

Yx30 – Clerical Quackery 10 – The Composite Christ

This is the 30th in a series of posts dealing with the history of what I call “the Mountainous God Lie” and the 10th in a subseries of posts emphasizing Clerical Quackery. In these posts, I’ve been using the metaphor that the God Lie is a mountain range of lies, with many different mountain peaks. The peaks represent different religions, including various polytheistic religions of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Europe, and so on, as well as various monotheistic religions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc. I’ve acknowledged that the foothills of many of the mountains are not lies but misunderstandings by primitive people, but during especially the most recent ~2500 years, clerical quacks and affiliated politicians have apparently deliberately perpetuated such misunderstandings as lies – for the profit, power, and presumed prestige they provided (and still provide).

In the previous post, I essentially finished my planned tromp up the mountain of lies known as Judaism (at least, up to the Maccabean revolt). My plan for the remaining posts is to pick up the pace. In fact, rather than attempt to hike up the mountains of lies known as Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism, I plan to (in effect) fly over the mountains in a helicopter, point out some prominent features, and mention the names of some guides who can more competently lead readers to detailed explorations, should readers desire.

In defense of my plan, I submit the following three points:

1. Whereas in the previous posts in this series I’ve now tried to at least expose the mountain of lies known as Judaism (i.e., lies incorporated into the Old Testament), such exposure already reveals many of the lies at the base of Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism (such as the existence of gods, sons of gods, prophets of gods, communications from gods, etc.), since Judaism is the bedrock on which rest these other mountains of lies;
2. Although I’ve now at least sketched the first ~3,000 years of written records of the development of the God Lie, leaving “only” the most recent 2,000 years of history, yet there’s at least an order-of-magnitude more literature available dealing with the most recent 2,000 years of religious lies; therefore, exploring Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism in similar detail would be at least an order of magnitude more challenging than exploring the lies in Judaism; and
3. Fortunately for humanity, many diligent, competent, and brave historians have already devoted decades of their lives to exposing the mountains of lies known as

Christianity and Mormonism; consequently, and also given the facts that I'm not a historian and that, with my age, my mountain climbing abilities have diminished, I think it best if, for these final posts in this series, I simply provide some illustrations of and references to reports on the explorations led by more competent guides.

I should add that, unfortunately for humanity, not so many historians have (as yet) similarly tried to expose Islamic lies (since Muslim clerics threaten to murder those who try). As I'll illustrate in a later post, however, some historians have done so – and I hope readers will revel in such honesty and bravery.

In these next few posts, I'll “fly over” the mountain of lies called Christianity and call attention to some of the brave people who tried to expose its lies.

AN OVERVIEW OF CHRISTIANITY

If I were encouraged to try to give a brief overview of Christianity, I'd probably try something similar to: “mysticism for the masses.” It emerged as a concoction of at least the following primary ingredients:

1. Mysticism,
2. Sun worship and associated astrological nonsense,
3. Ubiquitous superstition,
4. The “Mystery religions”,
5. Silly metaphysical speculations, and
6. Other cultural and political factors, especially
7. Blatant conspiracy by a new breed of clerics.

In this post, I'll outline my meaning for the first six of the above ingredients and provide references where more details can be found; in the next two posts, I'll try to explain what I mean by “blatant conspiracy by a new breed of clerics.”

1. Mysticism

Many “Church fathers” claimed that Christianity was an ancient religion. For example, “[the first great Christian philosopher](#)” (an oxymoron that I didn't concoct!) “Saint” Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) stated:

What is now called the Christian religion already existed among the ancients, and was not lacking at the very beginnings of the human race. When Christ appeared in the flesh, the true religion already in existence received the name of Christian.

If readers are confused by such a seemingly bizarre claim (even if one acknowledges that Augustine probably thought that the human race started only a few thousand years earlier), a possible resolution is: he probably saw that the Christian religion was (and still is) mysticism for the masses.

In turn, we now know that the first mystics were the first people who lost (or never gained) control of their rational faculties (*via* mental illness, starvation, meditation, fasting, physical or sexual abuse, ingesting mind-warping drugs discovered by the tribe's stone-age Shaman or Medicine Man, etc.). Subsequently, such “mystical experiences” (e.g., feeling “**unity with the divine**”, apparently caused by blocking sensory input to the “orientation association area” of the brain)¹ were promoted in most of the world's religions, including Hinduism (with meditation and with hallucinogens or entheogens² such as *Soma*), Zoroastrianism (with *Homa*), and quite likely³ many Jewish religious sects such as the Essenes (with the bark of the acacia tree or the shrub *Peganum harmala*, from which both the Hindu's *Soma* and the Zoroastrian's *Homa* can be produced).⁴

In fact, as an internet search can quickly reveal, many scholars have suggested that the Old Testament's (OT's) Adam and Eve myth about eating “the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge” refers to their ingesting an entheogen (perhaps the bark of the acacia tree or *Amanita* mushrooms growing symbiotically with host trees such as birch and pine) that provided knowledge of the “spirit world”; therefore, perhaps the moral of the Jewish version of the Adam and Eve myth is, in the vernacular, “**Don't do drugs**”! As for the other alleged tree in the alleged Garden of Eden (the Tree of Life, the fruit of which would allegedly yield eternal life), scholars suggest that the New Testament's (NT's) *Book of Revelation* reveals that its fruit was also the mushroom entheogen *Amanita*. Therefore, perhaps more accurate than Thomas Jefferson's assessment that *Revelation* is “**merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy, nor capable of explanation than the incoherencies of our own nightly dreams**” is to say that its author (St. John of Patmos) was on a drug-induced trip.⁵

¹ I reviewed this earlier in Chapter X3 at http://zenofzero.net/docs/X03_EXamining_Reasons.pdf.

² See, e.g., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entheogen>.

³ See <http://www.egodeath.com/WassonEdenTree.htm>.

⁴ See http://www.psychointegrator.com/down/biblical_entheogens.pdf.

⁵ From <http://www.egodeath.com/WassonEdenTree.htm - Toc135889223>.

[T]he Tree of Life in *Revelation* was long understood as *Amanita*... Near the start of the visionary journey in *Revelation*, John eats the little scrolls with writing on them (dried *Amanita* caps, per Heinrich), given by the angel... From *Revelations 10*, 8:

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel...” [H]e said to me, “Take it, and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.” So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

In his book *Strange Fruit* (p. 129) Clark Heinrich explains:

This “scroll-eating” [in *Revelation*] is the same as in *Ezekiel*, a metaphor for the dried cap of a fly *agaric* mushroom. Dried caps are as pliable as leather and have a sweet, honey-like smell, unlike the fresh mushroom, yet eating them often causes an upset stomach... The veil remnants on the cap often look like obscure writing of some kind, while the cap itself contains, and can reveal, the “word of God”, a word that can be seen as well as heard through the secret door of the mind...

And thus, for example, in some ways it’s “entertaining” that tens of millions of current Christians are anxiously awaiting “Rapture Time”, which may be best described as a drug addict’s psychedelic ravings!

Not all of Christianity’s “mysticism for the masses”, however, was associated with various hallucinogens (including wine). Some of the mysticism was (and still is) associated with various types of meditation, fasting, and mental illness. As examples of such mental problems, it’s reported in the NT that the mother of Jesus considered him “possessed” and Paul was judged to be “mad” (possibly with temporal lobe epilepsy) – and in fact, Muhammad describes himself in the Koran as “the mad poet”, and the probable founder⁶ of Mormonism (i.e., Sidney Rigdon) was described by his brother (a medical doctor) as being mentally unbalanced ever since he fell from a horse, had his foot caught in a stirrup, and was dragged on his head.

2. Sun Worship and Associated Astrological Nonsense

As suggested above, the roots of Christian mysticism appear to extend into the Stone Age; in addition, the portions of Christianity related to Sun worship extend back to at least 8,000 BCE (from which time, as I reviewed earlier,⁷ first evidence of Sun worship is available). As described⁸ by Alvin Boyd Kuhn in his presentation “Spiritual Symbolism of the Sun and Moon”:

⁶ See, e.g., the series of chapters starting at http://zenofzero.net/docs/Qx21_LDS_Ludicrousness_-_1.pdf.

⁷ See Chapters **Ix9** or **Yx22**, or search on the internet for “Nabta Playa”.

⁸ See http://www.tphta.ws/ABK_SSSM.HTM.

