

PETER EPISTLES SAY THERE ARE NO GOSPELS IN THE 60s AD

Paul's epistles show that the gospel stories did not exist in any form when Paul lived. But the later ones also show an absence of the gospel legends in the primordial soup of the Church of their times.

Peter was like James and John a core apostle of the early Church.

The New American Bible dates the First Epistle of Peter at between 64 and 67 AD and sees no reason to deny Petrine authorship (Biblical Dictionary and Concordance, page 176).

This epistle shows no sign of the gospels existing or even being incubated.

Some date the Epistle at 90 AD long after Peter's death because the epistle advises obedience to Rome and patience in suffering which is taken to imply that it was written when Rome was barbarically persecuting Christians. This was seemingly intended to satisfy Rome that Christians should be left alone. The letter says we must be calm for the end is close (4:7). Persecutions were expected universally among Christians so the letter would only say that if they were already happening and were very bad making it look like the end was on the doorstep. 1 Peter 4:17 says the Church is suffering terribly and calls it a trial by fire. The 90 AD date seems better. Peter could have been alive then to write it. The story of his martyrdom in Rome in 64 AD is unconvincing for it is based on gossip and legend and besides if Peter was in hiding it was easy to pretend that some Christian executed in Rome was really Peter. There is more reason to take 90AD as the correct date than any other.

Irenaeus was the first to say it was Peter's work and this was after at least a century had passed (NAB, Introduction to The First Epistle of Peter). The letter was not written by Peter. The author – Silvanus? - might have believed that God was inspiring him to write what the dead or absent Peter would write so it is incorrect to think that the letter could not be ascribed to Peter for the people would know that Peter was dead. Perhaps nobody knew what became of Peter and thought he was reclusive and still alive.

The First Epistle of Peter instructs us to love enemies and to suffer like Jesus did for doing right and with patience. Every Christian knows that if Jesus did that it does not mean we should do the same for he had divine protection and only had to give God the word and he would deliver him. If we and Jesus suffer for doing right then it must be forced on us. It would be ridiculous to command those who voluntarily suffer to be patient. The Gospel Jesus could have avoided death, perhaps only for a time for he had to die sometime, for he had miracle powers to save himself and he said that God could rescue him with an army of angels. Peter is denying that Jesus had these powers or protection or that anybody could have saved him from his passion and death. The gospels report that Jesus had to be apprehended under cover of darkness in case the people would save him. Peter is denying this too. Peter's Jesus is a human being and not God or a super-powered Son of God. So in 90 AD we have proof that even the authorities in the Church knew nothing of the gospels.

If Jesus suffered to save and our suffering does not do what it did then Peter is wrong to suggest that we must do what Jesus did. What Jesus' suffering implies for us is that we should be ascetics and brutal to ourselves but Peter is not saying that. He was hard up for something to illustrate his point. Therefore the Christians could find no quotes from Jesus to prove that we must endure suffering patiently because there were none. There were no gospels.

The epistle says that Roman governors must be obeyed for God uses them to punish and reward people (1 Peter 2:13,14). It is thought that this denies that one of them, Pilate, killed Jesus. It seems Peter would be taking it for granted that we know to obey them only when they are right. But then why does he tell us to uphold the Roman governor's decisions about meting out vengeance on people when most of their punishments were unduly harsh and they had little concern for justice? I agree with G A Wells that this command proves that the early Church did not believe that Pilate unjustly sent Jesus to the cross. Christians say that Pilate was forced by the Jews or Roman law or both but this is dubious for Pilate had the power to postpone a decision and could have decreed a discreet execution of a man who was not Jesus in Jesus' place to save Jesus. The John gospel has Pilate killing Jesus because he is afraid of the Jews and then informing Jesus that he could release him if he would only clear himself before him so somebody wasn't able to make up his mind about Pilate. The incoherence suggests that the Pilate episode may never have happened for it should not have been hard to report accurately about it if it had.

Wells observed that Peter gives some ethical teachings that match the teaching of Christ but he never quotes Christ and all his quotes are plucked from the Old Testament (page 365, The Enc of Unbelief). He knew nothing about the gospels or their Jesus.

The second Epistle of Peter may seem to have extracted the story of the transfiguration from the Gospel. The Epistle says that the people were not taught lies about Jesus having come in power for the author and others saw his glory on the mountain. This denies the gospel version that Jesus came stripped of much power and got tired and hungry and angry and did not know that Judas was stealing from the purse. Some say that God showing some glory through Jesus temporarily would not prove that he came in power. It would for it would mean he may not have showed the power but he still came in it. Jesus coming in power refers to his coming as man so the vision then must refer to Jesus after his resurrection when he ceased to be an ordinary man. 2 Peter is really describing a vision of the risen Jesus and not the gospel account of Jesus being transfigured on the Mount long before his crucifixion and death. And what the gospels say God said about Jesus at the baptism in the Jordan is said to have been said in this event. The gospels report that God said something different at the transfiguration. So it was not the transfiguration. There is no evidence that 2 Peter knows the gospels. Even if it does know the transfiguration story, it is far from saying that Jesus really existed outside of visions and was known by the people. Only three persons saw the transfiguration. And it might have been a leak from the hidden gospels. And why does the author not appeal to the resurrection as evidence for Jesus' glory? Either the author was a forger or Jesus' resurrection was not glorious.

2 Peter says that it is better not to know the law of God than to know it and turn your back on it. This is mad for if you know you can always use that knowledge again. This betrays a cynicism contrary to the attitude of Jesus in the gospels who concentrated on teaching backsliders. It denies the gospels were known. It denies the Jesus of the gospels existence.