

***AUGUSTINE and the JEWS***

*Rhetoric*: the study of how to have an argument over how to interpret a text.

*Cosmology*: geo-centric universe. The higher up in the heavens, the better materially, metaphysically, and morally

*Ancient monotheism*: one supreme god; any number of lower, ethnic gods

**Greco-Roman Binary Opposites**

Spirit/Matter or Flesh  
Soul or mind/Body  
Intelligible/Sensible  
One/Many  
Allegory/Narrative  
Eternity/Time

**“Christian” Binaries**

Gospel/Law  
Grace/Works  
Baptism/Circumcision  
Spiritual/Carnal  
Gentile/Jew

**Chronology**

c. 300 BCE	Alexander the Great’s conquests; <i>paideia</i> (Gk cultural education) exported.
c. 200 BCE	Jews in Alexandria complete translation of scriptures into Greek (Septuagint, or LXX)
50 CE	letters of Paul. esp. important for later tradition: <b>Galatians</b> and <b>Romans</b> .
70	<b>Roman destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple</b>
80-100?	Gospels composed
132-35	<b>Bar Kochba revolt; Jewish Jerusalem disappears beneath Aelia Capitolina</b>
c. 130	<b>Valentinus</b> , a premier Christian theologian. (“Gnostics”)
c. 140	<b>Marcion</b> , another premier theologian. (Invents a “new testament”)
c. 150	<b>Justin Martyr</b> , <i>Dialogue with Trypho the Jew</i> . LXX is <u>Christian</u> scripture.
c. 208	<b>Tertullian</b> <i>c. Marcionem</i> . Jews teach their poison to heretics.
c. 290	<b>Mani’s</b> new revelation of Christianity travels from Persia West.
386	<b>Faustus the Manichee</b> writes <i>Capitula</i> : Catholics are ‘really’ Jews.
398	<b>Augustine</b> responds with <i>c. Faustum</i>

**Points of Agreement**

- \* High God is not the creator god; of necessity it is a lower god (logos, demiurge) who creates.
- \* Jews and “heretics” read in a “fleshy” way
- \* Truest meaning of text available only through allegory/ spiritual reading.
- \* Judaism a bad religion, Jews are bad people: understand the Bible in a “fleshy” way (food laws, circumcision, resting on the Sabbath, & c.)
- \* blood sacrifices intrinsically idolatrous, “fleshy,” pagan, and bound up with bad religion.

**Point of Disagreement**

- \* Valentinus, Marcion, Mani, Faustus: OT a “fleshy” text. Christ only seemed to have human flesh; Jews and catholics read in a fleshy way.
- \* Justin, Tertullian, Augustine: OT “spiritual” when read correctly. Christ incarnate; Jews and heretics read in a fleshy way.

**Faustus**

- \* OT god carnal, morally impaired, ignorant.
- \* NT gospels written by “obscure half-Jews” (33.3)
- \* Paul’s letters corrupted by Judaizers.
- \* Jews, pagans and catholics all form one community; only Manichees are apart.
- \* Jewish law foolish and disgusting; whole purpose of Christ’s coming was to overthrow the Law. Catholics agree with this, though they hypocritically insist that OT is Christian scripture.

**Augustine**

- \* God chose Israel, gave his Law to be enacted in the flesh, Israel received it: all good.
- \* Jewish practice of Judaism – Sabbath, purifications, food laws, and most especially circumcision and blood sacrifices: all good, and according to divine will.
- \* Jesus kept the Law scrupulously, even when dead (*c. Faust.* 16.29)
- \* His apostles, both before and after resurrection, kept Jewish law, as did Paul, always.
- \* Law and Gospel two different phases of a single divine initiative of redemption.
- \* God and the Jews, and thus the church and the Jews, maintain an abiding relationship: BIBLE

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Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: UC Press)

Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press)