesus, many liberal Christian scholars have made his exorcisms central to their attempts to discover “the historical Jesus.” As a result liberal biblical scholars have written a number of books in recent years dealing with the exorcisms performed by Jesus.

The most infamous is Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God?, written by Morton Smith, who basically argued that Jesus was an evil magician. Smith in constructing his version of the “historical Jesus” rejected the picture of Christ that is found in the Gospels. Smith used the Gospels only very selectively because he believed that the Gospels whitewashed Jesus’ magical practices. According to Smith’s reconstructed history of the life of Christ, Jesus was a magician, who learned to be a magician while living in Egypt. Smith writes of Jesus that while in Egypt he: “...became expert in magic and was tattooed with magical symbols or spells.”⁴⁰ It should be noted that Smith believed that Jesus lived in Egypt not only as a child but also as an adult. Smith continues:

Returning to Galilee he made himself famous by his magical feats, miracles he did by his control of demons. He thereby persuaded the masses that he was the Jewish Messiah and/or the son of a god. Although he pretended to follow Jewish customs, he formed a small circle of intimate disciples whom he taught to despise the Jewish Law and to practice magic. These he bound together and to himself by ties of “love,” meaning sexual promiscuity, and by participation in the most awful magical rites, including cannibalism—they had some sort of ritual meal in which they ate human flesh and drank human blood. Surrounded by this circle he traveled from town to town deceiving many and leading them into sin. ⁴¹

Smith is here saying that Jesus was not only an evil magician who controlled demons, but he was also a homosexual and a cannibal!

Another widely read liberal author who supposedly seeks to find the “historical Jesus” is Graham Twelftree, but he is not as radical as Smith. Twelftree sees Jesus as an ancient exorcist and tries to reconstruct his version of the “historical Jesus” by comparing Jesus with other ancient exorcists. ⁴² Twelftree makes much greater use of the New Testament than did Smith, but he, like the second century heretic Marcion, uses a penknife to cut the New Testament into pieces that suit his theories. We will come back to Twelftree later in this paper, because he did partially recognize that the exorcisms of Jesus were different from those carried out by the vast majority of ancient exorcists. But first let us look at a few of the exorcisms performed by Jesus as given in the New Testament.

Robert Conner’s book, *Jesus the Sorcerer*, is far less scholarly than those of Twelftree and Smith, but he travels much the same methodological path and comes to the same preconceived critical conclusions as Twelftree. Conner strangely argues that Gospels cannot be relied on as historical documents because: “It is estimated that at least 30 years passed between the events of Jesus’ life and the writing of the gospels.” ⁴³ This

statement is so ludicrous that it borders on the ridiculous. Most ancient historians would be thrilled to have three ancient sources dating to ca. 30 years of the actual events.

For example, the best historical source that we have today on Alexander the Great is Arrian, who lived from ca. 145-85 BC. Alexander the Great died in 323 BC. In other words, Arrian wrote 200 years after the death of Alexander the Great. Historians today rely on Arrian when writing about Alexander the Great, and no one goes through his works trying to dig out imagined “pericopes” or seeking to find the “historical Alexander.” Conner’s problem--like Smith’s and Twelftree’s-- is not one of historical evidence; it is one of belief. Hence when they cannot find their beliefs in the New Testament, they cut it into pieces and use papier-mâché hermeneutics to support their own preconceived religious/ atheistic views. Let us now look at the New Testament itself, and see what it has to say about Jesus and the exorcisms that he performed.

It is very clear in the New Testament that the ministry of Jesus entailed three basic elements, preaching, healing, and casting out demons. That exorcisms were an important part in the ministry of Jesus Christ can be seen in Mark 1:39-42:

39. And He went into their synagogues through out all Galilee preaching and casting out the demons.
40. And a leper came to Jesus beseeching Him and falling on his knees before him, and saying, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”
41. Moved with compassion Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”
42. Immediately, the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. (NASV)

Before leaving this passage there are two important points that need to be made.