The (apparent) annual revolution of the sun about the earth, or more properly the course of the sun through the four seasons or four quarters (twelve signs) of the zodiac, was the entire symbolical basis of ancient religious systematism. The divinity in man was typed by the sun, and the sun's yearly experience in its journeying was made the outward typograph of the experience of the spirit in mortal man. As the sun descended into the dark realm of winter, died and was buried out of sight, to be revived and raised up again to glory in the vernal equinox, so the [Sun] god descended into the depths of night and winter in matter, lost his divine nature and died on the cross of incarnation, to rise again, as did Osiris in Egypt, "on the third day in the moon." The new moon was born on the third day of the dark period. And this, be it known on authority, was the origin of the three days during which all Saviors in ancient scriptures reposed in the tomb of death.

The zodiacal chart is divided into four quarters to match the four seasons, the four cardinal points, and the fourfold segmentation of man's nature. At the junction points of each two of these divisions, or at the two solstices and equinoxes, the ancients celebrated the four great religious festivals of the year. In June came the great Fire-festival, symbolic of the highest expression of the fiery nature of deity; in September came the festival that commemorated the incarnation, under whatever name; in December was celebrated the end of the dark night of death, and the birth or quickening of the Sun-god to new life; and at the vernal equinox in March followed the joyous festival of the bursting of the bars of death in matter, or the resurrection. Each of these was of cardinal importance and significance; yet it might be said that of the four the autumn and spring occasions were the ones of primary rating. They severally symbolize the descent of the god into incarnation and his re-aring after 'death'...

Then we have also the cycle of the Great Year, a period of 25,868 years, measured by the total precession of the equinoxes through the entire twelve signs, giving us the different astronomical "Ages." Each of these twelve divisions lasted 2155 years; and the ancient sages represented the Messiah as coming at the beginning of each new Age under the form of the sign. In Libra he came as the Lord of the Balance, or the King of Righteousness; in Scorpio he came as the divine Scorpion, to sting the god into incarnational Lethe from which he was to awake on Christmas in his quickening to life; in Sagittarius he came as the half-animal Archer aiming at the distant goal of unification of his two elements; in Capricorn he came as the mountain goat scaling the heights of the spirit; in Aquarius he was the Water-Pourer, or universal server; in Pisces he came as the Ichthys, the divine Fish, as the food of man; in Aries the ram or Lamb of God, sacrificed for the world; in Taurus, as the Golden Bull or Calf, the male Cow of life and plenty of ancient Egypt; in Gemini as the two divine twins, the god in his biune form, the one of which, like John the Baptist decreases as the other increases; in Cancer as the Good Scarab or Beetle, type of the self-renewing divine life; in Leo as the lion of the house of Judah; in Virgo as the shoot of the vine, constellated in this sign in old zodiacs. Jesus of Galilee came at or near the beginning of the Piscean era; his followers were called the Pisciculi (little fishes) and his disciples were figured as rude fisherman...

Readers interested in more information about astrological aspects of both Judaism and Christianity might want to start their exploration with Chapters **Ix7** and **Ix8**, then read some recent books such as Acharya S's *The Christ Conspiracy – The Greatest Story Ever Sold*, and search on the web using “astrology +Christianity” (and similar). The following quotation⁹ is illustrative of the type of information readily available on the web; its author is given as “Student No. 038694”; I obtained it from the website of Courtney Roberts, one of whose books is *The Star of the Magi*.¹⁰

Such is the poetry of the astrological *lingua franca*. After all [in the new age, starting at the beginning of the Current Era (CE)], the constellation Pisces [the fish] was the new host of the Sun and its vernal equinox for the next two millennia to come [i.e., because of precession of the Earth's axis of rotation,¹¹ then for the past 2,000 years, Pisces has been the last constellation that's visible just before dawn (called “heliacal rising”) on the first day of spring, whereas in approximately 200 years, it will be the constellation Aquarius – the idea conveyed in the lyrics of the song: “This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius”].

This fact was not lost upon the earliest Christians. They were quick to adopt the symbol of the fish, and used it to identify themselves to one another. This usage is usually explained by an acrostic derivation from the phrase “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior” in Greek, which yields the Greek letters that compose the word for fish, *Ichthys*. What seems to have been completely forgotten in this tradition was that *Ichthys* was also the Greek name for Pisces.

The astrological *lingua franca* permeates the Gospels, where mythological imagery cloaks the astronomical revelation of the dawn of a new eon, and the arrival of a new, piscine Solar hero. In the following gospel passages, substituting the word “Pisces” for fish may help to more closely approximate the meaning in Greek.

All four canonical gospels agree that Jesus began his ministry after being dramatically pulled up out of the River Jordan by John the Baptist. Christ purifies himself in the wilderness, and then sets right to work among the fishermen on the shores of the sea of Galilee, calling Simon, Andrew, James and John, to drop their nets and become fishers of men (*Matthew 4:18–22*, *Mark 1:16–20*).

In the gospel of *Mark*, the earliest of the four, Jesus spends most of the first eight chapters either afloat in a fishing boat or ministering on the shore. The first time he goes to the Sea of Galilee, he nets his first disciples. The second time, he calls Alphaeus, and is thronged at the seaside by the multitudes, desperate for his word and

⁹ From <http://webzoom.freewebs.com/courtneyroberts/srpaper.doc>.

¹⁰ See <http://www.courtneyrobertshome.com/thestarofthemagi.htm>.

¹¹ See, e.g., Chapter Ix7 at <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix07StarStories.pdf>.

his touch. The third time, he calls for a boat, because the crowds on the shore have become too intense. In Chapter 4, he returns to the shore once more:

- 1) And he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.
- 2) And he taught them many things by parables...(KJV)

Jesus habitually crosses back and forth from one side of the Sea of Galilee to another, also making side trips to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and the coastal city of Caesarea. After *Mark's* story of the first miracle of the loaves and fishes in Chapter 6, Jesus boards a boat and crosses the sea a fourth time. He appears to his disciples later that night walking on water, as their fishing boat struggles through a storm. He performs another miracle of bread and fishes, and again crosses the sea in Chapter 8. Six times in all Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee, healing and teaching to the surging crowds on the shore wherever he goes. In Chapter 10, he departs for the coasts of Judea.

The author of the later gospel of *Luke* tells the story in Chapter 5 of Jesus retreating to the fishing boat to escape the pressing crowds on the shore, and teaching them while afloat on the sea. After Christ dismisses the crowds, he helps the fishermen to a miraculous catch. They had toiled all night and caught nothing, but once Jesus tells them to drop their nets, they catch such a multitude of fish that their nets almost burst.

The gospel attributed to *John*, although quite different in structure from the synoptic gospels, includes the story of the miracle of loaves and fishes in Chapter 6. It also recounts that Jesus subsequently walked on the water and calmed the sea before joining the disciples in the fishing boat. However, this gospel ends with a fish story not found in the others, which mirrors the tale of the miraculous draught in *Luke*. *John's* version is set after the crucifixion, and takes Jesus and his disciples right back to where it all started, to a fishing boat on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias).

Chapter 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4) But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5) Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6) And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. (KJV)

The disciples then recognize Jesus and come ashore, where Jesus has a fire laid, and is cooking fish and bread on the coals. He tells the disciples to come and dine, and to bring the fish they have caught...

Meanwhile, Christ became increasingly identified with the all-powerful Sun God, albeit in a new, piscine guise. This belief was also enshrined within the Church Calendar, particularly during the reign of [the Roman emperor] Constantine.

Constantine's vision was considerably more eclectic than his later Christian hagiographers like to admit. He solidified his own power base by merging the Mithraism of his soldiers and the Imperial solar cult, with Christianity. In fusing God/Christ with the Sun/Emperor, he established a schedule of solar worship within Christianity that remains to this day. Christ's birthday was fixed on December 25th, the birthday of *Sol Invictus*, and the birthday of John the Baptist and Easter were arrayed around it at the solstice and equinox points that marked the Sun's annual journey.

On March 7, 321, Constantine issued the civil legislation that made Sunday, and not the Sabbath, the official day of worship, proclaiming, "Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades rest on the venerable day of the Sun." His choice of the Sun's day contained an implicit suggestion of which deity they ought to be worshipping...

All in all, it appears that astrology and stellar religion had a profound influence on early Christianity. It would be hard to imagine Christian lore without it. While there is much in Christianity that doesn't stem from astrology, if we could somehow remove the influence of astrology and stellar religion, Christianity would stand to lose the Star of Bethlehem, all the fish stories, the Virgin birth, as well as the Virgin herself and her cults, Christmas, Sunday, etc.

