

Chapter 1 : Jesus and scribal authority (Book,) [racedaydvl.com]

The synagogue on the Sabbath is scribal turf, where they exercise the authority to teach Torah. This "spirit" personifies scribal power, which holds sway over the hearts and minds of the people. Only after breaking the influence of this spirit is Jesus free to begin his compassionate ministry to the masses (ff).

Tucker Ferda Chris Keith. *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict*. His thesis is this: First, and as Keith himself notes, many critics have supposed that the controversy narratives, in whole or in part, are creations of the early church that reflect later debates with non-Christian Jewish communities. In this he makes a convincing case. Keith begins with this general impression and seeks to discover what kind of history could give rise to such testimony. This indeed appears to be a better approach than that of those who engage the topic atomistically. Each chapter constitutes a sequential step in the larger argument, which can be summarized here briefly. Chapter 5 observes that, in general, the conflicts between Jesus and Jewish leaders in the Gospels center on two things: He proposes that Jesus taught in synagogues which raised questions about his authority to teach, and then led to public debates over matters of law observance and biblical interpretation that intended to expose Jesus to public shame. It should go without saying that, for a study with such potential value to the field, criticism is an act of gratitude. The first is this. That is a slightly different angle than the thesis of Chapter 1 presents to the reader. His claim is a bolder one: Do the primary sources to which Keith refers reconstruct such criteria for proper synagogue roles? Sirach 38 mostly concerns issues of judging or ruling in a legal context e. We simply do not know enough to be sure, and so should reserve judgment. A second query is exegetical in nature. Keith claims that the Gospels evidence a disagreement among Christians over whether or not Jesus was a scribal-literate teacher. But some of his readings are questionable. This is unlikely, or at least overstated. Moreover, everywhere else in Mark the people celebrate the fact that Jesus taught not as the scribes 1: In the Capernaum synagogue scene and elsewhere, a traditional reading which Keith aims to supplement with this work, not contradict seems preferable: And finally, a question about method. But this reviewer was surprised to find that Keith does not treat all his sources the same way in this book. The very structure of the study makes the point: Should not these historiographical considerations apply equally as well to Philo, Josephus, or any other historical source presented in Chapter 1? Of course, many more pages could be filled with praises about this book and its importance for the field. In any case, every serious Jesus scholar should read this book and take into account its arguments. It will no doubt shape future discussion. Thanks to Professor Keith for another valuable contribution.

Chapter 2 : Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict by Chris Keith

*Jesus and scribal authority (Coniectanea biblica) [Stephen Westerholm] on racedaydvl.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

I believe the clue is "but I say this.. Eleazar lived a long time after Jesus. Analysis of word Usage: There were authorities chosen by Moses and empowered by God to judge in matters of the law and judgements of God Exodus Note especially they were to be trained in the statutes and laws as well as the way they must walk and do. Notice also, the character of these men chosen to judge v And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says this in regard to the magistrates: In early Hebrew history, the magisterial office was limited to the hereditary chiefs, but Moses made the judicial office elective. In his time the "heads of families" were 59 in number, and these, together with the 12 princes of the tribes, composed the Sanhedrin or Council of Some of the scribes were entrusted with the business of keeping the genealogies and in this capacity were also regarded as magistrates. And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days, and inquire of them; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the Lord chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously. The passage in question indicates, that the religious leaders in question did not appropriate their authority in their teaching. In fact, we find from other accounts that they instead, taught from their own traditions, making the laws of God of no affect Matthew This they did, not just in one regard, but in many Mark 7: They actually abused their office using it to elevate themselves. This was clearly contrary to Torah, as seen above, and for this Jesus reprovved them! Matthew 23 ; Luke In stark contrast, Jesus has authority from the Father, "All authority has been given me on heaven and on earth" Matthew Jesus appropriated the authority given Him; He taught with it, preached with it, healed with it, drove out demons with it John He also recognized that Jesus was under authority because he said, "I too am a man under authority. The religious rulers did not speak with authority because they were not subjecting themselves to God--they were not putting themselves under God in their judgements.