First, the Greek word *ekballo*, which is here translated as “casting out,” is not the normal Greek verb *eksorkizo*, which is used for an exorcism performed by a magician. As was seen above, the Greek word *eksorkizo* means to ritually/magically adjure a demon by a divine oath and in so doing cast it out. The Greek work *ekballo* means to throw out, throw away, or jettison. We will come back to the important distinction between these two words.

And second, it should be noted that in the healing of the leper no reference is made to his leprosy being connected to demon possession or to an exorcism. There are instances in the New Testament where certain diseases are said to be caused by demons, but clearly Christ and the Apostles did not see every disease as being caused by demons or by demonic possession, as some critical scholars have argued in the past. Edwin Yamauchi correctly rejects this view when he writes:

Our study has demonstrated that Bocher’s pan-demonological view that the ancients, including the biblical writers, believed that all diseases were caused by demons and that they could only be cured by exorcisms is patently false. 44

Before looking in detail at two examples of exorcisms performed by Jesus that are frequently studied by liberal critics, it is important first to see what power or authority Christ used to cast out demons. Jesus himself claimed that he cast out demons through the power or agency of the Holy Spirit. This can be seen in Matthew 12. In Matt. 12:24

the Pharisees say of Jesus, “This man casts out (*ekballo*) demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.” Jesus responds by saying,

27. “If I by Beelzebul cast out (*ekballo*) demons, by whom do your sons cast (*ekballo*) them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

28. But if I cast out (*ekballo*) demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Jesus also approved of others casting out demons in his name, as can be seen in Mark 9:38-39. Therefore to summarize, Jesus said that he cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit, but he also authorized his followers to cast out demons in his name.

Nearly every modern book on the exorcisms performed by Jesus deals with two examples, the demon that he cast out in the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum and the legion of demons that he cast out of the Gadarene demoniac. Let us first consider the Capernaum demoniac mentioned in Mark 1:21-28. In this passage, Jesus is preaching on the Sabbath in the synagogue at Capernaum.

23. Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24. saying, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out (*ekserxomai*) of him!”

26. Throwing him into convulsion, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.

27. They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him.

It should be noted that Jesus does not use magical oaths, rituals, spells, words, names, potions, etc to cast out this demon. He simply tells it to leave the demoniac, and it left. The amazed response of those who watched this exorcism is highly significant. They were amazed not because Jesus cast out this demon, but rather because he simply told the demon to leave the man, and the demon left. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Greek work *eksorkizo* does not appear in this passage.

The crowd almost certainly knew of the elaborate rituals that were normally performed by exorcists at that time. Knowledge of and belief in magic was endemic at the time. The normal practice for exorcists was for them to work their magic by using magical rituals, oaths, names, sounds, symbols, whips, potions, etc. to drive out demons. Ancient magicians were considered to be agents of divine power, but they were almost never considered to be divine or the source of divine power. In other words, the way that Jesus did this exorcism would indicate to the crowd that he was not just another exorcist but rather that he was himself a “divine power.” This is almost certainly what amazed and the crowd.

The expulsion of the legion of demons from the Gadarene demoniac is in many ways very similar to the expulsion of the demon from the Capernaum demoniac. Jesus

crosses over to the eastern shore of Sea of Galilee to an area that was then populated by gentiles. When he lands, according to Luke 8, a naked demoniac confronts him.

28. Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.

29. For He had commanded (*paraggello*) the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

30. And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.

31. They were imploring him not to command (*epitasso*) them to go away into the abyss. [NASV]

Before looking at the rest of this story, it must at this point be noted that the two Greek words used by Jesus’ in commanding these demons to leave the Gadarene demoniac are military words. These two Greek words were used much like the modern English words “order” and “command” are used in the military today. The use of these two Greek military words fit the context of this story very well since there was a “legion” (a military unit) of demons possessing the man. In other words, these demons recognized Jesus as having the authority to give them orders that they had to obey.

