

THE JEWS AND BALAAM - BALAAM WAS JESUS?

The Jewish traditions seem to confuse the Old Testament nasty prophet and fraud, Balaam, with Jesus. At times it looks that way, but Balaam is definitely a code for Jesus who was considered so vile that it was better to compliment him by calling him the name of religious villain Balaam. The four gospels give us the account of Jesus' alleged life and there are remarkable differences between them and the Jewish accounts. But there are broad similarities too.

Jewish tradition completely ignores the gospels and gives information that tallies with them only a little. Were the Jews scared of drawing attention to the gospels? Some of this tradition was created before the gospels went public. And to mention Jesus at all was enough to draw some to study the gospels so the answer is no. And Christianity was weak at that time anyway, which gave the Jews the advantage if they wanted an onslaught on the gospels. When the Talmud ignored the gospels it showed that they were considered to be too ridiculous to be worth refuting. The Talmud implies that the gospels are not evidence for Jesus or anything about him.

The Talmud calls Jesus Balaam. Balaam was true prophet of God according to the Bible who was asked to curse Israel but didn't. Numbers 24:1 says he stopped looking for signs in nature about what God's will was. But omens are only superstition when God does not speak through them for God could speak through signs of nature. So, why does the Talmud praise Jesus by calling him Balaam? It is not meant as praise but hints that Jesus did claim to be a prophet of God. And Jesus did curse the Jews.

Some think it was because Balaam went off on a donkey on a mission forbidden by God and that Jesus committed the same sin when he entered Jerusalem on a donkey. Some dubiously argue that this is improbable for it would not be a clear enough comparison and would be too unimportant to emphasise by name-calling and it is supposed to be meant to be a terrible sarcastic insult in that case. The donkey is part of the Balaam iconography and that is that. It could have got Jesus the Balaam nickname.

The Talmud sometimes makes a distinction between Jesus and Balaam. The same man or magician or demon can have two names. Perhaps Jesus was claimed or claimed to be Balaam reincarnated. Perhaps the Jesus story was based on Balaam, that is that Balaam was Jesus? The gospels did mine writings to weave their plots. Balaam is best seen as a figure of Jesus and a nickname.

In Jewish tradition, Chanina was asked Balaam's age and he said there was no record but he pointed to the Old Testament for a clue. The clue threw up an age about 33 which would match Jesus. The questioner went that he read a record saying "At 33 years, Balaam the lame was killed by Pinchas /Phineas the bandit." That allegedly came from a Chronicle of Balaam.

It is believed that the Jews accused Jesus of blood and murder when they wrote that men of blood and deceit shall die young -Sanhedrin 106b. This assertion was inspired by Psalm 55:23. "Hast thou heard how old Balaam (Jesus) was?—He replied: It is not actually stated but since it is written, Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days it follows that he was thirty-three or thirty-four years old."

The Jews typically think that this figure is not Jesus Christ. But it might be and still shows that there were other Jesus style figures around.

Yet the age matches. The Jews did not consider the gospels to stand as a record so that is why there is no record cited. Also, the Jews did feel that Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament but not in the way the Christians want to think! And there is a hint in Luke that Jesus had an impairment perhaps lameness. He joked that the people will be quoting doctor cure yourself at him! Tradition hinted that Jesus was lame in addition to this.

Ahmed Osman noticed that the Talmud says that Moses wrote the Book of Numbers and the bit about Balaam meaning Jesus (page 35, The House of the Messiah). This states that Balaam was Jesus. It need not mean that Jesus lived in Moses' day except that Jesus was the same person as Balaam but was Balaam's future life. Jesus is Balaam as in same man and may be Balaam back from the dead or some supernatural realm.

The Talmud treats Balaam as somebody important to know about when it says that Moses wrote a book with information on Balaam in it (b.B. Bathr. 14b). The Talmud is then saying that Balaam is a very very important person when such an important man as Moses wrote a book about him. It also indicates that the Talmud saw Balaam as very important and you are only important if you are well known or if a book can make you important. So the Talmud is indicating that Jesus is Balaam because Jesus was important. Balaam in the Bible was not important so this Balaam was Jesus. The Talmud does

not emphasise Balaam except when he is called Jesus so Balaam must be Jesus (page 35, The House of the Messiah). The Talmud says that Pinhas, a priest, killed Jesus-Balaam. Pinhas lived in Moses' time according to the Torah.