Chapter 3 : Keith, Chris | Jewish-Christian Intersections

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The alert reader of the gospel will find it useful to take these into account when putting together a profile of Jesus, such as we are attempting in these studies. In the present study we are proposing that the author was a major voice in the noble but ill-fated movement which we are calling Christian Judaism, or Jewish Christianity if one prefers. In the earliest days of the church, all followers of Jesus were Jewish, including the apostles and other leaders, and it was in Jerusalem that the largest and most influential congregation resided. By the ninth decade of the first century, when Matthew was written, things had changed: The apostles likely were dead; Jerusalem, the stronghold of Christian Judaism, lay in ruins, at the conclusion of the Jewish-Roman war of C. Beyond these threats to the viability of Christian Judaism were two other trends: The persistent and sometimes dramatic growth and spread of gentile Christianity formal recognition of which was given at the Jerusalem Conference , at the beginning of the sixth decade , so that Christian Judaism was becoming a minority; and The unhappy breach developing between Christian Jews and the Jewish synagogue. Regarding this separation, we know all too little. Ultimately Christian Jews would be obliged to choose Jesus or Judaism. We cannot date the end of Christian Judaism, but the author of Matthew was writing in its twilight years. We may note that the Jewishness of Matthew is representative of a Hellenistic rather than a Palestinian Judaism, especially in that the author favors the Septuagint , or the translation of the Jewish Bible into Greek. There are several revealing instances of this point of view: Though Matthew incorporates material from Mark wholesale into his gospel, he also makes judicious omissions to suit his editorial purposes. In the discussion of clean and unclean in Mark 7: Matthew also omits the argument in Mark 2: Good Jews might find offensive a view which seemed to relativize the sabbath and diminish its ultimacy. It appears that Matthew took a bit of Q tradition Matthew 5: Click on Matthew 5: Only Matthew explicitly acknowledges the authority not only of written Torah but of the oral traditions, handed down in scribal circles, which elaborated and applied the texts: Apparently without complete consistency, Matthew does take this material over from Mark, in Matthew The five discourses in Matthew are 5 “ 7; 10; At the same time, we need to recognize that it is possible to oversimplify the point: To be sure, Mark and Luke are also interested in showing the fulfillment of scripture, but the introduction of proof texts in Matthew is more frequent and seems more contrived. In his zeal for prophetic fulfillment, to make his strongest case for Jesus as the Messiah of the Jewish scriptures, he goes so far as to accommodate details of the narrative to the prophecy, as in having Jesus enter Jerusalem upon the donkey and a colt Matthew Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. We may also note that in 4:

Chapter 4 : A review of Jesus against the Scribal Elite, by Chris Keith

In stark contrast, Jesus has authority from the Father, "All authority has been given me on heaven and on earth" (Matthew). Jesus appropriated the authority given Him; He taught with it, preached with it, healed with it, drove out demons with it (John).