This is very different from the practices of the vast majority of ancient magicians and exorcists. As has been seen, there are provisions in ancient exorcism documents for the use of magical rituals, symbols, spells, oaths, potions, whips, amulets, etc. to drive out a demon. Jesus used none of these magical practices. Nor did he need any magical rituals to protect himself from an expelled demon. Pagan magicians feared being attacked by exorcised demons and used magical amulets to protect themselves, but in the case of the Legion of demons, Jesus did not fear them, they feared him.

One more point before continuing our look at this story, Jesus talked to the demon and asked its/their name. Some modern critical scholars, such as Smith and Twelftree, have made much over the fact that Jesus asked the name of the Gaderene demon. They suggest that by so doing Jesus was following standard magical practices in an exorcism. There are, however, two things wrong with their argument. First, it was not a standard magical practice to ask the name of a demon in an exorcism. I have read at least two hundred ancient magical documents, and I do not know of a single one in which a magician asks or is instructed to ask the name of a demon. The names of powerful deities are invoked in ancient exorcisms, but not the names of the demons being expelled. And second, Jesus never actually learned the names of all of the demons. He is in effect told that there are too many demons to name since there is a legion of them possessing the Gadarene demoniac. Legion is a Roman military unit and not a personal name. It should be noted that Jesus actually expelled these demons without learning their names.

Much is also made by some biblical critics of the fact that Jesus cast these demons into a herd of pigs that consequently drowned themselves in the Sea of Galilee. Ancient magicians did try to cast demons into various inanimate objects. However animals seem

to have been rarely used. I know of no instance in pagan magic where demons were cast into pigs.

Many, if not most, ancient magicians seemingly used bowls of water or liquid potions in performing exorcisms. For example, as was seen above, during ancient Jewish exorcisms in Mesopotamia, the demon was magically driven into the water/potion contained in an exorcism bowl, and then the bowl was turned over and the water/potion emptied into the ground. The bowl was then buried upside down, supposedly trapping or chaining the demon beneath it. As was stated above, I suspect that later Arab Muslim stories of genies trapped in bottles or lamps are based upon this ancient magical practice.

It must be noted that in the gospel of Matthew Jesus is not said to have performed any rituals, use any potions, or generally work any magic to force the demons to enter the pigs. In other words, Jesus does not behave like a normal magician would have behaved in the ancient world. A proper reading of the story suggests that the demons wanted to enter the pigs as a way of hiding and/or escaping from the presence of Christ, and not as the result of some magical ritual performed by Jesus. It also should be noted that Jesus did not cast these demons into the water of the Sea of Galilee, they cast themselves.

After the demons left the demoniac and entered the pigs, and after the pigs killed themselves in the Sea of Galilee, the gentile Gerasenes who lived in the area “became frightened.” Luke 8: 37 says: “And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned.” But the question arises: Why did they fear Jesus? They seem to have had more fear of Jesus than they did of the demoniac possessed by a legion of demons.

There were many magicians/exorcists active in the ancient world, but they do not seem to have engendered this sort of fear. Why then did the Gerasenes fear Jesus Christ. Let me suggest that the Gerasenes feared Christ not because he was seen as some sort of a powerful magician or exorcist, but because they believed him to be the embodiment of some sort of divine power, and it was for this reason that they feared him. Ancient magicians tried to employ divine powers to control demons, but the Gerasenes appear to have recognized Jesus as a divine power, and it was this that caused them such great fear.

WAS JESUS A MAGICIAN OR AN EXORCIST?

