

THE LOST BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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This a name given a collection of writings, but the title is misleading. For one thing, it may suggest that this collection should have been in the New Testament.

Some of these 'lost' books contain details which correspond with the existing New Testament. Of particular interest is the Acts of Pontius Pilate. However, other books are clearly spurious and some are biased and others written to advocate Roman Catholicism. But, note, they do not appear in the Bible.

There is the gospel of the birth of Mary in which it is said that Mary was born in Nazareth to Joachim and Anna. Anna's family came from Bethlehem and they were plain and simple people but pious in their ways. An angel appeared to Joachim to tell him that Anna was to have a baby daughter who must be called Mary who, in due time, would give birth to the Son of God. The angel also appeared to Anna with the same message.

Anna was brought to the Temple School in Jerusalem where she was educated. She is said to have been ministered to by angels. At a particular time, the High Priest ordered all fourteen year old virgins to leave the Temple and be married. A search for a husband for Anna was instigated and Joachim was found. In their marriage, Anna was found to be barren and, consequently, taunted by the traditional Jewish teaching that a woman who did not give birth to a son was inadequate as she could not be the mother of the have the Son of God. Anna was ridiculed by her maid, Judith.

This book is apocryphal. It is like Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code. People will always make up stories about historical figures.

The next book is the Protevangelion which tells of how Mary walked at nine months and how she was fed by angels. It tells of the birth of Jesus and how Joseph sought a midwife who was amazed that a virgin had given birth. Chapters 15 and 16 deal with the visit of the wise men and Herod ordering the slaying of all boy babies of two and under supporting the view that the wise men did not come to the stable on the night of the birth but some time later. The New Testament states that they came to the house.

The gospel of the infancy of Jesus falls into two sections and is clearly spurious. It is the work of Roman Catholics since these volumes speak of St Mary and Our Lady. It claims that the wise men came in response to the prophecy of Zoroaste and that Jesus was circumcised in a cave. It tells of the miracles Jesus performed both as a child and a boy and how he prophesied that two thieves, Titus and Dumachus, would be crucified with him. There is a foolish story of a man turned into a mule who is restored by Jesus.

In part two we read of how a boy that collides with Jesus is struck dead and how Jesus blinds his accusers. Jesus is branded a murderer and as a sorcerer.

Of course, these are not gospels since a gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ. What we have is a collection of stories which cannot be verified elsewhere and not in keeping with the character of the Son of God. Does it matter that Mary first walked when she was nine months old? Are we to accept that she had angelic caterers? Could Joseph and Mary afford the services of a midwife? Could one be found when Bethlehem was crammed full of visitors for the census? Jesus was circumcised in the Temple in accordance with Jewish law. Could or would anyone turn a man into a mule? Does the prophecy of two thieves being crucified with him ring true? Can we reconcile Jesus as the Saviour and His going about only doing good but who blinded people and killed a boy? It is inconsistent with the gospels of the New Testament and the exemplary character of Jesus.

What is clear is the doctrine of Mariology, the veneration of the Virgin Mary and details about her so that she is represented in some of these 'lost' books as important or more important than the Saviour.

If you have a saviour, for example someone who pulls you out of fast flowing river and prevents your being drowned, is his mother more important than the saviour himself?

There are people who pray to Our Lady whereas the clear New Testament instruction is to pray, "Our Father."

The great difficulty is that some of these books contain truths, that is to say detail confirmed elsewhere but they also contain some information which is clearly spurious and not in keeping with the established and confirmed writings of first century Christians. A lot of the writings are mischief and not written by believers who followed the teachings of Christ but are using guesswork, unsubstantiated stories being merely fiction, some of which are diametrically opposed to the Bible and some of which are clearly advocating Roman Catholicism and feminism.

This is welcome 'food' for the non-believer and agnostic. If these writings of the 'lost' books are spurious in part and not to be trusted, can anything written about Jesus be trusted? We can sympathise with that view but sufficient evidence has been shown to prove the existence of Jesus, His life, miracles, death and resurrection and these spurious writings indicate why they were not included in the New Testament.

Even today there are people writing nonsense and lies about the Christ because they want us to believe in real nonsense and falsehoods proclaimed by atheists, scientists and spiritualists.

The Acts of Pontius Pilate is also known as the gospel of Nicodemus. It is a work of great antiquity and because it supports the true gospel account, some mischievous people are quick to call it a forgery. It tells of Christ being accused before Pilate of healing on the Sabbath. Jesus is identified as the son of Joseph, the carpenter, and Mary. The accusing Jews complained that Jesus healed the lame and the deaf, the lepers, the mentally ill and all sorts of people and on the Sabbath day. He was also accused of casting out devils which made Him a devil Himself. Pilate answered, How can the casting out of devils be performed by a devil? Pilate's wife tells her husband to have nothing to do with Jesus as He is a just man. The Jews complain that Jesus was born out of fornication, but Pilate declares that he can find no fault in Jesus and twice exonerates Him. The Jews complained again that Jesus said He was king and the Son of God. But this does not move Pilate who seems to adopt the attitude what a man says he is and what he does is not a problem until those sayings are put into action.

