Here is yet another guest post by Stephen Carlson on the intriguing but puzzling quotations from Papias, the elusive second century church father who wrote a five-volume book called “Exposition of the Sayings of the Lord.” What was this book, and does it give us any information from outside the Gospels – from an extremely early source – about the sayings of Jesus?

In this post Stephen addresses one of the most, well, unusual passages known to be from Papias’s work. As you’ll see, in this account Jesus thought that in the millennial kingdom yet to come, the wine will be flowing....

I have broken the post into two because of its length. Part 2 will come next.

Stephen Carlson is the author of The Gospel Hoax and The Text of Galatians and Its History.

The Fertility Tradition in Papias

In our last post, we looked at the preface of Papias’s Exposition of Dominical Oracles, and noticed that it mentions two kinds of content in the work. One kind of content is characterized by the term “interpretations,” which Eusebius does not further explain. Since this term semantically overlaps the title of his work, however, it suggests these interpretations are explanations or expositions of the “dominical oracles.” The other kind of content in Papias’s work are oral traditions, which he claims to have carefully committed and kept in memory, most of which are attributed to two fairly obscure figures, Aristion and the elder John. In this post, we will look at the most substantial fragment from Papias’s work and explore how it corresponds to the these two types of content.

This fragment is earliest named citation of Papias to have survived, and it was preserved by the late second-century Biblical theologian Irenaeus of Lyons. This bishop wrote ...

I’m afraid you won’t be able to see what Papias says about the massive fertility of the earth (and the wine!) without being a member of the blog. So why not join? It won’t cost much, and all proceeds go to charity!