

## ON THE DATING OF THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS. GNOSTICISM AND THE TEACHING OF JESUS.

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There is no consensus on the date of the Gospel of Thomas. Some scholars believe that it is an early Christian monument, predating the canonical gospels, while others believe that this Gnostic work should be attributed to the middle of the second century AD.\* I adhere to the first view, and this work is devoted to a critical examination of the arguments in favor of a late dating, as well as the problem: could Jesus have preached Gnostic ideas in principle?

At the outset, it is necessary to state that the Gospel of Thomas (hereinafter abbreviated as TE)\*\* is not a gospel in its genre. The latter is the "good news," the story of the birth of the Son of God, coming into the world, death and resurrection. In the TE there are only sayings (logia) of the "living Jesus" without a description of the context in which they were said and without a narrative of the events of the gospel, primarily the suffering.

The prologue of TE says: "These are the secret words spoken by the living Jesus and written down by The great Judas Thomas". Commentary of the supporters of the late dating: "The living Jesus of the Gospel of Thomas is the resurrected Lord, the heavenly Redeemer, revealing to the disciples the fates of the world and man... The author of the Gospel of Thomas no longer needed the earthly Jesus image (as Paul did not need it yet). Therefore, in a literary sense, such works do not belong to the "gospel" genre (Lezov S. V. History and hermeneutics in the study of the New Testament. M., 1996, p.36).\*\*\*

This argument is unconvincing. "Alive" means resurrected. Was Jesus dead before his resurrection? Both Orthodox, Judeo-Christian, and Gnostic communities recognized the fullness of his "earthly" life and did not consider Him alive only after the resurrection.

Moreover, later in the text, God the Father is also called "the living one" (3:55). Was He also crucified and resurrected? The first argument for a late appearance is absurd. "The living one" means the source of eternal life, this epithet speaks of divinity. See, for example, Matthew: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (16:16)

Notes:

\*AL Khosroev: The question of the origin of this collection of Jesus' logia: is it related to the Synoptics, or, on the contrary, is it a text that Matthew and Luke used as a second source, should be left open for now. Alexandrian Christianity. M., 1991., p.27

\*\*In addition, for the sake of brevity, the canonical gospels will also be referred to as: Matthew Mt, Mark Mk, Luke Lk, John Jn. Old Testament OT, New Testament NT.

\*\*\* The claim that Paul did not yet need the real Jesus is based on the belief that Jesus was an ordinary man who was deified after his execution. Having believed in the Nazarene, Paul began to preach His divinity. Such a sermon is only hindered by the details of his earthly biography. And the omission of the story of Jesus' life in Paul's letters only confirms this.

However, it is somehow forgotten that the addressees of the messages have already become Christians and are already familiar with the events of the Gospel! (See Gal. 3:1) Paul wrote the letters to explain aspects of the new religion and to teach it, as he directly states. (See 2 Cor. 13:9-11) After all, no one would describe genealogy or provide birth certificates in a letter dedicated to family problems. etc.

The combination of words "Living Father", as indicated by SS Averintsev (without any connection with TE), apparently refers to the school of the Gnostic teacher Bardaisan. The alleged author of TE was also associated with his followers. To any Gnostic school, for example, the following fragment can be attributed: And Achamoth is justified by all her descendants? Achamoth, translated from Aramaic, means Sophia, Wisdom, the last emanation of the divine Pleroma. According to the Gnostics, she made a mistake and gave birth to the Demiurge. Who is the author: Valentinus, Bardaisanus? (In the writings of the same Bardaisanus, Achamoth cries out: My God, my head, why have you forsaken me?). However, the quote is taken from the Gospel of Luke! (7:35, Matthew 11:19. Sophia, in the synodal translation, is preferably translated as Wisdom.) It turns out that Jesus also taught about the fall of Sophia and her restoration? The NT also uses terms that are considered gnostic in principle. (See, for example, the Pleroma in John and in the letters of Paul.) And why is such a simple option as borrowing TE terms from the Bardaisano school impossible? (In addition, the high priest Caiaphas also calls God living in Matt. 26:62).

Of the 118 TE logias, more than 70 coincide, are close in meaning, or have parallels with sayings given in the canonical gospels. And in the NT, all the logias shared with the TE coincide with Jesus' sermon before the crucifixion. In addition, logias that are not in the canonical texts and that coincide with the apocryphal writings of early Christians are related to Jesus' earthly path.

And if TE is a Gnostic forgery based on early Christianity, it would be discovered immediately. Parallels with the authoritative synoptic gospels do not allow us to consider Jesus' sermons before the crucifixion as His logia after the resurrection.

If the author of TE "no longer needs the earthly Jesus," then he must have "gnostically" edited some existing source, removing all narrative content from it. And why?

First, the genre of the gospels (the Synoptics and their close relatives – the Jewish and Ebionite gospels)\* was an established canon as early as 150 BC, but such a "cutting" of the text would deprive the given text of its authority in the eyes of believers.

Secondly, in order to convince the reader that Jesus taught gnosis, it is not necessary to turn an authoritative text into a collection of short and dubious sayings. It is enough to supplement the existing one with your own insertions or use fragments of it, without changing the genre of the narrative itself. This is what the author of the spurious Gospel of Nicodemus did, for example. The reduction of any narrative to

archaic logics, instead of adding their own part of the story, are a completely inappropriate way of falsification.

It must be remembered that all the changes that were made to the canonical gospels after their creation of the world was not made by the hands of a frivolous dreamer, but by the hands of a deeply religious man. The editors and co-authors of the evangelists were confident that they knew that the oral tradition is correct and has been preserved intact "from the beginning", while the text has already been distorted by heretics. In the name of restoring such original truth, to delete a large part of the alleged text? (The shortest of the canonical gospels, Mark, has 678 verses, while the TE has only 118.) There is no explanation for such widespread distortion.

