

**BOOK: THE JESUS MYSTERIES – A STUDY**

The wonderful book, *The Jesus Mysteries*, by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy is essential reading for the informed Atheist. The book is an effort to demonstrate that Jesus never existed but was made up out of myths about pagan gods. Most modern proponents of this fact tend to hold that because the Old Testament history has been disproven by archaeology that its stories are myths – were never meant to be taken literally – and that the same is true of the New Testament tales about Jesus. But the Bible never mentions the myth theory or supports it so it is better just to regard the Bible as lies pure and simple. If the Old Testament is lies so is the New for it depends on it and teaches it as history. And just because Jesus was made up out of pagan myths doesn't mean that the New Testament wants us to take his story as myth.

The book tells us that all of Jesus' teaching was spoken to the world before by pagan gods and philosophers. In fact many teachers such as Confucius were not as hard to interpret and were better teachers.

Like Jesus, Osiris-Dionysus had a virgin mother – her name was Semele and she was made pregnant by Zeus when he flashed lightning on her – and was born in a cave or shed and offered a baptism and transmuted water into wine at a wedding and rode on a donkey into a city that welcomed him and died for sinners at Eastertide and returned to life and went to Heaven (page 5). So both gods did much the same things. Both gods were considered to be the Son of God (page 28). In the mystery religions the myths were re-enacted in the hope of bringing spiritual enlightenment to the initiates. There was a legend that Zeus fathered a child by Io simply by using a magic breath. Though seed comes into the equation a few lines later (page 63, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*) there is still enough here to suggest the idea of conception by breath or magic alone. We must remember that seed is never excluded from the gospel legends of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. Justin Martyr admitted that pagans believed that the sons of the god Zeus were born without sex just like he believed about Jesus (page 29). The Church says that he was wrong but though many pagans believed in divine-human sexual union not all did. As the book of Ecclesiastes says there is nothing new under the sun.

Pythagoras allegedly calmed a stormy sea like Jesus (page 39) and Asclepius cured the sick and raised the dead like Jesus. Apollonius of Tyana who was another first century miracle man claimed that he saw the miraculous multiplication of food. This could have suggested the legend that Jesus fed the five thousand with a few bits of food (page 41). The idea of putting evil into pigs to destroy it in the Eleusian Mysteries could be the root of the story about Jesus putting demons into pigs and the pigs killing themselves (page 41). Jesus was in a purple robe wearing a crown of thorns. His earlier pagan counterpart Dionysus wore the same except that the crown was ivy. There are pagan idols of Dionysus hanging on a cross. Arnobius was horrified about the worshippers of Dionysus using a cross in worship (page 52). Arnobius lived in the third century.

Tertullian claimed that the Devil mimicked the religion of Jesus when he inspired the Mithra religion to practice baptism that forgives sins and offered bread as communion and have a resurrected god (page 28). Blaming the Devil for the Christians mimicking paganism was in vogue from the time of Justin Martyr (page 28). Was this mimicking happening before Christianity took shape? Yes. Justin and Tertullian had to say that the communion rite was introduced into Mithraism by demons for only demons could know about the rite before Jesus instituted it. They couldn't have thought anything else. There was no need to blame demons if Mithraism was doing the same rite after Jesus' time. This shows the rites were exactly the same in symbolism and sacramental purpose.

The Case for Christ would object that the Mithraic baptism was done with the blood of a sacrifice which could not have inspired the Christian view of baptism (page 162) but that was enough to suggest the ideas of washing away sin and gaining benefit from Jesus' blood sacrifice through the waters of baptism and the initiation this rite brings. The Christians did not practice sacrifice outside the boundaries of the law of Moses at least so it was natural to use water instead of blood.

The pagan religions had dying and rising gods as nature symbolism. Christians answer that Christianity did not mean nature symbolism by proclaiming that Jesus died and rose. But the pagans still believed that a real personal divine being that was in nature and which nature was made of died and rose again so it was only a small step to have the likes of Jesus dying and rising again. Every man was believed to be the God who dies and is reborn in their pantheistic theology so in actual fact the Christians made such theology simpler by limiting the superior beings death and return to Jesus.

