

WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED IN ANOTHER WORLD?

Earl Doherty and many others believe that the first Christians never believed in a Jesus who lived on earth but in one who lived and was crucified and slain in the spirit world or another world and who appeared on earth after his resurrection from the dead.

TRANSFIGURATION

Second Peter states that the apostles did not give out cleverly devised myths when they revealed to the world the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus but were eyewitnesses to a visionary event, the transfiguration, that revealed the majesty of Jesus (1:16). In other words, a vision verified the power and coming of Jesus. It doesn't hint that it means the second coming of Christ. It just says coming. The vision he recounts said nothing or indicated nothing about a second coming. Second Peter is plainly saying that Jesus' power and coming had to be revealed to the apostles in a vision. He was not heard of before. This supports the idea that there was no Jesus known of until some people claimed to be having visions of this being who claimed to have been crucified and died and rose again. Could this being have claimed to have been crucified not on earth but another world?

CRUCIFIED BY ANGELS IN SPIRIT WORLD?

Paul declared that none of the rulers of the world or the age knew that God's ways are strange to us and that he brings us to Heaven for if they had they would not have crucified Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:8).

There are two interpretations for what Paul means by rulers. Choose the one you want.

One: Rulers who crucified Jesus are human kings and princes.

The standard Christian view is that these rulers are Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas the high priest of the Jews.

If this view is correct then the gospels are unreliable because they say Pilate was forced to execute Jesus and Caiaphas did not have Jesus crucified and was never said to have wanted that to happen to Jesus. He was the high priest of the Jews and so could not afford to scandalise his religion by advocating a form of execution that was against his religion. In Pilate's case, you can't say he would not have killed Jesus had he known who he was for Pilate felt he had no choice.

If Paul meant the political leaders, they did not know Jesus who taught such things. Yet the gospels say that Jesus was well known so that would mean Paul is denying the gospels.

Suppose Paul wrote that the rulers are the human rulers of the world. That suggests all the rulers of the world which again contradicts the gospels. He did not need to say rulers of the world if he meant a few rulers so he meant all rulers of the world.

Some say the context shows human rulers are meant for verse 6 says they will pass away and they are called men. But Paul means passing away by losing their power. You could talk that way if the rulers were still alive but not rulers anymore. If it's human rulers then Paul is saying that the whole world executed Jesus, which contradicts the gospels. This Jesus seems to have died in the distant past when Paul thinks all the rulers were hell-bent on killing him and succeeded. If there is no hint of the rulers being supernatural beings then they are natural rulers. They are earthmen.

Colossians 2:15 says that Jesus openly aired the dirty linen of the rulers by dying on the cross and triumphing over them on the cross. It means he atoned for sins on the cross. The resurrection is not mentioned. It does not say who nailed him. It just says he triumphed over the rulers. The verse says that he made public fools of them on the cross. Why the cross not the resurrection? It is not logical to say the cross made fools of Jesus' enemies for it was not really a triumph - the resurrection was the triumph. The text so far indicates that Jesus dying without any leaders being there and having nobody around him but mockers is a gospel tale and a false one at that.

Who are the rulers?

If the text means earthly rulers then this differs from the gospels which say that Jesus did not show up and humiliate and disarm the rulers of the earth by dying. The gospels say it was not Pilate or Rome's fault that Jesus was killed and says that his death had more to do with the Jewish people than the rulers. If it refers to human rulers then Jesus did not rise from the dead in the first century but some time in the distant past or in another world when he made a fool of the kings and

destroyed their kingly powers and overthrew them. He became king by dying on the cross and putting people right with God by this sacrificial death.

What supports the human ruler interpretation is the fact that nothing in the context indicates supernatural rulers. Some say Paul wrote in the context that we must not be deceived by philosophies about elemental spirits. But that was already refuted by his saying that Jesus was the image of the invisible God and the only supernatural being we need so that being dealt with has no link to the rulers mentioned later. Later he writes that the cross cancelled all the penalties we would have to pay for our sins and humiliated the rulers and therefore nobody must judge us in questions of food and drink or new moons or get us to worship angels. This would mean human regulations because earthly rulers try to tell you what to eat and drink and how and what to worship. Some would argue that the rulers were spiritual for getting rid of them frees us from their rules about food and angels and feasts. But what Paul could have meant was that it is not getting rid of the rulers that does this but the work of the cross. The cross frees us for it gives us strength to stand up to these people. He makes it clear he means human beings for he says we are not to tell them tell us what to do or judge us for the cross has saved us from their rules: "Let no one sit in judgement on you" (Colossians 2:16).

