

WAS JESUS DEBUNKED AND ACCUSED OF BLACK MAGIC?

Of course as atheists we know that the New Testament miracles, especially the resurrection of Jesus, have been made up and that the real Jesus was a fraud if he claimed supernatural powers. The miracles are mostly not that marvellous and great so if they have been invented the same may be true of the more mundane stories about Jesus. Once a liar does not mean always a liar so we would have to be agnostic about anything else they say.

Christians deny that Jesus' life, as it is in the gospels, and his miracle works were refuted by those who would have known.

ARGUMENT 1. If miracles were made up the New Testament would have been rapidly discredited by those who knew the real story and nobody would be believing them now.

REPLY. All religions use similar arguments, "If X never happened our religion would not exist now". They are naïve and simplistic and deceptive.

And the miracles of Jesus would have been contradicted by false records and equally false witnesses if need be. These efforts are lost to us which shows both that the Jews lost a great deal of historical material and books in the disasters that befell their land after Jesus died and that the Church may have successfully got rid of the damaging information. We know that the Church did weed out anything that cast doubt on its version of events.

The Jews accused Jesus of black magic and of deception (Matthew 27:64) and did it among themselves though the gospels portray them as liars. Why would they lie among themselves? And also, they accused Jesus of black magic especially when he cast demons out and he did not give a good reply to their allegation. He just whimpered that Satan can't cast out Satan. That was weak for Satan could do that to do more harm somewhere else or Satan can pretend to cast out Satan. And who is to say that Satan really has complete control over his demons? There could be stupid demons that possess people that he would only be too happy to cast out.

Jesus' failure to close them up shows that they had a point! And black magic is the form of occultism that has the most power simply because it scares people something stupid so that they cannot see through the crudest trickery. A totally fake black magician will be the best occultist and charlatan of all.

Perhaps the Jews were bad debunkers. They should have been saying that the lad wasn't possessed at all but sick and that Satan can heal the sick. Christians today claim that Satan can heal the sick to get their devotion or for some dark purpose.

In the First Apology of Justin Martyr we read that there was a Simon from Gitto who was a Samaritan and he did mighty miracles in Rome by the power of the devils and he ended up with the honour of his idol being worshiped in Rome and many of the Samaritans believed that he was God. Christians deny that Simon's miracles were real despite what Justin says. And yet they believe Justin when he says Jesus did miracles. This is prejudice at its worst. If Simon could get away with his fake miracles then so could Jesus. What makes it more disturbing is that it is a Christian saying that Simon did these things and Simon worked in the time of Claudius Caesar (41-54 AD) making his miracles closer to Justin's time than Jesus' were so Justin is more believable when he speaks of the miracles of Simon.

ARGUMENT 2. When you believe in the supernatural and you see the supernatural deeds of a holy man and want to debunk them you have to say they were black magic for it will not do to say they are tricks when they can't be. So Jesus did miracles. You can still accuse even the greatest wonder-worker today of deception and still get some to believe you so the supernatural nature of Jesus' wonders must have been irrefutable beyond belief.

REPLY. But then why do the gospels not support their alleged utter convincing nature? Why did the Jews and Romans not use force to prevent Jesus making an impression on the people? Was it because they were sure he was a crank and that anybody could see it? It had to be. If Jesus was scarily convincing then why did the Jews not use theology more against him to make his wonders out to be of diabolical origin? That would not have been difficult.

It is possible that when the Jews said that Jesus was casting demons out by demonic power and doing miracles that they meant the demons only engage in tricks. To say Jesus was doing magic could have meant that he was using trickery and demons were using their influence on people to believe in his crude tricks.

Witnesses to the miracles would have been afraid to come forward for they would have been smeared and persecuted. The Christians were free to tell all the lies they wanted.

ARGUMENT 3. There would have been too many who knew the truth for themselves so the truth about Jesus and that he had miracle powers would have been safe.

REPLY. When the Jews and Romans started persecuting Christians and killing them for their faith (Acts 8) one would expect them to go straight for anybody who said that Jesus did miracles which would bring converts to him. The Bible says that all except the apostles were driven out of the land and many were murdered and cast into prison. If anybody had a magical story about Jesus they were out of the way enabling Christians in safe places and who hid their real identities like the gossippers did to exaggerate their stories or come up with new ones like the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and the raising of Lazarus.

We conclude that refutation and the truth would not have stopped the miraculous tales of Christianity from taking off. We find no evidence against the view that Jesus was genuinely a fraud.

ARGUMENT 4.

The rabbinic stories about Jesus record that he learned magic in Egypt and had magic tattoos with spells on his skin and Justin wrote that the Jews were saying in the second century that Jesus was stolen from the tomb to generate a resurrection fable. Jesus did his miracles by calling on demons for help.

