

PAUL AND THE NON-HISTORY OF JESUS

SAINT SAUL WAS HE A SKELETON KEY TO THE HISTORICAL JESUS?

St Saul. This book is written by Donald Harman Akenso. It is about Saint Paul who as far as we can tell is the real founder of Christianity. He supposedly converted to Jesus on the way to persecute Christians at Damascus and had been a devout Jew. Jesus allegedly changed his name from Saul to Paul. He may have converted the year Jesus is believed to have died. He became an apostle, that is, a divinely inspired messenger of God to speak for Christ and provide the world with his true gospel. Nobody can deny that most religious or spiritual people are more interested in what they WANT to believe and not the truth. The fact that they disagree so much about what the truth is and are unwilling to accept new ideas or insights that question their truth proves this. That is why it is just stupid to trust the pope and religious leaders in general and why they are evil people for looking for obedience to them which is why miracles that invite us to believe are so absurd for only demonic ones would do that. Paul was no exception.

Paul talks about Jesus like he was in control of how Jesus was portrayed. It seems Paul was the one who determined the route and form the resurrection interpretations would take. This suggests that when Paul writes in the tampered 1 Corinthians 15 that Jesus appeared to him last of all that it could be that the apostles had visions of an unknown being and Paul claimed a vision and sorted out the confusion for them and identified the vision as Jesus and they accepted that. Paul could easily have been the inventor of Jesus Christ.

However, when Peter and Paul had a dispute at Antioch over Peter not eating with unclean Gentiles we can see that Paul and Peter made it a draw for Paul would have told us if he won the argument (page 160). This shows that there was a lot of doctrinal bickering and splitting in the early Christian communities.

It is said that Paul took no money from his communities to whom he preached. Perhaps the reason was that he would get into trouble for stating as history what was not history. Or maybe you can't charge for myth stories.

Paul strangely spent ten years collecting for the "poor" of the Christian communities in Jerusalem. Why just the poor of Jerusalem? Obviously, Paul only did this because if he didn't his ministry would have been declared illegitimate and his apostleship fraudulent (page 164). So money got Paul accepted not his Holy Spirit or his Jesus who appeared to him. This suggests a very mercenary pack of witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. Unsavoury men indeed. In Romans 15:31, amazingly Paul wanted people to pray that the Church in Jerusalem would accept the money he collected! Obviously, there was a danger that the apostles and their followers could loath him so much that they wouldn't satisfy him to take the money. And this was because his doctrine was not the same as theirs. His doctrine had to be the problem for they knew he wouldn't persecute them anymore. To reject Paul even to the extent of rejecting the money he brought and his kindness would mean rejecting the followers he had as well and cause a massive division in the followers of Christ. They would tell him to shove his money perhaps to make him look bad and look like a thief. Paul must have known they were capable of this and willing to do so. The Book of Acts tries to cover all this up by painting a rosy cosy picture of Church relations.

Saint Saul speaks of the gospels saying Jesus' family rejected him for his ministry. I'd say the gospels made this up to explain why nobody claimed to be blood relatives of Jesus.

Acts 22:3 has Paul saying he studied his Jewish religion under Gamaliel 1st. This would mean he was in Jerusalem in Jesus' time (page 302). Yet Paul knew nothing of Jesus' life and never met him indicating that Jesus didn't live then at all! The gospels lie about when Jesus lived.

Page 172-3 argues that Paul must have known about the life of Jesus after spending time with the apostles soon after his conversion and that the reason he never mentioned Jesus' life was simply because he had already given it to his followers orally and when there was a spiritual crisis to prompt epistles, he preferred to focus on Jesus as he was now, risen and in Heaven and working to save his people. The book says that the first reason for this is that Paul likes the present Jesus best for he experienced him and finds him more accessible and relevant. The second reason is that Paul does not like some ideas about what Jesus did. The third reason is that Paul prefers his own authority to the pre-resurrection Jesus' even going as far as to correct something Jesus said. Fourth, Jesus' life was mundane so it is best not focused on.