By the way, if it's confusing that sometimes in the NT Jesus is identified as the Sun and at other times as the constellation Pisces (and at still other times¹² as the planet Jupiter!), then readers should learn to just "go with the flow": Jesus became many different things (including the *Word* or *Logos* as well as Love, Peace, and Justice) to different people.

3. Ubiquitous Superstition

It's mind numbing to consider how much superstition polluted so much of the lives of ancient people – and so many "modern" people! In Chapter 8 of his excellent 1929 book *The Story of Religious Controversy*, the ex-Catholic priest Joseph McCabe (1867–1955) includes the following description of some superstitions (and associated "sins") of the ancient Mesopotamians (whom McCabe calls 'Babylonians') that were incorporated into Christianity.¹³

We turn now to a very different, but equally interesting and illuminating, aspect of Babylonian religious and moral life. We have seen what a land of gods and goddesses it was. We shall now see that it was a land of devils innumerable; and the very source of the weird belief in legions of malignant spirits which, through

¹² See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix08BiblicalStarMyths.pdf>.

¹³ From http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph_mccabe/religious_controversy/.

Judaism, passed on into Christianity. And this side of Babylonian life must be considered here because it is intimately connected with the virtue of the Babylonian people. No one who is acquainted with it can doubt that if, as we saw, adultery was a vice in ancient Babylon, there were more urgent incentives to avoid it than there are in Christendom.

Had, then, the Babylonians a worse hell than that of the Christian Church? No: no other religion surpasses Christianity in that respect, and very few approach it. The Babylonians seem in their latest days – I should think under Persian influence – to have partially adopted the belief in punishment and reward after death. During practically the whole of their four thousand years' history, they had no idea of reward and punishment beyond the grave. They believed, however, more intensely than most Christians believe in hell, that a man was punished in this world for his sins; and, since there was no escape from the penalty before it was felt (as there is in the case of hell), the deterrent was very effective.

There were two foundations of the Babylonian belief. One was their extreme vagueness about life after death. That the mental part of a man survived the body they fully believed. This was the oldest and most deeply ingrained of religious beliefs. But all that the Babylonians knew, though their learned priest speculated much on the subject, was that the dead passed into a dark, dim cave under the earth, *Arabu*, or the *House of Arabu*. In the legend of Ishtar, who (as we shall see) “descended into hell,” it is said:

...to the land whence there is no return, the land of darkness,
 Ishtar, the daughter of Sin [the Moon god], turned her mind,
 The daughter of Sin turned her mind;
 To the home of darkness, the dwelling of Irhalla,
 To the house whence no one issues who has once entered it,
 To the road from whence there is no return, when once it has been trodden,
 To the house whose inhabitants are deprived of light,
 The place where dust is their nourishment, their food clay,
 They have no light, dwelling in dense darkness,
 And they are clothed, like birds, in a garment of feathers,
 Where, over gate and bolt, dust is scattered.

Here again, we may note in passing, the Babylonians were the teachers of the Jews. Through the greater part of the Old Testament the Jews know only that the dead pass underground to *Sheol*, “the land of darkness”; and *Sheol* is only a variant of another Babylonian name for the home of the dead, *Shuala*. It was only when they came much later under Egyptian and Persian influence that the Jews began to talk of “**the spirit returning to God who made it.**”

In the end, when Greek influence fell on them, their educated men began (like the writer of *Ecclesiastes*) to reject the very idea of immortality. So little question is there of “revelation” in the Hebrew religion; and, as to the “religious instinct,” we

need not observe that it seems to have taught the early civilizations entirely contradictory things about the most fundamental of religious beliefs!

The Babylonians dreaded this lower world. Their priests avoided mention of it. It was felt that the dead were soured by their gloomy prison underground, and would harm the living. This was one of the primitive roots of the belief in malignant spirits; and it leads us on to the next basis of Babylonian character – the belief that the gods allowed legions of devils to torment the sinner in this life. One large class of the Babylonian devils has the express title “**shades of the dead.**” Other and more powerful demons are clearly gods of an earlier generation whom a more successful religion has turned into devils. Alongside of the elaborate religion, the virtual Monotheism, of the priests and the educated, Babylonia had plenty of religion in its more primitive stages: spirits of the river, the tree, the field, etc., and countless legions of evil spirits warring against men.

If there is one thing that Christianity owes to Babylon more plainly than another it is the belief in legions of devils. There were countless numbers of them, arranged by the priests in classes for the purpose of exorcism. They lurked by day in dark places, old ruins or groves, or in the desert, at night they set out to torture humanity. Every evil, from a tornado to a toothache, came from them. Most dreaded of all were the “**night spirits,**” Lilu and his wife Lilitu: and it would be profoundly interesting to trace the evolution of Lilitu into Lilith, the “**screech owl,**” the “**night monster,**” of the Jews, the vampire or blood-sucker of the Arabs, the fanciful creature of some of our modern novelists and mystics.

But our material is too vast and our space too small. What we have to notice here is that these immense armies of demons were responsible for every disease and misfortune of the Babylonians. Did a maid show the symptoms of anemia? Obviously Lilu or Lilitu had been busy at night with her body. Did a man or woman have an erotic dream leaving him or her excited and unsatisfied? It was Ardat Lili. Headaches, toothaches, stomachaches – every organ of the body had its demonic tormentors. Fevers (from the marshes), plagues and all pestilences were their work. Even “**the evil wind, the terrible wind, that sets one’s hair on end**” had its demon. Pictorially they were represented as ferocious beings of animal head and human body: the prototypes of our devil pictures. Some were so powerful that they were next to gods. *The Book of Job* is thoroughly Babylonian.

It followed that devil-dealers, sorcerers and witches, were very common. They turned on or turned away the “**evil eye**”. They gave magical (and often poisonous) potions: they made little clay or pitch images of your enemy and injured or killed him through that. Dreadful, you say, for so high a civilization! Why, the whole of Europe believed and did these things until modern times. Late in the Middle Ages cardinals sought to kill a pope by getting a sorcerer to make a wax image of him!

What could a man do but appeal to the more powerful spirits, the gods? Hence the immense number of priestly spells, incantations, and exorcisms, to which I have

referred. These were at first merely magical formulae (much as you read in the first part of Goethe's "Faust," which is thoroughly Babylonian). The gods were conjured to drive out the devils. But, as we saw, the ethical note gradually entered. The gods were the "fathers" of all men; they were full of love and mercy, and so on. Why, then, did they permit these demons to torture their children? The answer was as natural as on the lips of a modern preacher. Men had offended the gods by their "sins."

It is curious how religious writers still boast that Christianity invented the sense of "sin." Even if this were true, we should be the reverse of grateful. It has so obscured the real meaning of social law and character that it has actually led to far more "sin," far more injury to men, than there would otherwise have been. At the best it is a morbid illusion. At its commonest it is a fear that the gods will punish a man, just as in ancient Babylon. It is as old as civilization: that is to say, as old as the priesthoods which invented it and profited by it.

By the time of the start of Christianity (i.e., the start of the astrological age of Pisces, the fish), however, existing clerics of the huge number of religions in the Mediterranean region had "sown up the market" selling "forgiveness" for almost every conceivable "sin". Christianity, then, would likely never have emerged were it not for the pernicious "genius" of "Saint" Paul (who thereby became the real founder of Christianity).

Thus, as I've already described many times in these posts and elsewhere,¹⁴ Paul concocted the ridiculous notion (on which the clerical con-game known as Christianity is based) that everyone was a sinner, from birth – because we're all related to Adam, who allegedly violated God's order not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (of good and evil) – even though, before having eaten fruit from that tree, it would have been logically impossible for Adam to have known that it was 'good' to obey God and 'evil' not to! Clerics, however, have never let a little matter like logic constrain them, and seeing that Paul's new sin was a moneymaker, the new breed of clerical con artists started cashing in.

4. The "Mystery Religions"

As the reader can quickly confirm, an enormous amount has been written on "Mystery religions and Christianity"; e.g., that phrase yields ~700,000 "Google hits"! Much of what's written, however, is "Christian apologetics", vainly attempting to discount the connections.

¹⁴ See, e.g., http://zenofzero.net/docs/Qx16_NT_Insanities.pdf.

