

The gospels are entirely fictional, pure myths.

Many large tomes have been entirely devoted to supporting the point that great sections, if not all, of the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, are simply a retelling of fabulous tales based on older Jewish, Roman, Greek, Persian, and even more ancient Egyptian stories. Substantiating this point does not advance this paper's major thesis, except as it applies to the only supposed biblical "evidence" in support of a historic Jesus—that is, that testimony provided by the four gospels. For those readers who might be interested in the spurious origins of not only the gospels, but also the entire bible, the names of several entire books devoted to this subject can be found in the bibliography of this paper.

It is interesting to me that a great many freethinkers and rationalists—people who might be reading this article—are very quick to agree that pretty much the entire bible is chock full of misinformation, forgeries, bad history and just plain lies. Not only that, but most rationalists are quite willing to accept the proposition that this mish-mash of prevarication was not simply a naive passing along of old legends, but were written for the express purpose of convincing (i.e. "converting") the gullible reader into subscribing to the particular fanciful dogma the ancient writers were trying to peddle. However, for some reason or another that entirely escapes me—perhaps just early brainwashing imbedded as deeply as potty training—these same rationalists are reluctant to imagine that the four gospels are completely fictional. Surely, they say, there must have been some sort of demythologized, even perhaps anonymous nobody who was arrested, tried by Roman authorities, then crucified. We can't be sure of any more details than that, they say. I simply ask, why must this be so? What more tangible evidence can anyone present that the whole story is not simply what it appears to be—a retelling of one or more of the dozens, perhaps hundreds, of ancient sun-god or sky-god's traditional, descending then ascending god myths, generally consisting of elements such as of first some tribulations (a trial), conviction, crucifixion, and finally resurrection? One could go on for several paragraphs pointing out the many details of the "passion story" that have parallels not only in more ancient myths, but also in earlier Jewish writings including the Old Testament. See, for example, Zechariah 9: 9, which foreshadows Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem on an ass; actually "on an ass and the foal of an ass"—a neat trick, eh?), and the foreshadowing of the whole "passion story" in Psalms 22, the virgin birth in Isaiah 7: 14, his birth in Bethlehem in Micah 5: 2. All of this has been well noted for centuries. Why in the world would any rational person imagine that any of these fables were in any sense true?

It is interesting to speculate on the source material for the first written gospel, the Gospel according to Mark. Perhaps Mark—probably a well educated Greek-speaking member of the Jewish Diaspora—had read the works of "Philo Judaeus, the Jewish philosopher-theologian of Alexandria in Egypt." (A speculation of Alvar Ellegard, *Jesus One Hundred Years Before Christ*, p. 5) Or, perhaps he had heard the stories of the so-called "Teacher of Righteousness" of the Essenes who may have lived (mythological or real—who knows?) sometime in the first century BCE. (Ellegard, *op. cit.*, p. 258). Maybe Mark wrote in the second century as scholar Ellegard holds, and had read Flavius Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius*, whose life almost exactly paralleled the life of the mythical Jesus and who reportedly died in 98 CE. (See Randel Helms, *Gospel Fictions*, p. 9) Surely, he had read of the so-called "Suffering Servant of the Lord" described in Isaiah 52: 13 - 53: 12. (See Doherty's *The Jesus Puzzle*, p. 80). Certainly Mark, and later the other gospel writers, had no shortage of inspiration. What they didn't have is anyone who was in any sense "real."

It is important to remain focused on the primary reason why these gospels were written, or perhaps "compiled" would be a better word. They were written for the express purpose of convincing the uneducated and gullible masses that they no longer needed to believe in a sort of mystical, unseen, spiritual Christ—a somewhat difficult concept for the unsophisticated to grasp even though it was familiar to them as I will discuss later. Here, in the gospels, the new Jesus cult offers a "real", flesh and blood incarnation of god to believe in. (In truth, there was a terrific argument early on between the Gnostic Christians and the main line, later to become the Catholic Christians as to this "flesh and blood" issue.) This savior figure spoke real words (i.e. the Sermon on the Mount, etc.), ate food, performed miracles, visited real places, and spoke to "multitudes." He was truly crucified, not allegorically crucified in a heavenly realm. Remember "doubting Thomas"? He wanted to stick his fingers into Jesus' wounds, just to be sure. (John 20: 26-27) I thought that was a "nice touch" for the last gospel fiction writer to add; don't you? For those of you that might still be unconvinced of the absolute untrustworthiness of the gospels in particular, I offer just one more powerful quotation for your consideration:

"Nearly every thing written concerning the gospels to the year 325, and all the copies of the gospels themselves to the same period, are lost or destroyed. The truth is that very few early Christian texts exist because the autographs, or originals, were destroyed after the Council of Nicea and the "retouching" of 506 CE under Emperor Anastasius, which included "revision" of the Church fathers' works—catastrophic acts that would be inconceivable if these 'documents' were truly the precious testaments of the very Apostles themselves regarding the 'Lord and Savior,' whose alleged advent was so significant that it sparked profound fanaticism and endless wars. Repeating what would seem to be utter blasphemy, in

the 11th and 12th centuries the 'infallible Word of God' was 'corrected' again by a variety of church officials. In addition to these major 'revisions' have been many others, including copying and translation mistakes and deliberate mutilation and obfuscation of meaning." (Acharya S, The Christ Conspiracy, p. 26). Still think the gospels are about real events? If so, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd like to talk to you about.