In that book, I argue that Jesus was most likely not from the scribal-elite class and thus did not receive a scribal-literate education. Kershner Lectures in New Testament, and I decided to pursue the topic further in the context of those lectures. Those lectures formed the basis of Jesus against the Scribal Elite, where I take my prior arguments to the controversy narratives and ask what historical and exegetical implications might result from the idea of a historical Jesus whose status as a teacher was under question during his ministry. It focuses specifically on the question of how and why conflict first emerged between Jesus and authoritative Jewish teachers. Although not dismissing these important insights, this book argues that one must go further, since Jesus was not the only person regarded as a miracle-worker or exorcist in Second Temple Judaism, and he was most definitely not the only teacher who took a non-Pharisaic approach to the law. That is, the problem was not necessarily what he taught or how he taught it but whether, from the perspective of the authoritative teachers, he had the right to be teaching at all. This overall argument emerges from several more specific arguments. As part of this argument, I detail that the first-century Gospels in the New Testament attest a debate among early Christians over this issue. Mark and Matthew place Jesus outside the scribal-literate class in the manual-labor class Mark 6: Luke, on the other hand, places Jesus directly in the scribal-literate class, attributing to him the scribal-literate skill of public reading in synagogue Luke 4: Luke removes the claim that Jesus was a manual laborer Luke 4: I argue that this complex of events led the true authorities to engage Jesus publicly in order to expose him as an imposter to the position of scribal-literate teacher, and so emerged the initial stages of conflict. The only problem is that if Jesus ever managed to turn the tables on them and was perceived as the winner of a debate with them, it made their problem worse, because it gave some members of the audience further reason to consider Jesus an authority in his own right. Note, however, that my point is only that some members of the audience would have thought this. The farmer, illiterate and not versed in the intricacies of scribal authority, could have believed that Jesus must have been one of the teachers himself because he seemed to hold his own. The scribe, fully aware of the intricacies of scribal authority and culture, could have believed that Jesus was doing the best with his limited abilities but clearly was not an educated authority himself. Of course, in the Gospels Jesus pitches a shutout and wins every single argument. Indeed, if it is the case that Jesus himself was not a scribal-literate teacher but occasionally was perceived as one, we should expect that the true authorities would have challenged Jesus on precisely these issues. Of course, the conflict between Jesus and other teachers quickly spiraled beyond these issues and became more complex. The contribution of this book, however, is to establish that these were important issues at the very beginning of the conflict. For more information on Jesus against the Scribal Elite, [click here](#).

Jesus And Scribal Authority Coniectanea Biblica Document for Jesus And Scribal Authority Coniectanea Biblica is available in various format such as PDF, DOC and ePUB which you can directly.

First, Jesus was not a scribal-literate teacher, but some of his contemporaries believed he was. Second, these split perceptions led to conflict between Jesus and the scribal elites. Jesus provided compelling interpretations of scripture, but the elites assumed that only highly literate persons were qualified to offer such teaching. When the scribal elites sought to expose Jesus as a pretender who lacked the credentials to read and interpret the Law, Jesus fought back and occasionally won the struggle for public esteem. He explains that public teachers were expected to possess scribal competence, a rare quality in the ancient world. Contrary to widespread assumption, ordinary Jews did not acquire literacy through synagogue education. In a brilliant survey of the synoptic Gospels, Keith demonstrates a progression: Then Keith gets to the heart of the matter. Jesus spoke in public, particularly interpreting scripture in synagogues and challenging the interpretations of his opponents. Therefore some observers naturally assumed he was literate. His conflict with various scribal groups tended to revolve around his authority to interpret scripture—particularly because he lacked the ability to read the relevant texts. He is more interested in tracing the most fundamental motive for their resistance to him. But readers will wonder: How did Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, priests, and others relate to one another, and how did each group relate to Jesus? Did all these groups enjoy elite status? The Gospel narratives provide two different impressions regarding the controversies between Jesus and other authorities. On the other hand, in Jerusalem Jesus debated a wide variety of opponents. But Keith investigates neither the identities of these opponents nor their motives for resisting him. To his credit, Keith understands that conflicts over the authority to teach probably do not explain why scribal elites sought his death. Oddly, he does not mention the possibility that Jesus directly antagonized the Jerusalem authorities, who would have had very different reasons for opposing Jesus than did the Pharisees. I would love to see Keith take on that question in a future project. What did Jesus do to get himself killed?

Chapter 6 : Authority: in teaching | friarmusings

"The Contested Authority of Jesus" by, Chris Keith. Jesus against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict really came about as a result of my monograph Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee (T&T Clark).