The Wikipedia article entitled Greco-Roman Mysteries¹⁵ provides a good summary and references many books devoted to the subject. An outline of the link between Christianity and the Greek Mystery religions is given in Andrew Benson's book *The Origins of Christianity and the Bible*.¹⁶ The following, dealing with Greek Mystery religions, is from the 1939 online-book entitled *The Life of Greece* by Will Durant.¹⁷

We have left for the last the most troublesome, the most popular, the most difficult to classify, of all the Greek gods. Only late in his career was Dionysus [also called Bacchus] received into Olympus [i.e., accepted by Greek clerics as one of the Olympian gods]. In Thrace [the land between the Aegean and Black Seas], which gave him as a Greek gift to Greece, he was the god of liquor brewed from barley, and was known as Sabazius; in Greece he became a god of wine, the nourisher and guardian of the vine; he began as a goddess of fertility, became a god of intoxication, and ended as a son of god dying to save mankind [i.e., one of the forerunners of the Jesus of the Gospels]...

Mourning for Dionysus' death, and joyful celebration of his resurrection, formed the basis of a ritual extremely widespread among the Greeks. In springtime, when the vine was bursting into blossom, Greek women went up into the hills to meet the reborn god. For two days they drank without restraint, and like our less religious bacchanalians, considered him witless who would not lose his wits. They marched in wild procession, led by *Maenads*, or mad women, devoted to Dionysus; they listened tensely to the story they knew so well, of the suffering, death, and resurrection of their god; and as they drank and danced they fell into a frenzy in which all bonds were loosed...

Such was the passionate cult that came down from Thrace into Greece like a medieval epidemic of religion, dragging one region after another from the cold and clear Olympians of the state worship into a faith and ritual that satisfied the craving for excitement and release, the longing for enthusiasm and possession, mysticism and mystery [as did Christianity, about a thousand years later]. The priests of Delphi and the rulers of Athens tried to keep the cult at a distance, but failed [just as, a thousand-or-so years later, the Romans tried to constrain Christianity]; all they could do was to adopt Dionysus into Olympus, Hellenize and humanize him, give him an official festival, and turn the revelry of his worshipers from the mad ecstasy of wine among the hills into the stately processions, the robust songs, and the noble drama of the Great Dionysia [just as the Romans eventually did with Christianity]. For a while they won Dionysus over to Apollo, but in the end Apollo yielded to Dionysus' heir and conqueror, Christ...

¹⁵ At http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_mysteries.

¹⁶ At http://www.jesushistory.info/mystery_religions_influence.htm.

¹⁷ From <http://www.scribd.com/doc/7351192/Will-Durant-Thestoryofcivilization02-The-Life-of-Greece>.

In the seventh century [BCE] there came into Hellas, from Egypt, Thrace, and Thessaly, another mystic cult, even more important in Greek history than the mysteries of Eleusis. At its source we find, in the age of the Argonauts, the obscure but fascinating figure of Orpheus, a Thracian who “in culture, music, and poetry,” says Diodorus, “far surpassed all men of whom we have a record.” Very probably he existed, though all that we now know of him bears the marks of myth. He is pictured as a gentle spirit, tender, meditative, affectionate; sometimes a musician, sometimes a reforming ascetic priest of Dionysus. He played the lyre so well, and sang to it so melodiously, that those who heard him almost began to worship him as a god; wild animals became tame at his voice, and trees and rocks left their places to follow the sound of his harp. He married the fair Eurydice, and almost went mad when death took her. He plunged into Hades, charmed Persephone with his lyre, and was allowed to lead Eurydice up to life again on condition that he should not look back upon her until the surface of the earth was reached. At the last barrier anxiety overcame him lest she should no longer be following; he looked back, only to see her snatched down once more into the nether world. Thracian women, resenting his unwillingness to console himself with them, tore him to pieces in one of their Dionysian revels; Zeus atoned for them by placing the lyre of Orpheus as a constellation among the stars. The severed head, still singing, was buried at Lesbos in a cleft that became the site of a popular oracle; there, we are told, the nightingales sang with especial tenderness.

In later days it was claimed that he had left behind him many sacred songs; and perhaps it was so. At the behest of Hipparchus, says Greek tradition, a scholar named Onomacritus, about 520 BCE, edited these as the Homeric lays had been edited a generation before. In the sixth century, or earlier, these hymns had acquired a sacred character as divinely inspired, and formed the basis of a mystical cult related to that of Dionysus but far superior to it in doctrine, ritual, and moral influence. The creed was essentially an affirmation of the passion (suffering), death, and resurrection of the divine son Dionysus Zagreus, and the resurrection of all men into a future of reward and punishment. Since the Titans, who had slain Dionysus, were believed to have been the ancestors of man, a taint of original sin rested upon all humanity; and in punishment for this the soul was enclosed in the body as in a prison or a tomb [an idea later adopted by the Gnostic Christians]. But man might console himself by knowing that the Titans had eaten Dionysus, and that therefore every man harbored, in his soul, a particle of indestructible divinity. In a mystic sacrament of communion the Orphic worshipers ate the raw flesh of a bull as a symbol of Dionysus to commemorate the slaying and eating of the god, and to absorb the divine essence anew [similar to the Eucharist (or “**Holy Communion**”) ritual practiced by Christians to this day].

After death, said Orphic theology, the soul goes down to Hades, and must face judgment by the gods of the underworld; the Orphic hymns and ritual, like the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, instructed the faithful in the art of preparing for this comprehensive and final examination. If the verdict was guilty there would be severe punishment. One form of the doctrine conceived this punishment as eternal, and transmitted to later [Christian and Islamic] theology the notion of hell.

Another form adopted the idea of transmigration: the soul was reborn again and again into lives happier or bitterer than before according to the purity or impurity of its former existence; and this wheel of rebirth would turn until complete purity was achieved, and the soul was admitted to the Islands of the Blest. [Similar ideas were common within Christianity¹⁸ until the hideous Roman Emperor Justin (who ruled from 565 to 578 CE) saw that he would have more power over the people by purging the idea of reincarnation.]

Another variant offered hope that the punishment in Hades might be ended through penances performed in advance by the individual, or, after his death, by his friends. In this way a doctrine of purgatory and indulgences arose; and Plato describes with almost the anger of a Luther [1483–1545] the peddling of such indulgences in the Athens of the fourth century BCE:

Mendicant prophets go to rich men's doors and persuade them that they have a power committed to them of making atonement for their sins or those of their fathers by sacrifices or charms... And they produce a host of books written by Musaeus and Orpheus... according to which they perform their ritual, and persuade not only individuals but whole cities that expiations and atonements may be made by sacrifices and amusements [ceremonies?] which fill a vacant hour, and are equally at the service of the living and the dead. The latter [ceremonies] they call mysteries, and these redeem us from the Pains of Hell; but if we neglect them no one knows what awaits us.

Nevertheless there were in Orphism idealistic trends that culminated in the morals and monasticism of Christianity. The reckless looseness of the Olympians was replaced by a strict code of conduct, and the mighty Zeus was slowly dethroned by the gentle figure of Orpheus, even as Yahweh was to be dethroned by Christ. A conception of sin and conscience, a dualistic view of the body as evil and of the soul as divine, entered into Greek thought; the subjugation of the flesh became a main purpose of religion, as a condition of the release for the soul. The brotherhood of Orphic initiates had no ecclesiastical organization and no separate life; but they were distinguished by the wearing of white garments, the avoidance of flesh food, and a degree of asceticism not usually associated with Hellenic ways. They represented, in several aspects, a Puritan Reformation in the history of Greece. Their rites encroached more and more upon the public worship of the Olympian gods. The influence of the sect was extensive and enduring. Perhaps it was here that the Pythagoreans [as well as the Jewish sect known as the Essenes] took their diet, their dress, and their theory of transmigration; it is worthy of note that the oldest Orphic documents now extant were found in southern Italy [where Pythagoras lived].

¹⁸ See, e.g., http://www.reincarnation.ws/reincarnation_in_early_christianity.html.

Plato, though he rejected much in Orphism, accepted its opposition of body and soul, its puritan tendency, its hope of immortality. Part of the pantheism and asceticism of Stoicism may be traced to an Orphic origin.

The Neo-Platonists of Alexandria possessed a large collection of Orphic writings, and based upon them much of their theology and their mysticism. The doctrines of hell, purgatory, and heaven, of the body versus the soul, of the divine son slain and reborn, as well as the sacramental eating of the body and blood and divinity of the god, directly or deviously influenced Christianity, which was itself a mystery religion of atonement and hope, of mystic union and release. The basic ideas and ritual of the Orphic cult are alive and flourishing amongst us today...

Between these upper and nether poles of Greek religion, the Olympian and the subterranean, surged an ocean of magic, superstition, and sorcery; behind and below the geniuses whom we shall celebrate were masses of people poor and simple, to whom religion was a mesh of fears rather than a ladder of hope. It was not merely that the average Greek accepted miracle stories – of Theseus rising from the dead to fight at Marathon, or of Dionysus changing water into wine – such stories appear among every people...

