

Christianity before Jesus?

As with point two above, there is little or no debate among serious scholars that what we now call “Christianity” has so heavily plagiarized from prior existing Christ and risen sun-god myths as to be virtually indistinguishable from many of them. Of course, first of all there is simply Judaism, which had long talked about and predicted a soon-to-arrive “Christ.” Ironically, according to them, he still hasn’t come. The documentation of this claim is the subject of literally hundreds of books. A small number of these books are quoted in this paper. Just to present a quick summation, I would like to quote a well-recognized scholar of the early 20th century. “The Pagans had their holy days (from which the Christians plagiarized their Christmas, Easter, Rogation Days, etc.); their monks, nuns, religious processions carrying images of idols, incense, holy water, holy oil, chants, hymns, liturgies, confessions of sins to priests, revelations by gods to priests, prophecies, sacred writings of ‘holy bibles,’ Pontiffs, Holy Fathers, holy crafty priesthoods. All these sacrosanct things of Christian ‘Revealed Religion,’ were age-old pre-Christian Pagan myths and superstitions.” (Forgery in Christianity, by Joseph Wheless, p. 17 and 18) All of this is not even “controversial” among knowledgeable secular biblical scholars.

I will quote one more source, a small pamphlet published by The Freedom From Religion Foundation which “zeroes in” on the mythical antecedents of the Jesus Christ figure. The pamphlet—really, a tract—is entitled, “Cookie Cutter Christs.” The sun-god Mithra, who was very popular in the Roman Empire around 2000 years ago was “born of a virgin about 600 BC, was celebrated on December 25. Magi brought gifts to his birth. His first worshipers were shepherds and he was followed in his travels by twelve companions. Mithra was slain upon a cross in Persia to make atonement for humankind and take away the sins of the world. His ascension to heaven was celebrated at the spring equinox (Easter).” Additionally, the pamphlet continues, “Mithra celebrated a ‘Last Supper’ with his 12 disciples. The Mythraists observed weekly sabbath days and celebrated the Eucharist by eating wafers marked with a cross.” Does any of this sound familiar?

The same pamphlet notes that, “Attis was born of a virgin mother named Nana, in Phrygia sometime before 200 BC. He was hanged on a tree, died, rose again, and was called ‘Father God’.” “Horus was born of the virgin Isis in Egypt around 1550 BC. Horus as an infant received gifts from three kings, and was crucified on a cross. There are about 200 close parallels of the careers of Horus and Jesus Christ.” “Adonis (Tammuz) was born of a virgin mother called Ishtar (Easter), depicted like the Virgin Mary with her divine child in her arms. Adonis was regarded as both the son and husband of his mother Ishtar, as God the Father and God the Son.” We could go on and on. Any of the above named books will give the interested reader much more information about ancient gods along this same line. The mythology doesn’t change much, just the name of the current sun-god de jure.

Indeed, the parallels in the cult of Mithraism—perhaps Christianity’s major contemporary and most competitive religion of the first century CE—most especially, are so striking that I have often reflected that had Emperor Constantine not mandated that Christianity be the Empire’s only religion in 325 CE, and had that decree not been brutally enforced by the “firebrand and the sword” for the next 1,700 years by the Catholic Church, then we might see steepled little Mithraic Churches dotting the landscape throughout Europe and the United States especially. As part of this same fantasy, I have often wondered if there would now be heated debates as to whether or not the now recognized as mythic Mithra was somehow based on a historic, real flesh-and-blood, human being named Mithra. If the Catholic Mithraist myth enforcers had been equally as successful as have been the Catholic Jesus myth enforcers, I suppose the answer of the masses—and even of some atheists—throughout most of the world would clearly be, “Yes, most likely there was a historic Mithra.” Incredible! What a brainwashing we have all been subjected to!

Most well informed Christian apologists—even back to the early “Church Fathers”—admit that the above parallels are true. Their standard response is that just because there are all of these parallels doesn’t necessarily prove that Jesus wasn’t a real human figure who may have been just doing his best to “fulfill” all the ancient prophecies, and to “fit in” to the familiar legends about him. This counter-point can’t be denied. I only ask the reader which of the two possible explanations seems the most likely?