

As I indicated in the previous post, there are two versions of the death of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament. These versions have some striking similarities, but at the end of the day, I think they cannot really be reconciled with one another. After the New Testament period, there were legends about Judas's death that continued to be invented and circulated. I discuss one of them in my college-level textbook on the New Testament, in a side-bar that I meant to be a kind of humorous human interest story. Here is what I say there:

When trying to determine which stories in the Gospels are historically accurate, we need to look not only at the Gospels of the New Testament, but at all the surviving ancient narratives that discuss Jesus' life. In many instances, however, the accounts are quite obviously legendary, written for the entertainment, edification, or even instruction of their readers. One occurs in a fourth- or fifth-century document known as the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (also called the *Acts of Pilate*). In one of the most interesting manuscripts of this *Gospel* we find a tale about what happened to Judas Iscariot after he betrayed Jesus. Filled with remorse for what he has done, Judas returns home to find some rope with which to hang himself. When he comes into the kitchen he finds his wife roasting a chicken on a spit over a charcoal fire. To her horror, he announces his plan to commit suicide. She asks why he would want to do such a thing, and he indicates that it is because he has betrayed the Lord to his death, but that Jesus will surely rise from the dead, and then he, Judas, will be in *real* trouble. His wife assures him: Jesus cannot rise from the dead any more than this chicken on the spit can come back to life.

But as soon as she utters these words, the dead chicken rises up, spreads its wings, and crows three times. A terrified Judas runs out to grab some rope and end his life.

This passage from the manuscript of the Gospel of Nicodemus is obviously...

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