Before “Saint” Paul, participation in the mystery religions was limited to “initiates” (such as Plato); therefore, what Paul did was essentially “reveal” the Mysteries to the masses, thereby violating millennium-old rules for initiates. As Rudolf Steiner wrote in his 1902 book *Christianity as Mystical Fact and the Mysteries of Antiquity*:¹⁹

Christianity brought the content of the Mysteries out of the darkness of the temple into the clear light of day. The one spiritual stream within Christianity... led to the idea that this content must necessarily be retained in the form of faith.

Thus, the “real founder of Christianity” (Paul) promoted the idea to the masses that, if they’d just have “faith” (that he wasn’t a quack!), they’d be rewarded with eternal life in paradise.

5. Silly Metaphysical Speculations

Essentially all of the metaphysical speculations incorporated into Christianity were derived from Plato (who in turn obtained his speculations from Heraclitus and the Pythagoreans, who probably obtained theirs from the Egyptians, Zoroastrians, and Hindus). The incorporation of such ideas into Christianity proceeded especially *via* Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE – 50

¹⁹ From <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2523021/eBook-Antroposofia-EnG-Rudolf-Steiner-Christianity-as-Mystical-Fact-and-the-Mysteries-of-Antiquity>.

CE), many of whose writings are online.²⁰ In many ways, Philo was the prime metaphysical mover of Christianity. His writings (motivated by Plato and probably studied by Paul) are tedious; his main “contribution” was to introduce “allegorical interpretations” of the *Pentateuch*. For example, he famously interpreted the snake in the Adam and Eve story of *Genesis* as Satan – even though, as I demonstrated in early posts in this series, the ancient Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Sumerians almost certainly created the original myth to “explain” why snakes shed their skins (and therefore seem to have acquired eternal life).

The following are a couple of paragraphs from the summary article entitled “Plato and Platonism”, which appeared in *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000, pp. 109-14).²¹

In the decades after Plato’s death the Academy, under Arcesilaus (c.300 BCE) and later Carneades (c.200 CE), changed its emphasis from mathematics and science to a kind of skepticism, apparently in reaction to trends in Hellenistic philosophy. Little is known about the Academy during these years. The first centuries... [BCE], however, saw the development of “Middle” Platonism in Athens, Alexandria, and elsewhere. This was an uneasy synthesis of a variety of influences: Aristotelian, Stoic, Pythagorean, Hebrew, Zoroastrian, and Gnostic among them. Plato’s Forms were now conceived as Ideas in the mind of God, who is in turn an amalgam of Aristotle’s prime mover and the God of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures; matter and soul were opposed; several “grades” of reality were distinguished; and genuine knowledge or understanding was often taken to require a divine “spark” or illumination. Hints of all of these views can be found in Plato’s writings, especially when one is equipped with techniques of allegorical interpretation. Such techniques, routinely practiced on the Homeric epics as well as the scriptures, were now widely applied to philosophical texts.

The Alexandrian Jew Philo (c.30 BCE – 45 CE) was heavily influenced by Middle Platonism, as were the early Christian apologists Justin Martyr (d. 165), Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), and Origen (185–254). All four writers used Middle Platonism – especially the cosmology of the *Timaeus* – to reveal the mysteries of the *Genesis* account of creation. Platonism, suitably understood, became an important ally of Jewish and Christian revelation. It is not hard to see why. Unlike Aristotle, who maintained the eternity of the world and the materiality of the soul, Plato’s insistence on the immortality of the soul, the role of the Demiurge [the Creator] in creating and sustaining the world, and the necessity of teleological explanation, could be harmonized with what had been revealed about the world in the scriptures.

²⁰ See, e.g., <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/philo.html>.

²¹ From <http://www.plosin.com/work/PlatoPlatonism.html>.

One of the most enduring metaphysical speculations thereby incorporated into Christianity was the idea that ‘right’ or ‘order’ was “built into the fabric of the universe”. At least a thousand years before Christianity, this idea appeared in Egypt as *Ma’at*, in India as *Ritam*, and in Persia as *Asha*. The Christian metaphysicists used Heraclitus’ word for it, *Logos* (which is usually translated as “**the Word**”), an idea also promoted by the Pythagoreans, Plato, Philo, and the Gnostics.

Gnosticism (where *gnōsis* is the Greek word for ‘knowledge’) competed with Christianity; in fact, many of the early Christian metaphysicists were Gnostics. “In a nutshell”, the (crazy) Gnostic speculation was that, whereas matter (e.g., the human body) was ‘bad’ and energy (e.g., spiritual energy) was ‘good’ (before it was known that matter consists of energy, *via* $E = mc^2!$), therefore “the good god” wouldn’t have created matter; instead, it must have been created by a lesser god (the Demiurge). But, claiming knowledge from outside Plato’s cave in which everyone else was confined, the Gnostics were certain that the good god did send us an emissary (the Christ, i.e., “**the anointed one**”), to enlighten us about the glorious heavenly realm that we could enter, if only we’d believe that they weren’t spouting utter nonsense.

Readers who are interested in a less abusive treatment of Gnostic beliefs might want to start at the relevant Wikipedia article.²² Indications that Paul was a Gnostic (and was therefore believed in an entirely different Jesus from the one described in the Gospels and “worshiped” by essentially all of today’s Christians) is available in following “**Prayer of the Apostle Paul**”, which was found near Nag Hammadi (Upper Egypt) in 1945:²³

(Approximately two lines are missing.)

... your light, give me your mercy! My Redeemer, redeem me, for I am yours; the one who has come forth from you. You are my mind; bring me forth! You are my treasure house; open for me! You are my fullness; take me to you! You are (my) repose; give me the perfect thing that cannot be grasped!

I invoke you, the one who is and who pre-existed in the name which is exalted above every name, through Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords, the King of the ages; give me your gifts, of which you do not repent, through the Son of Man, the Spirit, the

²² At <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism>.

²³ From <http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/prayp.html>.

Paraclete of truth. Give me authority when I ask you; give healing for my body when I ask you through the Evangelist, and redeem my eternal light soul and my spirit. And the First-born of the Pleroma of grace – reveal him to my mind!

Grant what no angel eye has seen and no archon ear (has) heard, and what has not entered into the human heart which came to be angelic and (modeled) after the image of the psychic God when it was formed in the beginning, since I have faith and hope. And place upon me your beloved, elect, and blessed greatness, the First-born, the First-begotten, and the wonderful mystery of your house; for yours is the power and the glory and the praise and the greatness for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer of Paul (the) Apostle.
In Peace.
Christ is holy.

If “Saint” Paul really composed the above, then clearly he was more an adherent of Gnosticism than what is now commonly called Christianity.

In sum, early Christianity was a concoction of many ingredients, including ancient mysticism, sun worship and astrology, the Mystery religions, multiple strands of Greek metaphysics (from Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Plato, Zeno the Stoic, Diogenes the Cynic, etc.), and Gnosticism. As a result, in most respects Christianity was (and still is) just renamed paganism, a concept that has been well known for more than a century. For example, it was detailed in the 568-page 1883 book²⁴ *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions* by Thomas William Doane. Below are quotations from Chapter XXXVI of Doane’s book (with his references omitted), starting on p. 384 and then jumping to p. 408.

OUR assertion that that which is called Christianity is nothing more than the religion of Paganism, we consider to have been fully verified. We have found among the heathen, centuries before the time of Christ Jesus, the belief in an incarnate God born of a virgin; his previous existence in heaven; the celestial signs at the time of his birth; the rejoicing in heaven; the adoration by the magi and shepherds; the offerings of precious substances to the divine child; the slaughter of the innocents; the presentation at the temple; the temptation by the devil; the performing of miracles; the crucifixion by enemies; and the death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. We have also found the belief that this incarnate God was from all eternity; that he was the Creator of the world, and that he is to be Judge of the dead at the last day. We have also seen the practice of Baptism, and the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist, added to the belief in a Triune God, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost...

²⁴ At http://www.archive.org/stream/biblemythsandthe00doanuoft/biblemythsandthe00doanuoft_djvu.txt.

The early Christian saints, bishops, and fathers, confessedly adopted the liturgies, rites, ceremonies, and terms of heathenism; making it their boast, that the pagan religion, properly explained, really was nothing else than Christianity; that the best and wisest of its professors, in all ages, had been Christians all along; that Christianity was but a name more recently acquired to a religion which had previously existed, and had been known to the Greek philosophers, to Plato, Socrates, and Heraclitus; and that “if the writings of Cicero had been read as they ought to have been, there would have been no occasion for the Christian Scriptures.”