Graham Twelftree in his book In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians states: “In his exorcisms Jesus is reported to have availed himself of standard formulas or incantations used by the exorcists of ancient magic.”⁴⁵ Reported by whom? Certainly not the Gospel writers! It is only Twelftree’s destructive and highly speculative editing of the New Testament that leads him to the conclusion that Jesus used magic in his exorcisms. To say the very least, Twelftree bases this statement on very little hard evidence. Nevertheless, he cites the following as evidence that Jesus acted as a magician and exorcist:

First, Jesus told a demon to be silent in Mark 1:25. Twelftree states: “In Mark 1:25 Jesus says to the demon, ‘be silent’ (*phimotheti*) or more accurately, ‘be bound.’”⁴⁶ Since it was common for ancient magicians/exorcists to bind or more properly to chain demons, Twelftree argues that Jesus is here following a formula used by ancient exorcists. The problem for his theory is that the Greek verb (*phimo*) used by Mark does not “more accurately” mean “to bind” as Twelftree states. The Greek verb *phimo* is

derived from the Greek noun *phimos* which translates as a “muzzle,” meaning primarily a “dog muzzle.” There are no instances that I know of where the Greek verb derived from *phimos* is used for binding or chaining a demon. However, this word was occasionally used in magic spells to silence noisy demons, but this had nothing to do with binding, or more accurately chaining them. Contrary to what Twelftree states, “be bound” is not a more accurate translation of *phimotheti*, but rather “be silent” or “be muzzled” is. Twelftree is here twisting evidence to fit his theory that Jesus used some of the same magical practices used by magicians to exorcize a demon. All that Mark 1:25 has in common with magical exorcism documents is that both thought that demons at times could be very noisy and needed to be silenced.

Second, Twelftree argues that when Jesus in Mark 1:25, 5:8, and 9:25 orders demons to come out (*ekserxomai*) of demoniacs, he is following the magical practices of ancient exorcists. ⁴⁷ Twelftree has another problem here. Ancient exorcists did not just order demons to leave demoniacs; they used divine powers, spells, symbols, potions, rituals, magic words, etc to drive out demons. In one exorcism studied above a magical whip made out of an olive branch was used to drive out a demon. Only after making use of magical whips, spells, rituals, names, symbols, potions, etc. could an exorcist drive out a demon. Similarity of desired result—i.e. casting out a demon—is not proof that Jesus and ancient magicians followed a common practice. Both a modern medical doctor and a modern witch doctor may have the same desired result and they may in some cases use similar language, but this does not mean that they follow a common practice or that the medical doctor is a witch doctor. How else could Jesus have caused this demon to leave rather than by simply ordering it to leave? As will be seen below, Twelftree himself recognized that the exorcisms of Jesus were somewhat different from those of ordinary exorcists in the ancient world.

Third, Twelftree argues that in Mark 5:9, “Jesus follows a convention in asking the name of the demon.”⁴⁸ However, as was noted above, it is not true that ancient exorcists asked the name of a demon during an exorcism. The magical names used in exorcisms were the names of powerful deities that were used to control demons. The names of the demons to be expelled appear to have been superfluous in such magical rituals.

Fourth, Twelftree argues that in Mark 9:25, “Jesus adopts the practice of forbidding a demon to return to the person.”⁴⁹ Again it needs to be stated that similarity of desired result—i.e. forbidding future demonic possession—is not proof that Jesus followed the same magical practices used by ancient exorcists. In actuality, all that is seen here is that both Jesus and ancient exorcists believed that demons could return and repossess demoniacs.

And fifth, Twelftree argues that “Jesus took up the practice of transferring demons from the sufferer to an object, in this case to a herd of pigs (Mark 5:12-14).”⁵⁰ As was noted above, while it is true that ancient exorcists did at times seek to transfer demons into inanimate objects, it certainly was not a normal practice for ancient exorcists to transfer demons into living animals, with the possible exception of white chickens. It should also be noted, as was seen above, that Jesus did not transfer the demons into the pigs, the demons transferred themselves. In ancient exorcisms demons were forced or tricked into moving into objects, and they did not go willingly.

