

Who do you say that I am?

A Lecture Study of N.T Wright's Book, Jesus and the Victory
of God

Jesus Career in Outline

- Born around 4 BC, he grew up in Galilee, in the town of Nazareth
- Language: Aramaic, some Hebrew, probably some Greek
- He Became a Public Figure around AD 28
- Like John the Baptist
- Preached a Message
- Message:
 - A Call to Repent
 - An announcement of the Kingdom
 - The Reign of Israel's God
- He worked around the villages of Galilee: announcing and healing.
- He socialized with a socio-culturally wide group of people

Jesus Career in Outline (Cont.)

- Twelve Disciples (among others)
- His activities (i.e. temple cleansing) angered some elements of the Judaism (notably the high priestly establishment)
- Handed over to the Romans, he was executed in the manner regularly used for insurrectionists.
- His followers claimed that he had been raised from the dead.
- They carried on his work; some were persecuted for doing this.

Jesus Context

- Undercurrents of Revolution
- Israel's Story
- What would a *prophet* be doing in such a setting?

Prophetic voices of the time

- Clerical prophets (official: priestly and royal office)
- Wisdom prophets (Sectarian: i.e. Essenes, Pharisees)
- Popular Prophets
 - Leadership Prophets (like Moses and Joshua)
 - Oracular Prophets (like the classical Hebrew prophets)

Controlling Story

- Meta-Narrative – A Master- or Grand Story which provides a comprehensive explanation of historical experience or knowledge.
- According to John Stephens it "is a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience". *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture* (1998).

Israel's Hope

- Israel's God, YHWH, would act as King of the World
- Rescue Israel from Exile
- Defeat her Enemies (Romans)
- Forgive her sins
- Reconstitute and restore her

Bandits, Peasants and Revolt

- “Any opposition to the governing forces that did not require major military operation to put it down was *banditry*.” JVG p. 155
- ‘Robin Hood’ vs. ‘Sheriff of Nottingham’



What is a bandit but
an emperor on the
make...



... what was an
emperor but a bandit
on the throne?

Banditry

- Widespread in Jesus day
- Some (but not all) were supported by some (but not all) of the peasants.
- The line between banditry and revolution is blurry and easy to cross
- Serious revolution was more likely to take place in Judea, but not impossible in Galilee
- The relationship between banditry and other popular movements was likely to be fluid.



The Romans, and Jewish authorities, took banditry seriously as a force to be reckoned with



John the Baptist

- An Oracular Prophet
- Woe Oracles of Judgment
- Political and Religious
- Leadership Prophet
- Renewal Movement aimed at replacing the “Jewish King” Herod Antipas



Luke 3:3, 7-9

3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins... 7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Mark 6:17-18

¹⁷ For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. ¹⁸ For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."



Jesus and John the Baptist

- John represents a powerful mix of a popular oracular prophet and a leadership prophet
- John prophesied of a coming figure which would complete the work he had begun. (though in prison he is later puzzled by what Jesus is doing. See Mt. 11:2-6/ Lk. 7:18-23)
- Jesus points back to John as a forerunner of his own ministry. See Mt. 11:7-19 / Lk. 7:24-35

Jesus as 'Oracular' and 'Leadership' Prophet

Was Jesus seen as “the Prophet” of Deuteronomy 18:18-19?

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

Jesus as 'Oracular' and 'Leadership' Prophet

- Jesus as “a prophet” in a line of prophets

Mt. 16:13, 14

Who do people say that the Son of Man is?

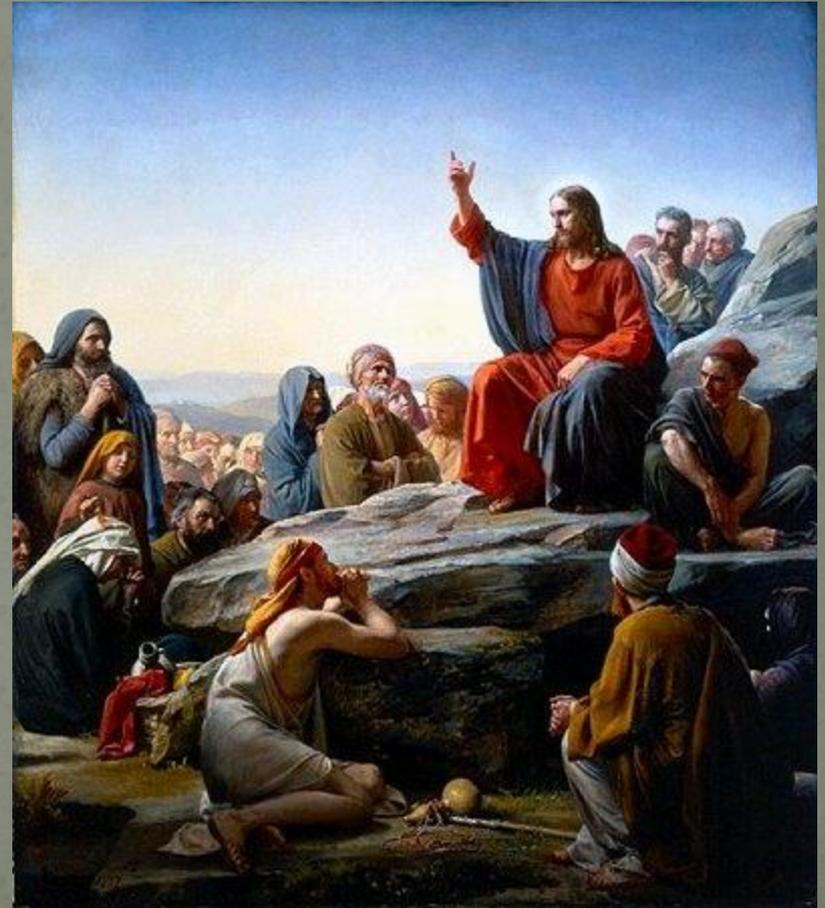
They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Jesus as 'Oracular' and 'Leadership' Prophet

