

ZEALOT BY REZA ASLAN - WAS JESUS A ZEALOT GODFATHER OR A MEMBER?

Reza Aslan points out to errors in the Gospel information about John the Baptist in his book, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. Matthew, Mark and Luke all error in thinking Herodias was the wife of Philip when she was in reality Herod's wife. Salome was married to Philip. Aslan dismisses the Christian solution that Herod was Herod Philip who had a brother Philip as just avoidance of admitting an error. It is pure speculation. "The gospels also seem to confuse the place of John's execution (the fortress of Machaerus) with Antipas's court, which at the time would have been in Tiberias." He says the seductive dance of princess Salome in the gospels was unthinkable. Jewish women and even princesses could not objectify themselves that way. A princess would not act like a mere performer.

The gospels then are not as careful as they pretend to be and evidence of Jesus' terrorists activities could be watered down or hidden or ignored.

"Research done by Harold Remus indicates no difference in the way pagans and early Christians described either miracles or miracle workers." This research can be studied in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1982 - Does Terminology Distinguish Early Christian from Pagan Miracles?

Aslan writes that Morton Smith (*Jesus the Magician*) is right to see that Jesus' miracles "bear a striking resemblance to what we see in the 'magical texts' of the time, which indicates that Jesus may have been seen by his fellow Jews and by the Romans as just another magician." Craig A Evans explored matches between the Jesus stories of miracles and the ones in the writings of the rabbis in his book *Jesus and His Contemporaries*.

Jesus could have been using this perception to hide his nationalistic aspirations. The gospels do say he didn't want the public to think he was the Messiah.

Aslan looks at Matthew 11:12. He says Jesus here said, "The Kingdom of Heaven has been coming violently." He likes Rudolf Otto's translation, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven operates by force, and forceful men snatch it away." He explores *biazomai* and says it means to deploy force violently. The passage rules out any idea that it means suffering violence so it means doing violence. It is "in the Greek middle voice and thus means 'to exercise violence'. Luke predictably when he worked over this text left that bit out! See Luke 16:16.

We read, "The entire point of crucifixion was to humiliate the victim and frighten the witnesses, the corpse would be left where it was hung to be eaten by dogs and picked clean by birds of prey". A forged line in Josephus says that Pilate had Jesus executed for there was an accusation made by the leaders of the Jews. It stands to reason that the accusation had to be one of terrorism!