

JOSEPHUS AND THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION

There is a short testimony to the life of Jesus in the writings of the first century Jewish historian Josephus.

The Testament of Josephus which is believed to be forged or tampered with says Jesus was crucified by Pilate because of Jewish pressure and died and that his followers remained loving towards him and that then they saw him on the third day risen from the dead and that this fulfilled countless prophecies in the Old Testament.

At least it records reports of the resurrection as opposed to saying he definitely rose. It is really like, "It was said he was seen again." It backtracks but it is still best to read it as a cautious endorsement of Jesus having returned from the dead.

Would Josephus go to the trouble of detailing that Jesus rose on the third day? He would just say he rose. Christians would use the expression all right because they used it like a creed. They had a habit of saying the Lord rose on the third day.

Josephus was pro-Rome and if he had known that the gospels and Christianity blamed Rome for Jesus' death he would have defended Rome's action and called for the destruction of the gospels. It was too obvious to all that Rome would have wanted Jesus dead for saying he was a king. Josephus never knew the gospels. It appears to be a mark of authenticity when the passage says that Pilate killed Jesus when Christians of the time tried to frame the Jews for it. But not all Christians would have wanted to do that. And the passage does say that Pilate did it because the Jews were behind it which may indicate that he was forced by them. We know that the Jews had nothing to do with the crucifixion so this is a further indication of inauthenticity. Josephus would not have reported that Pilate got Jesus crucified and that the Jews persuaded him to do it because that would have led to a huge scandal in which Pilate would have been pilloried for being soft and giving a bad impression to other nations. There is no way Josephus would have omitted to mention the controversy. And Josephus could not say the victim came back from the dead or that there was reason to think he did for that makes Rome look like an enemy of his God and Rome did not like anything that hinted of that. Any argument for the Testament is best ignored because it could be based on a mistake that just happens to seem to support Christianity and even if it were not would still have too much evidence against authenticity.

Josephus recorded that Pontius Pilate delighted in provoking the Jews which contradicts what he allegedly wrote about Pilate being compelled to murder Jesus. When he spent so much time on Pilate he would have explained why if Pilate behaved out of character with Jesus if there was no contradiction and this material on Jesus was really his work. He said that Pilate provoked the Jews and persecuted them and then we read that at that time Jesus appeared which shows that the Jesus material is faked for it gives the impression Pilate was into pleasing the Jews when the context says otherwise.

All the evidence indicates that if Jesus existed then his followers lost their faith in him when he was strung up. The Testament claims to know that this was not true. He is saying that the Christian Gospels are untrustworthy or that he did not know them which would imply the same thing for in that case he would not have wanted to know them. Josephus, if he wrote it, was not simply recording what Christians taught about Jesus. He wouldn't have made it look like that he was committed to their view of Jesus if he had. Historians get to the bottom of things before teaching.

Josephus was a Jew who would not have needlessly offended his countrymen and women by paying Jesus a compliment by calling him wise implying he was wise to claim to be a Messiah. It seems that the sayings attributed to Jesus would have been doing the rounds in those days and when they said extreme things like that family members should be hated for the sake of Jesus it is hard to believe Josephus would call Jesus wise for he would have looked into the sayings before writing. There are many other similar things in Jesus' sayings which the Christians justify with tortured and complicated "explanations" but which to the newcomer sound terrible.

Jesus made Rome suspicious of what was going on in Israel and Rome would have butchered many innocent Jews thinking they and their hero Jesus could turn nasty and start a rebellion. In the gospel of John we read that the Jews decided that it was better for Jesus to die than for a whole nation to perish over him.

Josephus could not call a man who put the nation at risk of attack by Rome and who caused a riot in the temple and who provoked Pilate to kill him by his provocative words a wise man. When somebody inserted something as minor as that in, the entire passage is probably fake. There is no doubt that if Jesus was really a wise man he would have taught and thought that being ruled by the people of God the Jews is better than being ruled by Rome. Josephus would not eulogise a man who did this.

God raising a crucified man from the dead would be very offensive to Rome. It would suggest that God was in opposition

to their law and that the gods of Rome couldn't stop him. It would suggest that God mocked their law that criminals like Jesus must be put to death in a humiliating fashion. It would suggest that Jesus was indeed the rightful ruler and the Christ and that the Emperor was not to get this devotion instead. Crucifixion was regarded as the will of the god of Rome the Emperor who got his mandate from the gods in Heaven so speaking of the resurrection of a crucified man would have been blasphemy against Rome.

Josephus was paid for his writing job by Rome and was writing principally for Romans and all his writings probably had to be signed by the Emperor. Titus signed his *The Jewish War* (Josephus Unbound).

Josephus was unlikely to write about Christ the way he allegedly did for he was a Jew though his sympathy for his people was not very strong. He would not make a fool of himself and give critics a reason to disparage his research by proclaiming a religion he would not join true. An orthodox Jew like Josephus could not insult his faith by applauding Christianity and even hint that his Jesus was God against the first commandment! Even *He Walked Among Us* cannot refute his orthodoxy and simply says that it can be questioned for he SEEMED to have lived the Roman way too deeply (page 44). Would the pope living with prostitutes mean he did not agree with all his religion taught?

If Josephus had written this material then it is of dubious value for though he might be a reliable historian he was not a reliable religionist. He sold out on his Jewish religion by backing Rome though God said that the Jew should not serve heathenism. He proclaimed Christ to be God's Messiah and prophet yet he stayed out of the Church of Christ.

It seems to be a problem that when the works of Josephus were so greatly respected by the Romans that nobody could have attempted to forge that piece for it would never have been tolerated. But the Mormons have done the intolerable and rewritten their Bible that God wrote, the Book of Mormon, in thousands of places and have more or less gotten away with it. Wouldn't this have been thousands of times easier in an age before printing and where there were few copies of every book about and when the Church was able to burn anything it did not like? And nearly everybody agrees these days that not everything in the passage was originally there.

Some authorities feel that this record is genuine, that it really was by Josephus. Their reasons are spurious however. Even if the record is genuine Josephus got his information from Christians so it is only hearsay and we have evidence from other sources that the information he got was dubious.

JOSEPHUS BELIEVED IN VISIONS BUT NOT IN RISEN JESUS ONES!

Josephus wrote of a vision in the sky at Jerusalem, "A certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds". He is so impressed by the testimony for it. He does not believe as easily as the Jesus insertion would make you think.

We don't have, ""A certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, three days after Jesus died he was seen and touched by his disciples and went up among the clouds".

He is clear that he does not accept supernatural stories unless the testimony is independent and unless there is an impressive aftermath of devotion. Nobody could say that of the resurrection where nobody could verify that Jesus was not stolen (which would not in itself prove he didn't rise but would prove God does not seem to want us to be sure). And Magdalene is not saying she is guessing when she said the Lord was removed and even the gospel explains nothing. The Mormon story is impressive with its visions and so on until you see that the culture of the time was rife with superstition and magic and supernaturalism. The same problem exists with the resurrection of Jesus.

Josephus would have written then in a firm way if he accepted that Jesus rose but not in the flimsy way the forged testimony would have you believe.

Incidentally, as Revelation has a militant Jesus who likes sky based appearances maybe Christians lied that the vision was

of Jesus and his angels. Maybe that is where Jesus' threat to appear one day with a heavenly army came from. The gospels stole many stories. And we know Luke mined Josephus for stories. Who knows?

The WWW

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