

The Origins of Christianity and the Quest for the Historical Jesus Christ

By Acharya S/D.M. Murdock

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Introduction

Around the world over the centuries, much has been written about religion, its meaning, its relevance and contribution to humanity. In the West particularly, sizable tomes have been composed speculating upon the nature and historical background of one of the main characters of Western religions, Jesus Christ. Many have tried to dig into the precious few clues as to Jesus's identity and come up with a biographical sketch that either bolsters faith or reveals a more human side of this godman to which we can all relate. Obviously, considering the time and energy spent on them, the subjects of Christianity and its legendary founder are very important to the Western mind and culture, and increasingly to the rest of the world as well.

The Controversy

Despite all of this literature continuously being cranked out and the significance of the issue, in the public at large there remains a serious lack of formal and broad education regarding religion and mythology, and most individuals are highly uninformed in this area. Concerning the issue of Christianity, for example, the majority of people are taught in most schools and churches that Jesus Christ was an actual historical figure and that the only controversy regarding him is that some people accept him as the Son of God and the Messiah, while others do not. However, whereas this is the raging debate most evident in this field today, it is not the most important. Shocking as it may seem to the general populace, ***the most enduring and profound controversy in this subject is whether or not a person named Jesus Christ ever really existed.***

Although this debate may not be evident from publications readily found in popular bookstores, when one examines this issue closely, one will find a tremendous volume of literature that demonstrates, logically and intelligently, time and again that Jesus Christ is a mythological character along the same lines as the Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Sumerian, Phoenician, Indian or other godmen, who are all presently accepted as myths rather than historical figures. Delving deeply into this large body of work, one uncovers evidence that the Jesus character is based upon much older myths and heroes from around the globe. One discovers that this story is not, therefore, a historical representation of a Jewish rebel carpenter who had physical incarnation in the Levant 2,000 years ago. In other words, it has been demonstrated continually for centuries that this character, Jesus Christ, was invented and did not depict a real person who was either the "son of God" or was "evemeristically" made into a superhuman by enthusiastic followers.

History and Positions of the Debate

This controversy has existed from the very beginning, and the writings of the Church fathers themselves reveal that they were constantly forced by the Pagan intelligentsia to defend what the non-Christians and other Christians ("heretics") alike saw as a preposterous and fabricated yarn with absolutely no evidence of it ever having taken place in history.

As Rev. Dr. Robert Taylor says, "And from the apostolic age downwards, in a never interrupted succession, but never so strongly and emphatically as in the most primitive times, was the

existence of Christ as a man most strenuously denied."¹ According to these learned dissenters, the New Testament could rightly be called, "Gospel Fictions."²

"Pious Fraud"

Those individuals (or their spiritual heirs) who concocted some of the hundreds of "alternative" gospels and epistles being kicked about during the first several centuries AD/CE even confirmed that they (or their compadres) had forged the documents. Forgery during the first centuries of the Church's existence was admittedly rampant, so common in fact that a new phrase was coined to describe it: "pious fraud."³ Such prevarication is admitted repeatedly in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, as shown by Joseph Wheless's extensive analysis in *Forgery in Christianity*.⁴

Some of the "great" Church fathers, such as historian Eusebius (c. 263-339), were determined by their own peers to be unbelievable liars who regularly wrote their own fictions of what "the Lord" said and did during his alleged sojourn upon the earth. According to renowned historian Edward Gibbon, in one of his works, *Evangelical Preparation* (bk. 12), Eusebius provides a handy chapter entitled, "How it may be lawful and fitting to use falsehood as a medicine, and for the benefit of those who want to be deceived."⁵ Wheless calls Church fathers Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165), Eusebius and Tertullian (c. 160–c. 220) "three luminous liars,"⁶ while Bronson Keeler concludes, "The early Christian fathers were extremely ignorant and superstitious; and they were singularly incompetent to deal with the supernatural."⁷

In addition, of the dozens of gospels, those once considered canonical or genuine were later rejected as "apocryphal" or spurious, and vice versa. So much for the "inerrant Word of God" and "infallible" Church! The confusion exists because the Christian plagiarists over the centuries were attempting to amalgamate and fuse practically every myth, fairytale, legend, doctrine or bit of wisdom they could "borrow" from the innumerable different mystery religions and philosophies that existed at the time. In doing so, they forged, interpolated, mutilated, changed, and rewrote these texts for centuries.

The Proof

The assertion that Jesus is a myth can be demonstrated not only through the works of dissenters and "Pagans" who knew the truth—and who were viciously refuted or murdered for their battle against the Christian priests and Church fathers fooling the masses with their fictions—but also through the statements of various Christians themselves who disclosed that they knew Jesus Christ was a myth founded upon more ancient deities located throughout the known ancient world. Illustrating this contention, in his play from 1564, Bishop of Ossory John Bale (1495-1563) appears to be suggesting that Pope Leo X (1475-1521) was privy to the truth based on his high rank, when the bishop recounts an alleged exchange between Cardinal

¹ Taylor, 253.

² With acknowledgement to Randel Helms, author of *Gospel Fictions*.

³ CE, I, 606.

⁴ Wheless, xxxvi.

⁵ Gibbon, 766. Gibbon includes the original Greek and cites the edition as "Page 356, edit. Graec. Rob. Stephani, Paris, 1544." *The Southern Review* (IV, 4) comments, "The passage in Eusebius is in p. 356, Edit. Graec. Rob. Steph. Paris, 1544, and lib. xii. ch. 31, p. 607 of vol. i. edit. Franc. Vigeri. Paris, 1628." Naturally, this quote has been disputed and picked apart to absolve Eusebius of deceit.

⁶ Wheless, 105.

⁷ Keeler, 48.

Bembo (1470-1547) and Pope Leo X, with the latter supposedly exclaiming, "What profit has not that **fable** of Christ brought us!"⁸

Even if the Pope himself did not express such a sentiment, Bale—a high-ranking Church official—certainly is acknowledging *someone's* viewpoint, which means that at that time there were doubters in the gospel story as a *fable*. Since I have been online, beginning in 1995, many individuals have written to me about having been ministers, seminarians, Catholic clergymen, Jesuits, Presbyterians, et al., relating that, in the higher levels of the Church educational institutions, "they know it is all myth." As Wheless says, "The proofs of my indictment are marvelously easy."⁹

The Gnostics

From their own admissions, early Christians were incessantly under criticism by scholars of great repute who were impugned as "heathens" by their Christian adversaries. This group included many Gnostics, who strenuously objected to the carnalization of their deity, as the Christians can be shown to have taken many of the characteristics of their god and godman from the Gnostics, meaning "Ones who know," a loose designation applied to members of a variety of esoteric schools and brotherhoods. The refutations of the Christians against the Gnostics reveal that the Christian godman was an insult to the Gnostics, who held that their god could never take human form.

For example, a commentator on the works of Church father St. Chrysostom (c. 347-407) remarks, "The Docetae, as their name denoted, considered that our blessed Lord did not actually exist on earth, or suffer upon the cross, but that all was a phantasy."¹⁰ In discussing the various "heretics" of the second century and onward, the author first addresses the Valentinians, who "were of opinion that our Lord had passed through the Blessed Virgin as water through a conduit..."¹¹ He then says, "Others asserted that the incarnation of Christ was a myth."

Biblical Sources

It is very telling that the earliest Christian documents, the epistles attributed to "Paul," never discuss a historical background of Jesus but deal exclusively with a spiritual being who was known to "Gnostic" sects for years. The few "historical" references to an actual life of Jesus cited in the epistles are evidently interpolations and forgeries,¹² as are, according to various scholars, the bulk of the epistles themselves, as they were not written by "Paul."¹³ As Wheless summarizes, "They are thus all uninspired anonymous church forgeries for Christ's sweet sake!"¹⁴

Aside from the brief reference to Pontius Pilate at 1 Timothy 6:13, an epistle widely rejected as not having been written by Paul, the Pauline literature "does not refer to Pilate, or the Romans, or Caiaphas, or the Sanhedrin, or Herod, or Judas, or the holy women, or any person in the gospel account of the Passion, and that it also never makes any allusion to them; lastly, that it

⁸ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, XXIII, 87. (Emph. added.) See also Walker, 471; Taylor, 35. Bale's original Latin is as follows: "Quantum nobis nostrisque ea de Christo fabula profuerit, satis est omnibus saeculis notum." (Roscoe, III, 339.)

⁹ Wheless, xxi.

¹⁰ *St. Chrysostom's Picture of the Religion of His Age*, 107.

¹¹ *St. Chrysostom's Picture*, 108, citing Chrysostom's "In Matt. Homil. viii. § 1."

¹² See Earl Doherty's *Jesus Puzzle* and *Jesus: Neither God Nor Man* for an extensive analysis of the value of the Pauline material.

¹³ Kennedy, J.H., 340-341.