My reply is this:

Paul would not like the risen Jesus best. Paul claimed to be weak and so a Jesus like that would terrify him

Paul does not correct Jesus but even if he did this is only a single instance and no evidence or hint is given that Paul didn't like the Jesus history at all. The alleged correction is 1 Corinthians 7:10:11 where Paul absolutely forbids divorce. But the oldest gospel Mark has Jesus saying the same thing. It is just the later Matthew one that says Jesus permitted divorce if adultery took place. There is no reason to believe Paul knew Jesus permitted divorce then. Nor does Paul indicate that his ban on divorce which he says came from the Lord came from a historical person who lived recently. It could have been told to Paul in a vision. If Paul corrected Jesus then Paul should not be trusted as far as he can be thrown. Really, the servant correcting his infallible Lord! Paul did prefer his own authority to that of Jesus Christ because he knew that to follow Jesus really meant obeying Paul who one had to go to get the stories about Jesus and the interpretation meaning Paul was the one who had the real power. But that does not mean he would have been disinterested in Jesus sayings and life as a man.

Saint Saul is just speculating on why Paul never spoke of the Jesus of history. The reason for the silence is that no such Jesus ever walked this earth.

Paul never mentions that Jesus had a life and what he does say can be understood as just inference from his resurrection vision. For example, if he saw a pierced man in his vision he could conclude that the man was crucified and must have once been an ordinary man and a Jew for he died to wash away the sins of the Jewish people to please their God. Such a man would have to be the Son of God and the Messiah and the king seated at the right hand of God the Father.

If Jesus' life and sayings were really that mundane then he didn't do much and didn't live on the edge like you have it in the gospels. It would mean again the gospels are lying all the time.

The book is right to say that it was Paul's doctrine and teaching that if Jesus did not rise then he was not the Christ. This is implied by 1 Corinthians 15:12-17 which says the entire faith is in vain if Christ didn't rise. That would mean holding Jesus to be the Christ would be in vain too. But if Jesus claimed to be the Christ and died and did not rise again he could still be the Christ for he could wait till later or the last day before rising again. It wouldn't matter as long as he came back spiritually or physically or both. Implicitly then Paul denies that anybody knew of a man called Jesus who claimed to be the Messiah before he died. For Paul, the resurrection made Jesus the Christ. That is, Jesus didn't claim to be Christ until after his resurrection from the dead. All this again denies that the gospel version of Jesus ever lived. Paul denied Turin Shrouds and Jesus' physical resurrection and empty tombs when he said that the risen body cannot corrupt for it is not flesh and blood which can corrupt (1 Corinthians 15:50). Anyway, all the Turin Shrouds in the world cannot save Jesus from the fact that he was not even a real prophet inspired by God and gave us no reason to regard him as one. Now God could stop you physically corrupting and give you an immortal body. But it still has the potential to corrupt as long as there is anything physical there. So Paul is denying this potential. He is saying the resurrection is non-physical. It is spiritual. The body dies but a "body", a spiritual essence that is entirely non-physical, rises. The body cannot be turned into that for if you turn gold into clay what you are really doing is replacing gold with clay.

When Paul mentions the birth of Jesus he says he was born of woman under the law (Galatians 4:4) and uses the law in a negative sense to mean corruption and weakness of the flesh which makes the law necessary he is saying that Jesus was born of sex between a man and a woman (page 180). This denies the virginal conception and the virgin birth.

Page 191 is right to reject the silliness of John Meier that the crucifixion of Jesus, his denial by Peter, Judas betraying Jesus and his being baptised by John the Baptist are too embarrassing to have been made up and must have really happened. The crucifixion was turned into a victory of God over evil. Peter's betrayal of Jesus later made Peter holier and more trustworthy according to the New Testament. Judas betrayed Jesus but Judas may have been a myth representing the Jews or the people of Judah. But since the New Testament says Judas could be replaced and came to a bad end his betrayal was nothing to be ashamed about. The baptism by John seems to be embarrassing for it implies that Jesus became John's disciple and was a sinner but the Christians turned it into the idea of Jesus being baptised for our sins and the gospels avoid saying that Jesus became a disciple of John. The baptism could have been invented to be able to say that Jesus was anointed by God before John in the Jordan. John baptises Jesus but soon learns that Jesus is the boss for the Holy Spirit comes down on him and God speaks audibly that Jesus is his beloved son. The argument that embarrassing facts about Jesus proves the facts are real facts does not work at all and yet most of modern scholarship is infected with this illogical error.

On page 196, we read that nearly everything said about Jesus in the gospels has a Hebrew subtext. That means the Bible stories were altered in details and used to create the Jesus story. The Old Testament not history was used to put the gospels together. The writers making up Jesus plundered those old texts for plotlines.

Page 212 alerts us to people who find up to 900 parallels in Paul's writings that indicate that he knew of the sayings of Jesus in the gospels that they are credulous and are turning expressions like be at peace with yourselves from Thessalonians 1 into a memory of Mark 9:50 which just says have peace with one another! So if I say, "People must try to stay at peace", that is a memory of the gospel!

