



Magic in Christianity: From Jesus to the Gnostics

Robert Conner

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The world of Jesus and the early Christians swarmed with prophets and exorcists, holy men and healers, who invoked angels and demons, gods and ghosts. *Magic in Christianity: From Jesus to the Gnostics* explores that world through the surviving texts of the first Christians and their pagan and Jewish contemporaries. Ecstatic spirit possession, handing opponents over to Satan, sending demons into swine, striking others dead on the spot by pronouncing curses, using articles of clothing and parts of corpses to perform magical healing and exorcism, invoking ghosts and angels for protection-these are all ancient Christian practices described in the New Testament, explained in detail by early Christian writers, and preserved by Christian amulets. Pagans and Jews accused Jesus and his followers of practicing magic and Christians accused one another of sorcery. Both pagan and early orthodox writers describe the rituals of the Gnostic sects in detail, including the magical passwords required to cross through the gates of the lower heavens. *Magic in Christianity: From Jesus to the Gnostics* examines evidence from the New Testament, the first Christian apologists, early apocryphal works, curse tablets and amulets to reconstruct the apocalyptic magical world of Jesus and the first Christians.

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