¹⁴ Wheless, 231.

mentions absolutely none of the events of the Passion, either directly or by way of allusion."¹⁵ Other early "Christian" writings such as Revelation likewise do not mention any historical details or drama. Paul also never quotes from Jesus's purported sermons and speeches, parables and prayers, nor does he mention Jesus's supernatural birth or any of his alleged wonders and miracles, all of which one would presume would be very important to his followers, had such exploits and sayings been known prior to the apostles purported time.

Turning to the canonical gospels themselves, which in their present form do not appear in the historical record until sometime between 170-180 AD/CE,¹⁶ their pretended authors, the apostles, give sparse histories and genealogies of Jesus that contradict each other and themselves in numerous places. The birth date of Jesus is depicted as having taken place at different times. His birth and childhood are not mentioned in "Mark," and although he is claimed in "Matthew" and "Luke" to have been "born of a virgin," his lineage is traced to the House of David through Joseph, so that he may "fulfill prophecy."¹⁷ Christ is said in the first three (Synoptic) gospels to have taught for one year before he died, while in "John" the number is around three years. "Matthew" relates that Jesus delivered "The Sermon on the Mount"¹⁸ before "the multitudes," while "Luke" says it was a private talk given only to the disciples. The accounts of his Passion and Resurrection differ utterly from each other, and no one states how old he was when he died. In addition, in the canonical gospels, Jesus himself makes many illogical contradictions concerning some of his most important teachings.¹⁹

Non-Biblical Sources

Basically, there are no known non-biblical references to a historical Jesus by any historian or other writer of the time during and shortly after Jesus's purported advent. As Barbara G. Walker says, "No literate person of his own time mentioned him in any known writing."²⁰ Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (20 BCE-50 AD/CE)—alive at the purported time of Jesus, and one of the wealthiest and best connected citizens of the Empire—makes no mention of Christ, Christians or Christianity in his voluminous writings. Nor do any of the dozens of other historians and writers who flourished during the first one to two centuries of the common era.²¹

In the entire works of the Jewish historian Josephus (37-c. 100 AD/CE), which constitute hundreds of pages, there are only two paragraphs that purport to refer to Jesus. Although much has been made of these "references," they have been dismissed by many scholars and even by Christian apologists as forgeries, as have been those referring to John the Baptist and James, "brother" of Jesus. Bishop Warburton (1698-1779) labeled the Josephus interpolation regarding Jesus as "a rank forgery, and a very stupid one, too."²² The arguments against this passage called the *Testimonium Flavianum* ("TF") are detailed and can be found in my other books, especially [Suns of God](#) and [Who Was Jesus?](#)

Several writers conclude that it was Eusebius himself who forged the passage.²³ As Dr. Alice Whealey remarks, "No other ancient writer knew Josephus' works anywhere near well enough to have crafted something so similar to Josephus' style."²⁴

¹⁵ Dujardin, 33.

¹⁶ See my book *Who Was Jesus?*, 82, etc.

¹⁷ Wheless (207): "Both genealogies are false and forged lists of mostly fictitious names."

¹⁸ Wheless, 229. See *Who Was Jesus?*, 81.

¹⁹ See *Who Was Jesus?*, 139ff.

²⁰ Walker, 465.

²¹ For a list of these historians, scholars and other writers, see *Who Was Jesus?*, 85.

²² Lardner, VI, 496.

²³ See, e.g., Olson, "Eusebius and the *Testimonium Flavianum*," *CBQ* 61, 1999, 305-322.

²⁴ Whealey in Böttrich, 74. Whealey provides an extensive analysis of whether or not Eusebius forged the TF.

Regarding the letter to Trajan supposedly written by Pliny the Younger (23-79 AD/CE), which is another of the pitifully few "references" to Jesus or Christianity held up by Christians as evidence of the existence of Jesus, there is but one word that is applicable—"Christian"—and that has been theorized to be spurious, as is also suspected of the entire letter. Concerning the passage in the works of the historian Tacitus (c. 56-c. 117 AD/CE), who did not live during the purported time of Jesus but was born two decades after his purported death, this brief mention is also considered by many competent scholars as an interpolation and forgery. Christian defenders also like to hold up the passage in Suetonius (c. 71-c. 135 AD/CE) concerning someone named "Chrestus" or "Chresto" as reference to their Savior; however, while some have speculated that there was a Roman man of that name at that time, the name "Chrestus" or "Chrestos," meaning "useful," was frequently held by freed slaves. Others opine that this passage is also an interpolation.²⁵

Discussing all of the non-Christian evidence, historian Dr. H.E. Barnes, a professor at Columbia University, remarks that "next to nothing exists" and concludes:

In all, this evidence mounts up to some twenty-four lines, not a single one of which is of admitted authenticity.²⁶

Of these "references," Edouard Dujardin says, "But even if they are authentic, and were derived from earlier sources, they would not carry us back earlier than the period in which the gospel legend took form, and so could attest only the legend of Jesus, and not his historicity."²⁷ In any case, these scarce and brief "references" to a man who supposedly shook up the world²⁸ can hardly be held up as proof of his existence, and it is absurd that the purported historicity of the entire Christian religion is founded upon them. As it is said, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof"; yet, no proof of any kind for the historicity of Jesus has ever existed or is forthcoming.

The Characters

From all the evidence, it appears that there was no single historical person upon whom the Christian religion was founded, and that "Jesus Christ" is a compilation of legends, heroes, gods and godmen. There is not adequate room here to go into detail about each god or godman that possibly contributed to the formation of the Jewish Jesus character; suffice it to say that there is plenty of documentation to show that this issue is not a question of "faith" or "belief."²⁹

The truth is that during the era this character supposedly lived there was an extensive library at Alexandria and an incredibly nimble brotherhood network that stretched from Europe to China, and this information network had access to numerous manuscripts and oral traditions that told a similar narrative with many like motifs as portrayed in the New Testament but with different place names and ethnicity for the characters.³⁰

As concerns the specious claim that the analogies between the Christ myth and those outlined below are "non-existent" because they are not found in "primary sources," let us turn to the words of the early Church fathers, who acknowledged that major important aspects of the Christ character are indeed found in the stories of earlier, Pagan gods, but who asserted that

²⁵ For more information about these and other purported references, such as Thallus and Phlegon, see also [Suns of God](#) and [Who Was Jesus?](#)

²⁶ Barnes, 391.

²⁷ Dujardin, 2.

²⁸ In the gospels, Jesus is depicted among "great crowds" and "multitudes" in some two dozen scriptures. (See Murdock, *WWJ*, 85fn.)

²⁹ See my books for further details.

³⁰ For more information on the role of Alexandria in the Christian effort, see my books [The Christ Conspiracy](#), [Suns of Gods](#), [Who Was Jesus?](#) and [Christ in Egypt](#).

the reason for these similarities was because the evidently prescient devil "anticipated" Christ and planted "foreshadowing" of his "coming" in the heathens' minds.

In his *First Apology* (21), Christian father Justin Martyr acknowledged the similarities between the older Pagan gods/religions and Christianity, when he attempted to demonstrate, in the face of ridicule, that Christianity was no more ridiculous than the earlier myths:

ANALOGIES TO THE HISTORY OF CHRIST. **And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter.** For you know how many sons your esteemed writers ascribed to Jupiter: Mercury, the interpreting word and teacher of all; Aesculapius, who, though he was a great physician, was struck by a thunderbolt, and so ascended to heaven; and Bacchus too, after he had been torn limb from limb; and Hercules, when he had committed himself to the flames to escape his toils; and the sons of Leda, and Dioscuri; and Perseus, son of Danae; and Bellerophon, who, though sprung from mortals, rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus. For what shall I say of Ariadne, and those who, like her, have been declared to be set among the stars? And what of the emperors who die among yourselves, whom you deem worthy of deification, and in whose behalf you produce some one who swears he has seen the burning Caesar rise to heaven from the funeral pyre?³¹

In making these comparisons between Christianity and its predecessor Paganism, however, Justin sinisterly spluttered:

...it having reached the devil's ears that the prophets had foretold that Christ would come for the purpose of tormenting the wicked in fire, he set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called (and were called) sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as those prodigious fables and poetic stories.³²

Aping these purported "prophecies," the devil *anticipated* Christ and caused human poets, priests and mythographers to create superhuman saviors and sons of God with practically the same characteristics. **Here is a clear admission that these mythical motifs long pre-dated the Christian era and that the gods' "lives" were very similar to that alleged of Jesus.** This contention is backed up by numerous artifacts from the ancient world, including books, inscriptions, statuary, wall carvings and paintings, as well as oral traditions and so on.

The Jesus story evidently incorporated elements from the tales of other deities recorded in a widespread area, such as many of the following world saviors and "sons of God," most or all of whom predate the Christian myth, and a number of whom were "crucified," executed or suffered otherwise, among other similarities to the gospel story.