Finally, linguistic analysis has shown that the TE logy is independent of the New Testament "Good News" versions. The proponents of late dating speak of a Gnostic abbreviation of some text (no longer necessary), but they cannot say which one, that is only their arbitrary assumption.

The TE text is remarkably consistent with the Q "source" (German Quelle), a collection of logia that NT scholars believe predates the Gospels and contains brief notes on Jesus' sermons. The existence of such a collection of logia is attested to by the 4th-century Church historian Eusebius: "Matthew recorded Jesus' conversations in Hebrew..." (that is, in Aramaic, A. L.) (Quoted from: Jesus Christ in Documents of History. St. Petersburg, 1998, p. 293). In that collection of logias, scholars believe that long before the discovery of the Gospel of Thomas in 1945, there should not have been a story about the suffering and the appearance of the resurrected Jesus. (SV Lezov. History and Hermeneutics: p. 88) And just like that, they are not in TE.

Notes:

\*The texts of these gospels, as judged by surviving fragments and early Church representatives reviews, did not differ substantially from the canonical ones. In the 2nd century they were considered authoritative sources. Church historian Eusebius quotes Bishop Serapion's review of the Gospel of the Jews: "We were able to obtain this Gospel... and found that there is much in it that corresponds to the true teaching of the Savior, and some things have been added..." (Jesus Christ in Historical Documents... P. 295)

Some may object that the Gnostic texts do not contain a narrative section devoted to the conversations of the risen Savior with his disciples.\* These include the Gospel of Mary, the Dialogue of the Savior, the Pistis Sophia, the Apocalypse of James (first), and the Book of Thomas the Athlete. The Gospel of Philip, which has not survived to our time (as distinct from the treatise of the same name found in the Gnostic library at Nag Hammadi), probably also belongs to this genre; it is reported by Epiphanius in his Panarion (XXVI.13). However, as already mentioned, the TE logias refer to the conversations of Jesus sermon before the resurrection, not after it. And if any Gnostic had decided from these If we had compiled the "Resurrection Conversations" from the sayings, such a forgery would have been immediately exposed – Christians in the 2nd century already knew from the Synoptic Gospels in what context the logias were spoken. Moreover, the text itself does not fit into the genre of post-Resurrection conversations: there is no mention of

The afterlife, the logias are composed without a clear semantic sequence. In general, there are no indications in the text that the sayings were composed specifically after the Resurrection.

The 96th logia could be considered a statement of the resurrected Jesus: **"Seek and you will find, but those (things) which you asked me about in those days, I did not tell you then. Now I want to tell you, but you do not seek them."** However, Thomas does not specify the context in which this was said. According to the Synoptics, "seek and you will find" refers to the time before the crucifixion (Matt. 7:7, Luke 11:9), so there is no reason to attribute those logias to the period after the Resurrection. "Then" could be the main period of the sermon, and "now" - the last days before the arrest. It is noteworthy and the fact that in Mark, the second source of Matthew and Luke after Q, there is no commandment to look for. It is taken from an unknown set of logia, which again indicates an early date for the emergence of the Tm!

One of the main arguments that the Gospel of Thomas is Gnostic, and therefore of late origin, is the reference to the "secret words" mentioned in the prologue - a sign of a supposedly secret teaching. But, firstly, the logia are close to the canonical gospels, and it would be foolish to declare them secrets in the 2nd century, when all Christians were familiar with them. Secondly, as the later writers themselves admit, dating proponents, "The Gospel of Thomas rather refers to a conversation between Jesus and the crowd, and not just with individual disciples." (MK Trofimova, book "Apocrypha of the Old Christians", p. 232)

Notes:

**\*If the Church recognizes the Resurrection of Jesus and the fact that He was with the disciples for 40 days until the Assumption (Rev. 1:3), then why is almost nothing known about what the Lord said during that time?** After all, He returned from the other world and apparently the disciples asked Him: "What happened there?" And they heard the answer. Jesus, having demonstrated His Divinity, probably already spoke clearly, without parables, about the kingdom of God, the soul, life and death. **This information had become the main wealth of all Christians, but it is not there.** (Stories about the descent into Hell was created 2-3 centuries after the crucifixion and is mythological, a continuation of 1 Peter 3:19-20). Then the Church would have to admit that: either Jesus did not rise; or the apostle Luke is unreliable; or Christ was silent for 40 days or immediately rose; or the most important part of the Savior's revelations was lost.

If we accept the latter assumption, why did this happen? The revelations were transmitted orally and were lost... (Clement of Alexandria writes in Stroma about a secret oral tradition coming from the apostles, and that some of it has already been lost - "forgotten"). But what prevented written down and preserved, how were the canonical gospels preserved? They were not written down so that secret teachings would not fall into the hands of unprepared people. Then a new question: what is this?

Did you have to hide it?

That the accounts of the teachings of the risen Jesus were kept secret is evident from the NT gospels themselves. Their early manuscripts end either with the scene of the discovery of the empty tomb (Mark 16:8) or with brief fragments of the apostles' encounters with the Savior (the account of the ascension in Luke 24:50-54 is a late insertion). The authors report that Jesus was resurrected, and then the narrative ends, although it is clear that such a silence could be considered an indication of unreliability.

(Although, on the other hand, if the gospels are a forgery, why weren't they brought to happy ending of the resurrection?)

Furthermore, Luke, the author of Acts, writes to his addressee Theophilus that I have written to you the first book... about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up from the dead... (1:1-2) So Luke also described the teachings of the resurrected Jesus, which were given over a period of 40 days? (It is obvious that in order to resolve the contradiction between this statement and the text about the lack of a teaching on the Resurrection, an addition was added to Luke's Gospel, according to which Jesus rose on the same day he was resurrected!) If writing sermons was forbidden, then the apostles students began to write them down on their own initiative.