It is said that unlike the pagan gods who never died for others or voluntarily only Jesus died for sin (page 187, *He Walked Among Us*). But the gods dying was enough to suggest that Jesus would die and the idea of him dying for sins came from the Jewish sacrificial ritual and the pagan rites of sacrifice in which animals were killed to appease the anger of the gods. Some of the pagan gods died for others.

Tacitus mentioned Christ who he never calls Jesus being executed under Pilate. This was based not on records for he made

the error of calling Pilate procurator and not prefect of Judea, for Pilate never used the procurator title, but on hearsay (page 135). An inscription that was uncovered in 1961 says that Pilate was prefect (page 290). Calling him procurator could have been down to a Christian legend. The gospels called Pilate procurator.

Firmacus Maternus claimed that the Devil tried to get the true faith ridiculed by inspiring the doctrine that Dionysus rose from the dead (page 261). I would just like to add that this must have been belief in a literal as opposed to a mythical resurrection of Dionysus (one that symbolised spiritual stuff and the daily "resurrection" of the sun) for belief in a myth would have nothing to do with belief in a historical resurrection or bring scorn on it. Maternus wrote in the fourth century and sarcastically snarled that the Devil has his own Christians. We know this god was worshipped long before Jesus Christ and this man knew that though some believed the resurrection of the god was a solar myth not all did.

The pagans were into having the twelve signs of the Zodiac representing twelve disciples of the god. Jesus had twelve disciples (page 42). Christians will respond that Jesus had twelve because of the twelve tribes of Israel but then why did he choose Judas the apostate who had been false all along meaning that Jesus only really had eleven apostles? What use was twelve apostles for the twelve tribes of Israel when Israel became apostate at the time of the mission of Christ and would not accept him and when we know nothing about most of these men? To say there were twelve for the twelve tribes is to call Jesus a failure. Why does the Talmud say he did not have twelve? The Christians got the number from paganism. It was trying to make Jesus have twelve when he didn't to please the pagans.

The pagan god Mithras said that the person who will not eat his body and drink his blood so that they will be one will not know salvation (page 49). This was found on an inscription and is so similar to Jesus' lecture on eating his body and drinking his blood in John 6 that John must have developed his sixth chapter from Mithraism even though there is no reason to think John 6 is about communion. If it were not for the pagan context, the Christians would be blazoning it as a quote from John! Let this be a warning to the snippets of texts that allegedly show that the gospels had an early origin. Mithraism was too hostile to Christianity to take inspiration from it.

The prophecy from the Etythraean Sibyl says she will be murdered by the son of Leto with an arrow and her spirit will then be no longer chained in its miserable body and her body will "lie shamefully unburied on mother earth. No mortal will cover it with earth or hide it in a tomb. My black blood will trickle down through the broad pathways of the earth, dried by time. From there thick grass will shoot up, which when the herds have grazed on it, will sink into their livers and show the purposes of the immortal gods by prophecies; and birds in their feathered robes, if they taste my flesh, will give true prophecy to mortals." The Eucharist then arose in an occult context in which grace and divine inspiration were thought to be passed on by eating Jesus' flesh and his blood.

Imagine if Jesus had lost an arm or leg and it was cremated. Then the Church comes along with the magic words, "This is my body." What if we could ingest ashes instead of the bread?

Clement of Alexandria and Origen admitted that the Church had secret doctrines that were not suitable for everybody (page 97). These are lost now.