His book, *Jesus Against the Scribal Elite: The Origins of the Conflict*, is the final volume in a trilogy of works devoted to examining a series of interrelated questions including 1 whether Jesus could read and write, 2 perceptions about those abilities by his contemporaries, 3 the relationship between Jesus and Jewish religious teachers, and 4 the implications these discussions have for our understanding of the various ways in which Jesus was remembered and passed on by earliest tradents. Keith claims that Jesus was not a scribal literate teacher though the way he taught often gave outsiders the impression that he was. He further suggests that the controversy between Jesus and the religious elite, rather than being a literary fiction, is rooted in a historical conflict, a fact that is often overlooked by scholars. Two major considerations that must be taken into account are the different levels of literacy that existed in the ancient world and the disagreement—“even within the NT”—about whether or not Jesus was a learned teacher. What are we to make of this disagreement among the evangelists? Despite this disparate presentation in the NT, Keith insists that all four gospels root the conflict between Jesus and the religious elite in the related contexts of Scripture and authority. To problematize Chalcedon is thus to overemphasize the humanity of Jesus at the expense of his divinity or vice versa. To be sure, many moderns regularly problematize Chalcedon unknowingly. Much like early Christians with a Docetic Christology, 6 many Western Christians, including those who regularly confess the ecumenical creeds, quite naturally conceive of an exalted Jesus without giving serious thought to his humdrum human existence. The glaringly obvious question is, if Jesus was not able to read the Scriptures—the interpretation of which lies at the heart of his controversies with the religious authorities—then how could he have had any authority as a teacher? Nearly a century of Jesus research has proceeded under the assumption that the criteria of authenticity can get us back to a historical window through which we can view a more-or-less reliable picture of the past. Such conceptions do not regard the end result of the historical task as a subjective reconstruction but rather an objective representation. In response to or perhaps reaction against 10 using the criteria of authenticity to isolate a seemingly pristine version of the historical Jesus, Keith, along with several other recent scholars, has helped to pioneer the social memory approach within historical Jesus studies. According to this model, memories about Jesus were socially constructed, narrativized, and passed on, and these constructions, rather than the Jesus-qua-Jesus, are what we can access today. While there has been enthusiastic support for this approach from some corners of the academic world, there has also been a more negative response ranging from strong critique to outright rejection. Perhaps it is neither charitable nor fruitful for me to express the matter in this way, but who doubts that our egos are inextricably bound up in what we research and write about? In making this point I am not absolving Chris Keith or myself for that matter of the desire to carve out an academic legacy, which is at least one reason why we must all balance our reverence or distaste for old arguments with our perennial desire to say something new. For some non-specialist readers this book will be about nothing more than why Jesus was unable to read and write—something many simply cannot abide. About eighteen years ago when I was beginning my graduate studies, I worked on a construction crew with a man of devout Catholic faith. He was aware of my area of study and engaged me on the topic of Jesus; in particular, he wanted to know what language Jesus spoke. His was a trick question, so he was unhappy with the content of my answer but thrilled with the opportunity he now had to correct and instruct me. He went on to inform me that Jesus was divine, and that as such he knew all languages of all time, including those that had yet to develop during his life on the earth. While Aramaic would have been his preferred language insofar as this would have allowed him to speak to his contemporaries, we should not attempt to place limitations on Jesus the divine Lord. As awkward and off-putting as this encounter was for me at the time, it ended up being a powerfully enlightening experience insofar as it reflected a pervasive attitude about Jesus that presently exists among Western Christians. For those who approach discussions about Jesus with either an inability or an unwillingness to conceive of Jesus as a real person, the assertion that he