- Adad of Assyria
- Adonis, Apollo and Zeus of Greece
- Agni of India
- Alcides/Hercules of Thebes
- Attis of Phrygia
- Baal of Phoenicia
- Bali of Afghanistan³³
- Buddha/Beddhu of India, China and Japan

³¹ Roberts, A., *ANF*, I, 170. (Emph. added.)

³² Taylor, 244. Taylor includes in the footnote the original Greek of Justin, referencing it as "*Justini Apolog. 2.*"

³³ Apparently, this god is a manifestation of the Hindu deity Balarama. (See Perry, 17.)

- Deva Tat (Buddha) of Siam³⁴
- Hesus of the Druids
- Horus, Osiris, and Serapis of Egypt³⁵
- Indra of Tibet/India
- Jao/Iao of Nepal
- Krishna of India
- The Mikado of the Shintos
- Mithra of Persia
- Odin of the Scandinavians
- Prometheus of Caucasus/Greece
- Quetzalcoatl of Mexico
- Salivahana of Burma³⁶
- Tammuz of Syria³⁷
- Thor of the Gauls
- Universal Monarch of the Sibyls
- Wittoba of the Bilingonese
- Xamolxis/Zamolxis of Thrace
- Zarathustra/Zoroaster of Persia

The Major Players

Buddha

Although most people think of Buddha as one person who lived around 500 BCE, like Jesus the character commonly portrayed as Buddha can also be demonstrated to be a compilation of godmen, legends and sayings of various holy men both preceding and succeeding the period attributed to *the* Buddha.³⁸ The Buddha character has the following in common with the Christ figure:

- Like Jesus, Buddha was a divine being, pre-existent in "heaven" before taking birth.³⁹
- Buddha was born of the virgin Maya, who was considered the "Queen of Heaven."⁴⁰
- He was of royal descent and was a prince.⁴¹
- At his birth appeared a "marvelous and powerful light."⁴²
- After Buddha was born, a "slaughter of the infants was ordered by the tyrant Bimbasara..."⁴³
- When Buddha was a babe, a saint prophesied he would be great, as did Simeon concerning Christ (Lk 2:25-35).⁴⁴
- As a child he taught his teachers.⁴⁵

³⁴ Acharya, *SOG*, 367-368; Garnier, 103.

³⁵ For more information on these gods, see [Christ in Egypt](#).

³⁶ In his original work, Kersey Graves depicted this god as coming from "Bermuda." After ridicule for naming a Caribbean island, Graves responded that he was speaking of a "Bermuda," which is a "small province as appears in ancient Burmah." (Perry, 76.) For more on Salivahana, see [Suns of God](#).

³⁷ Walker, 468.

³⁸ See my book *Suns of God* for more on this subject.

³⁹ Hopkins, 127-128; Thundy, 80.

⁴⁰ Coomaraswamy, 73; Lillie, *BB*, 26. See *Suns of God* and below for a discussion of Buddha's mother as a virgin.

⁴¹ Thundy, 81.

⁴² Thundy, 107.

⁴³ Del Mar, 124; Kloppenborg, 76.

⁴⁴ Hopkins, 128.

- Buddha was presented in the temple, where "the idols fell down before him."⁴⁶
- He began his quest for enlightenment at age 29.⁴⁷
- He crushed a serpent's head.⁴⁸
- Buddha was tempted by Mara, the evil one, who offered him "universal dominion."⁴⁹
- Sakyamuni Buddha had 12 disciples⁵⁰ and traveled about preaching.⁵¹
- He reformed and prohibited idolatry,⁵² was a "sower of the word,"⁵³ and preached "the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness."⁵⁴
- He performed miracles and wonders, healed the sick,⁵⁵ fed 500 men from a "small basket of cakes,"⁵⁶ and helps a disciple walk on water.⁵⁷
- He preached a "sermon on the mount"⁵⁸ and taught chastity, temperance, tolerance, compassion, love, and the equality of all.⁵⁹
- He was transfigured on a mount.⁶⁰
- Buddha was received in his native city with a triumphal welcome.⁶¹
- He was betrayed by a disciple, who led others to kill him.⁶²
- Some of his persecutors became his disciples.⁶³
- A tremendous earthquake occurred upon Buddha's death.⁶⁴
- Buddha died,⁶⁵ suffered for three days in hell,⁶⁶ and was resurrected.⁶⁷
- He attained Nirvana or "heaven."⁶⁸
- Buddha was considered the "Good Shepherd,"⁶⁹ the "Carpenter,"⁷⁰ the "Infinite and Everlasting"⁷¹ and the "Great Physician."⁷²
- He was the "Savior of the World"⁷³ and the "Light of the World."⁷⁴

⁴⁵ Carpenter, J.E., "Obligations of the New Testament to Buddhism," 973.

⁴⁶ Hopkins, 128.

⁴⁷ Thundy, 54.

⁴⁸ Dameron, 53.

⁴⁹ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 974.

⁵⁰ See the "[Temple of the Recumbent Buddha](#)" for artifacts proving the motif of Buddha and the 12. Concerning this motif, in private correspondence Dr. Lindtner related, "The Twelve in Buddhism are found 1. in the 'Wheel of Existence' (pratityasamutpâdacakram, my 'Master of Wisdom' gives ref. to sources), and 2. as 1200 apostles in the Lotus and many other Mahâyâna scriptures."

⁵¹ Thundy, 54.

⁵² Dobbins, 212; Wallbank, 172.

⁵³ Mead, GG, 133.

⁵⁴ Carpenter, J.E., CRW, 48.

⁵⁵ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 974.

⁵⁶ Carpenter, J.E., FTG, 89.

⁵⁷ Whitney, 8, 361; Āśvaghoṣa/Beal, 222; Garbe, IC, 56.

⁵⁸ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 975.

⁵⁹ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 977-978.

⁶⁰ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 974, 977; Lillie, BB, 184.

⁶¹ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 976.

⁶² Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 976.

⁶³ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 976.

⁶⁴ Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 977.

⁶⁵ See also my book *Suns of God*, 357ff, as to a discussion of whether or not Buddha was "crucified." See also below concerning "Buddhist Crucifixion."

⁶⁶ Thundy, 102; Del Mar, 124.

⁶⁷ Paine, 102.

⁶⁸ Jaini, 331-332; Leighton, 88.

⁶⁹ Lillie, BC, 162; Titcomb, 56; Vetterling, vi.

⁷⁰ Hardy, 100. See also *Suns of God*, 298-299, 366ff.

⁷¹ Mead, GG, 134.

⁷² Carpenter, J.E., "ONTB," 976.

⁷³ Thundy, 80.

Buddha's Birth

According to ancient Buddhist legend, the sage's mother was a "chaste wife, into whom miraculously entered in the shape of a white elephant the future Buddha, who subsequently came out of her right side."⁷⁵ Sanskrit scholar Dr. Edward W. Hopkins states that this miraculous birth story undoubtedly dates to "as early as the third century B.C. and perhaps earlier."⁷⁶ Indeed, the miraculous birth of Buddha, as well as his temptation, are carved on monuments that date to 150 BCE or older.⁷⁷

In the fourth century of the common era, Church father St. Jerome (*Adversus Jovinianum* 1.42) discussed Buddha specifically as having been born through the side of a *virgin*:

Among the Gymnosophists of India, the belief has been handed down from generation to generation as authentic that a virgin gave birth to Buddha, the founder of their religion, out of her side.⁷⁸

Jerome's words—"handed down from generation to generation" and "opinionis auctoritas traditur"—indicate not that the motif had been recently copied from Christianity by Indian monks or priests but that it was a tradition of some age.

Buddhist Crucifixion

In the texts, we find the curious motif of a Buddhist figure having been "crucified." In this regard, concerning the Buddhist influence on the gospel story, scholar of Buddhism and Sanskrit Dr. Christian Lindtner writes:

The Sanskrit manuscripts prove without a shadow of doubt:

Everything that Jesus says or does was already said or done by the Buddha.

Jesus, therefore, is a mere literary fiction.

- The Last Supper was the Last Supper of the Buddha.
- Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit was baptism in the name of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Samgha.
- All the miracles performed by Jesus had already been performed by the Buddha.
- The twelve disciples of Jesus were, in fact, the twelve disciples of the Buddha.
- It was king Gautama—not Jesus—who was crucified.⁷⁹
- It was Tathâgata—not Jesus—who was resurrected....
- There is nothing in the Gospels, no person, no event, that cannot be traced back to cognate persons, events or circumstances in the Buddhist gospels.
- ...Jesus is a Buddha disguised as a new Jewish legislator, teacher, Messiah and king of Israel.

The Gospels, forming the foundation of Christianity, are, therefore, typical Buddhist literature, fiction, designed for missionaries whose language was Greek.

