

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Some Writings about Jesus Are Not Gospels

January 8 is marked as the Sunday after Theophany. Over the past few weeks the Church has celebrated that momentous event as well as the Lord's Nativity.

What is known about the years between those two events, the time during which Jesus was growing up and preparing for His three-year ministry? The second chapter of the Gospel of Luke gives us a bit of insight, in the description of the twelve-year-old Jesus answering the questions of the elders in the Temple. After this, He returns to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and is obedient to them (2:46-51).

Luke's words show that Jesus had the wisdom of His Father, and used it properly, to enlighten His people. The words also reveal His willingness to take on humanity completely, which included living in submission to two human parents. Beyond this, there is little if any information in the four Gospels about Jesus as a child or a young man growing into adulthood.

But other books claim to tell us far more than the New Testament Gospels we read in church. These books describe a young Jesus showing his power by turning clay birds into real birds. When he doesn't like the way other children are acting, he curses them and turns them permanently into corpses, and then blinds their parents.

Because the accounts in these books are so different from the early Church's experience of Jesus Christ, they were not accepted as part of the Gospel canon, meaning the group of books the Church regarded as truthful descriptions of God's plan and saving work. Documents that would become part of the New

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Mary Fechisin, Andrew Fabian, Edward Fedush, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

Testament had already been written just a few decades after Jesus' death and resurrection, some of them eyewitness accounts. These authentic descriptions formed the basis of the Church's teachings about the risen Lord. The great second-century saint Justin Martyr referred to the canonical Gospels as the "reminiscences" of the apostles.

Saint Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all." The early Church, as Paul's words show, was unified in its core beliefs about God, and therefore was quite able to distinguish those writings that did not reflect those beliefs. That is why books like those that depicted Jesus as a vengeful child did not make it into the canon of Scripture.

Bible scholar Ben Witherington writes about this in his book "The Gospel Code: Novel Claims about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Da Vinci." Witherington's book is an excellent answer to fiction like "The Da Vinci Code" and other books that pretend to tell the hidden truth about the formation of the Bible. He explains how it really was formed, and happened, and enables the reader to determine which of the many writings about Jesus are fiction, and which are true Gospels.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to our President of the Board of Trustees **Robert Czech**, who celebrates his birthday today; to **Helen Rahnefeld**, this Wednesday, and **Joseph Pecoraro**, this Friday. May God grant each of you good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

◆ **Holy Water** that was blessed on the Feast of the Theophany is available for the faithful to take home. After the Divine Liturgy today the font with Holy Water will be moved to its usual place at the back of the Church.

◆ This coming **Saturday, January 14, 2017 at 2:00pm** in our church there will be a **Healing service** to the Mother of God in front of her icon "Queen of All". This service is open for everyone and is for the healing from any disease (this icon is especially known for the healings that occurred of those who suffered with cancer).

◆ The next **meeting of the Board of Trustees** will be held next Sunday, January 15, following coffee hour.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able.

While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.



January 8, 2017

Sunday After the Theophany

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Eph. 4:7-13 (Sun. After)
Gospel: Mt. 4:12-17 (Sun. After)
- **Panikhida** in memory of **Joseph Korin**, on the 40th Day of his repose, offered by Kathryn Korin & family.
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

2:00pm - Akathist / Healing service to the Mother of God "Queen of All", followed by general confession

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

9:00am - Divine Liturgy