So Colossians is telling us that Jesus lived in the far distant past.

Haley in his *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* (page 358) observes that the Bible says that the rulers did not know Jesus (John 16:3; Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8). Matthew said different (21:38).

He resolves the conflict by saying that the rulers who did not know were meant in the first case and the ones who did know in the second. This accuses the God who supposedly wrote the Bible of slander for he did not exclude anybody when he condemned the rulers.

And also, Haley says that the knowledge Jesus meant was the experience of knowing that Jesus saved you. But the verses could mean ordinary knowledge therefore they do mean it. Remember, don't go for a complex explanation when a simpler one will do.

Two: Rulers are angels

Paul sometimes calls the evil angels that rule the world rulers and dominions and thrones. In Christian and Jewish literature the idea that there were such rulers was shown to be extremely widespread among the people (Revelation 19:17; 7:1; 14:18; Jubilees 2:2; 1 Enoch 60:17). Probability alone then shows that Paul meant supernatural rulers for he would have been clear if he meant earthly rulers. He called them archons which is the word for supernatural angelic rules and demons. Ephesians 1:21 says that God put Christ over all the rulers and them under his feet. Jesus did not do this with the earthly rulers for they could not be under his feet until they submit to him. The Church might say that he did for he is the real boss. But this would be as true of him before the resurrection as after for he was still the Son of God.

The rulers could be angels but still be called men. The angel that fought with Jacob was called a man. Jesus claimed to be a supernatural messenger of God though he claimed to be a man too.

1 Peter 3:22 says that when Jesus went into Heaven all the angels and rulers were made to obey him. The rulers are rebel supernatural beings for he had to go to Heaven to make them do what he wanted. He had to force them.

The view that the rulers who executed Jesus are evil or hostile angelic powers that Christ battered into submission by his crucifixion is to be considered proven (GA Wells Replies to Criticism of His Books on Jesus). See also Kittel's *Standard Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

The angelic rulers put Jesus to death by nailing him to a cross. He did not die in public. If he was killed on earth then it was a crucifixion that no human eye seen because it was supernatural beings that performed the crucifixion. He could have been crucified in the spirit world.

The Christians might say that the rulers used human beings to kill Jesus so the gospels could still be right. But why then did they go to so much trouble to get rid of Jesus? They were not likely to for Paul says they did not know who he was (1 Corinthians 2:8, 9) so if they wanted rid of him they would have done their dirty work themselves. And would Paul talk as if angels crucified Jesus if men did it? If John kills Mary in a car crash you don't say the devil killed her though the Devil being evil would be the ultimate cause. There is no reason at all to believe the angels killed Jesus through men. When the epistles which were for teaching the basics didn't say men were used men were not used. Period.

The Ascension of Isaiah says "The Lord, who will be called Christ, will descend into the world,...the God of that world will stretch out his hand against the Son, and they will lay hands on him and crucify him on a tree, without knowing who he is" (9:4). 11:19 says this God was Satan who turned the Children of Israel against Christ. Jesus then was probably crucified

not by men but by angels in Heaven or some other non-earthly realm. The rulers of the world implies that Jesus did no miracles and gave no evidence of being sinless and therefore the supreme prophet and contradicts the gospels which say Jesus was known to the evil angels. The Ascension of Isaiah claims that the death of Jesus took place in secret (www.st-and.ac.uk/~www_sd/jconf_hall.html, Jesus Conference). The Ascension dates from the early second century. (See: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~www_sd/jconf_stuckenbruck.html).

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Our conclusion is, if the rulers of the world that crucified Jesus were men or if they were angels then Jesus was not crucified the way the gospels say. If it were the rulers of the world then Jesus died thousands of years before Paul. If it were angels then no human being may have known about the crucifixion until it was revealed in visions. This does not make it likely then that Jesus really existed.

If this is earthly rulers then this differs from the gospels which say that Jesus did not show up and humiliate and disarm the rulers of the earth by dying. The gospels say it was not Pilate or Rome's fault that Jesus was killed and says that his death had more to do with the Jewish people than the rulers. If it refers to human rulers then Jesus did not rise from the dead in the first century but some time in the distant past or in another world when he made a fool of the kings and destroyed their kingly powers and overthrew them. He became king by dying on the cross and putting people right with God by this sacrificial death.

There is no evidence that Jesus ever died of crucifixion in the first century.

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