



Judas of Nazareth: How the Greatest Teacher of First-Century Israel Was Replaced by a Literary Creation

By Daniel T. Unterbrink

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An investigation into the historical Jesus and the veracity of the Gospels

- Reveals the biblical Jesus as a composite figure, a blend of the political revolutionary Judas the Galilean and Paul's divine-human Christ figure
- Matches the events depicted in the New Testament with historically verifiable events in Josephus' history, pushing Jesus' life back more than a decade
- Demonstrates how each New Testament Gospel is dependent upon Paul's mythologized Christ theology, designed to promote Paul's Christianity and serve the interests of the fledgling Gentile Christian communities

Scholars have spent years questioning aspects of the historical Jesus. How can we know what Jesus said and did when Jesus himself wrote nothing? Can we trust the Gospels, written by unknown authors 40 to 70 years after Jesus' death? And why do other sources from the time not speak of this messianic figure known as Christ?

Drawing on the histories of Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Daniel Unterbrink contends that the "Jesus" of the Bible was actually a composite figure, a clever blend of the Jewish freedom-fighter Judas the Galilean and Paul's divine-human Christ figure created in the middle of the first century CE. Revealing why Paul was known as a liar, enemy, and traitor in other Jewish literature, he shows that the New Testament Gospels are not transcripts of actual history but creative works of historical fiction designed to promote Paul's Christianity and serve the interests of the fledgling Gentile Christian communities. He demonstrates how each Gospel is written in light of the success of Paul's religion and dependent upon his later perspective.

Matching the events depicted in the New Testament with the historically verifiable events in Josephus' history, Unterbrink pushes the dating of Jesus' life back nearly a generation to a revolutionary time in ancient Judea. He shows that

the real historical Jesus--the physical man behind the fictional stories in Paul's Gospels--was Judas the Galilean: a messianic pretender and Torah-observant revolutionary bent on overthrowing the Roman government and galvanizing the Jewish people behind his vision of the coming Kingdom of God. In the greatest cover-up of history, this teacher of first-century Israel was replaced by the literary creation known as Jesus of Nazareth.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This carefully documented tour-de-force demonstrates that many stories and teachings attributed to the ‘Gospel Jesus’ are derived from very similar biographical details from the life of the historical Galilean messiah, Judas of Galilee, a famous first-century Jewish rabbi and freedom fighter, probably executed by Roman authorities on charges of sedition.” (*Margaret Starbird, author of The Woman with the Alabaster Jar*)

“Combining some of my ideas--such as Paul as Herodian and Josephus’ “Sadduk” as John the Baptist--with his own theory, Dan Unterbrink suggests a new and much earlier timeframe for Christian origins, claiming that the historical Jesus was actually Judas the Galilean, a rebel leader who came on the scene in 4 BC with the beginning of the Zealot movement.

“As he sees it, Christian scholarship as a whole has been searching for characters such as Jesus and Paul in the wrong places. Not only does he claim that Jesus was a literary stand-in for Judas the Galilean, but that Paul may have been an active participant in the composition of the Gospel of Mark.

“Detailing the similarities between the gospel Jesus and Paul’s own life and teachings, Unterbrink claims the former to have been simply a clever blend of Judas the Galilean and Paul. In so doing, he gives his readers much to consider while at the same time challenging what they have always taken to be ‘the Gospel Truth’ and their traditional views.” (*Robert Eisenman, professor emeritus at California State University–Long Beach and author of Ja*)

“Judas of Nazareth is an engrossing read for any Jesus sleuth. Daniel Unterbrink’s latest restatement of his thesis that Jesus of Nazareth is the disguised and rewritten tale of Judas the Galilean is well worth time and attention. Yes, there is the predictable plethora of parallels but more crucial to the Unterbrink thesis than the multiplicity of Judas/Jesus similarities is the complete remodelling of the apostle Paul. The apostle is no less of a fabrication than the saviour himself, argues Unterbrink. He also draws attention to an obscure secondary source, Christian interpolations within the Slavonic edition of Josephus’s War, and presents a welter of argument that appear, at least at first sight, to have great explanatory power. There is much to muse over here.” (*Ken Humphreys, author Jesus Never Existed, March 2014*)

“ I love Daniel Unterbrink’s analytical style in Judas of Nazareth! His experience as a forensic auditor really shows through. Having been a record keeper and auditor myself for some of the world’s largest corporate retirement plans, I can appreciate that level of detail as I watch him weave through a maze of deception while excavating a mountain of covered-over facts. Ultimately he digs up several kernels of truth hidden deep beneath the surface, but those kernels are huge in terms of their significance.”

“As I continue to put my Jesus puzzle together with other historical characters, I feel certain that my Judas the Galilean piece has been solidly inserted into place thanks to Dan Unterbrink!” (*Miriam Moss, Amateur scholar and avid researcher of early Christianity, March 2014*)

“Yet again, Daniel Unterbrink is stepping where others fear to tread. Clearly, lucidly, with a forensic attention to detail, he has amassed a wholly plausible narrative linking Judas to the Christ of our mythologies of the Christ of Paul’s fantasies. If you want to stick with your belief system, you are welcome, but you have

to understand that it has no historical basis. If you want to understand the truth behind the history, this is the place to start.” (*MC Scott, author of Rome: The Art of War*)

About the Author

Daniel T. Unterbrink is the author of *Judas the Galilean*, *New Testament Lies*, and *The Three Messiahs*. A retired forensic auditor, he has turned his analytical prowess to the historical origins of Christianity. He lives in Columbus, Ohio.

