

Jesus Christ

The Jesus who was called Christos, "Anointed," took his title from Middle-Eastern savior-gods like Adonis and Tammuz, born of the Virgin Sea-goddess Aphrodite-Maria (Myrrha), or Ishtar-Mari (Hebrew Mariamne). Earlier biblical versions of the same hero were Joshua son of Nun (Exodus 33:11), Jehu son of Nimshi, whom Elijah anointed as a sacred king (1 Kings 19:16), and Yeshua son of Marah. The Book of Enoch said in the 2nd century B.C. that Yeshua or Jesus was the secret name given by God to the Son of Man (a Persian title), and that it meant "Yahweh saves." ¹

In northern Israel the name was written leu. It was the same as leud or Jeud, the "only-begotten son" dressed in royal robes and sacrificed by the god-king Isra-El. ³ Greek versions of the name were Iasion, Jason, or Iasus the name of one of Demeter's sacrificed consorts, killed by Father Zeus after the fertility rite that coupled him with his Mother. ⁴ Iasus signified a healer or Therapeuta, as the Greeks called the Essenes, whose cult groups always included a man with the title of Christos. ⁵ The literal meaning of the name was "healing moon-man," fitting the Hebrew version of Jesus as a son of Mary, the almah or "moon-maiden." ⁶ (See Virgin Birth.)

It seems Jesus was not one person but a composite of many. He played the role of sacred king of the Jews who periodically died in an atonement ceremony as surrogate for the real king. "The Semitic religions practiced human immolations longer than any other reli-

gion, sacrificing children and grown men in order to please sanguinary gods. In spite of Hadrian's prohibition of those murderous offerings, they were maintained in certain clandestine rites." The priesthood of the Jewish God insisted that "one man should die for the people . . . that the whole nation perish not" (John 1 1:50). Yahweh forgave no sins without bloodshed: "without shedding blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

Middle-Eastern traditions presented a long line of slain and cannibalized Saviors extending back to prehistory. At first kings, they became king-surrogates or "sacred" kings as the power of real monarchies developed. The Gospels' Jesus was certainly not the first of them, Jesus Christ though he may have been one of the last. One passage hints at a holy man's understandable fear of such brief, doomed eminence: ^^^^^^^-
"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).

This Jesus seems to have made little or no impression on his contemporaries. No literate person of his own time mentioned him in any known writing. The Gospels were not written in his own time, nor were they written by anyone who ever saw him in the flesh. The names of the apostles attached to these books were fraudulent. The books were composed after the establishment of the church, some as late as the 2nd century a.d. or later, according to the church's requirements for a manufactured tradition. 10 Most scholars believe the

earliest book of the New Testament was 1 Thessalonians, written perhaps 51 a.d. by Paul, who never saw Jesus in person and knew no details of his life story.

The details were accumulated through later adoption of the myths attached to every savior-god throughout the Roman empire. Like Adonis, Jesus was born of a consecrated temple maiden in the sacred cave of Bethlehem, "The House of Bread." He was eaten in the form of bread, as were Adonis, Osiris, Dionysus, and others; he called himself the bread of God (John 6:33). Like worshippers of Osiris, those of Jesus made him part of themselves by eating him, so as to participate in his resurrection: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56).

Like Attis, Jesus was sacrificed at the spring equinox and rose again from the dead on the third day, when he became God and ascended to heaven. Like Orpheus and Heracles, he "harrowed hell" and brought a secret of eternal life, promising to draw all men with him up to glory (John 12:32). Like Mithra and all the other solar gods, he celebrated a birthday nine months later at the winter solstice, because the day of his death was also the day of his cyclic re-conception. See Attis.

From the elder gods, Jesus acquired not only his title of Christos but all his other titles as well. Osiris and Tammuz were called Good Shepherd. Sarapis was Lord of Death and King of Glory. Mithra and Heracles were Light of the World, Sun of Righteousness, Helios the Rising Sun. Dionysus was King of Kings, God of Gods. Hermes was

the Enlightened One and the Logos. Vishnu and Mithra were Son of Man and Messiah. Adonis was the Lord and the Bridegroom. Mot-Aleyin was the Lamb of God. "Savior" (Soter) was applied to all of them.