At the trial of Jesus, Nicodemus speaks in His defence. Another Jew who had been miraculously healed by Jesus speaks in His defence. A man blind from birth spoke about Jesus giving him sight and Veronica who had an issue of blood for twelve years, touched the hem of Jesus's garment and was healed. Other witnesses spoke of the miracle of the water changing into wine at Cana in Galilee and another testified to the healing of a lunatic. A centurion testified of Jesus healing his servant when he was lying sick on his bed at home. There were other witnesses some who spoke of the raising of Lazarus after he had been dead and buried for four days. The evidence is so overwhelming that Pilate says that he cannot shed innocent blood. He cannot condemn Jesus to death.

We pause here to ask why the Biblical gospels do not give an account of the defence of Jesus and the witnesses for His defence? The fact is that it was a Roman trial and was recorded by Roman scribes. It would not have been recorded by Jews because it would show up how unfair unreasonable and aggressive they were. Where they failed on one accusation against Jesus they proceeded to another and then another and concluded that He should die because He was the product of fornication.

This lost book confirms the reliability of the Gospels.

Even today in news bulletins often more and more information gradually becomes available through 'leaks' and the reference to documents previously unavailable. The only record of the trial of Jesus before Pilate would be Roman records and not the record of Christian believers.

It must also be remembered that Roman trials prided themselves on justice and the hearing of evidence from both sides.

Pilate remonstrates with the Jews that if Jesus is put to death what profit will it be to them to have killed an innocent man.

Nicodemus defends Jesus further with fifteen other witnesses to show that Jesus was not the product of fornication, the defence made on the basis of His birth being miraculous and that God can perform miracles. Pilate, knowing Jewish history, actually quotes the miracles that befell the Jews but is now worried about the turbulence of the Jews. They are now an angry and unruly mob likely to create violence and serious social unrest. They were bloodthirsty. Pilate tries to appease the mob but agrees to let Barabbas be released in accordance with a custom at Passover.

The Jews became even more savage demanding the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate now is angry and refers to Jewish history again and how the Jews were also a troublesome and seditious people and always disobeying God. True words but truth often angers people and it did on this occasion. The Jews said that the blood of Jesus would be on their hands; they would be responsible for His death. And they have been for two thousand years. The greatest national error was made by the Jews.

Pilate gives in but it must be recorded that he fought to save Jesus from crucifixion. The Acts of Pilate continue with the crucifixion and the two thieves are named as Dimas and Gesta not as in the Roman 'gospel' of the infancy of Jesus. The crucifixion account agrees with the Biblical gospels.

The gospels and the Acts of Pilate refer to the resurrection of many saints at the crucifixion. The darkness is referred to as an eclipse of the sun and, again, astronomers, seeking to debunk the Christian gospel, try to prove that no such eclipse happened at the crucifixion. In doing this they ignore the essential fact that Jesus was crucified.

This lost book identifies the soldiers who pierced Jesus's side as Longinus and of a centurion who was amazed at Jesus and said when Jesus died, "This man was truly the Son of God." For a tough centurion to say that is quite astonishing, so astonishing that it must be true in that this soldier saw something uniquely wonderful in Christ.

The Roman records show that Jesus was certified dead and buried in a tomb built by Joseph of Arimathea. These records also show how angry the Jews were with both Nicodemus and Joseph whom they captured and held prisoner. But the tomb is sealed tight by the Roman authorities. There is no way in or out. Concerning the resurrection, the records show how the soldiers had to relate that Jesus was not in the tomb and plans were set in motion to indicate that the Roman guards fell asleep and someone broke into the tomb, and so quietly that the guards did not wake up, and stole the body. That excuse is unbelievable.

The Acts of Pilate and the gospel of Nicodemus record some of the appearances of Christ after the resurrection. The book ends with Pilate calling the Jews together in the Temple and demanding that the Scripture about Jesus, called the Christ, should be opened and read. By now there are thousands of converts to Christianity in Jerusalem and further afield. This is amazing for when Jesus was captured the disciples were very frightened and living behind locked doors for fear of the angry Jews. About forty days later these once terrified men were preaching in the open air with courage and on one day some 3000 Jews were converted. Why the change in 6 weeks? What had happened?

In the Temple and after the reading of the Jewish scriptures, who foretold the death and resurrection of Christ, many Jews declared that they had crucified Jesus in their ignorance and that they now know Him to be the Son of God.

This proves that the assertion that the only writings about Jesus are in the Bible to be a false assertion. Critics

want the Acts of Pontius Pilate to be a forgery because it supports the Biblical gospels and is independent from the Bible. If this lost book had presented Jesus as a fraud and the resurrection was a hoax it would have been circulated and accepted

This highlights again the prejudice there is against Jesus and that the hatred the first century Jews showed Him still exists and remains unreasonable and untenable.

There are many other 'lost' books of the New Testament but that title is a misnomer. The New Testament is a collection of authenticated books showing the impeccable character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and His willing sacrifice to save all who come to Him in faith.

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