Recognizing the existence of a secret oral or written tradition, it can be assumed that it was gradually, over decades of transmission, mythologically distorted and ended up in irreconcilable contradictions with the canon. And the Church itself, having changed quite seriously over the course of a century, refused to recognize the distorted words of the risen Jesus.

For science, which in principle does not recognize the possibility of resurrection, the "40-day problem" simply does not exist. But for the Church, it was to become the central mystery of her history.

In my opinion, the "secret words" of the prologue refer to secret writings - a special kind of religious texts. genre that existed in Judaism before the revolt of 67-73. Religious teachers did not allow writing down his sermons, because there was already the Holy Scripture, to which nothing was needed and could not be added. However, the disciples wanted to preserve even in a short summary form the words of the teacher, which were invaluable to them, and they secretly wrote down from him. (A. Menis. History of Religion. Vol. II) By copying those secret notes of Thomas, his disciples and/or scribes wrote the prologue. In the translation from Aramaic into Greek and then into Coptic, the word "writings" was replaced by a similar meaning "words" (and in a modern translation the literal "words of the Lord" can be replaced with "conversations of Jesus"). If this assumption is correct, then the TE logia were written down during Jesus' earthly preaching!

The fact that Thomas could have taken notes without his teacher's permission is indirectly proven by the prologue to Luke's Gospel: "Since many have already begun to write down the stories of the events, which have come to us and have become known by those who from the beginning were witnesses and followers of the Word, I also, most excellent Theophilus, have decided to write to you, so that you may be certain of the things that have been declared. (Kuznetsova's translation in the book "Canonical Gospels". Moscow, 1993, p. 207) The Gospel author wrote his own work because others had already created their own narratives. This reasoning suggests that there was a prohibition against putting down teachings in writing.\* It is quite possible that this came from Jesus himself. This may explain why the texts of the canonical Gospels were not written until the second half of the first century, since everything could be written down "before the traces had become cold."

The prologue also shows that the gospels written in Luke's time are "narratives of events," meaning they already contain a narrative part. And since it is not in TE, the apostle's words only confirm that it was written before Luke and the other narratives.\*\*

Notes:

\* It cannot be said that Luke wrote the Gospel with the intention of refuting or clarifying texts that had already appeared – “many” of those authors wrote based on the words of the apostles, “people from the beginning.” Luke writes to strengthen Theophilus' faith.

\*\* It follows from Luke's words that even in his time (70-80 AD) many gospels were written. But if we accept the church tradition, according to which the Gospel of John is the most recent of the canonical ones, then it becomes clear that Luke applies the word "many" to the authors of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew (and which text came first: Matthew or Luke - is still a debatable issue, so it is possible that it applies only to Mark). The question then arises: if there were many authentic stories - from the words of the apostles - then why did the Church not preserve them? And if they were false, why The apostle and evangelist Luke didn't know about this?

It is clear that the many Gospel texts reflected different traditions of understanding Jesus' teachings. The traditions competed with each other, and when one won, calling itself the "correct" and orthodox one, the other versions of the Good News were destroyed.

It is possible that some parts of the scripture were originally intended for a narrow circle of the perfect. These apocryphal texts were recognized as not conforming to "evident" doctrine as early as the 2nd century and were declared heretical.

Supporters of the later dating hold that the expression "interpretation of the words" in the prologue clearly indicates a Gnostic, and therefore later, origin of the text. Yes, the condition for salvation in the TE is the words of the Lord the perception of spiritual meaning. However, gnosis – the knowledge of the mysteries of God and the transition from the “external” state of the neophyte to the rank of the “perfect” – was the main task of Christians already in the middle of the 1st century. Mark: “He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to those outside all things are given in parables.’” (4:11) John: “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (8:32) Paul: “Now we speak wisdom among the mature, but not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age (this aeon - AL), who are temporary, but we proclaim the wisdom of God, hidden (Greek "apocrypha" - AL) means "hidden"... (1 Cor. 2:6-7). Interestingly, one of the early Christian texts (composed at the beginning of the 2nd century, which has come down to us only in fragments), written by Bishop Papias, was called "The Words of the Lord interpretation". TE quote?

By shifting the date of the TE's appearance to the 2nd century, supporters of the later dating repeat the long-recognized as unjustifiable "canonical dogma": "The NT gospels were written first." All other texts of this genre are their derivatives (in the church interpretation - "heretical distortions"). Analysis of the TE text proves exactly the opposite: the logia are the source of many pericopes of the synoptic gospels (pericope in Greek means "cut", a narrative episode in the gospel).

For example, TE 36 is Jesus' response to the reproach that, according to His words, He had said the Jews. (See Luke 4:23-24. Surely you will say to Me this proverb, 'Physician, heal

himself...). In the TE this expression is given without context: "A physician does not heal those who know him." This response was removed from Luke, apparently to smooth over an apparent contradiction.

in the gospels, which describe the facts of regular healings. It seems that Jesus' remark "hung" without any counterarguments. After all, physician, heal yourself is quoted as a direct statement of Christ.

TE 37 is found in the Gospel of Matthew in its abbreviated form: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." (5:37) The Logia statement that the fall of a "fortified city" is impossible is not included in the Gospel, which was written after the capture of Jerusalem. Even in the later

proponents of the dating acknowledge that "the text of Thomas as a whole probably reflects an earlier version of the logy of Jesus." (IS Svencickaja. Secret Writings of Ancient Christians. Moscow, 1980, p. 165) It is impossible to abandon the "dogma" that Christ could not have preached gnostic ideas.

They try to justify the late dating by saying that the TE is placed in a Gnostic library among texts dating back to the second or even third centuries AD. However, the Nag Hammadi codices also contain an excerpt from Plato's "Republic". And if this philosopher were not known to science, his views would have been clearly influenced by Gnosticism and Neoplatonism, and the work would have been attributed to the first centuries of our era (along with the meaningless reservation that some part of the text is "dated" to earlier times).