was unable to read and write will be disconcerting indeed. From my own personal conversations with Chris Keith over the past few years, I know that he has had far too many objections to his work from individuals with this mindset, believing his to be a deeply troublesome portrait of Jesus. It does not surprise me that educated and privileged Christians living in the Western world cannot tolerate the concept of an illiterate Jesus. Much of the reaction against this idea is tied up in a matrix of issues that includes the judgment that educated people are inherently more valuable to society and to the world at large. Here it is also important to note that educated elite men have determined the formal development of Christian theology for two millennia. How can these servants of Christ be deemed more learned than the one they serve? Interestingly though, I have witnessed a similar reaction to this thesis among people from a very different demographic. I currently live in North Carolina, where the public education system consistently ranks among the worst, least effective, and most underfunded in the United States. Further, I live in the eastern part of the state where there is a church on every corner and because agriculture is the dominant industry, a large portion of the population does not pursue formal education after high school. To state the matter more bluntly: However, neither of these responses actually engages with the substantive issues raised here. This book is a call to reenvision our understanding of Jesus and, in particular, the certainty that has attended our reflections about him, whether scholarly or devotional. Perhaps the most notable project to make use of the criteria is John P. Rethinking the Historical Jesus, 5 vols. Not only are there no longer Jesus traditions that reflect solely the actual past, there never were. In other words, there is no memory, no preserved past, and no access to it, without interpretation. Whereas response is often more nuanced, reaction has a tendency to overcompensate, often in an attempt to say something new. Memory, Typology, and the Son of David Waco: Baylor University Press, ; idem, Historical Jesus: See also the book edited by Keith and Le Donne, which takes aim directly at the criteria of authenticity: Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity London: Mohr Siebeck,], This is a quest for the pure genre; the authentic genre; the real genre. As such, this amounts to little more than the criterion of authenticity in drag. Formgeschichte in a New Dress? A Response to Christopher Skinner Christopher Skinner is one of the most insightful and productive Gospels scholars around, so it is a pleasure to dialogue with him about Jesus against the Scribal Elite. With the exception of a quibble over the criterion of embarrassment, Skinner is complimentary of the book and focuses more upon its reception among academic and church culture alike. I would probably stop short of jettisoning criteria altogether and take a more nuanced stance, especially since I am not completely convinced that embarrassmentâ€”if not the criterion, certainly the ideaâ€”is completely devoid of value. Recognizing that this is indeed a minor quibble between Skinner and me, I have three brief responses. First, I must defend myself and state that my jettisoning of the criteria of authenticity is also a nuanced stance. I raise this point because, in offering a reply to my arguments in the form of stating basically that I have gone too far, some critics again, not Skinner have not appreciated or represented the nuance with which I have forwarded those arguments. Second, and in basic agreement with Skinner, I have never denied the usefulness of the concept of embarrassment. My concern is not with the notion that early Christians could have been embarrassed about things and that this embarrassment could help scholars conceptualize the historical Jesus. Of course they occasionally were embarrassed. To state the previous point more bluntly, just because a given early Christian 1 could have been embarrassed about something but 2 left it in his account of Jesus, does not necessarily mean that it really happened. In some cases, a given tradition can suggest this course of events and thus the criterion of embarrassment can have a veneer of helpfulness. It is thus likely that Jesus really was crucified and early Christians simply dealt with it as best they could. But scholars cannot afford to allow examples like this to lead us to assume that early Christians responded monolithically to a potentially embarrassing past and necessarily had their hands forced by the historicity of that past. My point, simply, is that early Christian embarrassment is one, and only one, factor for which scholarly assessments for the historical Jesus must account. Even after noting the potential for early Christian embarrassment in a given presentation of Jesus, the scholar always has work left to do, in the form of narrating a plausible historical scenario, before connecting that presentation with the historical Jesus. Skinner, I think, agrees. Along these lines, one particular response that has intrigued me, which I mentioned already, is the charge that I have gone to an extreme by stating that the criteria of authenticity are broken