- Jesus as “a prophet” in a line of prophets
- Continuity and Climax of the prophets
- Lonely Figure

A Prophet Mighty in Word and Deed

- Jesus as a 'Leadership' Prophet
- An Itinerant Prophet
- Mighty in Word
- Mighty in Deed



Mighty in Word

- Authority and the Kingdom

“What is this? A new teaching with authority!” (Mk. 1:27)

- Parables

- Within Jewish Prophetic Tradition

- Subversive stories

- Secretly explosive (planting seeds)

- Example: The Parable of the Tenants Mt 21:33-46 (cf. Is. 5:1-7)

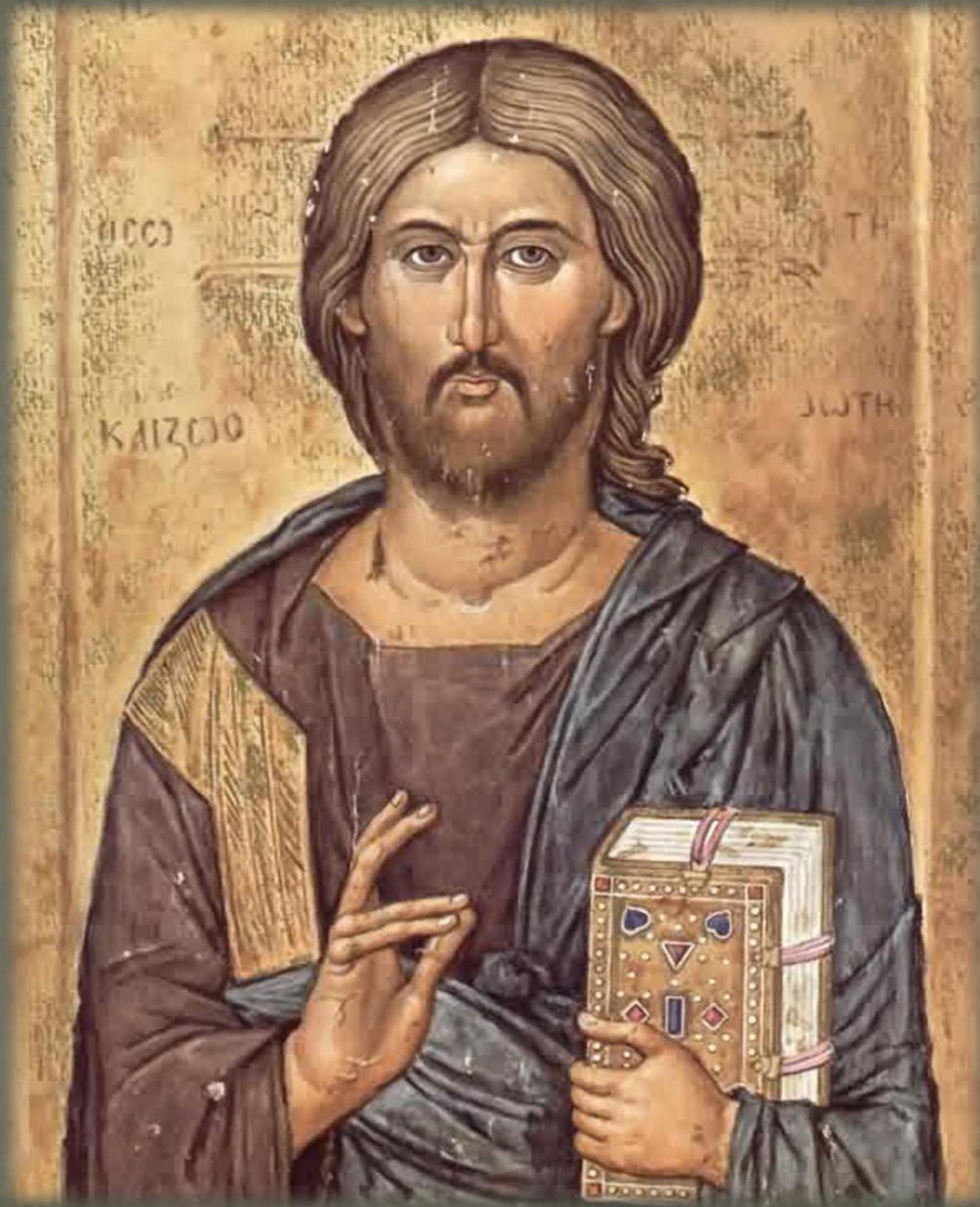
Mighty in Word

- Authority and the Kingdom
- Oracles of Judgment
 - Warning: YHWH's imminent judgment unless repentance
 - End of a long line of prophets

Mighty in Deed

- Older Issues
- 'Mighty Works' Interpretation
 - Example Mk. 5:1-20





Jesus

*More than a
Prophet?*