Thus, in examining the text of the Gospel of Thomas, we have found that the prologue of Thomas actually contains a gnostic exhortation to understand the teaching of Christ and thus avoid spiritual death. However, there is no There is reason to believe that it (like the entire text) was composed in the 2nd century AD. All the characteristic Gnostic expressions used in it could be dated to the 1st century AD. The text contains many Gnostic ideas and terms, but this does not contradict the early dating of the TE: they are also widely used in early Christian texts (see below). The genre of the text itself, a collection of logia, suggests its early origin. Finally, it is very likely that the basis of the TE was written down during the preaching of Jesus himself.

To see signs of late creativity in TE's laconicism is to turn everything upside down.

Comparing the texts of the NT gospels with each other, as well as their earliest copies, it can be said that they were shortened simply by removing unacceptable expressions. The narrative part grew with each subsequent text, becoming more and more literary, filled with small details and embedded mythological plots. It can be said that the protocol turned into a novel.

And if the form of the stories about Jesus became more and more complex over time, the religious content, on the contrary, lost its mystical meaning. Attempts to find a compromise with existing religious views (in this case with Judaism) intensified, and the revolutionary nature of Jesus' sermon softened.\* And the most unpolished, raw text about Jesus that we have (apart from the fragmentary preserved Oxyrhynchus logia) is the Gospel of Thomas.

**The explanations of the modern Orthodox apologist A. Kuraev as to why the Gospel of Thomas should be considered a heretical text do not stand up to criticism.** According to him, the Church rejected the Gospel of Thomas "not so much because of what she said, as much because of what she kept silent about (among the many sayings that this "gospel"

attributed to Christ, only once was there room to speak about love not only for the Truth, but also for people). (Satanism for the intelligentsia. Vol. II. Christianity without occultism. Moscow, 1997, pp. 77-78) If the number of commandments of love for one's neighbor is the main criterion for canonicity, then the Church should also reject the Gospel of Mark: such a commandment is also given there only once, despite the fact that the Gospel of Mark is five times larger than the TE! By the way, the commandment to love neighbor in these trials sounds almost the same. TE: "Jesus said: Love your brother  
"Guard him as the apple of your eye." (30) Mk: Love your neighbor as yourself.  
(12:31) Furthermore, according to Mark, Jesus only gave this command in response to a question from a "Pharisee"—a Jew testing His religious credibility.

The sign of dogmatic inferiority indicated by Kuraev is also found in the Gospel of John: eleven times it speaks of knowledge and truth, but only three times of love, and not to people in general, but to the disciples. The commands are repeated almost verbatim—it seems to be one statement written in three versions (13:34-35; 15:12, 17).

The second rebuke of the deacon to Tm is as follows: "Christ, even when directly quoting Old Testament texts, does not mention the source of the apocrypha. And further in the note: "For example, in the apocryphal In the "Gospel of Thomas," verse 70 gives the parable of the wicked vineyards, very close to The only thing missing is Jesus' commentary, with a reference to the Old Testament. (Matthew 21:42)".\*\* (This thesis also applies to supporters of late dating: they say that there are no quotes from the OT - a negative attitude towards it, and the author is a dualistic gnostic - the text was created no earlier than the 2nd century). However, there are no explanations or references in the OT at all, it is just a collection of long statements, a shorthand of a long sermon. The author of the text is concerned with what the Savior said, and not with whether there are parallels with what was said in the OT (even if these parallels were emphasized by Jesus himself). A comparison of the OT with any of the canonical gospels shows that the person who wrote the logia left a lot of valuable information outside the text. Even if the author of the OT did not describe the suffering of Christ, this does not prove that he denied them! Such laconicism of the text only proves that this is a "semi-finished" OT, the initial form of the written tradition about Jesus.

The parable of the wicked vineyards, about which Kuraev wrote with reproaches in TE, was also analyzed by the German exegete I. Jeremiah. In his opinion, the basis of the parable belongs to Jesus, who, in a dispute with the ideologists of the Jewish community, consciously used an image familiar to his listeners from the book of Isaiah. (Quote from: SV Lezov. History and hermeneutics... P. 125) Accordingly, for Tm himself and for potential readers from the Jewish environment, there was no need to add an explanation-reference to the text.

Notes:

\* The Gospel of John stands out from this trend, which, according to church tradition, is considered the most recent canon. However, textual examination shows that John was composed at least before Matthew and Luke and is not dependent on Mark. (See below)

\*\* Often in the canonical gospels, Jesus' references to the OT appear as authorial explanations and scribe insertions. For example, in a direct conversation, Christ somehow explains:

"...as Daniel the prophet said..." (13:14), but then he quotes Isaiah and gives no further details. references. (13:24). And in the same speech of Jesus, the reader is allowed to understand! Where it is no longer possible to refer to the name of Jesus in the NT, the authors do it themselves. (For example, Mark 1:2; 15:28. Matt. 1:22-23; 2:15,17; 4:4; 8:17; 12:17-18; 13:35; 21:4-5; 26:56; 27:9.)

There is much evidence that the TE has parallels with early Christian texts (e.g. the Gospel to the Hebrews) and may have been used as a source in their creation. In Logia 1, 35, 81 - sayings of Jesus discovered in Egypt (Oxyrhynchus) at the end of the 19th century. The Stroma of Clement of Alexandria also quotes TE1, but refers to the Gospel of the Hebrews (Clement specifies that a similar idea is found in the traditions of the apostle Matthew).

