

JESUS STORY UNKNOWN TO EARLY CHURCH

The earliest documents of the Church show that the gospels lie when they claim to have reported facts about Jesus. None of what they say was known or of any interest to anybody in the most primitive Church. Therefore there is no reason to believe the gospels.

If Jesus had been a real man or anybody really knew him why are there no normal stories of him helping people? It is all miracle stories. Why would you choose stories of somebody using miracles to help people as if the ordinary ways to help are something to be forgotten? Even Catholic hagiographies are replete with good works done by the saints and are not so obsessed with supernatural tales that they want to forget them.

People argue that the gospels are unreliable for they were written decades after the alleged events. True. But the fact that the gospels were written in a time when nobody cared about the Jesus story apart from the crucifixion and death and resurrection is far more serious. So even had the gospels appeared fifteen years after Jesus it would be of no help to the defenders of traditional Christian belief. They had nothing but invention and perhaps the reworking and plagiarism of stories about real life Jewish saints to go by. If you read the epistle of James you get the impression that the teaching of Jesus was plagiarised from that of James and perhaps events from the life of James were used to concoct stories about Jesus.

EXCUSES FOR PAUL'S SILENCE DEBUNKED

Christians have to say the silliest things to get away from the uncomfortable fact that Paul never used Jesus' life to teach the people but preferred to dictate to them what they should do. Paul knew this was a bad approach for he was very unpopular because of it. He could do nothing else for there was no Jesus story for them to be edified with.

He never quoted Jesus, never said that there were any stories about Jesus and never even said when he lived. Jesus was born, died and rose three days later and started appearing recently. That is all we are told.

Read Galatians 4:21-31. Paul is trying to refute those who say we must still follow the Law of Moses like slaves. He tells them that they must hear what the Law has to say. He says it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by his wife as a result of God's promise. He says this is an allegory. The two women stand for two covenants. One covenant is the covenant of slavery and the other is the covenant of freedom. The point he is trying to make is that Christians are not to go back to slavery to the Law for they are free. If they fail to keep the Law now, Jesus has kept it for them vicariously and they will still be saved in Heaven. Jesus speaks about the Law a fair bit in the gospels and promises delivery from slavery to the Law. When Paul couldn't use his words to refute these people but had to resort to a fanciful interpretation of the Bible it is plain that the gospels lied. It is also plain that Jesus as man had no relevance for Paul. If there had been a Jesus who lived recently Paul would have examined his life and looked in his teaching for ammunition. When Jesus the Jew said nothing about the Law it shows either that he lived an unknown life as a man or he never existed. Christians say that Paul is not denying that the scripture is history. But when he attaches such importance to a fanciful way of interpreting it he is saying that it is okay to worry more about spiritual interpretations than the literal. The same would have to be true of the gospels had they existed then. The original Christian Church had no concern for a Jesus of History at all. This adds fuel to those who believe that Jesus was a myth not a man. Instances like that prove that there is no excuse for Paul's silence only that his Jesus never lived or was just an apparition he made himself see.

He Walked Among Us lies that the reason for Paul's silence about Jesus was that he was so absorbed in his vision of Jesus that he had had on the way to Damascus that he felt no need or desire to draw attention to Jesus' life apart from his death and resurrection (page 328).

First, the Jewish Law said that Paul's vision was not enough for two independent witnesses are needed and the early Church was heavily into learning from the Law.

Second, Paul never said he was that absorbed in his vision and the few parts in which he mentions it all he does is touch on it and say what it means to him but he does not dwell on it or inflate its importance so it is clear that he was not totally absorbed in the vision. The letters don't even describe the vision or stress it at all. What did concern Paul most was Christian living. And if there had been a historical Jesus he knew about he could have used him and stressed his story as the model for that living. Even when Paul contends against those believers in Corinth who denied the resurrection he only briefly mentions his vision and puts no stress on it but uses other arguments. One of these arguments was the shocking, Jesus is risen for we are lost if he is not, which is as good an admission of helplessness as one can get. So, his vision proved

it to him and was a tiny bit of evidence for everybody else and was too minor to be stressed to them. If Paul had been so absorbed in the vision he would have been mentally ill for it was important but there were other important things too. He would not have been absorbed in the vision but obsessed by it and in need of help. If Christians want to present him as sick then let them go ahead. What Paul was absorbed in by his own admission was the cross of Christ.

Third, the vision was too brief, according to Acts, to be preferable to Jesus' life-story.