Concerning this purported "crucifixion" or impalement of an important Buddhist figure, related in, among others, a Buddhist text dating to the first century BCE—the Samghabhedavastu/Mahâparinirvâna sutra⁸⁰—Dr. Zacharias P. Thundy states:

⁷⁴ Yu, 428.

⁷⁵ Hopkins, 129.

⁷⁶ Hopkins, 130.

⁷⁷ Hopkins, 137.

⁷⁸ Hanna, 166.

⁷⁹ Lindtner, 87ff. In private correspondence, Dr. Lindtner informed me that there were three sources for the crucifixion story of Buddha: the Lotus sutra, the Mahâparinirvâna sutra and the Samghabhedavastu, of which the MPS is a part. He specifies that the episode is in the Mûlasarvâstivâdavinaya *recension* of the MPS.

This is the story of Gautama, a holy man, who was wrongfully condemned to die on the cross for murdering the courtesan Bhadra. Gautama is impaled on the cross, and his mentor Krishna Dvapayana visits him and enters into a long dialogue, at the end of which he dies at the place of skulls after engendering two offspring, the progenitors of the Ikshavaku Dynasty.⁸¹

As is evident from the remarks of Dr. Burkhard Scherer, a "classical Philologist, Indologist and Lecturer in Religious Studies (Buddhist and Hindu Studies)" at Canterbury Christ Church University, the fact that there is "massive" Buddhist influence in the gospels has been well known among the elite scholars for a long time. Says Dr. Scherer:

...it is very important to draw attention on the fact that there is (massive) Buddhist influence in the Gospels....

Since more than hundred years Buddhist influence in the Gospels has been known and acknowledged by scholars from both sides. Just recently, Duncan McDerret published his excellent *The Bible and the Buddhist* (Sardini, Bornato [Italy] 2001). With McDerret, I am convinced that there are many Buddhist narratives in the Gospels.

Horus of Egypt

The stories of Jesus and Horus/Osiris are very similar, with the Egyptian god even possibly contributing the title of "Christ." Horus and his once-and-future Father, Osiris, are frequently interchangeable in the mythos, as in the scripture, "I and my Father are one."⁸² The legends of Horus go back thousands of years, and he (or Osiris) shares the following in common with Jesus:

- Horus was born of the virgin Isis-Meri on December 25th in a cave/manger, with his birth being announced by a star in the East and attended by dignitaries or "wise men."⁸³
- He was a child teacher in the Temple or "House of the Father" and was baptized when he was 30 years old.⁸⁴
- Horus was also baptized by "Anup the Baptizer,"⁸⁵ who becomes "John the Baptist."
- He had 12 companions, subjects or "disciples."⁸⁶
- He performed miracles and raised one man, El-Azar-us, from the dead.⁸⁷
- The Egyptian god walked on water.⁸⁸
- Horus was transfigured on the Mount.⁸⁹

⁸⁰ Concerning this episode, Thundy specifically states: "We have been able to identify two major Sanskrit sources for the trial narratives. A. Sangabhedavastu of the Mahaparinirvanasutra: Professor Lindtner has identified the Sangabhedavastu section of the Mahaparinirvanasutra of the Vinayapitaka of the Mulasarvastivadins. I have studied this text carefully and have arrived at some significant conclusions." Again, Lindtner specifies that the episode is in the Mulasarvastivadinaya ("MSV") *recension* of the MPS.

⁸¹ "The Sanskrit Sources of the Gospel Narratives of the Trial and Death,"

www.jesusisbuddha.com/thundy.html See also Lindtner, 87-97. (In my previous version of this article, I attributed this quote to Ken Humphreys, whereas Professor Thundy is apparently the source.) Although there are many "Buddhas," a number of whom appear to make up the composite character of "the Buddha," this figure is evidently not one of them. The point, however, is that evidently pre-Christian Buddhist texts contain a crucifixion scene which parallels that found in the gospels.

⁸² See my book [Christ in Egypt](#), 52ff.

⁸³ Murdock, *CIE*, 79-209.

⁸⁴ Murdock, *CIE*, 210ff.

⁸⁵ Murdock, *CIE*, 233ff.

⁸⁶ Murdock, *CIE*, 261ff.

⁸⁷ Murdock, *CIE*, 298ff, et al.

⁸⁸ Murdock, *CIE*, 293-297.

⁸⁹ Massey, *AELW*, II, 911.

- The Egyptian god was killed, buried in a tomb and resurrected.⁹⁰
- He was also the "Way, the Truth, the Light, the Messiah, God's Anointed Son, the Son of Man, the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God, the Word," etc.⁹¹
- He was "the Fisher," and was associated with the Lamb, Lion and Fish ("Ichthys").⁹²
- Horus's personal epithet appears to have been "Iusa," the "ever-becoming son" of "Ptah," the "Father."⁹³
- Horus (or Osiris) was called "the KRST," long before the Christians duplicated the story.⁹⁴

Numerous ancient artifacts depict the baby Horus being held by the virgin mother Isis—the original "Madonna and Child." These motifs can be found in ancient Egyptian texts as well as other artifacts, as detailed in my book [Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection](#).

Mithra, Sun God of Persia

The worship of Mithra precedes the common era by several centuries. In fact, the cult of Mithra was, shortly before the true Christian era, "the most popular and widely spread 'Pagan' religion of the times."⁹⁵ Indeed, numerous Mithraic monuments have been found stretching from Asia Minor to Great Britain.⁹⁶

Although Mithraism as it developed in the Roman Empire is different from its Perso-Indian roots, its major motifs and traditions can be traced to a pre-Christian body of knowledge that is largely astrotheological in nature, as demonstrated by Dr. David Ulansey in *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*.

Mithra has the following in common with the Christ character:

- Mithra was born on December 25th⁹⁷ of the virgin Anahita.⁹⁸
- The babe was wrapped in swaddling clothes, placed in a manger⁹⁹ and attended by shepherds.¹⁰⁰
- He was considered a great traveling teacher and master.¹⁰¹
- He had 12 companions or "disciples."¹⁰²
- He performed miracles.¹⁰³
- He was buried in a tomb.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁰ Murdock, *CIE*, 335-430.

⁹¹ Murdock, *CIE*, 309ff.

⁹² Massey: "Horus in Egypt had been a fish from time immemorial, and when the equinox entered the sign of Pisces, Horus, was portrayed as *Ichthys* with the fish sign over his head." (Massey, *HJMC*, 25.)

⁹³ Murdock, *CIE*, 324ff, 424, et al.

⁹⁴ Murdock, *CIE*, 313ff.

⁹⁵ Wheless, 18. Christianity did not become influential to any significant extent until the second century.

⁹⁶ See the extensive research of Dr. Franz Cumont, who catalogued numerous Mithraic monuments throughout Europe, as well as Dr. M.J. Vermaseren's *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, vols. I and II.

⁹⁷ Cumont, 191; *CE*, X, 404.

⁹⁸ Amir-Moezzi, 78; Robertson, *PC*, 322.

⁹⁹ Riddle, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Turner, 325.

¹⁰¹ Turcan (78) calls Mithra "comme le maître et l'animateur du Kosmos"—"like the master/teacher and animator of the Cosmos." *Bibliothèque de L'École des Hautes Études* (65) cites the Avesta as calling the god the "master/teacher of nations." In the texts, Mithra is also called "master/teacher of vast campaigns." (de Harlez, 468.)

¹⁰² See, e.g., Cumont, 117, 122; Ulansey, 17.

¹⁰³ One such miracle would be that of Mithra shooting at a rock, producing water. (See, e.g., Hinnells, 173.)

- He was considered "the Way, the Truth and the Light, the Redeemer, the Savior, the Messiah."¹⁰⁵
- Mithra is omniscient, as he "hears all, sees all, knows all: none can deceive him."¹⁰⁶
- He was identified with both the Lion¹⁰⁷ and the Lamb.¹⁰⁸
- His sacred day was Sunday, "the Lord's Day," hundreds of years before the appearance of Christ.¹⁰⁹
- His religion had a eucharist or "Lord's Supper."¹¹⁰
- Mithra "sets his marks on the foreheads of his soldiers."¹¹¹

Mithra's "Virgin" Birth?

As concerns the debate regarding the Perso-Roman god Mithra's "virgin birth," not a few scholars and writers of *Persian/Iranian* extract have discussed the Persian goddess of love Anahita as Mithra's *virgin mother*. Presumably, these individuals know more about their ancient traditions than do modern Christian apologists, who emphasize Mithra's rock birth and deny the virgin-mother motif. For example, Dr. Badi Badiozamani says that a "person" named "Mehr" or Mithra was "born of a virgin named Nahid Anahita ("immaculate") and that "the worship of Mithra and Anahita, the virgin mother of Mithra, was well-known in the Achaemenian period [558-330 BCE]..."¹¹² Philosophy professor Mohammed Ali Amir-Moezzi states: "Dans le mithraïsme, ainsi que le mazdéisme populaire, (A)Nāhīd, mère de Mithra/Mehr, est vierge"¹¹³—"In Mithraism, as in popular Mazdaism, Anahid, the mother of Mithra, is a virgin."