Mystery cults everywhere taught that ordinary men could be possessed by the spirits of such gods, and identified with them as "sons" or alter egos, as Jesus was. It was the commonly accepted way to acquire supernatural powers, as shown by some of the charms used by magicians: "Whatever I say must happen For I have taken to myself the power of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and of the great god-demon Iao Ablanathanalba ... for I am the Son, I surpass the limit. . . . I am he who is in the seven heavens, who standeth in the seven sanctuaries; for I am the son of the living God. ... I have been united with thy sacred form. I have been empowered by thy sacred name. I have received the effluence of goodness, Lord, God of gods, King, Demon . . . having attained that nature equal to the God's."

The skeptical Celsus noted that beggars and vagabonds throughout the Empire were pretending to work miracles and become gods, throwing fits, prophesying the end of the world, and aspiring to the status of saviors:

Each has the convenient and customary spiel, "I am the god, " or "a son of God, " or "a divine spirit, " and "I have come. For the world is about to be destroyed, and you, men, because of your injustice, will go (with it). But I wish to save, and you shall see me again coming back with

heavenly power. Blessed is he who worships me now! On all others, both cities and countrysides, I shall cast eternal fire. And men who (now) ignore their punishments shall repent in vain and groan, but those who believed in me I shall preserve immortal. "

Of course this "conspicuously false" doctrine was the central message of the Gospels too. Persian eschatology passing through a Jewish-Essenic filter predicted "the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 9:27, 21:27). Jesus promised the end of the world in his own generation. The rest of the Gospel material was largely devoted to the miracles supposed to demonstrate his divine power, since religions generally "adduce revelations, apparitions, prophecies, miracles, prodigies and sacred mysteries that they may get themselves valued and accepted." Even these miracles were derivative. Turning water into wine at Cana was copied from a Dionysian ritual practiced at Sidon and other places. ¹⁶ In Alexandria the same Dionysian miracle was regularly shown before crowds of the faithful, assisted by an ingenious system of vessels and siphons, invented by a clever engineer named Heron. Many centuries earlier, priestesses at Nineveh cured the blind with spittle, and the story was repeated of many different gods and their incarnations. Demeter of Eleusis multiplied loaves and fishes in her role of Mistress of Earth and Sea. Healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, handling poisonous serpents (Mark 16:18), etc., were so commonplace that Celsus scorned these "Christian" miracles as "nothing more than the common

works of those enchanters who, for a few oboli, will perform greater deeds in the midst of the Forum. . . . The magicians of Egypt cast out evil spirits, cure diseases by a breath, and so influence some uncultured men, that they produce in them whatever sights and sounds they please. But because they do such things shall we consider them the sons of God?"

Magicians often claimed that their prayers could bring flocks of supernatural beings to their assistance. ²⁰ Thus Jesus declared that his prayer could summon twelve legions (72,000) of guardian angels (Matthew 26:53). Magicians also communed with their followers by the standard mystery-cult sacrament of bread-flesh and wine-blood. In I texts on magic, "a magician-god gives his own body and blood to a recipient who, by eating it, will be united with him in love."

The ability to walk on water was claimed by Far-Eastern holy men. Ever since Buddhist monks praised it as the mark of the true ascetic. ²² The Magic Papyri said almost anyone could walk on water with the help of "a powerful demon." ²³ Impossibilities have always been the props of religious credulity, as Tertullian admitted: "It is believable because it is absurd; it is certain because it is impossible."

However, repetitive miracles were not so believable as original ones. Therefore early Christians insisted that all the older deities and their miracle-tales were invented by the devil, out of his foreknowledge of the true religion, so the faithful would be confused by past "imitations." ²⁵ Pagan thinkers countered with the observation that

"The Christian religion contains nothing but what Christians hold in common with heathens; nothing new, nor truly great." Even St. Augustine, finding the hypothesis of the devil's inventions hard to swallow, admitted that "the true religion" was known to the ancients, and had existed from the beginning of time, but it began to be called Christian after "Christ came in the flesh."