The Talmud is saying that Jesus lived in the time of Moses and was Balaam.

He Walked Among Us argues that it is not (page 61). It gives a quote that simply says that Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi were commoners and the kings, Jereboam, Ahab and Manasseh will have no part in the salvation to come. Then another one says that the disciples of Balaam the wicked shall inherit the destruction of Gehenna for God says that liars who kill will not see half their lives. None of that says that Balaam didn't live in the time of Moses.

The book maintains that there was no reason to hide the identity of Jesus under the name of Balaam. This shows the duplicity of the book because the Talmud and its Mishna did not mean to hide Jesus. Either they were just inferring that Jesus' name was too evil to be mentioned much or that they didn't want to give much evidence that he existed or found the evidence so appalling that they kept getting Jesus confused with other people. When Jesus was clearly mentioned a few times when it was not really necessary it cannot be true that they didn't want to mention his evil name. The book then contradicts its first objection by saying that the rabbis called Jesus such and such to avoid naming him. Then what did they call him Balaam for? Then the book says that Balaam could not have been a nickname for Jesus for Balaam was not an Israelite! Ugh! What kind of logic is this? The Jews believed that Jesus wasn't a proper Israelite. Anyway, the Law allowed racial mixing so there would have been a few Israelites of mixed origin about. Balaam could have been a half-Israelite down the line somewhere. If it was a nickname it had nothing to do with race. The nickname was meant solely to insult Jesus.

The book says that the Balaam name could be a cover for some others. It could but when the Talmud hates mentioning Jesus by name he is the number one person being covered and there is no point in writing about somebody who want to blacken and hiding them too much unless the readers will know who you mean in which case there is no hiding intended. Then it is said that some of the passages about Balaam are late and have no historical reliability if they mean Jesus. Then despite this assertion the book then quotes a late passage that has the two men Jesus and Balaam existing side by side so it is willing to use this as proof that he wasn't just a nickname for Jesus though it says late texts can't be used that way. And there could have been a real Balaam who Jesus got nicknamed after!

The passage says that Balaam prophesied that a man would deceive the world by claiming to be God and that nobody should listen to that man. This here is worth quoting, "He will deceive and say that he departed and cometh again at the end. He saith and he shall not perform" (page 62). This appears to refer to the ascension and second coming of Christ. Departed may refer to departing this world in death and coming again at the end may refer to the resurrection at the end of the world. The passage said that the man was not God because God cannot lie and it sought to prove that Jesus did lie and the failure of his prediction was the proof of that. Obviously, the second coming at the end of the world or the resurrection of Jesus taking place at the end of the world and not happening before then will prove nothing to us now for we don't know yet if Jesus was a liar. We need to have tangible proof for the prophecy to mean anything to us. Anybody can make prophecies about the distant future. If Jesus went away vowing to return at the end of the world or if Jesus died and will not come back from the dead until the general resurrection at the end he must have been a liar for God would come back from the dead sooner. The resurrection interpretation is the most likely one. This is what the passage is driving at: Jesus did not rise and so was a liar when he said he was God for God would rise.

The passage says that Balaam spoke this message to the whole world. It could be that Balaam was Jesus and that the fake God-man he warned against was the Antichrist who would depart and promise to return at the end of the world his departure having taken place at that time as well. Perhaps the Antichrist was the gospel Jesus who came pretending to be Jesus-Balaam the true prophet of God and who perhaps looked like him and managed to take over his life by stealing his identity. Maybe this Jesus was an evil spirit who tricked people to think there was a historical Jesus. Paul said the antichrist would be an impostor and a false Christ and Revelation says the Antichrist will be dealt a mortal blow and then seem to come back to life. Jesus did speak to the world and warn against false messiahs which supports this interpretation. There is no evidence that the biblical Balaam spoke to the world. And why would the Jews want to believe that Balaam, an unimportant figure, made such a prophecy instead of Moses or Isaiah or somebody? So, the passage must contain early material that has evidential strength and it must mean to be honest. The Jews had traditions that Balaam was Jesus and Jesus Balaam lived many centuries before Christianity surfaced in the first century.