Mithra and the Twelve

Mithra surrounded by the 12 "companions" is a motif found on many Mithraic remains and representing the 12 signs of the zodiac, which are sometimes depicted as *humans*. The comparison of this common motif with Jesus and the 12 has been made on many occasions, including in an extensive study entitled, "Mithras and Christ: some iconographical similarities," by Professor A. Deman in *Mithraic Studies*.¹¹⁴

Many of these Mithraic parallels were remarked upon by the Church fathers, who were flummoxed by them and who blamed them on the prescient devil.

Krishna of India

In discussing the comparisons between Krishna and Christ, it is claimed either that there are no real parallels or that these "exact counterparts"—as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* calls them¹¹⁵—rest squarely on the shoulders of the Brahman priesthood, who allegedly copied them from Christianity. Indian and other scholars contend that the story is uninfluenced by Christianity, many averring that any borrowing must have occurred by Christianity from Hinduism. As part of this debate, a common earlier English transliteration of Krishna was "Christna," which reveals its possible relationship to "Christ."

¹⁰⁴ Robertson, "Mithraism," *Religious Systems of the World*, 209.

¹⁰⁵ Cumont, 192-193; Hastings, 753; Nabarz, 16; Ragozin, 69.

¹⁰⁶ Cumont, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Jackson, S.M., VII, 422. Mithraic monuments often include an image of a lion. (See, e.g., Ulansey.)

¹⁰⁸ Maitland, E., 63; Robertson, "Mithraism," 202.

¹⁰⁹ Jackson, S.M., VII, 419.

¹¹⁰ Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1.66; Hinnells, 181.

¹¹¹ Tertullian, *On Prescription against Heretics* (40); Roberts, *ANF*, III, 262.

¹¹² Badiozamani, 96.

¹¹³ Amir-Moezzi, 78.

¹¹⁴ Hinnells, 507ff.

¹¹⁵ *CE*, "Brahmanism" (II, 734). (Emph. added.)

Krishna shares the following characteristics and motifs in common with Christ:

- Krishna is an incarnation of the sun god Vishnu, who rises or awakens on the winter solstice.¹¹⁶
- Krishna was born in a stable¹¹⁷ of the "virgin"¹¹⁸ Devaki ("Divine One")¹¹⁹
- He was of royal descent and was a prince.¹²⁰
- Krishna is the "King of the Yadus."¹²¹
- Like the cave-born Christ of tradition, Krishna was born in a "cave-like dungeon."¹²²
- Upon birth, the baby Krishna, was placed in a "basket for winnowing corn; *in other words, a manger*."¹²³
- Great signs and wonders occurred at Krishna's birth,¹²⁴ including the appearance of a bright star.¹²⁵
- His birth was attended by angels,¹²⁶ wise men¹²⁷ and shepherds,¹²⁸ and he was presented with gifts, including gold and incense.¹²⁹
- His foster father was in the city to pay taxes when Krishna was born.¹³⁰
- The hero-god was persecuted by a tyrant who ordered the slaughter of infants.¹³¹
- The infant Krishna was carried across a river.¹³²
- As a young boy, he worked miracles and wonders, and was hailed as a divine incarnation.¹³³
- He was worshipped by shepherds as a god.¹³⁴
- Krishna was "tempted" in the wilderness by "various fiends," before crushing the serpent's head.¹³⁵
- He raised a child from the dead¹³⁶ and healed lepers, the deaf and the blind.¹³⁷
- Krishna preached faith "in God's love to man and in his mercy and forgiveness of sins arising therefrom."¹³⁸
- Krishna miraculously fed the multitudes.¹³⁹
- "He lived poor and he loved the poor,"¹⁴⁰ humbly washing the feet of guests.¹⁴¹

¹¹⁶ Tod, 448. The summer and winter solstices represent the sleep and rise of Vishnu.

¹¹⁷ Hopkins, *ION*, 163.

¹¹⁸ Abhedānanda (50) calls Krishna's mother, Devaki, a "holy virgin."

¹¹⁹ *Indian Studies* (108) states that Krishna's "mother's name, Devaki...can also be interpreted as meaning 'the divine one.'"

¹²⁰ Sheridan, 11.

¹²¹ Barth, 174; Abhedānanda, 64. The "Yadus" were the descendants of the hero Yadu, living in the area near Mathura and Vrindavana, where the Krishna cult thrived. (Monier-Williams, 845.)

¹²² Knapp, 199.

¹²³ Robertson, *CM* (1900), 150.

¹²⁴ O'Flaherty, 212.

¹²⁵ Bryant, *KS*, 119; Robertson, *CM* (1900), 175. The story of the star, which is called "Rohini" (Aldebaran), is found in the *Bhagavat Purana* (10.3:1).

¹²⁶ Sen (325).

¹²⁷ Abhedānanda, 59; O'Flaherty, 212.

¹²⁸ Garbe, "CELK," 41.

¹²⁹ Abhedānanda, 59.

¹³⁰ Dahlquist, 13; Abhedānanda, 55.

¹³¹ Doniger, 477.

¹³² Bryant, *KS*, 6; Robertson, *CM* (1900), 194.

¹³³ Abhedānanda, 62. See the Protevangelion and infancy gospels for Christ's similar childhood.

¹³⁴ Garbe, "CEM," 346.

¹³⁵ Robertson, *CM* (1900), 150; O'Flaherty, 226. In Christian tradition, Christ is said to be the one who puts enmity between the woman (Eve) and the snake. (Gen 3:15)

¹³⁶ Robertson, *CM* (1900), 151; Jackson, J.G., 131.

¹³⁷ Wheeler, 414-415; Abhedānanda, 63.

¹³⁸ Garbe, "CEB," 508.

¹³⁹ Abhedānanda, 69.

- Like Jesus, Krishna continually manifested his divinity and then denied it.¹⁴²
- He was transfigured in front of his disciples.¹⁴³
- Krishna was anointed with oil by a woman bearing a jar of ointment.¹⁴⁴
- Krishna had a beloved disciple named Arjuna or "Ar-jouan."¹⁴⁵
- A fig or banyan tree figures prominently in Krishna's myth,¹⁴⁶ as the god is depicted approaching a fig tree, where he "utters a sort of parable."¹⁴⁷
- Tradition holds that Krishna died after being shot in the foot while under a (fig) tree, leading to claims he was pinned against the tree by an arrow or "crucified."¹⁴⁸
- After his death, he ascended to heaven,¹⁴⁹ where he lives on.
- Krishna descended into hell to rescue others.¹⁵⁰
- As Vishnu, he is the god "who incarnates himself when sin threatens to take the upper hand in the world, and destroys it."¹⁵¹
- Krishna is "a personal savior, a messianic deliverer who will bring all men and women salvation if only they choose to give Him their devotion."¹⁵²
- Krishna is called the "Shepherd God,"¹⁵³ "Lord of the god of gods"¹⁵⁴ and "Lord of lords,"¹⁵⁵ and was considered the "Redeemer,"¹⁵⁶ "Firstborn,"¹⁵⁷ "Sin Bearer,"¹⁵⁸ "Liberator,"¹⁵⁹ and "Universal Word."¹⁶⁰
- As Vishnu, he is the second person of the Trinity,¹⁶¹ considered the "Beginning, the Middle and the End,"¹⁶² ("Alpha and Omega"), as well as being omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.
- His disciples shouted the words "Jai Shri Krishna," meaning "Victory to Lord Krishna."¹⁶³
- A future incarnation of Vishnu is the Kalki avatar, who will arrive riding a white horse and destroy the wicked.¹⁶⁴

¹⁴⁰ Jacolliot, 250.

¹⁴¹ Abhedānanda, 69.

¹⁴² Robertson, *CM* (1900), 150.

¹⁴³ Abhedānanda, 63-64.

¹⁴⁴ Abhedānanda, 64.

¹⁴⁵ Doane (247) uses this uncommon transliteration.

¹⁴⁶ Chandra, 190.

¹⁴⁷ Robertson, *CM* (1900), 150.

¹⁴⁸ Abhedānanda (80): "His feet were shot through with the arrow of an unknown barbarian hunter." See the discussion "Krishna Crucified?" below and in my book *Suns of God*. See also "Was Horus Crucified?" for a discussion of the meaning and use of the term "crucify."

¹⁴⁹ Vyasa, 304; Gupta, 871.

¹⁵⁰ Abhedānanda, 67. See the similar story about Jesus as found in the apocryphal text the "Gospel of Nicodemus" or "Acts of Pilate."

¹⁵¹ Dahlquist, 77.

¹⁵² Blank, 252.

¹⁵³ Abhedānanda, 38.

¹⁵⁴ Bryant, *KLBG*, 308.