The earliest Gnostic Christians like pagans were not literalists. They believed that the Jesus story was symbolism. That was why they did what Tertullian and Irenaeus say they did: invented new stories about Jesus and altered any stories they got from tradition (page 111). Origen denied that the New Testament Jesus story was literally true (page 114). Christians often interpret Origen as denying that Jesus lived physically on earth (page 65, Let's Weigh the Evidence). Origen believed that Jesus was primarily the word of God and a mystical being who was spoken about in fable and allegory in the gospels. He did not accept the gospels as literally true and regarded the literal sense as immaterial with the consequence that if they were ever right historically that was an accident and so the records in them do not matter in the least (page 108, The Early Church).

The New Testament was written in Greek so the inventors of Jesus could have given him his name because in gematria the name adds up to 888 which is a sacred number in the occult numerology system of Pythagoras (The Jesus Mysteries, page 116). It is a magical name and would signify that Jesus was a magician or that those who invented him were occultists.

It does not seem necessary to hold that the Jesus story was wholly directly borrowed or plagiarised from pagan myths. All that matters is that the story could have been inspired by the imaginations of those who had been influenced by the legends.

Docetists did not believe that Jesus was a phantom that pretended to die on the cross but meant it symbolically (page 119). I would change this to say that not all believed that Jesus was a phantom. But I would say most of the Docetists believed Jesus was a symbol for the idea of a phantom pretending to be a man is bizarre and the believers would be unable to trust this phantom's gospel for he would be deceptive. The Fathers said that Docetism was literal but the way Gnostics used symbols and believed the truth could only be grasped by pictures and parables because it was so abstract and abstruse argues against them. Thus, some of the Docetists could have denied that there was such a person as Jesus Christ and

regarded him as a mental vehicle like the guides imagined and evoked in Silva Mind Control. When they did not care for his history and yet placed him at the centre of their spirituality it is probable that they did not believe that such a man ever lived and died on earth. It stands to reason that some would have believed that Jesus was on earth but was an apparition while the other Docetists would have gone further. The Christians would say that what they have done is not to deny that Jesus lived on earth but that he was a real human being which would mean that since they are wrong that there really was a man called Jesus. But they would have been saying that Jesus was known not to be a man for he was invisible at times and could walk through walls and acted like a vision. In fact the Docetic Nag Hammadi scrolls say just that. Some of their writings speak of Jesus doing an illusion to make it look like he ate and drank. They used so much symbolism that this might mean that Jesus didn't need food and drink. I suppose there is no reason to think that any Docetists believed Jesus was just an apparition. Their stories were meant to guide them and were not considered final or gospel truth. They improved their myths all the time. They might all have thought he was a symbol.

The book says that the Romans were professional record keepers and especially in relation to legal matters and the fact that no plausible record concerning the trial and crucifixion of Jesus was mentioned or kept in the early Church shows that Jesus could not have existed (page 133). I would add that it never existed for Josephus would have used it if it had and if there had been a Jesus.

The Crestus mentioned by Suetonius is not Christ for that was a popular name (page 134). It is not likely that it is a corruption of Christ though the Christians don't think that. McDowell quotes Suetonius as saying that Christians were dying for their faith. But this is blatant dishonesty because all Suetonius said was that Nero was punishing Christians for their mischievous superstition. McDowell lies to be able to say that these people died for their belief in Jesus meaning that there must have been a Jesus all right. But he doesn't even know why they were punished or if they could have done anything to escape the punishment.

The material about Jesus in Josephus is noted to differ in style from that of Josephus. I would add that it looks like a creed. Josephus would not write a creed and him not a Christian. And if you take it out you don't miss it for it is stuck in the middle of an argument. So it is a forger's insertion (page 137). Josephus mentioned ten Jesuses and yet Christians translate the name as their Jesus when they think he means their Jesus and don't follow suit with the other ones (page 138) though when Judea was full of miracle-men according to Josephus who had their followers acting like spirits were controlling them and then used to convince them that God would free them in the desert and they took the name Joshua in memory of the Joshua who conquered the promised land (page 201). If Josephus called Jesus the so-called Christ and did not make any effort to show that he did not mean him when he criticised these lunatics it says a lot.