Nevertheless, adherents of the true religion violently disagreed as to the circumstances of its foundation. In the first few centuries a.d. there were many mutually hostile Christian sects, and many mutually contradictory Gospels. As late as 450, Bishop Theodore of Cyrrhus said there were at least 200 different Gospels revered by the churches of his own diocese, until he destroyed all but the canonical four. 27 The other Gospels were lost as stronger sects overwhelmed the weaker, wrecked their churches, and burned their books.

One scripture, later thrown out of the canon, said Jesus was not crucified. Simon of Cyrene suffered on the cross in his place, while Jesus stood by laughing at the executioners, saying, "It was another . . . who drank the gall and vinegar; it was not I ... it was another, Simon, who bore the cross on his shoulder. It was another upon whom they placed the crown of thorns. But I was rejoicing in the height. . . . And I was laughing at their ignorance." 29 Believers in this scripture were persecuted and forced to sign an abjuration reading: "I anathematize those who say that Our Lord suffered only in appearance, and that there was a man on the cross and another at a distance who

laughed."

Some Christians interpreted Jesus's *noli me tangere* ("Touch me not") to mean he came back from death as an incorporeal spirit, after the manner of other apotheosized heroes, such as the Irish hero Laegaire, who also told his people not to touch him. 31 Later, an unknown Gospel writer inserted the story of doubting Thomas, who insisted on touching Jesus. This was to combat the heretical idea that there was no resurrection in the flesh, and also to subordinate Jerusalem's municipal god Tammuz (Thomas) to the new savior (see Thomas, Saint).

Actually, the most likely source of primary Christian mythology was the Tammuz cult in Jerusalem. Like Tammuz, Jesus was the Bridegroom of the Daughter of Zion (John 12:1 5). Therefore his bride was Anath, "Virgin Wisdom Dwelling in Zion," who was also the Mother of God. 32 Her dove descended on him at his baptism, signifying (in the old religion) that she chose him for the love-death.

Anath broke her bridegroom's reed scepter, scourged him and pierced him for fructifying blood. She pronounced his death curse, *Maranatha* (1 Corinthians 16:22). As the Gospels said of Jesus, Anath's bridegroom was "forsaken" by El, his heavenly father. 35 Jesus's cry to El, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" seems to have been a line written for the second act of the sacred drama, the pathos or Passion (Mark 15:34).

Of course this Passion was originally a sexual one. Jesus's last words "It is consummated" (*consummatum est*) were interpreted as a

sign that his work was finished, but could equally apply to his marriage (John 19:30). As a cross or pillar represented the divine phallus, so a temple represented the body of the Goddess, whose "veil" (hymen) was "rent in the midst" as Jesus passed into death (Luke 23:45). As usual when the god disappeared into the underworld, the sun was eclipsed (Luke 23:44). In their ignorance of astronomical phenomena, Christians claimed that the moon was full at the same time Easter is still a full-moon festival though an eclipse of the sun can only occur at the dark of the moon. 34 The full moon really meant impregnation of the Goddess.

The parting of Jesus's garment recalls the unwrapping of Osiris when he emerged from the tomb as the ithyphallic Min, "Husband of his Mother." If Jesus was one with his heavenly father, then he also married his mother and begot himself. A 4th-century scripture said in the underworld he confronted his mother as Death, Mu} s She was also the Bride disguised as Venus, the evening star, presiding over the death of the sun. Jews still recall her in a ritual greeting to the evening star, "Come, O friend, let us welcome the Bride."

