

JEWISH RECORDS undermine THE GOSPEL JESUS' EXISTENCE

The Jewish records are supposed to mention Jesus. Christians sometimes use them to prove that Jesus existed.

THE ARGUMENT THAT JESUS IS NOT IN THE TALMUD

In the book *Jesus in the Talmud*, Peter Schäfer complains about Johann Maier's book which says that the evidence from Jesus' time that he lived is nil. It's all later reports. Quote, "This is, in many respects, an amazing and disturbing book. It presents the most comprehensive, painstakingly erudite treatment of the subject so far. Maier has sifted through all the secondary literature, even if only remotely relevant, and showers the reader with excruciating details about who wrote what and when. More important, all the rabbinic sources that have ever been brought into connection with Jesus are analysed in every possible regard, with Maier taking great pains not just to discuss bits and pieces ripped out of context but to examine them always within the larger literary structure in which they are preserved... according to Maier, there is hardly any passage left in the rabbinic literature that can be justifiably used as evidence of the Jesus of the New Testament. The rabbis did not care about Jesus, they did not know anything reliable about him, and what they might have alluded to is legendary at best and rubbish at worst."

Not all agree that Jesus is not in the Talmud. If he is not then clearly they thought that to ignore him was better than trying to dignify his story with counter-arguments.

THE JEWS ON THE LIFE OF JESUS

The Talmud speaks of a Yeshu but likes to avoid saying his name a lot of the time. We are not certain if the person who seems to be Jesus in it is our Jesus.

The Talmud contains information that dates back to the time of Jesus and the Mishnah part of it was finished and written at the start of the third century AD. The Babylonian Talmud and the Palestine one were completed later. The Rabbis were very strict about learning their material off by heart and any teacher who forgot his material had to relearn it from his students. Forgetting even a single word of the Mishnah was regarded as bad as losing one's soul (page 164, 165, *He Walked Among Us*).

The Christians say that it seems that the Jews grew more and more reluctant over time to condemn Jesus by name in case their books would be burned by the growing Christian Church. We read that they did not do this suddenly but over time they were less and less inclined to name Jesus (page 45, *The Jesus Event and Our Response*). If they were afraid of Christians then why did they name Jesus sometimes even in insulting contexts? Why did they not remove all the references to Jesus? Why not call him (if it is him) such and such a one which they did at times all the time? Why did they leave references to Jesus in? They knew what the Christians were like and knew that if they called Jesus such and such they would still be in bother. The Christians did not have the resources to persecute Jews in every land so we can dismiss Church bigotry for the Jew's behaviour. The Jews' behaviour is so bizarre. It looks as if they had figures in their books that they thought might be Jesus but didn't want to name them Jesus in case Jesus never existed or simply because the evidence for him was a garbled mess. They didn't want to give the Jesus myth any historical basis.

A part of the Talmud called the Baraita says that Jesus sneered at the wisdom of Israel and transgressed against it and also quotes him as saying that he said good things about Israel (page 45, *The Jesus Event and Our Response*). These statements need not be contradictory.

The Talmud speaks of a lot of Jesuses and the Bible Jesus may have been a fictional person based on one of these characters. When the gospels say Jesus taught in the Temple and the Temple Guards did not know him at his arrest and gives lots of clues that Jesus was not well-known, it indicates that there was no such man and that the Talmud might have mistaken the man Jesus was based on for Jesus. The Gospels show then that the Talmud, if it confuses Jesus with other people then it was not because of sloppiness.

Mary was said to have descended from kings and princes (b. Sanh., 106 A). If so then the Jews did believe that Jesus was royalty even though the gospels say they did not and even said they had no heir or claimant to the throne but Caesar! The gospels hint that they did not have genealogical proof that Jesus was royal. The Talmud would not say she was royal unless it believed they had. If Mary could prove it she would not have been poor for there would have been so many who would have been pleased to finance her for she could give Israel its king or even Christ king. The Talmud is denying the gospel picture of a poor Mary who had to ride about on a donkey and give birth in a stable because there was no room at the inn.

Here is a quote from *The Encyclopaedia of Unbelief*, Volume 1, Gordon Stein, Editor Prometheus Books, New York, 1985, page 367). "Jewish traditions on which the Talmud drew persistently place Jesus among these ancient victims [of crucifixion] by dating him somewhere in the 2nd century B.C."

Some traditions do this. But there are traditions that deny that Jesus was crucified at all. The Talmud and other traditions contend that Jesus was in fact hanged.

One wonders how relevant the Qumran community were as regards information. It may be that this community is only saying what it would do if it could influence Judaism in Jerusalem. The Temple Scroll reads, "If a man informs against his people, delivers his people up to a foreign nation and betrays his people, you shall hang him on the tree so that he dies. On the word of two and three witnesses shall he be put to death, and they shall hang him on the tree. If a man commits a crime punishable by death, and he defects into the midst of the nations and curses his people, the children of Israel, you shall hang him also on the tree so that he dies. And their bodies shall not remain upon the tree, but you shall bury them the same day, for those who hang on the tree are accursed by God and men, you must not defile the land which I give you as an inheritance (64:6-13). This is based on the book of Deuteronomy where God says that whoever is hanged on a tree must be buried or he will defile the land for he is cursed. The Hebrew is confusing for it can mean somebody being killed and then hung on a tree or somebody killed by hanging on a tree. The wisest course is that the Hebrew means both.