The Stroma also contains a complete version of TE 37. Verse 57 from this apocryphal, forbidden source, was known to St. Augustine in the 6th century!\* Parallel passages from TE are found in the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:4, Galatians 3:28), Apostle Barnabas (IX 8.1XIIM). Clement of Rome Corinthians (in authentic and pseudo-). Also, in the second letter of pseudo-Clement (first half of the 2nd century) TE 27 is quoted as "The Lord himself said..." (closely related to Paul - Gal. 3:28). It quotes the logia of Thomas and Origen.

The use of Thomas's logia is also noticeable in the Gospel of the Infancy (previously, before the finds in Nag Hammadi, it was usually called the Gospel of Thomas). The author, who introduces himself as Thomas the Israelite, uses Mark (2 times), Luke (at least 4 times) and Acts (2 times) in his fantastic story. And in the same text, the TE is mentioned at least 4 times, of course, in a corrected form. This means that for the author of the Gospel of the Infancy, who lived in the 2nd century, this source was no less authoritative than the canonical Luke.

Comparative analysis of the New Testament gospels also supports the early dating of the TE. For example, the earliest Gospels of Mark and John do not contain the Beatitudes.

In the Gospel of Thomas they are scattered throughout the text as separate sayings, while in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew they are already collected in one sermon (6:20-22 and 5:3-11, respectively). TE provides a good explanation for why they are not in the Sermon on the Mount (Luke's Plain) of Mark and John.

The commandments were indeed spoken (Tm), but in a scattered form, and the authors of Mark and John omitted them because they had so much significant material from the Lord's words that they "could not (John 21:25) The commandments in the New Testament are presented as they were spoken—in separate utterances—and the writers of Matthew and Luke, using their pious imagination (or perhaps it happened before them—in the oral tradition), transformed the separate logia into a single narrative.

Thus two texts opposed to each other appeared. Matthew: "And seeing the crowds, he went up the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them..." (5, 1-2) (The author considers it necessary to inform that before speaking Jesus opened his mouth. A simple example of literary processing of the original: "Jesus said..."). Luke: "And he came down with them and stood on a level place. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said..." (6:17, 20) ("He went up, came down..." are fictitious details that have no religious value and are not in the TE).

There is absolutely no material in the TE that would somehow coincide with Luke and Matthew chapters 1 and 2. And as has already been shown, these invented, miraculous and contradictory fragments are later insertions.\*\*

Notes:

\* MK Trofimova, based on the analysis of this expression, claims that TE has a negative attitude imprint on the Old Testament tradition. The author was not alone in this. It is known that Marcion rejected the prophets. (Apocrypha of the Ancient Christians: p. 238). However, the logic is a paraphrase of the prophet Isaiah: will the dead be questioned about the living? (8:19) The meaning of the saying is obvious: when faced with an extraordinary religious phenomenon, one cannot be guided by others, a template of religious experience for people long dead.

\*\* The content of the second chapter of Luke has parallels even with ancient Egyptian mythology. When He was twelve years old, they came to Jerusalem. After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers [of the religious law - AL]. All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. (Luke 2:42-47) Cf.: When Osiris was 12 years old, no one in all of Memphis could compare with him in cult knowledge. (Shokhin V. Menamas Influences. // Alpha and Omega, 1997, 3, p. 304).

The denial of early TE dating is based on a common misconception among many NT scholars. concept: the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth were initially simple, quite traditional for Judaism of the 2nd century BC - 1st century AD ("messianic expectations", etc.). Then the original teaching was influenced by ancient religious-philosophical teachings, and borrowings complicated his concept, turning it into a special religion. Gnosticism is complex teaching, so it did not appear in Christianity immediately. This approach is based on the postulate that, supposedly, all religious, philosophical and scientific concepts develop from simple to complex. However, history shows opposite examples. So, the great astronomer Ptolemy, who lived in Egypt at the end of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd centuries, described the Earth as a round body located in a void. 400 years later, his compatriot Kozma Indicoplov presented the Earth as a flat disk and supported his error with quotations from the Old Testament. And if we knew nothing of the Ptolemaic system, we would consider the views of Cosmas to be the pinnacle of ancient astronomy.\*\*

Notes:

\* It is quite possible that Clement is deliberately silent here about the existence of secret texts. In a letter discovered in 1956, he quotes the Secret Gospel of Mark and claims that it is carefully preserved in the Church of Alexandria.

\*\* An even more striking example is the history of Marxism. Its very development demonstrates a process that similar to the worldview schemes of the Gnostics. After its emergence, Marxism became increasingly simplified, losing the complexity and ambiguity of its original concept. Its descending "eons" - Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao Zedong and finally Pol Pot. If Marxism had emerged 2000 years ago, only Plekhanov and

Mao's works, the conclusion would be clear: Plekhanov wrote later than Mao, because his ideas are more complex and filled with liberal-bourgeois inclusions.

The idea that Christianity borrowed Gnosticism from the Hellenistic religions of the East was and remains very popular. It was substantiated by the first heresiologists, who fiercely defended their understanding of the teachings of Christ as the only true one. For them, the Gnostics were just "repainted" pagans. And many scholars still agree with this thesis without much thought. However, a discrepancy arises.

The first Gnostic to be proclaimed by the detractors of heresies was Simon Magus (mid-1st century). But why then does the Apostle Paul actively use Gnostic ideas, the most evil of them?

ideas of an enemy of Christianity? Simon himself probably borrowed ideas from the Christian Gnosticism.\*

Notes:

\* In general, his activities are very similar to an attempt to proclaim himself the Messiah, following Jesus. Irenaeus also noted this, calling him the first antichrist. The implicit claim of Simon's statement to the role of Christ in the second coming confirms the vague message about it in Acts: we know that God. Apparently, the author of Acts chose not to ... He pretended to be some great man." (8:9) From other sources elaborate on the hopeful parallel between Christ and the first antichrist.