As you will see in Jesus the Magician, nothing in the stories about Jesus from outside the New Testament indicate that his marvels were stupendous or inexplicable. They could have been tricks while demons did the work of making people want to believe in them so that they were accepted. The miracles could have been quite crude and clumsy at times. There is no unbiased account that Jesus had preternatural powers.

The dreadful Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Volume 1, has no right to dare to say that the Jewish writings after the time of Jesus support his miracles (page 124-125). This drivel has been refuted for centuries and fundamentalist Christians won't stop resurrecting it.

LIGHT FROM JOSEPHUS - HE WOULD HAVE SEEN JESUS AS AN OCCULTIST

Flavius Josephus wrote that Solomon had occult powers from God and those powers were still rife in his day. Josephus did not write anything about the life Jesus and the text we have is forged. Suppose he had written the piece about the amazing powers of Jesus that we find in Jewish Antiquities. Then the following shows that he regarded Solomon as the best manifestation of God's wisdom anywhere in the world and at any time. This refutes the New Testament assertion that it was Jesus. It even calls Jesus the word of God. Josephus believed that spells were needed to get demons out which does not fit Jesus who allegedly just told them to get out and used no rites or props. Josephus if he was told about a man like Jesus casting out demons would say, "He must have been using Solomon's magic if he really could eject demons." Eleazar here had a success never reported by any Christian exorcist. The Anna Ecklund exorcism left her half cured and the demons were not completely gone.

Jewish Antiquities 8" Now the sagacity and wisdom which God had bestowed on Solomon was so great, that he exceeded the ancients: insomuch that he was no way inferior to the Egyptians, who are said to have been beyond all men in understanding: nay indeed it is evident that their sagacity was very much inferior to that of the King's. He also excelled and distinguished himself in wisdom above those who were most eminent among the Hebrews at that time for shrewdness. Those I mean were Ethan, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. He also composed Books of Odes, and Songs, a thousand and five. Of Parables and Similitudes three thousand. For he spake a parable upon every sort of tree, from the hyssop to the cedar: and in like manner also about beasts, about all sorts of living creatures, whether upon the earth, or in the seas, or in the air. For he was not unacquainted with any of their natures; nor omitted enquiries about them; but described them all like a philosopher; and demonstrated his exquisite knowledge of their several properties. God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons: which is a science useful, and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms; by which they drive away demons; so that they never return: and this method of cure is of great force unto this day. For I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his Captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers: the manner of the cure was this: he put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniack: after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils: and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more: making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it; and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man. And when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shewed very manifestly. For which reason it is, that all men may know the vastness of Solomon's abilities, and how he was beloved of God, and that the extraordinary virtues of every kind with which this King was endowed, may not be unknown to any people under the sun; for this reason, I say, it is, that we

have proceeded to speak so largely of these matters."

The following account from Josephus makes him hardly reliable if he said Jesus had powers and rose from the dead.

Jewish Wars Book 8, "Now within this palace there grew a sort of rue, that deserves our wonder, on account of its largeness. For it was no way inferior to any fig tree whatsoever; either in height, or in thickness. And the report is, that it had lasted ever since the times of Herod: and would probably have lasted much longer, had it not been cut down by those Jews, who took possession of the place afterward. But still in that valley which encompasses the city on the north side there is a certain place called Baaras: which produces a root of the same name with itself. Its colour is like to that of flame: and towards the evenings it sends out a certain ray like lightening. It is not easily taken by such as would do it, but recedes from their hands, nor will yield it self to be taken quietly, until either the urine of a woman, or her menstrual blood be poured upon it. Nay even then it is certain death to those that touch it, unless any one take and hang the root it self down from his hand, and so carry it away. It may also be taken another way, without danger: which is this. They dig a trench quite round about it, till the hidden part of the root be very small. They then tie a dog to it: and when the dog tries hard to follow him that tied him, this root is easily plucked up; but the dog dies immediately: as if it were instead of the man that would take the plant away. Nor after this need any one be afraid of taking it into their hands. Yet after all this pains in getting, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to the sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them; unless they can obtain some help against them. Here are also fountains of hot water, that flow out of this place; which have a very different taste one from the other. For some of them are bitter; and others of them are plainly sweet. Here are also many eruptions of cold waters: and this not only in the places that lie lower, and have their fountains near one another, but, what is still more wonderful, here is to be seen a certain cave hard by; whose cavity is not deep; but it is covered over by a rock that is prominent: above this rock there stand up two [hills or] breasts, as it were, but a little distant one from another; the one of which sends out a fountain that is very cold; and the other sends out one that is very hot. Which waters, when they are mingled together, compose a most pleasant bath; they are medicinal indeed for other maladies; but especially good for strengthening the nerves. This place has in it also mines of sulphur, and alum."

