

DOES INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE SHOW DOHERTY IS WRONG TO SAY JESUS DID NOT EXIST?

Jesus Neither God or Man The Case for a Mythical Christ by Earl Doherty is an interesting read. It says the original Jesus was a myth figure not a historical one. Christians try to attack that view by saying there is evidence that this man lived.

What about what purports to be independent testimony about Jesus? What about Tacitus who said Pilate nailed Christ?

Doherty is right to say that the bit where Tacitus insults Rome by saying it is where all hideous movements and ideas in the world make their centre is an interference. Tacitus would not demean Rome like that. And Jerusalem was the centre of Christianity then. It sounds like an attempt to make Rome the head centre of the Church which happened some time later. So how reliable is our text? We do not know if we can trust it about Christ who incidentally is not said to be Jesus.

Doherty asks why a forger of the testimony of Josephus to Jesus put it where it is instead of naturally after the bit where he wrote about John the Baptist? That could imply the gospels which inseparably linked the two are lying. Doherty shows that Eusebius wrote that the testimony was positioned where Josephus wrote about Pilate. That is in book 18 but before the John material. It is not there now! It is suspect if the testimony was moving around. What else was going on?

Josephus in the current text mentions James the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ. Here is the James text. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done - Flavius Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews Book 20.

The logic is that if Jesus had any chance of being Messiah then James would be in line to the throne and would have had feared royal blood. What if the names have been swapped? What if originally it was, "he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of James, who was called Christ, whose name was Jesus"? Why is James not considered a Christ or potential claimant? Josephus sounds definite that those people had no royal blood. Jesus was a common name and if James's parents married twice there could have been more than one Jesus in the family.

Doherty points out that Justin Martyr told Trypho that the Jews have ordained ministers to go everywhere saying Jesus was a Galilean sham whose disciples stole him from his grave to pretend that he rose from the dead and is now in Heaven. The idea that they went to all that effort when there is so much silence about Jesus is insane. Justin is lying. Why? It sounds like a boast in a way. It is making Jesus out to be so important that the Jewish religion just turned into a debunking industry over him!

Trypho accused the Christians of saying Jesus was crucified and ascended (Dialogue with Trypho, chapter 29). So he was saying it was just their word one had to take for the crucifixion.

Doherty refers to Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth — manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? Surely no such event as this is recorded for a long period. But it was a darkness induced by God, because the Lord happened then to suffer. And calculation makes out that the period of 70 weeks, as noted in Daniel, is completed at this time."

There had to be tombs that were opened thanks to earthquakes getting the stones to come free and break. It was easy to invent a tomb story for Jesus when that was the inspiration. His tomb was supposedly found with the stone rolled away.

I just wish to stress how it mentions rocks begin torn apart and says that the earthquake was universal. It is a miracle if this happened and nobody has recorded it or mentioned it apart from one or two.

Doherty quotes the Toledoth to argue that the Jesus story is legend and so the gospels are legend too. They diverge from the gospels hugely. I would remark that if the Jews were not consulting the gospels to get the facts right or half-right then that shows how sure they were that they were insignificant nonsense. Maybe the Jews knew best?

I wish to quote the Toledoth.

Then, taking him out from the place of which they stoned him to death. Then the wise men commanded him to be hung on a tree, but no tree was found that could support him, for all, being frail, were broken. His disciples seeing this, wailed and cried out, Behold the goodness of our Master Yeshu, whom no tree will sustain. But they knew not that he had enchanted all wood when he was in possession of the name. But he knew that he would surely suffer the penalty of hanging, as it is written, When any man shall be judged to death for an offense and shall be put to death, then you shall hang him. Then Judas, when he saw that no wood would hold him up, said to the wise men, Behold the subtlety of this fellow, for he has enchanted the wood that it might not sustain him. But there is in my garden a great stem of a cabbage [carob tree?]; I will go and bring it here; perhaps it will hold the body. To whom the wise men said, Go and do so. So Judas went at once and brought the stalk, and on it Yeshu was hanged. Toward night the wise men said, It is lawful for us to break one letter of the divine law in regard to this fellow; we must do to him what the law demands, even though he did seduce men. Therefore, they buried him where he was stoned.

MY COMMENT: This is clearly Jesus Christ. Remember how the Jews were asking for trouble by saying they hanged Jesus. That shows how convinced they were that they had. That would refute the crucifixion. For all we know, Jesus could have been removed from the tree dead and then crucified by some one trying to make a spectacle of him. All they had to do was nail him to something. It didn't have to be an official crucifixion as the Romans would have engaged in.

Now about the middle of the night his disciples came and sat down by the grave under the brook. Judas, seeing this, took away the body and hid it in his garden under a brook. Diverting the water elsewhere, he buried the body in the channel and then brought the water back. On the morrow, when the disciples came again and sat down to weep, Judas said to them, Why do you weep? Look and see if the buried man is there. And when they looked and found he was not there, the miserable crowd cried out, He is not in the grave but has ascended to heaven. For he foretold this himself when alive, and as if concerning himself the saying was interpreted, But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me; Selah.