Twelftree's conclusion that Jesus used magical practices pioneered by magicians and exorcists is fatally flawed. While he and other modern scholars have written books arguing that Jesus was a magician, sorcerer, or an exorcist, the evidence for this is lacking. The New Testament never calls Jesus an exorcist, sorcerer, or a magician. The New Testament has Jesus casting out demons, but it never uses the verb "*eksorkizo*, to exorcise." It should also be noted that the New Testament never calls Jesus an exorcist, magician, sorcerer, etc. Of course, Twelftree, like Morton Smith, believes that the Gospel writers purged away such embarrassing magical references, which he—like Smith--believes he has rediscovered by his critical deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of the Gospels to fit his theories. However, if the Gospel writers were embarrassed by the supposedly magical exorcisms of Jesus, why did they not just eliminate them altogether, rather than just purging them as Twelftree maintains? The answer to this question is that the Gospel writers were not embarrassed by the exorcisms of Jesus because they clearly believed that his exorcisms were fundamentally different from those performed by magicians.

Morton Smith also argues much the same in his book Jesus the Magician. Smith argues that Jesus was a magician, and he too argues that the Gospel authors in embarrassment purged away most of the magical deeds and practices of Jesus. However, the New Testament picture of Jesus is not that of a magician, sorcerer, or an exorcist. As was stated above, Jesus never performs any rituals, mixes any potions, carries out any magical rituals, makes any amulets, uses any magical words, symbols, or names, etc. And as was also stated above, the Gospels never use the verb *eksorkizo* when Christ casts out a demon. *Eksorkizo* implies the use of magical rituals, words, oaths, symbols, spells, etc. to drive out a demon. On the other hand, the Greek word *ekballo*, which is used for the exorcisms of Jesus, does not imply the use of magic, as does the word *eksorkizo*. In other words, the Gospels picture Jesus not as an exorcist or a magician, but rather as a miracle worker who had the power to cast out demons without the use of the magical practices of exorcists.

There is nothing in the Gospels that would indicate that Jesus was a magician or even an exorcist in the strict meaning of the word. It should be noted that Jesus never summoned demons or sought to use them in any way. The summoning of demons and using them to work magic was the most important act of pagan magicians, not the casting out of demons. Because Jesus cast out demons, does not mean that he was an exorcist. Ancient pagan magicians only rarely sought to cast out demons. As was seen above, exorcists were magicians who summoned and adjured demons by religious oaths and tried to control them by rituals, potions, magical words, spells, etc. There is nothing in the New Testament that indicates that Jesus ever did any of these. The same is true of the exorcisms of the Apostles.

While commenting on one ancient magical text containing Christian elements, R. A. Kearsley correctly notes by way of contrast that there are no magical elements to be found in the actions of Jesus Christ or of his apostles in the New Testament.

But none of the magic is found in the actions of the apostles themselves or the beliefs expressed in the NT documents, and it is through the reaction of others to the miracles of healing performed by Jesus and the apostles that the element of magic enters the NT world. 51

In other words, it is a misnomer to call Jesus a magician or an exorcist, and neither he nor his apostles were involved in using magic. However, there were others-- pagans, Jews, and marginal Christians--who did practice magic, and sometimes in their magical practices they used the name of Jesus in attempting to exorcize a demon.

The differences between the exorcisms of Jesus and those of the magician exorcists are striking. Yamauchi points this out when he writes:

We have numerous examples of incantations and the accompanying praxis for the exorcism of demons from Mesopotamia. According to Lucian [Philopseudes 16] Syrian and Palestinian exorcists used incantations and spells to threaten the demons out of the afflicted. Such incantations were ordinarily whispered or uttered in an abnormal voice (cf. Sanh. 11.1). Often the incantations had to be recited carefully word for word, with prescribed procedures exactly followed. 52

Clearly the New Testament never has Jesus performing any such incantations, rituals, etc. He simply commanded demons to leave.