Interestingly, in Pseudo-Clementine, a 2nd century Judeo-Christian text (Judeo-Christians rejected Jesus the God-man, considered Him only the Messiah, and practiced the rites of the Old Testament), Simon Magus is depicted as a supporter of the Apostle Paul (AD Meshcherskaya. Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Moscow, 1997, p. 41). The Gnosticism of Paul and Simon Magus was equivalent in the eyes of their opponents. However, it was the faith of Gnostic "Paulinism," which severed ties with the spirit of Judaism, that led the early Church to the entire territory of the Roman Empire.

**The idea that Christianity borrowed Gnostic ideas is also unconvincing, since they are present in all mystical religious systems in general.** Mystics of various faiths describe in approximately the same way the multi-level structure of a different afterlife, the identity of the microcosm of the soul and the divine macrocosm, the left and "right" afterlife paths of the soul during trials, the achievement of mystical unity with the Absolute, etc. There are also smaller "coincidences". For example, amazing parallels with Gnostic texts are found in the ancient Mexican Indian epic "Popol Vuh". This can be explained either by borrowing (did the 1st century Gnostics sail to America?), or by independent testimonies of mystics of different religions about a single afterlife reality and a single path to the One.\*

Notes:

\*Third option: a forgery by the translator of the Popol Vuh. Then it is necessary to explain why the Jesuit Ximenez spread heretical ideas in the 18th century.

So, we have examined the known and possible arguments in favor of a late TE dating, and they have not proved convincing. Why then do many scholars and church leaders

persistently assign it to the 2nd century? One reason: the obvious proclamation of gnostic ideas in the Jesus Logias written by Thomas. And "this cannot be, because it can never be." **Many scholars are much more comfortable considering Jesus and the apostles as an ordinary Jewish sect, which for some reason so successful that it became a world religion. For theologians, Gnosticism is for the Church hostile heresy. At the same time, it is completely ignored that the earliest Christians The New Testament texts\* – the letters of the apostle Paul – are the most Gnostic.** (See Rom. 8:2, 29-30, 38-39; 12:2. 1 Cor. 1:5, 21, 24-27; 2:6-15; 6:3; 8:1-3; 15:19, 24, 34-55. 2 Cor. 3:6-10; 1:6-10; 5:1-9, 10:2, 13:11; Phil. 1:9-10; 3:8-21. Also the letters that the Church has recognized as Paul: Ephesians. 1:4-11, 17-23; 2:2, 10-19; 3:3-20; 4:1-16. Quantity. 1:6-9, 15-16, 19-20, 28; 2:1-3, 9-15, 20-23; 3:3-10.) Paul himself did not hear the "earthly" Jesus, but he drew material for his sermons from the earliest tradition and combined it with the other apostles. (Acts 15:1-26, 21:19-25) I am in no way inferior to the chief apostles; though I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not ignorant. (gnosis! AL) (2 Cor. 11:5-6)

The Gospel of John also speaks of Christian gnosis – the knowledge of truth. It is quite possible that, contrary to church tradition, it is one of the earliest texts in the canon.

For example, it, like the first of the Synoptic Gospels, Mark (the Gospel), does not contain any blessings and the prayer "Our Father"; the narrative is independent of Mark, Matthew and Luke. It contains lexical and phraseological similarities with the Qumran manuscripts - texts of the Essene community (2nd century BC - 73 AD, the community disappears after the suppression of the uprising against the Romans). Some scholars believe that this is the oldest gospel: so C. Tresmontan dates the Jewish original of John to the 30s of the 1st century. (A. Menis, Evangelijos. // Biblijos pasaulis. 1997, 1, p. 23)

Both Paul and John repeatedly encounter the classic image of Gnosticism: the archon of this aeon or cosmos ("the prince of this world," John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), "the spirit of this world," or even "god" (!) (1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4). This aeon is also mentioned in Mark.

4:19, Lk. 16:8. The aeon of Satan is also mentioned in the manuscript epilogue of Mark. Although this epilogue was not included in the canon, according to Svencickaja, one can "assume that the description was deleted from the canonical text quite early... and not consider this description to be a late insertion; the use of the word in this passage does not contradict the rest of the Gospel text." (Old Testament, vol.

Christian Apocrypha... P. 35-36) This epilogue, which was apparently written by the author of Mark himself, also says that Satan hinders gnosis, that is, the true Power of God.

"perception." A similar idea is found repeatedly in the writings of the apostle Paul.

The late TE dating is based on the same erroneous conclusions as the late 19th century dating of John.

Since the Gospel of John contains obvious Gnostic terms

(Pleroma, archon, gnosis), which means it was written in the second half of the 2nd century. However

Archaeological discoveries have shown that the Gospel of John was already widely distributed in Egypt by 125 AD.

Accordingly, its date of composition can be pushed back to at least the end of the 1st century.

Notes:

\*Also ignored is the fact that the Mandaeans (other sources mention the Nazarenes, to whom John the Baptist belonged!!! – translator's note), the worshipers of the sect of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, are also bearers of Gnostic teachings.

Interestingly, the idea of resurrection in the New Testament is understood in the same way as in the earliest canonical texts, the letters of Paul and John, which are different from the Synoptics. "He who believes in Him who sent Me will have eternal life and will not come into judgment, but will have passed from death to life." life...The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and when they hear, they will live. him, he will rise again." (John 5:24-25, also 5:28; 8:51; 12:44-45, etc.) Paul: "But now that you Having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, your fruit leads to holiness, and the end to eternal life." (Rom. 6:22; 5:9, 8, 2, etc.) Gospel of Thomas: "The disciples asked him, On what day will the kingdom come? (Jesus said): It will not come when you expect it. No one will say, "Look here!" or "Look there!" But the Kingdom of the Father is spreading on earth, and people do not see it." (117)

The late date of composition of the Gospel of John (compared to the Synoptic Gospels) is usually justified by the fact that the Synoptic Gospels reflect the inevitable expectation of the kingdom of God in glory.