And our Protestant, and most orthodox Christian divines, the best learned on ecclesiastical antiquity, and most entirely persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion, unable to resist or to conflict with the constraining demonstration of the data that prove the absolute sameness and identity of Paganism and Christianity, and unable to point out so much as one single idea or notion, of which they could show that it was peculiar to Christianity, or that Christianity had it, and Paganism had it not, have invented the apology of an hypothesis, that the Pagan religion was typical, and that Krishna, Buddha, Bacchus, Hercules, Adonis, Osiris, Horus, &c., were all of them types and forerunners of the true and real Savior, Christ Jesus. Those who are satisfied with this kind of reasoning are certainly welcome to it.

That Christianity is nothing more than Paganism under a new name, has, as we said above, been admitted over and over again by the Fathers of the Church, and others. Aringhus (in his account of subterraneous Rome) acknowledges the conformity between the Pagan and Christian form of worship, and defends the admission of the ceremonies of heathenism into the service of the Church, by the authority of the wisest prelates and governors, whom, he says, found it necessary, in the conversion of the Gentiles, to dissemble, and wink at many things, and yield to the times; and not to use force against customs which the people were so obstinately fond of.

Melito (a Christian bishop of Sardis), in an apology delivered to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, in the year 170, claims the patronage of the emperor, for the now-called Christian religion, which he calls our philosophy, “on account of its high antiquity, as having been imported from countries lying beyond the limits of the Roman empire, in the region of his ancestor Augustus, who found its importation ominous of good fortune to his government.”

This is an absolute demonstration that Christianity did not originate in Judea, which was a Roman province, but really was an exotic oriental fable, imported from India, and that Paul was doing as he claimed, viz., preaching a God manifest in the flesh who had been “**believed on in the world**” centuries before his time, and a doctrine which “**had already been preached unto every creature under heaven.**”

Baronius (an eminent Catholic ecclesiastical historian) says:

It is permitted to the Church to use, for the purpose of piety, the ceremonies which the pagans used for the purpose of impiety in a superstitious religion, after having first

expiated them by consecration to the end, that the devil might receive a greater affront from employing, in honor of Jesus Christ, that which his enemy had destined for his own service.

Clarke, in his *Evidences of Revealed Religion*, says:

Some of the ancient writers of the church have not scrupled expressly to call the Athenian Socrates, and some others of the best of the heathen moralists, by the name of Christians, and to affirm, as the law was as it were a schoolmaster, to bring the Jews unto Christ, so true moral philosophy was to the Gentiles a preparative to receive the gospel.

Clemens Alexandrinus says:

Those who lived according to the *Logos* were really Christians, though they have been thought to be atheists; as Socrates and Heraclitus were among the Greeks, and such as resembled them...

Eusebius, the great champion of Christianity, admits that that which is called the Christian religion, is neither new nor strange, but if it be lawful to testify, the truth was known to the ancients.

How the common people were Christianized, we gather from a remarkable passage which Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, has preserved for us, in the life of Gregory, surnamed "*Thauma-turgus*" that is, "the wonder worker." The passage is as follows:

When Gregory perceived that the simple and unskilled multitude persisted in their worship of images, on account of the pleasures and sensual gratifications which they enjoyed at the Pagan festivals, he granted them a permission to indulge themselves in the like pleasures, in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs, hoping that in process of time, they would return of their own accord, to a more virtuous and regular course of life.

The historian remarks that there is no sort of doubt, that by this permission, Gregory allowed the Christians to dance, sport, and feast at the tombs of the martyrs, upon their respective festivals, and to do everything which the Pagans were accustomed to do in their temples, during the feasts celebrated in honor of their gods.

The learned Christian advocate, M. Turretin, in describing the state of Christianity in the fourth century, has a well-turned rhetoricism, the point of which is, that:

...it was not so much the empire that was brought over to the faith, as the faith that was brought over to the empire; not the Pagans who were converted to Christianity, but Christianity that was converted to Paganism...

Faustus, writing to St. Augustine, says:

You have substituted your agapae for the sacrifices of the Pagans; for their idols your martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honors. You appease the alludes of the dead with wine and feasts; you celebrate the solemn festivities of the Gentiles, their

caelestis, and their solstices; and, as to their manners, those you have retained without any alteration. Nothing distinguishes you from the Pagans, except that you hold your assemblies apart from them.

Ammonius Saccus (a Greek philosopher, founder of the Neo-platonic school) taught that:

Christianity and Paganism, when rightly understood, differ in no essential points, but had a common origin, and are really one and the same thing.

Justin explains the thing in the following manner:

It having reached the devil's ears that the prophets had foretold that Christ would come... he (the devil) set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called sons of Jove (i.e., "The Sons of God"). The devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables and poetic stories.

Caecilius, in the Octavius of Minucius Felix, says:

All these fragments of crack-brained opiatry and silly solaces played off in the sweetness of song by (the) deceitful (Pagan) poets, by you too credulous creatures (i.e., the Christians) have been shamefully reformed and made over to your own god.

Cecils, the Epicurean philosopher, wrote that:

The Christian religion contains nothing but what Christians hold is common with heathens; nothing new, or truly great.

This assertion is fully verified by Justin Martyr, in his apology to the Emperor Adrian, which is one of the most remarkable admissions ever made by a Christian writer. He says:

In saying that all things were made in this beautiful order by God, what do we seem to say more than Plato? When we teach a general conflagration, what do we teach more than the Stoics? By opposing the worship of the works of men's hands, we concur with Memmder, the comedian; and by declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, our master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, to be crucified and dead, and to have rose again, and ascended into heaven, we say no more in this, than what you say of those whom you style the Sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a parcel of sons, the writers most in vogue among you, assign to Jove. There's Mercury, Jove's interpreter, in imitation of the Logos, in worship among you. There's Esculapius, the physician, smitten by a thunderbolt, and after that ascending into heaven. There's Bacchus, torn to pieces, and Hercules, burnt to get rid of his pains. There's Pollux and Castor, the sous of Jove by Leda, and Perseus by Danae; and not to mention others, I would fain know why you always deify the departed emperors and have a fellow at hand to make affidavit that he saw Cassar mount to heaven from the funeral pile?

As to the son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be nothing more than man, yet the title of the son of God is very justifiable, upon the account of his wisdom, considering

that you have your Mercury in worship, under the title of the Word and Messenger of God.

As to the objection of our Jesus being crucified, I say, that suffering was common to all the fore mentioned sons of Jove, but only they suffered another kind of death. As to his being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that. As to his curing the lame, and the paralytic, and such as were cripples from birth, this is little more than what you say of your Esculapius...

We have seen, then, that the only difference between Christianity and Paganism is that Brahma, Ormuzd, Osiris, Zeus, Jupiter, etc., are called by another name; Krishna, Buddha, Bacchus, Adonis, Mithras, etc., have been turned into Christ Jesus; Venus pigeon into the Holy Ghost; Diana, Isis, Devaki, etc., into the Virgin Mary; and the demi-gods and heroes into saints. The exploits of the one were represented as the miracles of the other. Pagan festivals became Christian holidays, and Pagan temples became Christian churches.

The reason why Christianity spread relatively rapidly among “the pagans” appears to be, therefore, that it was so similar to existing pagan religions. Christianity, however, was available to everyone and promised eternal life in paradise without nearly so much effort (or so many hangovers!) as the Mystery religions: all that “initiates” of the Christianity needed to do was to state that they “believed” in the nonsense being promoted.

That the resulting concoction spread rapidly throughout “the ignorant masses” can be seen in the following letter written by the Roman governor of Bithynia (present-day northwestern Turkey), Pliny the Younger (c.62–c.113 CE). The letter was written (in about 111 CE) to the Roman emperor Trajan:²⁵

It is a rule, Sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of guiding my uncertainty or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials of the Christians, I am unacquainted with the method and limits to be observed either in examining or punishing them. Whether any difference is to be allowed between the youngest and the adult; whether repentance admits to a pardon, or if a man has been once a Christian it avails him nothing to recant; whether the mere profession of Christianity, albeit without crimes, or only the crimes associated therewith are punishable – in all these points I am greatly doubtful.

In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have denounced to me as Christians is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it I repeated the question twice again, adding the threat of capital

²⁵ From <http://www.allaboutthejourney.org/pliny-the-younger.htm>.

punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For whatever the nature of their creed might be, I could at least feel not doubt that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved chastisement. There were others also possessed with the same infatuation, but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither.