The Jewish Toldoth says, "In that same hour he was put to death. It was the sixth hour and the eve of the Passover and the Sabbath. When they had brought him forth to hang him on a tree, the tree broke. This was because the Ineffable Name was with him. Now when the foolish ones saw that the trees were broken under him, they accounted for the greatness of his righteousness. Until they brought him for him the stock of the carob tree for while he was yet alive he knew the custom of Israel that they would hang him. He knew his death and the manner of his being put to death that at last he would be hanged on a tree. At that time he caused by the Ineffable Name that no tree should bare him but over the carobstock he uttered not the Ineffable Name for it is not a tree. It is a plant" (Toldoth 4:19-23).

The Talmud says that Yeshu was hanged on the Eve of the Passover. For forty days before that a Jewish messenger went in front of him to let the public know that he would be put to death by stoning. We know the messenger was Jewish for stoning was a Jewish punishment. The Talmud says that the messengers work was intended to give people the opportunity to come forward and testify for him to save him. Nobody bothered so Yeshu was hanged on the Eve of the Passover. So he must have been strung up and then stoned. The Talmud denies the crucifixion for nobody says hanged when they mean hanged on a cross for that is too vague. Hanged seems to mean that Jesus was tied up on a tree or something so that the people could stone him better. The Jews abominated crucifixion and the gospels give the impression that they wanted Jesus on the cross to prove that he was not the Son of God. If so, the Talmud would have been only too happy to clarify things and say crucified, not hanged. It is nonsensical how some scholars assume that hanged is just the Talmud's word for crucifixion. The Talmud states that the Jewish messenger was commissioned to try and save Jesus and it says nothing in his favour was discovered so "they" hanged him. The they is obviously the Jews. Jews did not crucify. Jesus was hanged.

Mar Seraphion wrote in about AD 70 that the Jews executed their wise king. This cannot mean that the Jews forced Pilate to kill Jesus. It must mean they stoned him or executed him themselves. Mar Seraphion also stated that the king lived on in this teaching just as Pythagoras lived on in the statue of Hera (page 26, *The Jesus Inquest*). This is a clear declaration that the resurrection was thought according to Mar Saraphions sources to be a mystical symbol for Jesus being alive in his doctrine.

Jesus died on the cross according to Philippians 2:8. Was he hanged on a cross first and then nailed to it as a warning to rebels? The Talmud denies the nailing for it goes unmentioned and had it been true it would have spoken about it with glee but the Christian scriptures lend credibility to the Talmud in regard to hanging. And why would Jesus have been nailed when he could hang from the rope?

The Talmud contradicts the gospel claim that Jesus had to be taken secretly for execution and that Judas was hired to arrange a discreet capture. It implies then that nobody minded if Jesus was going to be stoned because if they cared they had long enough to rescue him. He had too few disciples for them to be of any use. It says that he had five disciples whose names are very different from the gospels. The Talmud also says that the Jews give Yeshu a good chance to clear himself for the purpose of the notice was so that anybody who could defend him would have a good chance to. I reject the statement that the five are leading believers in Jesus who were not disciples of Jesus on the personal level (Josh McDowell's *Evidence for Jesus, Is It Reliable?*). There is no evidence in support of this and why would second generation Christians be remembered? They were direct personal disciples of Jesus.

Why would the Jews make any of the Talmud material on Jesus up? They would have liked to say that Jesus was betrayed by one of his own and why would they make it up about the notice to hint that Jesus was not popular for they could have

just said it out straight? And why would they have been so ashamed to say that, if most of the people had been led astray by Jesus? Why would they say that Jesus' mother was royal and then destroy a bloodline by planning to kill her son? Even if Jesus were fathered by a non-Jew they couldn't prove it and so wouldn't have taken the risk of destroying him.

Sometimes the New Testament says Jesus was hanged. It is important that Acts 10:39 says that Jesus was slain by being hanged on a tree. This gives the Talmud more weight and so it cannot be as easily dismissed as the Christians like to think. St Paul in the letter to the Galatians claimed that God cursed Jesus for God put a curse on anybody that was hanged on a tree. The curse referred to the gallows. It is possible that Paul was claiming that Jesus was hanged perhaps unsuccessfully and then crucified.

The Talmud gives laws that would prove that the trial of Jesus as recounted in the New Testament never happened if they existed at that time. Christians claim that the Talmud made up the laws to discredit the story, which is ridiculous. As if they had nothing to do but battle Christianity which was a predominately gentile religion and the Jews didn't want gentiles. Why would they go out of their way to prove that the trial never happened? There were many things that would have disturbed them far more that they would have liked to make up lies about to discredit but they left them alone.

The fact that the information given by the Talmud is simpler than the gospels suggests that it is more primitive than the gospels though it may not have been written down until after the gospels were composed. The earlier evidence is given to refute something, the better. The Talmud material is obviously more primitive than the gospels. Stories get more complex as time goes on. If it is invented stuff knowing that the Christian version of events was the right one then why is it so sober? Why is it much more sensible? The saner a story is the more likely it is to be true. Yet Christian frauds use this argument for the gospels being true knowing that it would do a better job of authenticating the Talmud. The Talmud never looks at the gospels which is strange and indicates that its Jesus material preceded the gospels.

The only problem with the Yeshu material is that if there was a Jesus or if the Christians had taken advantage of gaps in the Jewish history to invent one it was most probably about him for there was no way the Talmud would pass over him completely. Instead of attacking Jesus, the Talmud could have reported what others said about him and feign disapproval which was one way of getting the criticisms past the censors. If Christians could have been so wrong about Jesus then he easily might not have existed. And also, if the figure is not Jesus or is somebody that was just confused with Jesus then Jesus probably never existed.

Conclusion

The Jewish records cannot be used to prove that Jesus didn't exist but they do make it likely that he didn't when the information they have on him is so muddled and confused indicating that the traditions about Jesus were like that. The account of Jesus' death differs fundamentally from the gospels meaning that if they got that major fact wrong that the man might not have existed after all.

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