John's text repeatedly states that the coming is already happening now. They say that the difference in time in the different gospels is due to disappointment: they waited (in the synoptics - 70-80 AD) and did not receive it. (John – 90 years old). (SV Lezov. History and Hermeneutics... P. 108) But it is immediately recognized, that Paul's letters, which say that God's truth has already been revealed, are the earliest, in the 50s. Paul, whose sermon is full of optimism, does not despair. How can this be explained?

The contradiction is resolved if we recognize that there were two levels of understanding of Christ's teaching: spiritual (a few apostles and their disciples - perfect Christians) and folk Jews.

The latter's supporters relied on the Old Testament tradition and expected a supernatural leader of Israel who would conquer the whole world and establish a millennial kingdom of abundance. They could not believe otherwise. The understanding of the elect: the kingdom of God is not food and drink, the day of the Lord is the exit from this aeon, salvation is liberation from the archons and an open meeting with God-Light, was based on the fundamentally new teaching of Christ: My kingdom is not of this world.

(John 18:36) In Christianity, two traditions were formed in the first years: those that remained within the framework of Judaism (James the Just and many believing Jews); and the chief apostles and their disciples, who separated from Jehovah's Witnesses. And in the synodal gospels, an attempt is made to find a compromise between them, to pour new wine into old wineskins.\* (If we believe Clement of Alexandria, Mark did not unite the traditions, but Mark wrote another secret gospel). Thus, among the synoptics, there is an expectation of the inevitable coming of the Messiah, as well as a radical change in the physical Universe (the sky will change),\*\* along with some gnostic ideas (e.g., Luke 17:20). And Orthodoxy became the embodiment of the compromise. If the perfect asked for true bread, give us, then now the earthly version works: daily bread...

Clement of Alexandria, a 2nd century theologian who lived around the same time as the first heresiologists (Justin, Irenaeus), testifies to a secret gnostic tradition that was preserved

In the Church, parallel to Christianity for the masses, he also spoke out against heresies.\* The true Clement highly valued Christian Gnosticism: "The souls of true Gnostics... are destined to live in the blessed abodes of the gods." (Yes!) (Stromata.7, III, 13, 1) However, he refuses to explain the secret doctrine: "And some things, even those that came to my mind, I deliberately

I missed it, fearing... to earn the reproach that... I give a sword to a baby". (Stromata. M., 1996, p. 37) The theologian of Alexandria testifies that the secret teaching was transmitted by Christ himself: "This highest knowledge, transmitted from generation to generation without any special intermediary writings were transmitted earlier than all to several apostles, and have reached us in turn". (Stromata. M., 1996, p. 251) It turns out that Christ transmitted a certain wisdom only to a few of the 11 apostles, and it was transmitted orally\* and secretly (apocryphal – AL). However, by the time of Clement, the main texts of the New Testament had already been written 100 years earlier! It follows from this that the "highest knowledge" of Christianity remained outside the canon...

Notes:

\* For example, Jesus was born in the city of Nazareth ( it has been proven that such a city did not exist at that time - the author of the text is mistaken, there could have been a settlement of the Nazarene sect, led by John the Baptist - translator's note), and not in Bethlehem, where, according to the prophet Micah, the leader of Israel was to be born. (Matthew 2:6) The Jews expected the Messiah only from Bethlehem: Can anything good come out of Nazareth (from the Nazarene sect - translator)? (John 1:46) In order to smooth out the contradiction with the Old Testament, the unknown authors of chapters 1 and 2 of Matthew and Luke provided their own versions, which contradict each other, explaining that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and lived only in Nazareth from childhood (maybe among the Nazarenes? - translator). (Matthew 2:1, 13-23 and Luke 2:1-6)

\*\* That Jesus, when describing the day of His Appearance, did not have in mind some global catastrophe, is clear from His words: Two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. (Luke 17:35) With the collapse of the physical universe, such selectivity is impossible. We are only talking about someone's personal death here. Advice: whoever is outside, just don't look back - it's pointless if you are here we understand the last day of the world. But if the Day of the Lord is considered the death of a person, it is a warning against attachment to worldly things, which can be harmful in times of trial.

The minor synoptic apocalypses about the second coming of the Messiah (Mark 13:2-30, Matthew 24:2-42, Luke 21:6-33) are copies of the same as the Sermon on the Mount. They are composed of Jesus prophecies (which came true!) about the bloody suppression of uprisings in Judea and the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, about false messiahs and the persecution of the first Christians. However the concept of the second coming as a global transformation, judgment on earth, and the resurrection of believers The homage, anew, reiterates the expectations of the Old Testament Anointed One, the conqueror of the nations. (See Isa. 68:4-14, Mic. 5:4-15, Zeph. 2:2-15, Zech. 14:1-21, etc.) After all, Jesus did not bring earthly prosperity to the children of Abraham, and the Jews who believed in Him transferred their hopes to the future, to the second, final coming of the Messiah. (Therefore, there was no place in the canon for Jesus' promise, which was fulfilled 40 years later. after the crucifixion: I will destroy this house (AL - temple) and there will be no one who can build it to restore (Tm 75)).

But the global catastrophe, which, based on the words of the Lord, the first Christians were so waiting for, did not happen and will not happen. **And every time it happens that the world is destroyed for the soul and it meets the Light and the judgment of its conscience takes place.** What was or will be in the dimension of time is always in the face of Eternity. Before the Absolute, in which there is no spatial separation, the death of each individual person is the only particle of the end of the world, the end of the perception of this aeon.

The images of legendary calamities from the OT that Jesus used in the parables of his day obscured the mystical meaning of his words from outsiders. If the kingdom of God does not come by a visible path, then the coming of the Logos has no spatial localization: do not go and do not chase.