¹⁵⁵ Abhedānanda, 60: "Krishna [is] the Lord of all." He also calls him "the most beloved Lord and Savior of all." (Abhedānanda, 38.)

¹⁵⁶ Abhedānanda, 77.

¹⁵⁷ Walker, 515.

¹⁵⁸ Abhedānanda, 81.

¹⁵⁹ Bryant, *KS*, 98.

¹⁶⁰ Walker, 515.

¹⁶¹ Abhedānanda, 56.

¹⁶² *Bhagavad Gita*, 10.20; Campbell, 315.

¹⁶³ Knott, 40.

¹⁶⁴ Turner, 258. At Revelation 19:11 it is said that Jesus will return in his Second Coming riding on a white horse.

As we can see, there are numerous detailed similarities between the stories of Krishna and Christ.

Krishna's "Virgin" Birth?

Over the centuries, it has been debated whether or not Krishna's mother, Devaki, who was said to be a "chaste maiden," could also be called a "virgin," mainly because she traditionally had given birth to seven children prior to Krishna. However, the evidence points to Devaki—and Krishna—as a *mythical character*, and myths do not have human body parts and so on, so many goddesses are said to be *both* mother and virgin, regardless of how many children they produce. For example, according to the myth, Devaki is an incarnation of the dawn goddess Aditi,¹⁶⁵ who was the "eternal virgin" or "celestial virgin,"¹⁶⁶ despite the fact that she too gave birth to eight children.¹⁶⁷

In addition, Krishna's mother earlier had given birth as an unmarried and presumably virginal teenager, after becoming pregnant from eating half a mango.¹⁶⁸ Obviously, the virgin birth vis-à-vis Krishna's mother represents a real Indian tradition, even if it is not strictly applicable to his specific nativity. In other words, at one point before Krishna was born, Devaki *was* a virgin mother, and the assumption that she remains so throughout the myth is thus understandable.

The Names of Krishna and Christ

Part of the controversy concerning commonalities has revolved around the Indian and Christian godmen's respective names. In older English literature, for example, we often encounter the transliteration of Krishna/Krsna as "Christna," indicating a possible relationship. In this regard, Sri Ramakrishna Mathah relates that the names "Krishna" and "Christ" became "a focal point in such debates: 'But despite decades of two-way arguments, it was eventually determined that the name *Christ* was taken from the Greek *Christos*, which is derived from the Sanskrit *Krishta*, or *Krishna*.'"¹⁶⁹ Indeed, as Dr. Richard Garbe says, "In some localities of India the word Krishna is pronounced *Krishta*."¹⁷⁰ Adding to these facts, we learn that "*Krishta*" was "also the way the name 'Christ' was pronounced" in certain dialects.¹⁷¹

Christian missionaries in India were so struck with the similarities between the names of the two gods that they explained "Krishna" as the "*nomen ipsum corruptum Christi*,"¹⁷² or a "corruption of the very name of Christ."¹⁷³

Krishna's Solar Nature

Under "Krishna" in the Sinhalese English Dictionary, Rev. Clough states that "in Hindu mythology Krishna is considered the most celebrated form of Vishnu or rather Vishnu himself; in that form he is however distinct from the ten avatars or incarnations of Vishnu, being always identified with the deity himself..."¹⁷⁴ Clough additionally relates that "Krishna" is also "one of the names of Arjuna the charioteer of the sun."¹⁷⁵ Indeed, Vishnu is a solar deity or epithet/aspect of the sun, while, as his incarnation—"being always identified with the deity himself"—Krishna likewise is solar in nature. The fact that Krishna is not only an incarnation

¹⁶⁵ Parmeshwaranand, 1; Vallabhācārya, 3517, citing the Rig Veda, 1, 89.10.

¹⁶⁶ Turner, 15.

¹⁶⁷ Shashi, 178.

¹⁶⁸ Hildebeitel, 186.

¹⁶⁹ Mathah, 311.

¹⁷⁰ Garbe, "CELK," 36.

¹⁷¹ Dahlquist, 16.

¹⁷² Hopkins, 166.

¹⁷³ Robertson, *CM* (Kessinger), 139.

¹⁷⁴ Clough, 144.

¹⁷⁵ Clough, 144.

of the sun god but also a deity himself who possessed many solar attributes should be kept in mind when investigating the Krishna-Christ parallels.

Prometheus of Greece

The Greek god Prometheus has been claimed to have come from Egypt, but his drama took place in the Caucasus Mountains. Prometheus shares a number of striking similarities with the Christ character including the following:

- Prometheus made the first man and woman out of clay.¹⁷⁶
- He descended from heaven as God incarnate as man, to save mankind.¹⁷⁷
- He had an "especially professed" friend, "Petraeus" (Peter), the fisherman, who deserted him.¹⁷⁸
- Prometheus was crucified,¹⁷⁹ suffered and was unbound¹⁸⁰ or "resurrected."¹⁸¹
- He was called the Logos or Word.¹⁸²

Five centuries before the Christian era, famous Greek playwright Aeschylus wrote *Prometheus Bound*, which was presented in the theater in Athens. Taylor states that in the play Prometheus is crucified "on a fatal tree" and the sky goes dark.¹⁸³

In relating the depiction of Prometheus's death by ancient Roman writer Lucian (c. 125-180 AD/CE), Dr. Martin Hengel remarks:

When describing how his hero is fastened to two rocks in the Caucasus, Lucian uses all the technical terms of a crucifixion: Prometheus is to be nailed to two rocks above a ravine in the sight of all, in such a way as to produce the effect of "a most serviceable cross"...¹⁸⁴

Long before Lucian, Aeschylus had depicted Prometheus's torment using "what was then the technical term for 'crucify.'"¹⁸⁵

The Creation of a Myth

For centuries after obtaining power during the reign of Constantine, Christians went on a censorship rampage that led to the virtual illiteracy of the ancient Western world and ensured that their secret would be hidden from the masses. The scholars of other schools/sects evidently did not easily give up their arguments against the historicizing of a very ancient mythological creature. We have lost the exact arguments of these learned dissenters because Christians destroyed any traces of their works. Nonetheless, the Christians preserved the contentions of their detractors through their own refutations.

For example, early Church Father Tertullian (c. 160-220 AD/CE), an "ex-Pagan" and a presbyter at Carthage, ironically admitted the true origins of the Christ story and other such myths by

¹⁷⁶ Pausanias/Frazer, 220.

¹⁷⁷ Hamilton, E., 25.

¹⁷⁸ Taylor, 193.

¹⁷⁹ Hengel, 11.

¹⁸⁰ Brown, 79.

¹⁸¹ Saladin, 369.

¹⁸² Awad, 267; Taylor, 192.

¹⁸³ Taylor, 192-4.

¹⁸⁴ Hengel, 11.

¹⁸⁵ Brown, 79.

stating in refutation of his critics, "You say we worship the sun; so do you."¹⁸⁶ Interestingly, a previously strident believer and defender of the faith, Tertullian later renounced orthodox Christianity after becoming a Montanist.¹⁸⁷

The "Son" of God is the "Sun" of God¹⁸⁸

The reason these various narratives are so similar, with a godman who is killed or "crucified" and resurrected, who does miracles and has 12 companions or "disciples," is because these stories were based on the movements of the sun through the heavens, an astrotheological development that can be found throughout the world because the sun and the 12 zodiac signs can be observed around the globe. In other words, Jesus Christ and others upon whom this character is predicated are personifications of the sun, and the gospel fable is in large part merely a rehash of a mythological formula revolving around the movements of the sun through the heavens.

For instance, a number of the world's sacrificed, suffering or crucified godmen or sun gods have their traditional birthday on December 25th ("Christmas"). This motif represents the ancient recognition that (from a geocentric perspective in the northern hemisphere) the sun makes an annual descent southward until December 21st or 22nd, the winter solstice, when it stops moving southerly for three days and then starts to move northward again. During this time, the ancients declared that "God's sun" had "died" for three days and was "born again" on December 25th. The ancients realized quite abundantly that they needed the sun to return every day and that they would be in big trouble if it continued to move southward and did not stop and reverse its direction. Thus, these many different cultures celebrated the "sun of God's" birthday on December 25th. The following are the characteristics of the "sun of God"¹⁸⁹:

- The sun "dies" for three days on December 22nd, the winter solstice, when it stops in its movement south, to be born again or resurrected on December 25th, when it resumes its movement north.
- In some areas, the calendar originally began in the constellation of Virgo, and the sun would therefore be "born of a Virgin."¹⁹⁰
- The sun is the "Light of the World."
- The sun "cometh on clouds, and every eye shall see him."
- The sun rising in the morning is the "Savior of mankind," as well as the "healer" or "savior" during the day.
- The sun wears a corona, "crown of thorns" or halo.¹⁹¹
- The sun "walks on water," describing its reflection.
- The sun's "followers," "helpers" or "disciples" are the 12 months and the 12 signs of the zodiac or constellations, through which the sun must pass annually.
- The sun at 12 noon is in the house or temple of the "Most High"; thus, "he" begins "his Father's work" at "age" 12.
- The sun enters into each sign of the zodiac at 30°; hence, the "Sun of God" begins his ministry at "age" 30.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ CE, XIV, 521. This remark represents a paraphrase by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* ("Tertullian") concerning Tertullian's comments in his *Apology* (16). (Roberts, ANF, III, 31.)