Jesus was clearly different and this is in part recognized even by Twelftree, who sort of places Jesus Christ into a very small elite category which he has deemed "charismatic exorcists". Twelftree writes of charismatic exorcists:

With what we could term the charismatic exorcists, we come to the other end of the spectrum of exorcists from those reflected in, for example, the magical papyri. In contrast to the so-called magical exorcists, success for the charismatics depended entirely on the persona or charismatic force of the exorcist, not on what was said or done, or on any outside source of power-authority. 53

After providing a short list of stories of other charismatic exorcists besides Jesus, Twelftree concludes by writing:

Even though at first sight these stories may be considered to some extent reminiscent of those of Jesus, it is notable that they are all significantly later than the time of the first followers of Jesus and the early Christians. Therefore, this method of exorcism where, as Peter Brown put it, "the holy man was thought of as having taken into his person, skill that had previously been preserved by society at large," probably developed and flowered later than the time of the earliest followers of Jesus. The significance of this is not to be underestimated as we seek to understand what early Christian knew about exorcism. 54

Twelftree is here arguing that the concept of charismatic exorcists "probably developed" after the time of Christ, and therefore he suggests that elements of charismatic exorcists were later added to the exorcisms of Jesus found in the Gospels. However, Twelftree also seems to have believed that Jesus was something of a transition between the old style magical exorcists and the charismatic exorcists who came later. He writes:

It is suggested that Jesus' methods of exorcism are nearer those of Apollonius Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.*, 4.20] or that of a first-century Jewish charismatic than an exorcist in the magical tradition. This is, without aid he was able to order unwanted spiritual beings out of a person. However, we have just seen that Jesus used standard magical formulas as well as, on one occasion, a herd of pigs in transferring demons from a person to a body of water. Also, even though during an exorcism Jesus makes no mention of his power-authority, seeing him simply as a charismatic ignores the import of him saying that he casts out demons "by the Spirit [or finger] of God. 55

Twelftree is here guilty of special pleading. He amplifies a few examples of what he sees as similarities between the exorcisms of Jesus and those of magicians. However, he basically overlooks the fact that in the New Testament Jesus never uses any of the elaborate rituals, potions, spells, symbols, etc. use by magical exorcists.

Nevertheless, Twelftree agrees that Jesus was an exorcist who used many of the same practices as those used by magician exorcists, but, as was seen above, he believes that the magical practices of Jesus were purged and purified by later Gospel writers. Therefore, Twelftree feels justified in reconstructing a historical Jesus by first deconstructing the Gospels and then selectively pasting together a picture of Jesus that is clearly at odds not only with the picture of Jesus found in the New Testament but also with that found in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. In supposedly seeking to find the historical Jesus, Twelftree—and also Morton Smith—used a decidedly unhistorical approach. There is absolutely no proof that New Testament writers purged magical elements from the stories about Jesus. This is a false assumption made by Smith and Twelftree, and it is clearly contradicted by the *Didache*, which forbids Christians to be involved in magic, calling it idolatry, in other words a great sin.

CONCLUSION

The exorcisms of Jesus were clearly very different from those of the magician exorcists. Exorcists were middlemen, agents transferring power, while Jesus was seen even by pagan and Jewish magicians as being a divine power. Magician exorcists had to follow exactly prescribed rituals, spells, chants, etc for their exorcisms to work. There is clearly none of this in the exorcisms of Jesus. The exorcisms of Jesus were not accomplished by rituals, but by his spoken word. The so-called exorcisms of Jesus are pictured in the New Testament as acts of divine power, in other words as miracles, which have much in common with his miracles of healing. In other words the Gospels picture Christ as a miracle worker and not an exorcist or a magician.

However, it is clear that later magician exorcists used the name of Jesus in casting out demons. The appropriation of divine names in controlling demons has a long history in ancient magic. As was seen above, ancient magical exorcists were extremely syncretistic, and it is not surprising that the name of Jesus Christ, the symbol of the Cross, Alpha-Omega, etc. were all appropriated by magical exorcists, including magical Jewish exorcists as seen in Acts 19:11-19.