Everything that the Savior left outside will remain mysterious: where there is a corpse, there the eagles will gather.

It was obviously guarded with extreme care, as heresiologists were unaware of it or remained silent. Clement writes about the Secret Gospel of Mark: ...It is still most strictly guarded... This testimony also corresponds to the words of the Apostle Paul that the secret wisdom of God is communicated only to the perfect. It is also obvious that there were serious reasons for keeping this teaching secret, since it was not included in the official dogmas of the Church.

That Gnosticism was present in Christianity from the very beginning is testified by Justin the Philosopher, the first Christian heresiologist (mid-2nd century). In a work directed against the Gnostic teaching of spiritual resurrection without bodily restoration, he writes: But the leader of evil, unable to distort this teaching (of bodily resurrection - AL) in any other way, sent his apostles, introducing evil and harmful teachings; choosing them from among those who crucified our Savior: they proclaimed the name of the Savior, but did the works of Him who sent them, and through them His name was blasphemed. (St. Justin. Works. Moscow, 1995, p. 483) It follows from this that the Gnostics, opponents of the resurrection of the body, were precisely Christians: through them His very name was blasphemed and they existed from the very beginning of the new religion: having chosen them from among those who had once crucified our Savior (a reference to the Apostle Paul, who was once an ardent enemy of Christians?)

Notes:

**Justin Martyr, according to modern scholars of Gnosticism, was the first apologist who... gave the status of a crime to individual differences of doctrine, and heresy turned into service to the devil.** (EV Afonasin) Moreover, Justin did not think that the epithet heretic would fully apply to himself, since Christ taught precisely about the incorporeal resurrection: for when he rises from the dead... they will be like angels in heaven. (Mark 12:25) Paul also taught about the spiritual resurrection: ... it will be raised spiritually. (1 Cor. 15:44) Bodily resurrection contradicts the very existence of the afterlife, since any biological system develops from conception to disintegration, and the physical body is inseparable from death. (See Tm 91) It is unclear why digestive and reproductive organs, etc., are needed in eternal life.

The idea of a bodily resurrection, again, comes from the messianic aspirations of Judaism (borrowed from Zoroastrianism): all the dead before the coming of the Messiah are asleep, and after His coming many of those who are asleep will be resurrected.

They will wake up in the dust of the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame...(Dan. 12:2)  
Orthodoxy combined the teachings of Jesus with Judaism and a compromise was reached: souls do not fall asleep, but go to heaven or hell, but the resurrection of the body will also occur after the Last Judgment. (What is meant by the double judgment: first a preliminary one after the trials and at the end of the last times, and where it is mentioned in the canonical gospels remains unexplained).

The idea of the restoration of the body contradicts the mystical teaching of the Savior, according to which the resurrection happens to a person from faith-knowledge of the true God while still alive: he who listens to My word... does not come into judgment (the judgment is already taking place! AL), but passes from death into life.

(John 5:24) **The spiritual degradation of Christianity, which occurred in the 2nd century after the cross-pollination of Jesus' teachings with Judaism, is recognized even by representatives of Orthodoxy themselves:** In general, it must be admitted that the general mood of the writers of the post-apostolic age has significantly departed from the mystical insights of the apostles, St. Paul and the Evangelist John. (Cyprian (Kern). The Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas. M., 1996, p. 87) **And what are mystical insights, if not gn**

**Thus, having refuted the arguments for late dating, we found evidence that TE – expressions  
The collection without the narrative part was created no later than the middle of the 1st  
century (earlier than Mark and John). We have also shown that the gnostic ideas contained in it are  
precisely in the first texts of the new religion. Thus, the early dating of the TE proves  
the gnostic nature of Jesus' original teaching, which had not yet been edited to bring it closer  
to the Old Testament tradition. Conversely, the NT early Christian  
The gnosticism of the texts is another argument for the authenticity of the TE.**

The almost literal coincidence of the TE logias with the logias and agraphas of other early Christian texts and their frequent citation indicate that the text had great religious authority in the 1st and 2nd centuries. However, the archaic form of the TE already pushed it outside the canon at the end of the 2nd century, because then a unified standard for stories about the Savior was formed - the gospel genre.

The narrative part, especially the Passion, became obligatory. The TE also contradicted the Gospels (especially the Synoptics) in spirit, since it was created as a hasty record, and not as an exposition of the foundations of the new religion to outsiders. The rejected text probably remained for a long time in closed Christian communities: monasteries and Gnostic groups.\*\*

And Christian hermits, having safely hidden the Gnostic texts under some heretical writings purifications, somehow preserved for us the text with the unedited sayings of Jesus.

### **Do such manuscripts disappear?**

Notes:

\* In his treatise "Stromata" Clement polemicizes against heretical deviations from Christian Gnosticism. They understood the literal word allegorically, and the allegorical - too literally. However, Clement himself recognizes and attributes to true gnosis, for example, the teaching about the Ogdoad - the eight aeons of God and the transmigration of souls (reincarnation was described by Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 5:6-10).

\*\* These books were hidden not by those who wanted to get rid of them as heretical writings, but by those for whom they undoubtedly had a sacred authority. They were collected only when the necessity arose to remove these books from use. (A. L. Khosroev. From Early Christianity Histories. M. 1997, pp. 102-103). The Gnostic library, which contained the TE, was hidden in a cave located just 5-8 kilometers from the first Orthodox monasteries founded by St. Pachomius.

**The covers of the codices were made from the letters of monks, which proves that the Gnostic library belonged to the first ascetic monks. The burial of the texts corresponds to the campaign to destroy heretical writings. In 367, a letter from Patriarch Athanasius of Alexandria, directed against the apocryphal books, was specially translated into Coptic.**

**To the monks of the Pachomian monasteries.** (AL Khosroev. Alexandrian Christianity. M., 1991, pp. 5-6)