beyond repair. Although perhaps I should be, I am not too concerned with this critique. Of course, in principle it is possible that I am wrong and have gone too far. I have made mistakes before; I am certain that I will make them again. At the same time, whenever one person charges another person with operating at an extreme, it is simultaneously a move to place him- or herself at the center. It is not as if I am unaware of the rhetorical nature of such language or the way in which it privileges safe conclusions that recycle received knowledge. If others want to continue to use the criteria approach, that is their business. I am certain that the field will still learn much from such scholars. The criticism from the church that Skinner notes has been more personal, and I wish to be careful with my language here. On the one hand, no one who writes about Jesus should be under the illusion that he or she will escape criticism, whether that criticism comes from the high-brows of the academy, the pew-sitters of the church, or the keyboard warriors of the internet. They may not like what you have to say because you are wrong. They may not like what you have to say because you are right. But rest assured—someone somewhere will not like it for some reason or another. That is the nature of the discussion. On the other hand, Skinner is correct that there are some, particularly within the ecclesial contexts, and even more particularly ecclesial contexts of the first world, who respond viscerally and unjustifiably to the idea of an illiterate Jesus. I once watched a dinner to which my family was invited with other families devolve into *Lord of the Flies* when the host mentioned that I was writing a book about Jesus being illiterate. The book had not yet even been published. The problematizing of Chalcedon is part of it. The ethnocentrism of modern Western Christianity, wherein the vast majority of Christians are literate, is another part of it. I had to explain that I was not claiming that Jesus was stupid so many times that it became tragically comical. Anyone with any familiarity with the non-industrialized world knows that literacy and intelligence are not always tied together, but that does not stop many others from reading their socio-historical contexts onto Jesus. It seems that historical Jesus scholars are not the only ones who stare down the well of history in search of Jesus and see themselves looking back. Mohr Siebeck, n.

Chapter 7 : Project MUSE - Jesus, the Essenes, and Christian Origins

Given the Jewishness of Matthew, and his evident recognition of scribal authority (), we may naturally feel some surprise at the exceptionally sharp attack upon the Pharisees in that same chapter (). This anti-pharisaism is present already in the Q material of this chapter, but Matthew seems to go out of his way to sharpen these.

Our passage this morning is all about authority. And in Jesus day, religious authority was important. The Pharisees asked Jesus what his authority was for the things he was saying. What right did an unordained carpenter have to make a nuisance of himself. Message of Matthew p. In this way, the religious authorities could negate his message and ultimately much more easily have him executed without the fear of an uprising from the people. So Jesus follows a great Rabbinic tradition of answering the question by asking a question in return. If they said his authority was simply human they feared a backlash from the people and loss in popular support from the people who recognised John as having divine authority to be a prophet. But the question Jesus asked the Pharisees was no only a Catch 22 question for them But Jesus reply went further. Only once the Pharisees recognised where the authority that John had come from- can they hope to understand who Jesus is. Michael Green put it like this: Jesus is emphasising the eschatological dimension of his cleansing of the Temple. In other words John was the Elijah figure predicted by Malachi about years earlier who was to precede the coming of the Messiah sent from God. In other words to precede Jesus, the Messiah. And that aspect would not have been lost on the Pharisees and rulers of the people. And today the question that Jesus was asked is still relevant. Where does Jesus authority come from? Jesus is described as the Word of God in Scripture and the Bible is referred to as the Word of God That being the case, we -as Christians - have to ask ourselves the same question about the authority of the Bible. Is it simply a human book or is it divinely inspired 1. If it is ONLY a human book, we can pick and choose what we want to accept and work out in our lives. If the Bible has divine authority, then we have to listen to it, however painful its teaching is to us. And in the end if we are committed Christians we need to work out how to obey what Jesus and authors like Peter and Paul teach us. Even when it goes against the natural grain. Because if we believe that Jesus and those to whom he delegated authority, have divine AUTHORITY to exercise their gifts, then we need to listen carefully to what they tell us as recorded in the Scriptures. And in this way we can avoid being led astray by false teaching. If not the Bible simply becomes "Just another book".

Chapter 8 : Jesus and scribal authority. (Book,) [racedaydvl.com]

This is to say that conflict arose between Jesus and the scribal elite because of "how various groups within Second Temple Judaism would have perceived Jesus, a scribal-illiterate carpenter, upon his occasionally occupying the position of a scribal-literate authority" ().