Nearly everything in Acts 19:11-19 fits perfectly with the historical evidence that is available on magical exorcisms. While it might at first glance seem strange that Jews would use the name of Jesus in an exorcism, we have historical evidence proving that

there were Jewish exorcists who used the name of Jesus. And in addition, the references in Acts 19: 19 to magical books also fits perfectly with the documentary evidence. Archaeologists have discovered numerous examples of such ancient magical books.

One final point in conclusion, Acts 19:11-19 suggests that even non-believers considered Jesus as a divine power as early as ca. 55 AD during the ministry of Paul. As was seen above in one magical exorcism text, there is early evidence apart from the New Testament that suggests that Jesus was seen some sort of a divine power before the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 AD. Those critical biblical scholars who have in the past argued that divinity was only attributed to Jesus long after his death and who also argue that the miracles of Jesus were later inventions of his followers, must explain why at least one non-Christian magician in Egypt at a very early date saw Jesus as some sort of divine power and miracle worker.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. xlvi.
2. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, p. xlii.
3. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM I. 262-347, p. 11.
4. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM I. 262-347, p. 11.
5. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM I. 262-347, p. 10.
6. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM I. 262-347, p. 10.
7. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM I. 262-347, p. 10.
8. John C. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 228.
9. Dan Levene, *Rare Magic Inscription on Human Skull*, BAR, March-April, 2009, p. 50.
10. Dan Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls* (London: Routledge, 2009), See Bowl M59 pictured on pp. 180-182. The Aramaic text for this exorcism bowl mentions both “male and female liliths,” p. 32.

11. Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 59-62.
12. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM IV. 3007-86, pp. 96-97.
13. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM IV. 3007-86, footnote 407, p. 97.
14. See also John C. Gager, *Curse Tablets*, pp. 185-187 where he suggests that a “Jewish” curse tablet found on the Greek island of Rheneia near Delos is probably Samaritan.
15. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, pp. 52, 78, 109, 111, 127.
16. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 103.
17. For examples of such “get” bowls, see Levene, bowl texts M50, p. 32; M59, p. 34; and M103, pp. 52-53.
18. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 124.
19. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 125.
20. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 129.
21. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 126.
22. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 127.
23. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*, p. 127.
24. Betz, *Greek Magical Papyri*, p. xlvi.
25. Levene, “Human Skull,” p. 50.
26. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM IV. 2125-39, p. 75.
27. *Didache* in Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers in English* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), p. 164. I inserted the bold type in this passage.
28. *Didache*, p. 164.
29. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, pp. 43-44.
30. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 120.
31. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 121.

32. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 122.
- 33 Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 123.
34. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 124.
35. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 177.
36. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 196-197.
37. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, p, xli.
38. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, p. 146.
39. Betz, *Magical Papyri*, PGM VII. 795-845, pp. 140-141.
40. Morton Smith, Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God (Berkeley: Seastone, 1998), p. 88.
41. Smith, Jesus the Magician, p. 88.
42. Graham H. Twelftree, Jesus the Exorcist (Peabody, MA: Henderson Publishers, 1993). See also Twelftree's In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007)
43. Robert Conner, Jesus the Sorcerer (Oxford, GB: Mandrake, 2006), p. 31.
44. Edwin Yamauchi's "Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and Exorcisms" in Gospel Perspectives: The Miracles of Jesus, Vol. VI, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1986). p. 145.
45. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 46.
- 46 Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 46.
47. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 46.
48. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 46.
49. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 46.
50. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 46.
51. S. R. Llewelyn and R.A. Kearsley, eds. New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity (Marrickville, NSW: Macquarie University, 1992), vol. 6, 1980-81, p. 196

52. Yamauchi's "Magic," p. 131.

53. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, pp. 44-45.

54. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 45.

55. Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus, p. 47.