

Eliseo Ferrer / About the fraudulent and sterile research on the origins of Christianity.



Three months ago, I opened a forum for discussion and debate on Academia.edu about the influence that theology (and its dogmas and preconceived ideas) continues to exert on historical research on the origins of Christianity. In other words, I proposed to assess the enormous errors that a large part of the researchers in this specialty have maintained in the last decades of the last century and continue to maintain in the 21st century, due to their chaining to ideologies derived from ecclesiastical positions (Catholics or Lutherans). Of course, I was not referring only to the positions of Catholic or Protestant historians, mediated by their beliefs (which not all are, it must be recognized. Cf. Alfred Loisy, Rudolf Bultmann, Jean Daniélou, Daniel Ruiz Bueno, Alejandro Díez Macho, Antonio Orbe, Franz Joseph Dölger, Raimon Panikkar or the same Jacinto Choza, etc.), but to many historians also that they call themselves agnostics or atheists, but whose research continues to be dominated and tied (unbeknownst to them) to theology and ideologies derived from the secular Church positions.

By opening this discussion forum, I did not intend anything other than an approximation and a mere assessment of the state of the matter among experts and professors from all over the world: a mere approach to the positions of an issue that I consider very important and of great interest. The text that I proposed as the basis for the debate was: «*Myth, ritual and meaning of the Sacrifice of the Sacred King. The archaic origins of the Christian myth*», which is among the articles I have published on LinkedIn and other social networks; and that it was not, at first, more than a remote reference to the true "heart of the matter", as an Argentine specialist rightly pointed out.

But the debate was radically transformed and we reached that “heart of the matter” when I published (in response to the objections expressed in the forum) the text that I publish under these lines: “Dodecalogue of errors and nonsense. Regarding the fraudulent and sterile investigations into the origins of Christianity».

As the basic text of the discussion was published in Spanish and English, I have to admit that the forum was a success that far exceeded my modest initial expectations. There were more than four hundred readers and more than fifty active participants. In such a way that, after this experience (and also as a continuation of my article on the Piñero-Gatell debate), I want to reopen this forum in Academia.edu on October 15, but not with the initial base text (which I must admit was a bit far from the problem raised), but with the text that I propose to LinkedIn friends under these lines.



**Dodecalogue of errors and nonsense.
REGARDING THE FRAUDULENT AND STERILE INVESTIGATIONS
ON THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY.**

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I believe that the secular influence of the theology and dogmatics of the Church (inherited, to a large extent, by the Lutheran reformers), as well as the ideology generated over eighteen centuries on the substratum of the New Testament, have led and They continue to lead in the XXI century to great errors of study and interpretation of the origins of Christianity. I present a twelve-point list of the errors that I consider the most important, and that surprise me the most and call my attention.

1) Interpret the letters attributed to the figure of Paul of Tarsus from the theology and from texts edited and manipulated by the Church (with their corrections, interpolations and amendments) at the end of the second century; and not from a broader vision that starts at the base and the beginning. That is, framing this epistolary within a historical vision that must begin (diachronically speaking) with the Christianity of Marcion and with the Christianity of the Gnostic teachers (Menandro the Gnostic, Cerinto, Valentin, Basilides, Carpocrates, Ptolemy, etc.), for whom Paul of Tarsus was neither more nor less than «the Apostle of the Resurrection». For the death and resurrection of the Messiah-Christ, in Paul, were nothing other than the allegorical account of the annihilation and death of the Spirit, executed by the archons of this world (lords of cosmic matter), and the awakening to the Wisdom and identity with Christ, to the faith in the resurrection of the Spirit of God (pagan mystery and protognosticism).

Everyone should know that, written in Greek, the letters predated the gospels (also written in Greek), and, as we know them today, they arrived late: several decades after being exhibited and interpreted by the heresiarch Marcion and by the Gnostic masters. Firstly, Jewish mysticism and protognosticism happened; then came the interpretations and dogmas of ecclesiastics... The Church was not born in the Gospel of Matthew (as pious legend tells), but after a ruthless struggle of certain "Judaizing" bishops with textual allegorism, with Christianity of Marcion and with the Christianity of the Gnostic masters. And I say "Judaizers", because the bishops of Irenaeus needed their own ideology to disguise their genuinely Gnostic theology (A. Orbe) and, through a late revisionism, to get rid of Marcion and the Platonic intellectual hegemonism of Gnosticism. And whoever does not understand the foundations of Christianity as a constructivist process of texts and ideology based on the sapiential and apocalyptic tradition, and inspired by the Book of Daniel; who does not understand the birth of the Church as a ruthless struggle of sects and ideological and power interests (as something completely alien to the pious legends of "Acts of the Apostles") you will understand absolutely nothing about all these matters.

2) Considering the three Synoptic Gospels as biographies of Jesus Christ (or of Jesus, as they say in these times) is another of the enormous errors of the so-called contemporary research; something that many researchers claim without any foundation. In general terms, these points of view fit into the consideration of these three texts as a historical chronicle of Judea in the first century: a more or less successful account of the Herodian history of Judea and Galilee.

3) Another of the most important errors derives from the inability (and ignorance) to understand that the gospels (in a broad sense, which includes canonicals and gnostics) are midrashic literature (*Midrash-Pésher*): allegorical and symbolic texts inspired by scriptural motifs that imply, at least, two different levels of reading. A literature developed, originally, against the background of the archetypes of apocalyptic ideology (revelation, kingdom of God, heavenly judge, final judgment, resurrection of the dead, etc.) in transition, after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, the year 70, to a pre-Pauline and Pauline-based protognosticism (revealer, descent of the Spirit-Son of God, salvation, return to heaven, etc.). A protognosticism that, imbued with Platonism, led from apocalyptic literature to Christian Gnosticism at the end of the first century and in the second and third centuries.