The Origins of the Conflict. But Jesus was not scribal-literate according to Keith , and this raised questions about his ability and authority to teach in synagogue. What do you think of, when you think of a scribe? My image of a scribe is the one at the beginning of this post: He is gentle and long-suffering. And when I first read the New Testament as an adult , one of my first thoughts was, what is it that Jesus has against Bob Cratchit? Both Mark and Matthew have Jesus predict that it will be the scribes, along with the chief priests and elders, who will cause Jesus to undergo great suffering, and who will condemn Jesus to death. As it turns out, this is a surprisingly difficult question. In similar fashion, a scribe in ancient Israel might be a poorly educated man scratching out a meager living in a Galilean backwater, writing marriage contracts and personal correspondence for villagers. A better trained scribe might find employment in a bigger city or even Jerusalem, preparing tax records, military musters, government annals and even literary works for the educated elite. A few scribes might end up as close advisors to a king or high priest, or even in a position of direct and exalted authority. But being a scribe in ancient Israel must have meant more than it did elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Anthony Le Donne described this importance in the chapter he contributed to the book co-edited by Keith Jesus Among Friends and Enemies. Memory, Imagination, and History: Although G-d created a good world, evil spirits have filled it with wickedness, so that it is in disarray and full of injustice. A day is coming, however, when G-d will repair the broken creation and restore scattered Israel. Before that time, the struggle between good and evil will come to a climax, and a period of great tribulation and unmatched woe will descend upon the world. After that period, G-d will, perhaps through one or more messianic figures, reward the just and requite the unjust, both living and dead, and then establish divine rule forever. Today, Christians and I suspect, many Jews think about the Kingdom of G-d in terms of heaven and the afterlife: But what is characteristic of first century Jewish apocalypticism is the belief that the Kingdom of G-d is coming here, to planet Earth, more specifically to Israel, and that its coming establishment is imminent. Helen Bond describes some of these changes in her terrific book *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed*: Jesus encouraged his followers to renounce material or cultural attachments, presumably to focus on the repentance and radical love required for the impending kingdom of G-d. The rich were to discard their wealth Mark The poor, meek, and ostracized were to be blessed, since the hierarchies of the reigning order soon would be stood on endâ€”the last would be first, and the first last Matthew 5: Take particular note of what Garroway says about the first being last. Presumably, a reversal of fortune, followed by a lot of weeping and gnashing of teeth. From this understanding of Jewish apocalypticism, I think we can finally understand what Jesus had against the scribes. Jesus would have looked at their elite status, and pegged them as in league with the evil forces temporarily in control of the world. Or perhaps in the Kingdom, all people would enjoy the leisure to study, and would learn to read and write. Perhaps the Kingdom would be a Kingdom where all would be scribal-literate! At this point, I hope that at least some of you are raising objections. Did Jesus imagine a Kingdom free of scribes, or a Kingdom where all would be scribes? Those are two very different outcomes. Which one did Jesus say was coming? Indeed, did Jesus say anything, at any time, about the fate of scribes and literacy in the Kingdom of G-d? We cannot say for sure that Jesus had scribes or literacy in mind when he proclaimed the coming Kingdom of G-d. The answer to this question may seem self-evident to Christians who have grown up with the Gospel stories. But Keith has already undermined this commonplace answer: Jesus could and did teach nearly everywhere else â€” one did not need to be literate to teach on a mount, or a plain, or even at the Temple in Jerusalem. My guess is, Jesus chose to teach in synagogue in order to directly challenge the authority of the scribes. My guess is that from the first moments of his ministry, Jesus selected the scribes as a target for attack. Because doing so was logically mandated by his apocalyptic program. By teaching in synagogue in place of an elite scribe, Jesus was giving his fellow Jews a sneak peak

of what the Kingdom of G-d would be like: Common folk will teach there instead. But for me, this idea helped me process what Keith had to say. Indeed, why should they have been troubled? This is in the nature of power relationships: I would love it if Keith picked up a suggestion made by historian Gerd Theissen in a book edited by his friend Anthony Le Donne: Jesus is not at all an exotic Jew but in many regards the representative of lay-piety. Along with the Temple, large portions of the Jewish elite in particular, the Sadducees disappeared from the scene. The Rabbis that eventually became the new leaders of the Jewish world instituted a system of mandatory public education for all Jewish boys, making the Jews the most literate people in the Middle Ages.