These accusations spread (as is usually the case) from the mere fact of the matter being investigated and several forms of the mischief came to light. A placard was put up, without any signature, accusing a large number of persons by name. Those who denied they were, or had ever been, Christians, who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered adoration, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the gods, and who finally cursed Christ – none of which acts, it is into performing – these I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by that informer at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion but they had quitted it, some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food – but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses: but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition.

I therefore adjourned the proceedings, and betook myself at once to your counsel. For the matter seemed to me well worth referring to you, especially considering the numbers endangered. Persons of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes are, and will be, involved in the prosecution. For this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread through the villages and rural districts; it seems possible, however, to check and cure it.

Thereby, Roman officials made three horrible errors:

- 1) To torture people to try to ascertain their beliefs (a technique later adopted by Christians, once they were in power),
- 2) To try to stop superstition by force rather than by educating the people (just as later Christians eschewed education in anything but their dogmas), and

- 3) To conclude that, thereby, they could “[check and cure... this contagious superstition](#)” (i.e., Christianity).

An additional way that Roman officials tried to “[check and cure... \[the\] contagious superstition](#)” was to imprison Christian leaders, such as Paul. That such “spiritual leaders” were promoting scams was clearly seen and described by (the rhetorician, satirist, and Epicurean) Lucian of Samosata (c.125–c.180 CE) in his “Alexander the Oracle-Monger”, quoted below.²⁶ This particular description is not necessarily about Christian clerics, but being an Epicurean, Lucian would undoubtedly have described all clerics as similar con artists:

These ambitious scoundrels were quite devoid of scruples, and they had now joined forces; it could not escape their penetration that human life is under the absolute dominion of two mighty principles, fear and hope, and that anyone who can make these serve his ends may be sure of rapid fortune. They realized that, whether a man is most swayed by the one or the other [fear or hope], what he must most depend upon and desire is a knowledge of futurity... men thronged the temples, longed for fore-knowledge, and to attain it sacrificed their hecatombs or dedicated their golden ingots... [T]hey [the clerics] looked for immediate wealth and prosperity; the result surpassed their most sanguine expectations.

Lucian’s writings are important, because he provides us with²⁷ “[the earliest independent substantial secular source for the existence of Christianity following the Flavian forgers and myth-makers from late in the first century.](#)” In Lucian’s presumed fictional story entitled *The Passing of Peregrinus [Proteus]*, Lucian seems to be describing not some fictional character Peregrinus Proteus but none other than “Saint” Paul himself:²⁸

It was then that he [Proteus = Paul?] learned the wondrous lore of the Christians, by associating with their priests and scribes in Palestine. And –how else could it be? – in a trice he made them all look like children, for he was prophet, cult-leader, head of the synagogue, and everything, all by himself. He interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many, and they revered him as a god, made use of him as a lawgiver, and set him down as a protector, next after that other [Jesus?], to be sure, whom they still worship, the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world.

Then at length Proteus [Paul?] was apprehended for this and thrown into prison [as was Paul], which itself gave him no little reputation as an asset for his future career

²⁶ From <http://www.epicurus.net/en/alexander.html>.

²⁷ From <http://www.tertullian.org/rpearce/lucian/peregrinus.htm>.

²⁸ From <http://carrington-arts.com/cliff/PROTEUS5.htm>.

and the charlatanism and notoriety-seeking that he was enamored of. Well, when he had been imprisoned, the Christians, regarding the incident as a calamity, left nothing undone in the effort to rescue him. Then, as this was impossible, every other form of attention was shown him, not in any casual way but with assiduity, and from the very break of day aged widows and orphan children could be seen waiting near the prison, while their officials even slept inside with him after bribing the guards. Then elaborate meals were brought in, and sacred books of theirs were read aloud, and excellent Peregrinus [Paul?] for he still went by that name – was called by them “the new Socrates.”

Indeed, people came even from the cities in Asia, sent by the Christians at their common expense, to succor and defend and encourage the hero. They show incredible speed whenever any such public action is taken; for in no time they lavish their all. So it was then in the case of Peregrinus [Paul?]; much money came to him from them by reason of his imprisonment, and he procured not a little revenue from it. The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody; most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver [Jesus?] persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once, for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist [Jesus] himself and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines traditionally without any definite evidence. So if any charlatan and trickster, able to profit by occasions, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing upon simple folk.

6. Other Cultural & Political Factors

In the fabrication of Christianity, a large number and range of other cultural and political factors entered, each of which has been studied in depth. Here, I'll only mention some of the factors and provide a few references where readers can begin to explore the topics in depth, should they desire.

- The Hellenization of the ancient world continued, especially at its intellectual center, Alexandria, where Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, Persian, and Indian ideas were shared and intermingled. As reported in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*:²⁹ “the whole city was divided into five districts, which were named after the first five letters of the Greek alphabet. Of these five districts two were denominated Jewish districts, because the majority of their inhabitants were Jews. ”
- Although Greek philosophical ideas (e.g., of the Epicureans and Stoics) were entertained by the educated elite, the vast majority of people were uneducated and therefore according to a Wikipedia article on Hellenistic religions,³⁰ the people

²⁹ From <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1171&letter=A>.

³⁰ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_religion.

“would consult oracles and use charms and figurines to deter misfortune and cast spells [and use] astrology, which sought to determine a person’s character and future in the movements of the sun, moon, and planets.”

- Having adopted a homeland in the most undesirable location in the ancient world (and in the modern world?!), i.e., in the middle of the road between great powers (Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome...), the ancient Jewish people were almost continuously being “walked over”, which they obviously resented. Even the 100-year-old article³¹ on the “History of the Jews” in the biased *Catholic Encyclopedia* describes the terrible troubles the Jews caused themselves by not having a better realtor (“[location, location, location](#)”) than Yahweh.
- Judaism split into factions, including the Sadducees (the old guard, rejecting “new fangled ideas” about life-after-death), the Pharisees (who adopted many Zoroastrian ideas), and the Essenes (a Pythagorean-like cult, who adopted ideas from Plato and the Greek Mystery religions). In particular,³² from the Dionysus Mystery religion (which had spread to Palestine) the Essenes (who probably composed the Dead Sea Scrolls) adopted the “[ritual of repentance followed by baptizing as the means for spiritual purification...](#)” (as did John the Baptist) and assumed (according to the Jewish historian Josephus, c.37–c.100 CE) “[that the bodies are corruptible... but that the souls are immortal and continue forever.](#)” Thereby, the Essenes adopted basic concepts that were used by Paul and the Gospel writers in their concoction of Christianity.
- Many Jews (future Christians) must have become extremely dissatisfied with Judaism and its patriarchy. Yahweh seemed to have welched on his alleged promise of a homeland for the Jewish people (and surely many of them were tired of hearing the same-old excuse that it was their fault and not Yahweh’s), and as in the rest of the Greco-Roman empire, patriarchy was dying³³ (in part, because of the independent spirit of many ancient Greeks, and in part, because upon returning from war to their homes, Roman Legionaries were probably reluctant to be ruled by their fathers – and had the physical and financial resources to be independent).
- Along with the decay of patriarchy (which has yet to occur in “the Muslim world”), interest in ruling “father gods” probably waned. That is, consistent with the corrected astrological mantra “[as above, so below](#)” (namely, “[as below, so above](#)”!), many ancient people preferred to recognize not “god the father” but god’s son, e.g., Mithras rather than Ahura Mazda, Horus rather than Osiris, Apollo rather than Zeus, Jupiter rather than Saturn, and Jesus rather than Yahweh. In fact, throughout the Roman Empire, there was renewed interest in the worship of goddesses, including the worship of the mothers of such “sons of gods”.

³¹ At <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08386a.htm>.

³² See http://www.jesushistory.info/cultural_background_of_christianity.htm.

³³ See <http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/777777121908/>.

Illustrative of some of the controversies (which raged for centuries) is the following quotation³⁴ from “Did Jesus Exist? Part 3: The Religion of the Word”, which adds: “Much of the material in this article comes from Earl Doherty’s excellent website *The Jesus Puzzle*,³⁵ and his book by the same name.”

First-century Palestine was a religious and ethnic melting pot, a crossroads where many peoples, beliefs and cultures intermingled. It was also a time of upheaval – Jewish resentment against Roman rule was building, new sects were splintering off everywhere, and messianic expectation had risen to a fever pitch.