Paul knew that it made sense to focus on converting the Jews for he thought his gospel was all over the Old Testament. Yet

he made no plans for this to be done. This shows he knew nothing of the disaster that Jesus had allegedly prophesied for the Jewish people that would come in 70AD (page 214).

The book sees evidence that Paul memorised hymns and creeds in his letters which would have been used in his Churches. This explains the sayings that seem close to the sayings of Jesus. They were probably memorised as well.

The book quotes the hymn of Paul about Jesus in Philippians 2. This hymn says we must be like Jesus who was obedient to God even unto death on a cross and sought no reputation when he was alive. Because of his humility, God exalted him highly at the resurrection and gave him the name which is above all names so that every tongue should confess Jesus Christ as Lord to glorify the Father. The gospel Jesus did seek a good reputation and boasted that he was the Son of God and did things only the messiah was supposed to do. He went to parties to hobnob with big name Pharisees. He was famous as a healer. This hymn shows that the later stories about Jesus that we have in the gospels are fiction. Jesus is to be declared Lord for it pleases the Father meaning the Father is the real object of worship so Jesus is not God but an exalted saint who God values above all his saints.

The bizarre idea that those that teach the gospel should live by it and not have secular jobs originated with Paul and the gospels indicate that it may have been Jesus' will (page 219). There is nothing wrong with doing some secular work and it doesn't have to interfere with being an evangelist.

Page 226 says that what Paul gives us about the Jesus of history is that he was born normally, concerned about divorce, had a last supper, was crucified and buried. His mission was to Jews not Gentiles (Romans 15:8) and his teachers should not work to earn a living but live by their ministry. Romans 15:8 does not say that Jesus preached only to Jews. It only says he had a ministry to the Jews which does not exclude him making Gentile contacts when it was handy. And it does not say this ministry happened when Jesus was alive. Jesus spoke only to Jews after his death and resurrection.

Page 229 draws our attention to where Paul says he is crucified with Christ and that Paul does not live in Paul's body but Jesus does (Galatians 2:20). He says this to refute the idea that you need to keep the Law in all respects to be saved and right with God. He then tells the Galatians to recall their own experience of receiving the Holy Spirit and to ponder if they experienced him through faith or through works of the Law (Galatians 3:1-3). So they could also have the same experience of identification with Christ too. Does this theology sound like you should exalt any man as pope and Vicar of Christ on earth? Of course not! All real Christians are vicars of Christ. The model worked out by Paul was that you experience Jesus in you and you know what Paul says is true because of what you experience. He virtually claimed to be Jesus which goes a lot further than the pope would dare to go and yet he refuses to expect the obedience the pope demands.

The traditions describe both Jesus and Paul as short unattractive men who had some disability. Paul virtually claims that he is Jesus and that the Church is Jesus too and its members are parts of the body of Jesus. Many cults have taught similar doctrines and in modern witchcraft the coven can become the goddess right now. So its odd then that nobody came up with the idea that Jesus maybe managed to get a look-alike crucified in his place or otherwise survived the crucifixion and after speaking to some of his friends claimed to have went up to Heaven and then sneakily returned as Saul who later became Paul! Paul stated he bore the wounds of Jesus on his body.

Pages 238-9, tell us that the entire teaching of Jesus Christ could be plagiarised directly from Jewish sources of the time for there was nothing unique in it and it had all been said before.

Page 243 suggests that Paul thought that Jesus deserved his death by crucifixion. You certainly get that impression from Galatians 3. But he is clear elsewhere that Jesus had changed and was holy by the time he was crucified so that his death could save the world.

Page 245 contradicts the gospels that the Pharisees were inflexible keepers of the Law, they were more liberal and understanding than the gospels say. It also claims that there is no evidence that any Jewish theological group of Jesus' day thought a resurrection had to be physical. Jesus, for example, was more unforgiving towards people who needed a divorce than the Pharisees generally were.

The book mentions John 7 where it is said that the Jews were determined to condemn Jesus without a hearing and Nicodemus reminded them that this was illegal and immoral without commenting on why this tale is untrue. The Jews had no need to do without a trial. They could have got Jesus executed by showing that the Old Testament never predicted him at all and he was an impostor. And he did and said enough to have him justly put to death in the eyes of the Mosaic Law. To try and get rid of Jesus without giving him a hearing would only make Jesus' disciples say the Jews had nothing on him to justify destroying him. It would only have made the Jew's task harder. I agree with the book that John is just using Nicodemus to rouse hatred towards the Jews by indicating that he was a good man though one of them meaning they had no excuse for being bad.