Like pagans, early Christians identified the Bride with the Mother. They said Jesus "consummated on the cross" his union with Mary-Ecclesia, his bride the church. Augustine wrote: "Like a bridegroom Christ went forth from his chamber, he went out with a presage of his nuptials. ... He came to the marriage bed of the cross, and there, in mounting it, he consummated his marriage . . . , he lovingly gave

himself up to the torment in place of his bride, and he joined himself to the woman for ever." 37 John 19:41 says, "In the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid." A garden was the conventional symbol for the body of the mother/bride; and a new tomb was the virgin womb, whence the god would be born again. On the third day, Jesus rose from the tomb/womb like Attis, whose resurrection was the Hilaria, Jesus Christ or Day of Joy. 38 Jesus's resurrection day was named after Eostre, the same Goddess as Astarte, whom the Syrians called Mother Mari. Three incarnations of Mari, or Mary, stood at the foot of Jesus's i cross, like the Moerae of Greece. One was his virgin mother. The second was his "dearly beloved" (see Mary Magdalene). The third Mary must have represented the Crone (the fatal Moera), so the tableau resembled that of the three Norns at the foot of Odin's sacrificial tree. The Fates were present at the sacrifices decreed by Heavenly Fathers, whose victims hung on trees or pillars "between heaven and I earth." Up to Hadrian's time, victims offered to Zeus at Salamis were I anointed with sacred ointments thus becoming "Anointed Ones" or "Christs" then hung up and stabbed through the side with a spear. 40 Nothing in Jesus's myth occurred at random; every detail was part of a formal sacrificial tradition, even to the "procession of palms" which glorified sacred kings in ancient Babylon. Far-Eastern traditions were utilized too. The Roman empire was well aware of the teachings and myths of Buddhism. Buddha images

in classic Greek style were made in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the first century a.d. 42 Buddhist ideas like the "footprints of Buddha" appeared among Christians. Bishop Sulpicius of Jerusalem reported that, as in India, "In the dust where Christ trod the marks of His step can | still be seen, and the earth still bears the print of His feet." 43 Buddhist metaphors and phrasing also appeared in the Gospels. Jesus's formula, "Dearly Beloved," was the conventional way for Tantric deities to address their teachings to Devi, their Goddess.

Scholars' efforts to eliminate paganism from the Gospels in order to find a historical Jesus have proved as hopeless as searching for a core in an onion. 45 Like a mirage, the Jesus figure looks clear at a distance but lacks approachable solidity. "His" sayings and parables came from elsewhere; "his" miracles were old twice-told tales. Even the Lord's Prayer was a collection of sayings from the Talmud, many derived from earlier Egyptian prayers to Osiris. 46 The Sermon on the Mount, sometimes said to contain the essence of Christianity, had no original material; it was made up of fragments from Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Secrets of Enoch, and the Shemone Esreh. 47 Moreover, it was unknown to the author of the oldest Gospel, pseudo-Mark.

The discovery that the Gospels were forged, centuries later than the events they described, is still not widely known even though the Catholic Encyclopedia admits, "The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning . . . has no foundation in history." No extant manuscript can be dated earlier than

the 4th century a.d.; most were written even later. 49 The oldest manuscripts contradict one another, as also do even the present canon of synoptic Gospels.

The church owed its canon to the Gnostic teacher Marcion, who first collected Pauline epistles about the middle of the 2nd century. Later he was excommunicated as a heretic because he denied that the scriptures were mystical allegories full of magic words of power. The epistles he collected were already over a century old, if indeed they were written by Paul; much of their material was made up of forged interpolations.

The most "historical" figure in the Gospels was Pontius Pilate, to whom Jesus was presented as "king" of the Jews and simultaneously as a criminal deserving the death penalty for "blasphemy" because he called himself Christ, Son of the Blessed (Luke 23:3; Mark 14:61-64). This alleged crime was no real crime. Eastern provinces swarmed with self-styled Christs and Messiahs, calling themselves Sons of God and announcing the end of the world. None of them was executed for "blasphemy." 51 The beginning of the story probably lay in the tradition of sacred-king sacrifice in Jerusalem long before Pilate's administration, when Rome was trying to discourage such barbarisms.

From 103 to 76 B.C., Jerusalem was governed by Alexander Janneus, called the Aeon, who defended his throne by fighting challengers. One year, on the Day of Atonement, his people attacked him at the altar, waving palm branches to signify that he should die

for the earth's fertility. Alexander declined the honor and instituted a persecution of his own subjects. Another king of Jerusalem took the name of Menelaus, "Moon-king," and practiced the rite of sacred marriage in the temple. 52 Herod also made a sacred marriage, and had John the Baptist slain as a surrogate for himself.