Fourth, visions need to be verified by scripture and by the life of the prophet before they can be accepted. Deuteronomy 18 says one has to be totally sure a guy is a prophet before listening to him. The Bible and the Church teach that any vision that does not accord with what was known about the truth of God before is false or satanic. Paul could not ask anybody to believe in Jesus over his vision. It was a milestone in his life but it was not the be all and end all for others. The life was not emphasised for Paul knew nothing about it or could know nothing. Where did Paul try to prove that he was a prophet? He could have decided to believe in Christ before his vision and then his emotions forced him to have a vision to confirm his faith and erase the guilt he felt for his new heretical faith. Luke never tells us that Paul never had second thoughts about his hatred for Christianity up to the point of his conversion. We can be fully sure that the reason Paul paid no attention to Jesus' life was because nobody knew anything about this man that some people were saying was appearing to them.

Others would say that Paul never met Jesus and that was why he had so little interest in what happened in Jesus' life. But this makes no sense. Paul was a trained Jewish theologian and would have had to investigate Jesus when he was so interested in stripping Jesus of any influence he had among the people. Paul knew that persecution alone was not good enough and often made a group craftier and more obstinate. Persecution without debunking is not a good idea. He would have had to explain to critics what offended him so much about Jesus when he had to go after his followers. Some object that Paul was a theologian not a historian. But a theologian has to be a historian to some extent. One does not need to be a historian to know about some dead person's life especially one that died a few years before. Paul actually focused more on the crucified Jesus than on the resurrected one. He said that he lived for nothing but Jesus crucified. So he would have been interested in the pre-resurrection Jesus had there been anything to be interested in. Though Paul believed that we are lost if Jesus has not risen the crucifixion was more important than the resurrection for it was Jesus paying for our sins. The resurrection was no good without the atonement.

The First Letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians states (4:1-2) exhorts the Thessalonians to live good lives and congratulates them on not having forgotten the instructions in this they were given by Paul and his friends on the authority of the Lord Jesus. It would have been natural to use the records about Jesus' teaching and his example instead of appealing to authority. Jesus stressed the importance of Jesus being servant which means that you don't command in Jesus' name unless your back is really against the wall. Paul and his friends using their authority which is dangerous for authority even in Jesus' name is a second-hand thing and best avoided where possible would mean that there was no life of Jesus or teaching of his recorded. That proves then that Jesus did not live in the first century and it explains that the silence of Paul on Jesus' life really was down to there not having been a Jesus who had a verifiable earth life.

Second Thessalonians 3 has Paul having to appeal to his own behaviour and that of his disciples about not taking advantage of people and their generosity and states that it had to be done as an example. Jesus' example was not available. Yet the gospels give examples of Jesus avoiding being an burden on people. When Paul was so Jesus-centred and couldn't put forward Jesus' example then clearly it is because the stories about Jesus were not invented yet.

The Bible never bluntly states that Paul never met Jesus. Rather people just assume this. If Paul never met Jesus then that was all the more reason for him to familiarise himself with Jesus' history. If Paul had not met Jesus then Jesus did not exist for Paul would have been in Judaea a lot. Paul may have come from Tarsus but he was prominent in the Holy Land which suggests he was out of Tarsus a long time so nobody can say that since Paul was in Tarsus all the time he never crossed paths with Jesus.

EUCHARIST DOES NOT PROVE JESUS REAL

Paul had no interest in the earthly Jesus the one that existed before the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 11, he even said that he received the Eucharist story from the risen Jesus and passed it on so even the story that the earthly Jesus took bread and wine and made them emblems of his body and blood and was betrayed had to come through visions. The Christian argument that Paul meant Jesus gave him the Eucharist through historical tradition is too far-fetched. If Paul wrote as if Jesus told him face to face in a vision that is what he meant. His letters mentioned visions quite a bit and he would have expected people to take that meaning.

FATHERS TESTIMONY VALUELESS

The apostolic Fathers provide no convincing evidence for Jesus being a historical reality. They often contradict the Gospels which shows that either they knew nothing about them or did not recognise them as having any authority. They say nothing

about Jesus apart from some things as if he were almost a stranger or obscure. They say nothing in the way of evidence and depend only on hearsay.

Conclusion

The stories about Jesus in the gospels are fiction. The first Christians had heard nothing of this miracle working teacher in Palestine. All they had was their belief that he was crucified and died and seemed to appear to people after his death.