To recap, Balaam refuted the gospel Jesus as a false portrait and Balaam himself was the real Jesus according to traditions.

Balaam's prophecy states that the man will be born of woman. This is to stress that the man was born the normal way for it wants to show that this man will have no right to claim to be God because of that. If the man were virgin born it would be more likely for him to be God. The Talmud says that the other Jesus was an enemy of the Jewish religion and nobody could call him up for his advice. It also suggests that this Jesus did not rise again bodily when Titus was called first and then Balaam and Jesus last. If Jesus had risen from the dead in any form or irrefutably thought to have risen he would have been

called first. Klausner dates this passage earlier than the above one which was written before 260 AD when the Rabbi who was behind it died (page 62). This could suggest that Jesus never rose. It could suggest that nobody who might have known said he did making the resurrection only hearsay. Or that this was another Jesus and possibly the one the secular historians, like Josephus, meant. The passage did not mean to hint the things that are so detrimental to Christianity for it would be more up-front if it did which bolsters their importance. It does not prove that the Christian Jesus was not Balaam.

John 5:46 has Jesus saying Moses wrote about him so the Jews should believe in him which may support the identification of Jesus with Balaam for Moses certainly never clearly wrote about Jesus but he did write about Balaam according to tradition. Christians will point out that Moses said a prophet like him will come but that could have been anybody and would not entitle Jesus to say Moses wrote about him and Jesus proved it was not this he meant when he told the Jews they don't believe in Moses when they deny what he wrote. Perhaps, the writer of John did not realise the import of what he reported. Worse the writing of Moses Jesus had in mind said that the prophesied person would come from their midst so he could have been Joshua as well. The context says that the Hebrews must not listen to fortune-tellers like the other nations for they will have a prophet like Moses so it had to be the person who succeeds Moses as prophet and who is as convincing as Moses which Jesus was not. Did Jesus do miracles that all the people saw like Moses when God came down to talk to Moses on Sinai?

An older passage from the Babylonian Talmud says that a man called Onkelos used spells to call up Titus, Balaam and Jesus for he sought to know if he should become a convert to Judaism. Jesus told him that Israel was the most important thing in the world and anybody who hurt it would boil in filth and that to hurt it was to hurt God. This is supposed to prove that Balaam was not Jesus. But the passage merely reports these visions and does not say if they were true or false. But still, it is surprising that Jesus got such a positive treatment. This suggests that this Jesus was not the Jesus of the Christian gospels but another healer and prophet.

The problem with the Babylonian Talmud is the fact that it is hard to date what is in it and anything plausible it says is weak in value because of that. But weak or not the story is very believable and should still be used as evidence against Christ particularly when it makes attacks against Christ that were so subtle that nobody knew them. The sly Josh McDowell takes the assertion of the Amoraim in the Babylonian Talmud as evidence for Jesus but does not give any hint that it is reliable enough.

In another Talmud passage the necromancer Onkelos Bar Kalonikus calls up Balaam from the dead. He asked Israel who is honoured in the spirit world and Balaam replied, "Israel" and said that the peace and welfare of Israel must never be sought. Then the magician called up Yeshu or Jesus from the dead. Jesus also said that Israel was honoured in the spirit world and commanded, "Seek their good. Do not seek their bad. Whoever touches them is as if he touched the pupil of his eye." Onkelos asked Jesus: "What is your punishment?" Jesus or Yeshu answered, "In boiling excrement. As the master said: Whoever mocks the words of the sages is punished in boiling excrement." Onkelos converted to Judaism and was highly regarded.

It is thought that the episode proves that Jesus and Balaam were not the same person. But the real Balaam could have been called up. Jesus was only called Balaam as a nickname. And the teaching that the summoned up Jesus gives matches what the New Testament Jesus would say. He claimed he was being punished with boiling excrement in the afterlife.

The fact that Balaam Jesus was thought to have lived very very long before the first century means that the Jews had nobody in the same century that they could pin down as being Jesus Christ. Jesus did not live in the first century. The gospels which say he did are false.