If there was a Jesus cult in Jerusalem after 30 a.d., it completely disappeared forty years later when Titus conquered the city and outlawed many local customs, including human sacrifice. Jerusalem was wholly Romanized under Hadrian. It was newly named Aelia Capitolina and rededicated to the Goddess. The temple became a shrine of Venus. 53 Tacitus described the siege of Jerusalem, but his writing is abruptly cut off at the moment when Roman forces entered the city as if the final chapters were deliberately destroyed so no one knows what the Romans found there. However, Romans did express disapproval of the Jews' or Christians' cannibalistic sacraments. Porphyry called it "absurd beyond all absurdity, and bestial beyond every sort of bestiality, that a man should taste human flesh and drink the blood of men of his own genus and species, and by doing should have eternal life."

From the Christians' viewpoint, a real historical Jesus was essential to the basic premise of the faith: the possibility of immortality through identification with his own death and resurrection. Wellhausen rightly said Jesus would have no place in history unless he died and returned

exactly as the Gospels said. 55 "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Still, despite centuries of research, no historical Jesus has come to light. It seems his story was not merely overlaid with myth; it was mythic to the core.

Like all myths, it revealed much about the collective psychology that created it. In earlier pagan religions, the Mother and Son periodically ousted the Father from his heavenly throne. The divine son Jesus Christ of Christianity no longer challenged the heavenly king, but tamely submitted to his fatal command: "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Some early sects said the Father who demanded his son's blood was cruel, even demonic. 56 These were suppressed, but scholars have discerned in Christianity "an original attitude of hostility toward the father figure, which was changed in the first two centuries into an attitude of passive masochistic docility." 57 If orthodox Christianity demanded subordination of the Son, it was even more determined to subordinate the Mother. The Gospels' Jesus showed little respect for his mother, which troubled the church in its Renaissance efforts to attract women to the cult of Mary. "Any hero who speaks to his mother only twice, and on both occasions addresses her as 'Woman,' is a difficult figure for the sentimental biographers." 58 Together with Jesus's avowed opposition to marriage and the family (Matthew 22:30; Luke 14:26), women's primary concerns, New Testament sexism tended to disgust educated women of

[he pagan world. But the Jesus who emulated Buddha in advocating poverty and humility eventually became the mythic figurehead for one of the world's pre-eminent money-making organizations. The cynical Pope Leo X exclaimed, "What profit has not that fable of Christ brought us!" Modern theologians tend to sidestep the question of whether Jesus (was in fact a fable or a real person. In view of the complete dearth of hard evidence, and the dubious nature of the soft evidence, it seems Christianity is based on the ubiquitous social phenomena of credulity: An idea is able to gain and retain the aura of essential truth through telling and retelling. This process endows a cherished notion with more veracity than a library of facts. . . . [Documentation plays only a small role in contrast to the act of re-confirmation by each generation of scholars.] In addition, the further removed one gets from the period in question, the greater is the strength of the conviction. Initial incredulosity is soon converted into belief in a probability and eventually smug assurance.