The book says that Luke said that there were six months between the conceptions of Jesus and John and this was in Herod's time according to Matthew. But then it says Jesus was still not born ten years later at the time of the census! The authors wondered if this was a miraculous decade long pregnancy! (page 141).

It could be a mistake to accuse Jesus of contradicting himself on forgiveness as page 143 does. He said that forgiveness should be granted 77 times a day despite saying that anybody who won't repent a sin should be ostracised. But the former case is in the context of people repenting while the second is procedure for handling people who are not sorry and Christians add that it has to be a serious sin to merit that treatment. But it could be responded that when you sin and repent that much a day you should not be forgiven for you are not really sorry so there is a contradiction and especially when Jesus never said that ostracising was necessary for serious sin but just sin therefore any sin.

In Mark, Jesus depends on mistranslations of the Jewish Bible that he erroneously thinks bolster his case (page 144). Fallible wasn't he? That shows that he and his gossellers were dishonest for anybody knows that the original is best but they would not use it. (Acts made the same mistake in Peter's Pentecost address, page 150). That shows that the gospels were not composed by Israelites and so have nothing to do with the apostles who were Israelites because the Jews would have chewed Jesus up and spat him out while splitting their sides with laughter at his silliness and he would have had no credibility had he used mistranslations. The apostles were the foundation of faith so the Jesus scriptures should have come from their pen alone. It is not as good for others to do these things for them. When Jesus made them apostles he was saying they will be the foundation but history prevented that happening. He was a fake prophet.

Acts is telling a lie when it claims that Paul preached to everybody in Asia in two years (page 149). History proves it. Luke had no reason to say all if he did not mean all for the context does not give us any reason not to take the fullest sense.

It says a lot when Bishop Melito of Sardis travelled to Judea in 160 and encountered only Gnostic heretics who used scriptures that denied the New Testament (page 172). A bishop would have met true believers if there had been any. We see that there was no evidence at that time for anything the Catholic Church says Jesus did for there was no force in Palestine to preserve the truth about him and to back up what the New Testament would say.

The fourth century historian, Eusebius, had to depend on one writer on the earliest Church, for the evidence relating to early

Christianity was so meagre (page 184). Inventing Jesus was so easy! Also, Eusebius is all we have got apart from the New Testament about the primitive history of Christianity (page 317). The thing the Christians hope you never find out about him is that he wrote a book called Preparation of the Gospel in which he wrote that it was recommended to tell a lie to convince people that the faith would benefit them for their own good. He also advised in the same book that it was a holy duty to tell lies to young people to get them to live good lives. The Church did not burn his books as heretical though it could not let any other heretic's book alone which says it was just as incapable of honesty as he was.

The Jesus Mysteries agrees with me that none of the four gospels were published in the time of St Justin Martyr (page 224). The Shepherd of Hermas does not clearly quote the New Testament (page 331) indicating that the New Testament was largely hidden.

In 250 AD, only two per cent of the population of the Roman Empire were Christian. There is no reason to doubt the unreliable Eusebius when he says that only three villages were Christian in the Holy Land! He would have hated to admit that so it must have been true. It makes the faith look bad and unconvincing. It shows that there was no persuasive evidence despite Acts boasting about the miraculous rise of Christianity in Palestine from the start. The Christians were secretive and were pacifists so the near-liquidation of the Jews can't be the reason for the small number.

When Helena the mother of Constantine went to find the cross in the Holy Land she could not find anybody there to tell her about Jesus except one old man who took her to the alleged cross of Christ. This was even three hundred years after Jesus died. She found that nobody had heard of Jesus which tells against his existence.

There is evidence that Paul was a Gnostic for he uses Gnostic terms. Paul might not have believed in an earthly Jesus or in a Jesus for whom there was non-mystical evidence at all.

Christianity says that Gnosticism did not produce it for it preceded Christianity. But that proves nothing and makes no sense. Christian Gnosticism was distinct from the Gnosticism that preceded it. The original Christianity could have been Gnostic.

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