

## TURNING EVIDENCE AGAINST JESUS' AUTHENTICITY AS A PROPHET OR SON OF GOD INTO EVIDENCE FOR THEM

The Four Gospels purport to be evidence for Jesus Christ and his life and death and resurrection. If an ancient book appeared about Hercules which claimed he gave wise teachings and contained alleged eyewitness accounts of his wonders and his ascension into Heaven to reign as God of the universe and the book was less fantastic than the gospels few would accept it as true. Christian belief in the gospels is more conditioning than belief. If we were all heathens, and a minority of scholars appeared who realised that there were gospels and that they were reliable as scripture and as history, that discovery would impact little on us. The only reason there is such a fuss about the gospels is because ostensible Christianity is everywhere which makes people biased in its favour. Its ubiquity alone is enough to condition people.

But Christians however do try and make a case for the reliability of the gospels. They say for example that if the gospels were lies they would not contain material that embarrasses believers in Jesus and material that could embarrass even Jesus himself. They say the miracle stories are pretty tame so they ring true.

It is easily supposed that since the gospels say things about Jesus that were embarrassing for believers and the Church that he must have existed. So evidence against Jesus becomes evidence for him!

The gospels could have left them out even if they were true. The stories might be mistakes. Many religions and apparitions contain unsavoury material. Such mistakes do happen. So the unsavoury gospel yarns could be mistakes and you can make mistakes whether or not it is a real person you are writing about.

The unsavouries are an indicator of fallibility and that there couldn't have been much good to tell about Jesus when they had to settle for a lot of unflattering stuff – the supposedly embarrassing material makes us think there was no Jesus when stories about him were hard to come by. Then again, Hinduism has lots of shocking stories about its favourite god, Krishna so there was a strong religious tradition for attributing evil or bizarre antics for gods though you wanted people to start devotion to them. The idea was that gods could do things people were not allowed to do and still be considered good. In a sick way, people like Gods they say are perfect but who still exhibit flaws. Its human nature. That is why Gods doing malicious things while claiming to be paragons of holiness got more popular not less. Good in the religious sense is boring.

Perhaps the shaming bits and pieces about Jesus were not shaming to the early Church when it put them in the gospels. It didn't have to include them. People might not have realised that they should have been ashamed. The moral sense in those days was very dull. The Church had long enough to see that Jesus could have his popularity despite some of the unsavoury stories about him so it would have ceased to have even noticed that the stories were shocking and would not have desired to hide them. This is what has happened throughout most of Christian history. People have heard about the terrible things God and Jesus did and yet they did not register these actions as evil and distasteful. They would have felt uncomfortable but as they were desensitised by Church conditioning to overlook and applaud what they seen, rightly or wrongly, as evil in the scriptures they took little heed.

All of the unpleasant tales can be reconciled with an interpretation satisfactory to the Christian though not often to the objective person who looks hard enough but they were not written for geniuses but simple people. Theologians are pompous charlatans and make out you need a theology degree that they approve of to read the Bible. The liberals do this more than most and no liberal Christian school agrees with the next one.