Chapter 9 : Saucy: Miracles and Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

Addresses whether or not Jesus was "literate" with sophisticated nuance examining degrees of literacy in the ancient world and the role of perspective in how Jesus came to be remembered both as scribal literate and scribal illiterate in strands of traditions that are rooted in his own lifetime.

The Origins of the Conflict. How would you recognize a scribal-literate authority in antiquity if you saw one? And what does this status have to do with Jesus and his conflicts with authorities—such as the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and priests? Keith is glad we asked. The book is divided into six chapters. The first chapter situates his topic by discussing the two broad types of teachers one would expect to find in antiquity, namely, the scribal-elite and everyone else p. With these categories in mind, the second chapter presents the dilemma. Therefore, who was right and who was wrong? Before providing his answer, Keith takes a step back in chapter 3 to deal with the most technical portion of the book. He briefly introduces or reorients the reader to a few prominent ways in which scholars have approached historical Jesus research in order to resolve these types of contradictions. Some have used the form-critical approach, while others have used the criteria approach. Turning back to the main topic, Keith sets out to apply his methodology or memory approach to the Gospels in chapter 4. There he argues that Jesus was not a scribal-literate teacher even though he was able to deceive some audiences by plac- ing himself in the position of a scribal-literate teacher p. As a result of the fact that Jesus taught—“not merely what or how he taught—“the authorities attacked both his interpretation of Scripture and projected position of authority, which chapter 5 outlines. Part of the irony in all this as Keith sees it is that these disputes often worked in the opposite direction from what the authorities intended, since some audiences sided with Jesus. Some may also find it refreshing that Keith is not among the scholars who start with the assumption that nothing in the NT reflects the historical Jesus. For example, he supports the historicity of these conflicts p. His work will also likely place a few unnoticed or underappreciated topics on the radar of more students and schol- ars. Johns Hopkins University Press,] —“ At the same time, there are numerous, and I think serious, problems with this monograph, both at the macro- and micro-levels. Due to space limitations here, however, I will only be able to note one macro-level issue that I felt prevented the academic discussion from moving forward in a more productive way. Elliott, and Craig Blomberg, to name a few. Only one of these scholars receives even a single men- tion in this work: Yet even then it is only a one-sentence footnote dismissal: Without interaction, justification, or counter-evidence, Keith simply sets aside an opposing view. At best, Keith assumes his readers will know all the background conversations and context regarding his comment. At worst, he offers and models for students—“his primary audience, p. Granted, these same scholars also note some positive features regard- ing his previous publications, and I certainly do not want to take away from any of those here. My primary point, however, is that there ought to have been some level of response in this work to their critiques, since they almost all carried over and remained applicable. Scribal Culture and the Teacher from Galilee [London: This is surprising because so much has been written since then that either confronts im- portant details of his work or would have provided the necessary qualifications many areas lacked. In sum, Keith seems at his best when he is reviewing select portions of the history of investigation. His insights into social history are at times penetrating and acute. It is hard, therefore, for me to heartily recommend this book to the audience for whom it was written. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift fur die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft There has been an apologetic resurgence of late in the defense of purgatory and indulgences. Yale University Press, Does Matthew have an atonement model? If so, how specific is it? Jesus will save his people from their sins 1: After laying out a narrative-critical method that also attends to the historical landscape in which the text was produced, chapter 1 surveys a handful of late OT, Second Temple, and rabbinic texts that shed light on first-century understandings of sin as debt and the counterbalance of righteous deeds stored in a heavenly treas- READ PAPER.