Many new religions arose from this ferment, but most of them faded away or were stamped out by their competitors or the authorities. Out of this Darwinian competition, however, there was one new faith that managed to survive. This religion would not have been unfamiliar to many people living today. At its core it was predominantly Jewish, believing in the monotheistic God of Abraham and relying, at least in part, on the Old Testament scriptures. But it also drew on ideas from Greek Platonism, such as that objects in the material world were only imperfect reflections of objects in a higher, heavenly plane. More importantly, it also incorporated the Platonic concept of the *Logos*. [Which, as I’ve mentioned many times, had precedents in Heraclitus’ *Logos*, Zarathustra’s *Asha*, the Egyptian’s *Ma’at*, the Hindu’s *Ritam*, the Sumerian’s *Mummu*, etc.]

The Platonists faced a problem: like the Jews, they believed in a single, ultimate deity possessing all perfections. But they also believed that the material world was composed of imperfect matter. A perfect deity could not interact directly with imperfection, and so their solution was the *Logos*, Greek for “word” [or ‘reason’, ‘logic’, etc.]. The Platonists saw the *Logos* as an agent of the deity – an “emanation” of the divine which could act as an intermediary between God and the world. (Some traditions of Judaism described a similar personified divine agent, which was named *Wisdom*; see *Proverbs* chapter 8, for example.)

The new religion incorporated this concept of the *Logos*, which they styled the Son after dividing the previously united Jewish deity into the trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also drew on the ethical teachings of a band of Greek philosophers called the Cynics, as well as aspects of those ancient, enigmatic cults, the mystery religions: the concept of dying and rising deities (in accordance with the cycles of nature), the idea of a sacramental meal, and the concept of redemptive sacrifice. And finally, it touched on the apocalyptic expectation common among first-century radical sects, the belief that the final judgment and the coming of the kingdom of God were just around the corner.

³⁴ From <http://www.ebonmusings.org/atheism/camel3.html>.

³⁵ At <http://jesuspuzzle.humanists.net/>.

The religion that emerged from these disparate elements was, of course, called Christianity. An offshoot of messianic Judaism, it believed in a Son of God named Jesus Christ, co-eternal in power and glory with the Father, the agent of creation by which all material things were made and the instrument of humanity's redemption. He was crucified, and in his suffering and subsequent death took humanity's sins upon himself, offering his blood as payment for our crimes, and after three days was resurrected and took his place alongside the Father. Jesus was the source of wisdom, the long-awaited messiah, a divine "mystery" whose coming was prophesied by and hidden in the Old Testament scriptures, and he was to be the judge of humankind when the end times came. All in all, it was very similar to what Christians believe today - except for one minor detail.

This Jesus was never on Earth.

The early Christians believed in a /spiritual/ redeemer, a heavenly being whose crucifixion, death and resurrection took place not on the Earth, but in a Platonic higher realm. This Jesus was never incarnated in human form.

This was the Christianity of the earliest Christians, namely the writers of the New Testament [Paul's] epistles (which are widely agreed to predate the gospels). This is the Jesus that Paul believed in and wrote about in his letters.

Of course, this is not widely recognized by Christians today. This is because most of them read the Bible with what NT scholar Earl Doherty calls "gospel-colored glasses" – they know about the gospel stories of a historical Jesus, and so they unconsciously read that material into the epistles, assuming that Paul was talking about the same Jesus that the gospels describe.

That is, as pointed out by the ex-Presbyterian pastor M.M. Mangasarian (1859–1943) in his 1909 book *The Truth about Jesus – Is He a Myth?*:³⁶

In comparing the Jesus of Paul with the Jesus whose portrait is drawn for us in the gospels, we find that they are not the same persons at all. This is decisive. Paul knows nothing about a miraculously born savior. He does not mention a single time, in all his thirteen epistles, that Jesus was born of a virgin, or that his birth was accompanied with heavenly signs and wonders. He knew nothing of a Jesus born after the manner of the gospel writers.

It is not imaginable that he knew the facts, but suppressed them, or that he considered them unimportant, or that he forgot to refer to them in any of his public utterances. Today, a preacher is expelled from his denomination if he suppresses or ignores the miraculous conception of the Son of God; but Paul was guilty of that very heresy.

³⁶ Available at http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/m_m_mangasarian/truth_about_jesus.html.

How explain it? It is quite simple: The virgin-born Jesus was not yet invented when Paul was preaching Christianity. Neither he, nor the churches he had organized, had ever heard of such a person. The virgin-born Jesus was of later origin than the Apostle Paul...

For many Jews, probably the final phase in their disillusionment with Judaism came with the Roman's destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 CE and the banishment of the Jews. During the more-than-two centuries since the Maccabees tried to "save" the Jewish people and their religion, many "saviors" seemed to have arisen, but none was successful. I therefore suspect that disillusioned Jews with literary skills (such as the writers of the NT's Gospels) decided to concoct a "true savior", i.e., a fictitious Jesus the Christ. In the next two posts, I'll address such increased fascination with and indulgence in apocalyptic stories, but I'll do so under the title:

7. Blatant Conspiracy by a New Breed of Clerics

As a preview of the next post, what seems to have happened is that, near the turn of the millennium, Jewish expectations of a "savior" (to free them from Roman rule) reached (as quoted above) "a fever pitch". Of the many who claimed to be the expected savior, at least one seems to have managed to gain a few followers.

He, however, possibly being a former member of the Essenes sect and possibly having learned some Egyptian "magic tricks", promoted concepts that conflicted with the ruling Jewish priesthood. Therefore, consistent with Jewish law as allegedly dictated by their god, this "savior" (probably one of many with the common name Jesus) was executed for his apostasy (just as is still done in Islam today).

During his short career as "savior", this Jesus seems to have gained a few followers, and subsequently, his followers were pursued (e.g., by Paul) and punished (e.g., as reported in the NT, the stoning to death of Stephen, "the first Christian martyr", in about 35 BCE). On one such pursuit, on the road to Damascus, Paul (who seems to have suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy) had a vision of the dead Jesus – and to this apparition he ascribed the properties of the Gnostics' imagined emissary of the good god.

Thus, in Paul's prayer to the good god (quoted above in full), there's no indication that Paul's Jesus was the Jesus of "flesh and blood" known by others:

Give me authority when I ask you; give healing for my body when I ask you through the Evangelist, and redeem my eternal light soul and my spirit. And the First-born of the Pleroma of grace – *reveal him to my mind! Grant what no angel eye has seen and no archon ear (has) heard* [italics added], and what has not entered into the human heart which came to be angelic and (modeled) after the image of the psychic God when it was formed in the beginning, since I have faith and hope.

Poor old Paul, however, apparently became deeply puzzled by the obvious question: why would the good god permit his emissary – his son – to be executed? In a flash of insight (having lost his rational faculties), Paul speculated that, just as people sacrificed animals “thinking” that they could thereby “**atone for their sins**”, the good god (according to Paul) decided to sacrifice his alleged son, Jesus – to appease himself – to atone for the “**original sin**” of humanity, i.e., our collective guilt (!) for being related to Adam and Eve, who ate from the Tree of Knowledge (of good and evil).

Paul added (although it’s rarely reported) that if people were dumb enough to believe his wild speculation, then they’d buy into anything – an addendum from which subsequent Christian clerics and TV Evangelists have accrued hundreds of billions of dollars – not to lightly dismiss other perks that clerics claim, such as having vaginal sex with senseless women and forcing oral and anal sex on defenseless children, since to acquire such perks seems to be a prime reason why so many sexual perverts become clerics, whether Christian, Muslim, Mormon, or whatever.

Paul’s ghostly Jesus, however, was far too esoteric for the uneducated and simple masses, who (as attested by the fortune made by Mel Gibson with his movie “The Passion of Christ”) were – and still are – moved more by “**treachery, beatings, blood, and agony**” (as the movie critic David Denby wrote³⁷ about Gibson’s horrible movie). Some talented Jewish writers who were thoroughly familiar with the Jewish “holy book” apparently reached a similar conclusion about the need for “**treachery, beatings, blood, and agony.**” They therefore composed a large number of fictitious stories about the executed Jesus, stories that were consistent with Pagan myths about other “sons of God”, consistent with wild speculations by astrologers and metaphysicists of the day, consistent with fake “prophecies” in the Old Testament, and consistent with perceived need for “**treachery, beatings, blood, and agony.**”

³⁷ At http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/03/01/040301erci_cinema.

After a lot of wrangling by critics, four of the resulting seventy-or-so stories were adopted as the Gospels (i.e., “good news”) of the New Testament. These fictitious stories subsequently became the foundation of Christianity and are promoted by clerical quacks and adopted by simpletons as “sacred truths” to this day.

[To be continued]