1. H. Smith, 19V 2. Albright, 262. 3. Frazer, G.B., 341. 4. Graves, G.M. 1, 89.

5. Rose, 111.6. Graves, G.M. 2, 396. 7. Albright, 262. 8. Knight, D.W.P., 113.

9. Cumont, O.R.R.P., 1 19. 10. H. Smith, 179-80. 11. Enslin, L.C.M., 233-38.

12. Frazer, G.B., 402; Briffault 3, 97. 13. M. Smith, 102-4. 14. M. Smith, 1 17.

15. Guignebert, 371. 16. M. Smith, 25, 120. 17. deCamp, A.E., 258.

18. Gifford, 63. 19. Doane, 272. 20. M. Smith, 109. 21. M. Smith, 123.

22. Burdo Thodol, 158; Tat/ & Kent, 167. 23. M. Smith, 120. 24. Angus, 268.

25. Robertson, 112. 26. Doane, 409-11. 27. M. Smith, 2. 28. H. Smith, 189.

29. Pagels, 72-73. 30. Reinach, 245. 31. Joyce 1, 298. 32. Ashe, 31.

33. Larowse, 77. 34. Agrippa, 71. 35. Brandon, 45. 36. Wilkins, 143.

37. Cavendish, P.E., 54; T., 75. 38. Frazer, G.B., 407. 39. H. Smith, 201.

40. H. Smith, 135. 41. Pritchard, A.N.E., 204. 42. Ross, 100.

43. de Voragine, 287. 44. Munnirvunntunrn, 173. 45. M. Smith, 4.

46. Budge, E.M. 116. 47. H. Smith, 186. 48. Augstein, 260. 49. Pfeifer, 103.

50. Reinach, 256, 277. 51. Brandon, 248. 52. Pfeifer, 72-74, 120.

53. Encyc. Brit., "Jerusalem." 54. M. Smith, 66. 55. Guignebert, 47.

56. Legge 2, 239. 57. Augstein, 309. 58. M. Smith, 25. 59. de Camp, A.E., 399.

60. Arens, 89.

Jesus ben Pandera

Celsus and the Talmudic tradition mentioned Jesus, son of Pandera or Panthera, begotten by a Roman soldier on a Jewish prostitute, Miriam of Magdala (Mary Magdalene), whose husband was a carpenter. 1 The word for carpenter, najjar, was applied to a sacred brotherhood, the Nazarites or Nazorenes, who supported themselves by woodworking. 2 Jesus ben Pandera was called a najjar, a holy man. He worked miracles, healed the sick, foretold the world's end. 3 Eventually he was executed, perhaps by hanging, through his own wish.

Some said this ben Pandera or Bar-Panther was the grandfather of the Virgin Mary. 4 Other Christian authorities, like Epiphanius, said he was the paternal grandfather of the Christian Jesus which, obviously, contradicted the Virgin Birth myth. "Son of Pandera" was a title so firmly attached to Jesus that many Christian writers accepted it and tried to explain it. The name of Pandera as Jesus's father is traceable back to the time of the Gospels and has "an equal claim to reliability." 5 Later Christians said the name was used by the Jews to discredit their savior by calling him a whore's son who was executed as a criminal.

The "whore" called Miriam of Magdala seems to have been a sacred hierodule or Virgin Bride of God, dedicated to the temple (magdala). Since the oldest traditions associated Mary Magdalene with the Holy Vase that represented Pandora, the Great Goddess entitled "All-Giver," some suggest that Pandera was a corrupt form of this title. 6 Another theory said Jesus ben Pandera really meant Jesus, son of the Virgin (Parthenos), the latter being the usual title of a temple hierodule. 7 Or again, Pan-Thera could have meant Dionysus the son of Pan, whose totem animal was a panther, or "all-beast." Jesus was

var. Panthera

Jesus Christ

assimilated to the Dionysian savior. The story of his miracle at Cana was directly modeled on a Dionysian rite of sacred marriage celebrated at Sidon; even the Gospels' wording was copied from the festival of the older god. 8

These few garbled hints of Jesus's pagan background may have been greatly clarified by the hundreds of diverse Gospels extant in the first few centuries a.d., had not the early church seen fit to destroy them all. 9

1. Keller, 341-42. 2. Briffault 3, 367. 3. Robertson, 68. 4. de Voragine, 520.
5. M. Smith, 61, 65. 6. Graves, G.M. 1, 148. 7. Ashe, 53. 8. M. Smith, 120.
9. M. Smith, 2.

Other versions of the name were Jaho, lao, or leuw, sometimes titles of Zeus-Sabazius as the nocturnal sun and Lord of Death in the underworld. 7

The same god was Sabaoth, the Jews' "Lord of Hosts." The Latin name for this Heavenly Father came

from the same root:

lu-piter, Father leu. 8