¹⁸⁷ Ehrman, 150; Wheless, 144.

¹⁸⁸ The claim is not being made here or elsewhere that the two words "son" and "sun" are related etymologically. It happens to be a "happy coincidence" and a reality in mythology that the "son of God" is the "sun of God." See also the "son-sun" discussion in my ebook, "[Jesus as the Sun throughout History](#)."

¹⁸⁹ For a more complete list of solar characteristics and aspects, see my book [The Christ Conspiracy](#), 154-156.

¹⁹⁰ Other reasons include the moon, Spica, etc.

¹⁹¹ Many of the sun gods are depicted with haloes or rays around their heads, hundreds of years before it became fashionable in Christianity.

- The sun is hung on a cross or "crucified," which represents its passing through the equinoxes, the vernal equinox being Easter, at which time it is then resurrected.

Contrary to popular belief, not all ancients were an ignorant and superstitious lot who actually believed their deities to be literal characters. Indeed, this propaganda has been part of the conspiracy to make the ancients appear as if they were truly the dark and dumb rabble that was in need of the "light of Jesus."

Etymology Tells the Story

The Greek god Zeus, aka "Zeus Patêr," whom we now automatically believe to be a myth and not a historical figure, takes his name from the Indian version, "Dyaus Pitar," the latter term related to the Greek word "patêr," or "father."¹⁹³ "Zeus" equals "Dyaus," which became "Deos," "Deus" and "Dios"—"God." "Zeus Patêr," like Dyaus Pitar, means, "God the Father," a very ancient concept that in no way originated with "Jesus" and Christianity. Dyaus Pitar becomes "Jupiter" in Roman mythology, and likewise is not representative of an actual, historical character. In Egyptian mythology, Ptah, the "father of the gods,"¹⁹⁴ is the unseen god-force, and the sun was viewed as Ptah's visible proxy who brings everlasting life to the earth; hence, the "son of God" is really the "sun of God."

Furthermore, since Horus was evidently called "Iusa,"¹⁹⁵ while Osiris was the "KRST,"¹⁹⁶ centuries before any Jewish character similarly named, it would be safe to assume that Jesus Christ is just a repeat of Horus and Osiris, among others. According to Taylor, the title "Christ" in its Hebraic form meaning "Anointed" ("Masiah") was held by all kings of Israel, as well as being "so commonly assumed by all sorts of impostors, conjurers, and pretenders to supernatural communications, that the very claim to it is in the gospel itself considered as an indication of imposture..."¹⁹⁷

Horus's principal enemy—originally Horus's other face or "dark" aspect—was "Set" or "Sata," whence comes "Satan."¹⁹⁸ Horus struggles with Set in a similar manner that Jesus battles with Satan, with 40 days in the wilderness, among other parallels.¹⁹⁹ The myth represents the triumph of light over dark, or the sun's return to relieve the terror of the night.

"Jerusalem" simply means "City of Peace," and the actual city in Israel may have been named *after* the "holy city of peace" in the Egyptian sacred texts that already existed at the time the city was founded.²⁰⁰ Likewise, "Bethany," site of the famous multiplying of the loaves, means "House of God," and is *allegory* for the "multiplication of the many out of the One."²⁰¹ Any town of that designation was likely named for the allegorical place in the texts that existed before the town's foundation. The Egyptian predecessor and counterpart is "House of Anu," which, with

¹⁹² Evans, 113-114.

¹⁹³ Müller, 21.

¹⁹⁴ Frankfort, 181.

¹⁹⁵ Murdock, *CIE*, 321ff.

¹⁹⁶ Murdock, *CIE*, 313ff.

¹⁹⁷ Taylor, *TD*, 7.

¹⁹⁸ Murdock, *CIE*, 67ff.

¹⁹⁹ Massey, *AELW*, II, 837.

²⁰⁰ Massey, *AELW*, I, 539. Prior to its alleged conquest by David around 1,000 BCE and subsequent occupation by those who came to be called Jews, Jerusalem had been an Egyptian garrison.

²⁰¹ Massey, *HJMC*, 135-136; Kuhn, 18.

the Semitic word for "house," *beth*, would be "Bethanu."²⁰² Interestingly, the town of Bethany is called in Arabic *el-Aziriye*h or *el-Azir*—"Lazarus."²⁰³

²⁰² The Archaeological Institute of America's *Art and Archaeology* (45) relates that "Bethany comes from Beth-Anu, i.e., 'the shrine of the god Anu.'" In his translation of the pre-Nicene New Testament, Dr. Robert M. Price renders the Judean town "Beth-Anu." (Price, 97.)

²⁰³ Ritter, 5.

The Book of Revelation is Egyptian and Zoroastrian

One can find certain allegorical place names such as "Jerusalem" and "Israel" in the New Testament Book of Revelation. Gerald Massey has stated that Revelation, rather than having been written by any apostle called John during the 1st century AD/CE, represents a very ancient text that dates to the beginning of this era of history, i.e. possibly as early as 4,000 years ago.²⁰⁴ Massey also asserts that Revelation relates the Mithraic legend of Zarathustra/Zoroaster.²⁰⁵ Dr. Hilton Hotema says of this mysterious book, which has baffled mankind for centuries: "It is expressed in terms of creative phenomena; its hero is not Jesus but the Sun of the Universe, its heroine is the Moon; and all its other characters are Planets, Stars and Constellations; while its stage-setting comprises the Sky, the Earth, the Rivers and the Sea."²⁰⁶

The word Israel itself, far from being a Jewish appellation, may come from the combination of three different reigning deities: Isis, the Earth Mother Goddess revered throughout the ancient world; Ra, the Egyptian sun god; and El, the Semitic deity passed down in form as Saturn.²⁰⁷ El was one of the earliest names for the god of the ancient Hebrews (whence Emmanu-El, Micha-El, Gabri-El, Samu-El, etc.) and his worship is reflected in the fact that the Jews still consider Saturday as "God's Day."²⁰⁸

Indeed, that the Christians worship on Sunday betrays the genuine origins of their god and godman. Their "savior" is actually the sun, which is the "Light of the world that every eye can see." The sun has been viewed consistently throughout history as the savior of mankind for reasons that are obvious. Without the sun, the planet would scarcely last one day. So important was the sun to the ancients that they composed a "Sun Book," or "Helio Biblia," which became the "Holy Bible."²⁰⁹

The "Patriarchs" and "Saints" are the Gods of Other Cultures

When one studies mythmaking, one can readily discern and delineate a pattern that is repeated throughout history. Often when an invading culture takes over its predecessors, it either vilifies the preceding deities or makes them into lesser gods, "patriarchs" or, in the case of Christianity, "saints." This process may be exemplified in the apparent adoption of the Hindu god Brahma as the Hebrew patriarch Abraham.²¹⁰ Another school of thought proposes that the patriarch Joshua was based on Horus as "Tusa," since the cult of Horus had migrated by this period to the Levant.²¹¹ In this theory, the cult of Joshua, which was situated in exactly the area where the Christ drama allegedly took place, then mutated into the Christian story, with Joshua becoming Jesus.²¹²

The legend of Moses, rather than being that of a historical Hebrew character, is found in germ around the ancient Middle and Far East, with the character having different names and races,

²⁰⁴ Massey, *HJMC*, 3-6.

²⁰⁵ Massey, *HJMC*, 3.

²⁰⁶ Massey, *EBD*, 16.

²⁰⁷ Walker, 143.

²⁰⁸ Park, 359.

²⁰⁹ Hilton Hotema says: "Christianity's Holy Bible was compiled from the Helio Biblia or Sun Book of the ancient Sun Worshipers..." (Massey, *EBD*, 2.) As it is not supported by mainstream etymology, this purported cognate of "holy" and "helios" can be accepted as a *play on words* to illustrate a point.

²¹⁰ For a discussion of the Hebrew patriarch Abraham possibly being the Indian god Brahma, see my books [The Christ Conspiracy](#), [Suns of God](#) and [The Gospel According to Acharya S](#).

²¹¹ See my book *Suns of God* for more on the pre-Christian Joshua cult.