MY COMMENT: Jesus's body was removed by Judas and thrown into a river? Judas was indeed probably alive when Jesus was buried.

Meanwhile, the Queen, finding out what had been done, commanded the wise men of Israel to appear; and when they came she said to them, What have you done with this man who you have accused of being a sorcerer and a seducer of men? They answered, We have buried him according to the requirement of our law. Then she said, Bring him here to me. And they went and sought for him in the grave, but did not find him. Then returning to the Queen, they said, We know not who has taken him from the grave. The queen answered and said, He is the Son of God and has ascended to his Father in heaven; for thus it is prophesized for him, For he shall receive me; Selah. Then the wise men said, Do not allow these thoughts into your mind, for surely he was a sorcerer; and they gave proof by their own testimony that he was a bastard and the son of an adulteress. The Queen replied, Why do I exchange words with you in vain? For if you bring him here, you shall be found innocent, but if not, none of you will survive. They all responded in these words: Give us time that we can determine the outcome of this affair. Perhaps we may find him there, but if we do not succeed, do unto us whatever pleases you. She allowed them three days time, and they departed, grieved at heart, lamenting, and not knowing what to do.

Therefore they ordered a fast, and when the appointed time came and they had not found the body, many left Jerusalem to escape the sight of the Queen. Among the rest went a certain old man named Rabbi Tanchuma. He in great sorrow, wandering the fields, saw Judas sitting in his own garden, eating. Coming up to him, Rabbi Tanchuma said, How is this? Why do you take food when all the Jews fast and are in sore distress? Judas, greatly astounded, inquired why they fasted. Rabbi Tanchuma replied, It is because of the bastard who has been hung and buried near the place of stoning; he has been taken away from the grave, and none of us know who has taken him. But his worthless disciples declare that he has gone up to heaven, and the Queen threatened all of us Israelites with death unless we find him. Then Judas asked, If this fellow shall be found, will it bring safety to the Israelites? Rabbi Tanchuma said, Indeed it will. Then said Judas, Come, and I will show you the man, for I took him away from the grave because I feared that perhaps the impious followers might steal him from the tomb, and I hid him in my garden, and made the brook run over him. Then Rabbi Tanchuma hastened to the wise men of Israel and related the matter.

Therefore they all assembled, and tying the body to a horse's tail, brought it and threw it down before the Queen, saying, Behold the man of whom you have said, He has gone up to heaven. When the Queen saw him, she was overwhelmed with shame and unable to speak. Moreover, while the body was dragged about for some time, the hair of the head was pulled out. And this is the reason why now the hair of a monk is shaved off in the middle of the head; it is done in remembrance of what happened to Yeshu.

MY COMMENT: Like Magalene, if the Jews had any sense they would simply just say that they don't know who stole the body. They would not really be blaming his disciples.

Ben Stada was hanged according to Jewish lore and he seems to be Jesus. This could fit the crucifixion claim for the

Romans did sometimes crucify dead bodies as an example or spectacle. Crucifixion was about show and fear-mongering more than execution.

It has been suspected long ago that Jesus was involved in terrorism and this has been covered up. It explains why he was executed as a terrorist. Doherty quotes Severus. It is a pity Doherty didn't point out Severus' implication that Christians and Jews were engaging in terrorism. Regarding the destruction of the Temple in the first century, "The number of those who suffered death is related to have been eleven hundred thousand, and one hundred thousand were taken captive and sold. Titus is said, after calling a council, to have first deliberated whether he should destroy the temple, a structure of such extraordinary work. For it seemed good to some that a sacred edifice, distinguished above all human achievements, ought not to be destroyed, inasmuch as, if preserved, it would furnish an evidence of Roman moderation, but, if destroyed, would serve for a perpetual proof of Roman cruelty. But on the opposite side, others and Titus himself thought that the temple ought specially to be overthrown, in order that the religion of the Jews and of the Christians might more thoroughly be subverted; for that these religions, although contrary to each other, had nevertheless proceeded from the same authors; that the Christians had sprung up from among the Jews; and that, if the root were extirpated, the offshoot would speedily perish. Thus, according to the divine will, the minds of all being inflamed, the temple was destroyed, three hundred and thirty-one years ago. And this last overthrow of the temple, and final captivity of the Jews, by which, being exiles from their native land, they are beheld scattered through the whole world, furnish a daily demonstration to the world, that they have been punished on no other account than for the impious hands which they laid upon Christ."

Doherty mentions how Christians was so unknown as a term that writers were using Chrestians at the time when there should have been a reasonable number around.

Doherty tries to turn the gospels into midrash - symbolic tales not to be taken as history but which copy and use Old Testament plots - but they don't claim to be midrash and plus the constant use of words meaning reliable oral tradition and claimed testimony from witnesses proves they are not. They are lies pure and simple. The gospels do borrow from the Old Testament but not in a midrash way. Joseph Smith stole Bible plots for the Book of Mormon and the same thing happened here.

The notion of the gospels being midrash is apparently compatible with them being history. Midrash would only refer to the history being written in a certain way - a preaching way full of rich learning opportunities.