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Chapter 7

Foundation Legends

Relying on primary sources, a new theory emerges that the Jesus of history was really Judas the Galilean. The historical Jesus has been glossed over by other images and impressions. The Jesus of Nazareth we find in the canonical gospels of the New Testament is not the Jesus of history but rather a composite. It is a portrait created by the Pauline Gentile Christ Movement to suit its needs after the Jewish Jesus Movement and Judaism waned due to the disastrous war with Rome in the first century CE. A new Messiah figure was needed, worthy of Roman admiration and devotion. Jesus of Nazareth was created.

“Foundation legends” helped bridge the gap between 60 CE and the reality of the emerging church from 90 CE on. These legends provided answers to troubling questions concerning the continuity of teachings from Jesus of Nazareth to Paul.

Then the four gospels of the New Testament were created based upon a storyline provided by the author of the Gospel of Mark. They reflect the theology of Paul as well as his experiences, a fact rarely discussed by scholars and never quantified. But the astute reader of the New Testament suspects that the gospel Jesus was not the Jesus of history, the person who preached in Galilee and met his tragic end in Jerusalem. The gospel Jesus was a created figure, a fiction, one suited for the Christ Movement and its successors. It was a remarkable creation for it has stood the test of time.

The early Christian Church story has been buttressed by several “foundation legends,” not included in the New Testament but circulated in Christian communities from the early second century. The legends have a twofold purpose: first and foremost, church history had to be consistent and uniform in nature; second, the time period from the end of Acts (approximately 60-62 CE) to the early church historians (early to late second century) had to be accounted for in an appropriate manner.

Two distinct “Christian” movements existed by the fourth decade of the first century: the Jewish Jesus Movement and the Pauline Christ Movement. Most Christians today have not even considered such a split. The traditional viewpoint states that the church began after Jesus’s resurrection and the apostles—including Peter, Paul, and James—all worked together for the same purpose. Any differences between these leaders have been minimized in order to present a unified front.

The fact that Christians today fail to recognize any split is a testament to the Foundation Legends’ success. Would Christians today believe in the traditional Christian unified world if these legends had not been invented?

The Martyrdom of Peter and Paul

When Paul traveled to Achaia to meet Nero in 67 CE, he was not in chains but went of his own accord to lay blame for the Jewish war on Florus (*The Jewish War* 2.556-58). Nothing at this time points to Paul’s

untimely demise. If Paul still lived and traveled freely, then why did the later church insist that he and Peter underwent persecution and martyrdom together? The answer: the church wanted to gloss over any disagreements between the earlier Jewish Jesus Movement and Paul's Christ Movement.

The first mention of Peter's and Paul's martyrdom came from Clement of Rome (30-97 CE). He did not supply a concrete date for the martyrdom but did concoct the falsehood that Paul "taught righteousness to the world." Clement attached to Paul the righteousness attribute that clearly belonged to Cephas (Peter) and James the Just (followers of Judas the Gallilean and the Jewish Jesus Movement). Righteousness meant dedication to the Torah. Compare this to the Ebionite claim rejecting "the Apostle Paul as an apostate from the Law." If Paul were an apostate from the law--and his own letters prove it--then no one in the Jewish Jesus Movement could have considered his teaching "righteousness."

Eusebius wrote, "It is recorded that in his [Nero's] reign Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the record is confirmed by the fact that the cemeteries there are still called by the names of Peter and Paul, and equally so by a churchman named Gaius, who was living while Zephyrinus was Bishop of Rome [199-217 CE]."

By the early fifth century the legend had become so entrenched that Augustine wrote, "Both apostles share the same feast day, for these two were one; and even though they suffered on different days, they were as one. Peter went first, and Paul followed." Augustine differed from Eusebius, who claimed that both were martyred at the same time. However, the important point is that Peter and Paul were viewed as one, with the same teachings and visions of God. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

The martyrdom legend followed upon the misinformation contained in the Book of Acts. In Acts, the argument between Cephas and Paul at Antioch was amicably resolved, but if that is true, then why did the Ebionites consider Paul an apostate from the law? In addition, Paul supposedly went to meet Caesar in Rome in 60-62 CE. In reality Paul met Nero in 67 CE at Achaia (modern-day Greece). The martyrdom legend simply built upon the faulty history of Acts.

The agenda for the legend is clear: Make the apostles agree in all things and present a uniform history of the early church. This legend also brought the working lives of Peter and Paul together. If they were willing to die together, they also were willing to work together. Noted scholars such as the late Hyam Maccoby (*The Mythmaker*) and, more recently, Barrie Wilson (*How Jesus Became Christian*) argue that Paul and James represented totally different gospels. (Cephas/Peter followed strict Torah observance.) Much of the evidence for this separation comes from Paul's own letters and from the Book of Acts. The unity of Peter and Paul in life was as much a foundation legend as their unity in death.

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