²¹² Robertson, *PC*, 154.

depending on the locale: "Menu" is the Indian legislator²¹³; "Mises" appears in Syria and Egypt,²¹⁴ where also the first king, "Menes, the lawgiver" takes the stage²¹⁵; "Minos" is the Cretan reformer²¹⁶; "Mannus" the German lawgiver²¹⁷; and the Ten Commandments are simply a repetition of the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi and the Egyptian Book of the Dead, among others.²¹⁸ Like Moses, in the Mahabharata the Indian son of the Sun God named Karna was placed by his mother in a reed boat and set adrift in a river to be discovered by another woman.²¹⁹ A century ago, Massey outlined that even the Exodus itself is not a historical event, an opinion now shared by many archaeologists and scholars. That the historicity of the Exodus has been questioned is echoed by the lack of any archaeological record, as is reported in *Biblical Archaeology Review* ("BAR"), September/October 1994.²²⁰

Like many biblical characters, Noah is also a myth,²²¹ long ago appropriated from the Egyptians, the Sumerians and others, as any sophisticated scholar could demonstrate. There have been floods and deluge stories in many different parts of the world, including but not limited to the Middle East. The so-called Flood of Noah may refer to the annual flooding of the Nile—an event that was incorporated in Egyptian mythology. However, it is also yet another part of ancient mythology.

Additionally, the "Esther" of the Old Testament Book of Esther appears to be a remake of the Goddess Ishtar, Astarte, Astoreth or Isis, from whom evidently comes "Easter"²²² and about whose long and ubiquitous reign little is said in "God's infallible Word." Per Harwood, "Esther" is best transliterated "Ishtar" and "Mordechai" is "Mardukay."²²³

The Virgin Mother/Goddess/Queen of Heaven motif is found around the globe, long before the Christian era, with Isis, for instance, also being called "Meri" or "Mery."²²⁴

Even the Hebraic name of God, "Yahweh," was possibly taken from the Egyptian "IAO."²²⁵

The "Disciples" are the Signs of the Zodiac

It is no accident that there are 12 patriarchs and 12 disciples, 12 being the number of the months and astrological signs. Indeed, like the 12 Herculean tasks and the 12 "helpers" of Horus, Jesus's 12 disciples are symbolic for the zodiacal signs and do not depict any literal figures who played out a drama upon the earth circa 30 AD/CE.²²⁶ Each of the disciples can be shown to correspond to an earlier deity, folkloric hero, constellation or other figure.²²⁷ This "coincidence" did not escape the notice of the Christian world.

²¹³ See Franklin, Ketkar. Variant transliterations are "Manu" and "Manou."

²¹⁴ See the discussion of Dionysus, Mises and Moses in [The Gospel According to Acharya S.](#)

²¹⁵ Bennett, 121; *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24. Variations include "Men" and "Manes."

²¹⁶ Rollin, 438.

²¹⁷ *JNCBRAS*, 24.

²¹⁸ The 125th chapter of the Egyptian Book of the Dead is commonly cited as a probable influence on the Decalogue.

²¹⁹ Buitenen, 779.

²²⁰ The BAR article nevertheless seeks to prove that the Exodus is historical. See also Finkelstein's *The Bible Unearthed*.

²²¹ See Bierlein's chapter, "The Flood Myths." See also Walker, 730, et al.

²²² Walker, 285-286; Murdock, *CIE*, 389ff.

²²³ Harwood, 230.

²²⁴ See [Christ in Egypt](#), 124ff.

²²⁵ In his *pre-Christian* book about Egypt, Diodorus Siculus relates that the Jewish god was viewed as the same as the "IAO." (Murdock, *CIE*, 324.) This divine epithet has been found in various places, including Egypt.

²²⁶ For more information on the motif of the 12, see *Christ in Egypt*, 261ff.

²²⁷ See, e.g., J.M. Roberts, 182.

For example, Peter can be revealed to be a mythological character,²²⁸ while Judas has been said to represent Scorpio, "the backbiter," the time of year when the sun's rays are weakening and the sun appears to be dying.²²⁹ It is interesting to note that, in the Egyptian story from pre-Christian times, Horus was said to have been killed by Set, in the form of a scorpion.

James, "brother of Jesus" and "brother of the Lord," may be equivalent to Amset, brother of Osiris the Lord.²³⁰ Massey says that "Taht-Matiu was the scribe of the gods, and in Christian art Matthew is depicted as the scribe of the gods, with an angel standing near him, to dictate the gospel."²³¹

Was Jesus an Essene Master?

As regards Jesus being an Essene according to "secret" Dead Sea Scrolls, even before the discovery of the scrolls, over the centuries there has been much speculation to this effect, but Massey, for one, skillfully argued that many of Jesus's presumed teachings were either in contradiction to or were non-existent in Essene philosophy. Indeed, Jesus's character and many of his actions were utterly contrary to the notion of him being a great Essene healer.²³²

The Essenes did not believe in corporeal resurrection, nor did they believe in a carnalized messiah. The scrolls at Qumran have been dated to between 150 BCE and 70 AD/CE, and, based on the later scrolls, in which the writers never mention Christ or Christianity, they evidently did not accept the historicity of Jesus, if they had even heard of him. They were not followers of the Hebrew Bible, or its prophets, or the concept of the original fall that must produce a savior. Massey further points out that the Essenes were teetotalers and ate to live rather than the other way around. Compared to this, the assumed Essene Jesus appears to be a glutton and drunkard. Also, whereas according to Josephus the Essenes abhorred the swearing of oaths, Jesus was fond of "swearing unto" his disciples. While many Essenic doctrines are included in the New Testament, the list of disparities between the "Essenes" and their alleged great master Jesus goes on.²³³

Qumran is Not an Essene Community

It should also be noted that there is another debate as to whether or not Qumran, the site traditionally associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls, was an Essene community at all. In BAR, previously cited, it is reported that archaeological finds indicate Qumran was *not* an Essene community but was possibly a waystation for travelers and merchants crossing the Dead Sea. It has also been hypothesized in BAR that the fervent tone and warrior-stance of some of the scrolls unearthed near Qumran belie any Essene origin and indicate a possible attribution to Jewish Zealots instead. In *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Norman Golb makes a very good case that the Dead Sea Scrolls were not written by any Essene scribes but were a collection of tomes from various libraries that were secreted in caves throughout eastern Israel by Jews fleeing the Roman armies during the First Revolt of 70 AD/CE. Golb also hypothesizes that Qumran itself was a fortress, not a monastery. In any case, it is impossible to equate the "Teacher of Righteousness" found in any scrolls with a "historical" Jesus Christ.

²²⁸ See, e.g., Walker, 663.

²²⁹ Lewis, 225; Anderson, 210.

²³⁰ Massey, *NG*, 466. For more on the Four "Brothers" of Horus, see *Christ in Egypt*, 272ff.

²³¹ Massey, *HJMC*, 157.

²³² Massey, *GML*, 77.

²³³ See Massey, *Gnostic and Historic Christianity*.

Was the New Testament Composed by Therapeuts?

In 1829, Taylor adeptly made the case that the gospel story was essentially in existence before the Christ's purported advent and was probably composed by the monks at Alexandria called "Therapeuts" in Greek, meaning "healers." This theory has stemmed in part from the statement of Eusebius, who "admitted...that the canonical Christian gospels and epistles were the ancient writings of the Essenes or Therapeutae reproduced in the name of Jesus."²³⁴

According to Massey, it was Pagan "Gnostics"—who included members of the Essene/Therapeut and Nazarene brotherhoods, among others—who actually carried to Rome the esoteric (gnostic) texts containing the mythos, upon which the numerous gospels, including the canonical four, were based. Wheless says, "Obviously, the Gospels and other New Testament booklets, written in Greek and quoting 300 times the Greek Septuagint, and several Greek Pagan authors, as Aratus, and Cleanthes, were written, not by illiterate Jewish peasants, but by Greek-speaking ex-Pagan Fathers and priests far from the Holy Land of the Jews."²³⁵ G.R.S. Mead averred, "We thus conclude that the autographs of our four Gospels were most probably written in Egypt..."²³⁶

Conclusion

As Walker says, "Scholars' efforts to eliminate paganism from the Gospels in order to find a historical Jesus have proved as hopeless as searching for a core in an onion."²³⁷ The "gospel" story of Jesus is not a factual portrayal of a historical "master" who walked the earth 2,000 years ago. It is a myth built upon other myths and godmen, who in turn were personifications of the ubiquitous sun god mythos.

The Christ of the gospels is in no sense an historical personage or a supreme model of humanity, a hero who strove, and suffered, and failed to save the world by his death. It is impossible to establish the existence of an historical character even as an impostor. For such an one the two witnesses, astronomical mythology and gnosticism, completely prove an alibi. The Christ is a popular lay-figure that never lived, and a lay-figure of Pagan origin; a lay-figure that was once the Ram and afterwards the Fish; a lay-figure that in human form was the portrait and image of a dozen different gods.

Gerald Massey, *The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ* (169)

²³⁴ Massey, *NG*, II, 419.

²³⁵ Wheless, 185.

²³⁶ Mead, 180.

²³⁷ Walker, 469.

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