Jesus in Mark 7 showed his belief that the Gentiles would only get crumbs off the table and the Jews would get the banquet meaning the Gentiles were not entitled to have the full benefits of his ministry and teaching (page 253). Here we have the earliest gospel contradicting Paul in a foundational matter. Paul stated that there was no Jew or Greek where Christ was concerned. He did not know that Jesus was a racist.

Paul referring to homosexuals as the extremely derogatory buttfuckers (page 12) would not match Jesus who welcomed prostitutes many of whom were doing anal sex to avoid pregnancy so again Paul is indicating that Jesus never did any such thing.

We read on page 265 that only four synagogues have been found in Palestine which makes some consider the synagogues mentioned in the gospels and Acts to be anachronisms for there are too many of them. Others say that private houses were used as synagogues in Jesus' day which explains this.

Page 269 dismisses the references to Jesus in rabbinic literature as being worthless for they were written down late. But they look so primitive and came from older traditions and writings. So who knows?

Josephus's writings were preserved by Christians for the Jews had strangely no time for his writings (page 270). No wonder they have some Christian interpolations in them for it is now certain that Josephus hardly mentioned Jesus if at all.

Page 276 rejects the Christian consensus that the Jews met in 90AD at a general council in Yavneh and determined the canon of scripture for the Old Testament. It was not really a council and nothing is verifiable about it and it had little clout. It was not binding.

Interestingly, 285-6, tells us that the general life span was 25 years in those days and childbearing killed many women but speculates that Jesus and Paul would have lived to about 60 had it not been for them being put to death! Both of them allegedly met a lot of people and people like that die faster for they catch bugs and viruses easily. There is no doubt that the early Christians hadn't long to wait if they wanted rid of the vast majority of unfavourable witnesses who contradicted their Jesus tales.

If page 295 is right to say that when Paul spoke of Jesus Christ that he did not mean Jesus the Messiah but just meant Jesus Christ as in two names then Paul did not agree with the gospels which give Christ as a title to Jesus. It would mean it could be that Jesus was not the Messiah at all and never claimed to be. Yes he used Messiahs' name but would somebody calling themselves Joshua which is our version of Jesus be claiming to be Jesus or the saviour?

Page 296 remarks that no scripture can be found to back up Paul's claim that the scriptures say that Jesus was to be killed and rise again on the third day. The only hope is to maybe argue that the prophet Jonah was Jesus. One can speculate without contradicting the book of Jonah that Jonah was crucified by the men who kidnapped him. They bury him at sea and a fish comes along and eats the dead man off the stake or cross. Jonah comes back to life inside the fish after three days and it spits him out. When Jonah goes then to preach to Nineveh to convert the people there and threatens divine destruction the people believe him and repent. Now why did they repent and how were they so easily convinced? Did they believe Jonah was dead and raised to life again? Did Jonah then become Jesus when Jonah started appearing to the apostles? If Jonah rose from the dead it was a physical resurrection but perhaps after his mission he then became a spiritual being.

Page 298 draws attention to Mark 9:41 where Jesus says that anybody who gives you a drink of water because you bear the name of Christ will be rewarded. Jesus didn't claim to be Christ then. The verse is really referring to people who help you because you are a Christian, a Christian means follower of Christ and to be a Christian means you bear the name of Christ. But since the name Christian only took off late in the first century (page 64) and is rarely used in the New Testament and other names are preferred it would mean that this gospel was written then. The first gospel had a late origin. There is no evidence for the Book of Q so the first gospel could have been pure invention. Jesus was made to officially sanction people saying they were the followers of Christ before it actually happened at Antioch years later. So we have a serious anachronism here.

CONCLUSION

The book Saint Saul is excellent. It sharpened my own thoughts and brought me new insights which I have written down in this review. I have corrected it here where necessary and overall I find that it is undeniable that Saint Saul or St Paul did not believe in the existence of the Jesus of the gospels and he was a later invention. 1 Corinthians 2:12 says God's spirit alone is the one who helps us understand what God has freely given us - the early Church was very dependent on seeming prompts from a divine source. This is a clue that this religion was based on theology not history. The book of Acts 8:14-17/13:2 argues that this guidance from the Spirit was very clear. It was specific and not just a vague sense of inspiration.

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