4) ...Not understanding that the synoptic gospels (in an *emic* sense) were nothing more than the story of the myth of the descent to earth and the incarnation of the Spirit, in the broadest sense of protognosticism and Christian gnosticism. That is to say, the late Platonic account of the descent of the soul to the sensible world, which died or was annihilated, imprisoned and nailed to matter (wood), under the salvific expectation of the resurrection and the final ascent to heaven. In a mythical sense, we can speak of the descent of the Offspring of Good (Platonic) or of the Son of God-Wisdom, however we want to call it.

5) ... Not understanding, as recognized by the great Raimundo Panikkar (whom I have always admired, despite the great differences (materialism vs. mysticism)... Not understanding, he said, that, in Christianity, «first was the Word (the Logos)

and later came the flesh". This is something evident in the Pauline letters, in Christian Gnosticism and in the fourth gospel. And it also appears in a manifest way, although not in an evident way, in the three synoptic gospels. The main thing in these three (synoptic) texts is, above all, the descent of the Spirit (the Son of God), who descends, as a revealer (like the Zoroastrian saviors and the central figure of the Gnostic myth), to save sleeping men (dead) and prisoners of matter; in such a way that the resurrection (awakening) will be the reward of the "chosen" and those privileged by divine "grace." In the Gospel of Mark, the Spirit descends into the Jordan in his first lines. And the gospels of Mateo and Lucas present like base the myth of the incarnation of the Spirit, and not another thing.

6) ...Not understanding or knowing absolutely nothing, beyond the dogmas of theology, of the myth of the incarnation of the Spirit-Wisdom-Son of God. That is, not knowing the platonic component of the phenomenon and not knowing what the myth of the incarnation of the Spirit (or of the incarnation of the Son of God) is from an anthropological (and historical), materialistic, naturalistic or positivist point of view.

For this reason, I must make it clear that it was not Christ who became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, as many pious catechists and uninformed teachers affirm. Nor did they carry on the aching backs of "a rebellious Galilean" (Jesus) the heavy burden of theology, as many third- and fourth-rate historians believe. In an *emic* sense, what the evangelical texts relate is the incarnation of the Spirit-Wisdom-Son of God in the double Jewish figure of Jesus-Joshua/Messiah-Christós; through whose mythical narration the Son of God became man. Although, in an *etic* sense, and as I have repeated on countless occasions, we must recognize the allegorical and symbolic character of the texts; who, beyond the literal reading (the Son of God becomes Man) and in a deeper reading, transport us to the Gnostic idea of the divine component (the spark of light) within human carnality. As Joseph Campbell rightly said, "God did not become a Man, nor did he divinize and adopt a human being; because that man, the world itself, knew itself to be divine; from whose anthropological experience derived a field of inexhaustible spiritual depth. Here is the secret and the basis of the myth of the incarnation of the divinity.

7) ...Not understanding, or not wanting to understand, that the Redemptorist ideology of the forgiveness of sins due to the monstrosity of the spilled blood, the suffering and the humiliation of the Suffering Servant, or the Lamb of God, was something really late, from the end of from the second century and the third century (I stick to the work of Rudolf Bultmann, whom fashion and the ideologies of ecclesiastical and academic power have condemned to the silence of the catacombs). The forgiveness of sins and redemption by blood was something much later than the mysteries and the protognosticism of Paul of Tarsus, and also later than the primitive Christian Gnosticism, where death and resurrection meant things very different from those interpreted by the bishops of the Church after Irenaeus. It goes without saying that the notion of "Vicarious Satisfaction" was raised, for the first time, by Irenaeus of Lyons, at the end of the second century; and it was not developed until San Anselmo, in the eleventh century, the date on which, according to specialists in religious iconography, the first crucifixes appeared with the suffering Christ and his head tilted to one side.

8) Consequently, ignoring all the above aspects, some so-called historians insist, time and time again, on the gargantuan methodological error that supposes separating «the Christ of faith» and «the historical Jesus». An arbitrary and capricious separation that, clearly, entails a petition of principle (*petitio principii*); because we know for sure what "the Christ of Faith" is or was (the Spirit of God, the Son of the Most High, etc.), but no one knows, beyond the dogmas of the Church, what was "the historical Jesus" or the human component of the divinity. I understand that only from the influence of theology or from the ideology that the Church has distilled over eighteen centuries, can such methodological barbarity be proposed.

I have repeated it countless times... The first reference to the humanization of the myth is very late, around the year one hundred and forty, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, a work of ecclesiastical propaganda of very dubious historicity. And then Justin Martyr, right in the middle of the second century, who spoke of a "crucified teacher." Subsequently, the conciliar theology conceived of Jesus Christ as "true god and man", but this is a matter that does not concern scientific research.

9) Another error is not seeing, or not wanting to see, that the four canonical gospels do not appear documented in the texts until the second half of the second century. Proof of this was that, despite the obscure references of Papias of Hierapolis, Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, was unaware of the Gospels as such.

The canonical gospels (edited and literarily finalized by the bishops in the second half of the second century) pose problems of the second century on the basis of apocalyptic texts from the end of the first century and very close to the Qumran tradition. Hence, in its pages are combined such heterogeneous and disparate issues as apocalyptic ideology and protognosticism, (to a certain extent assimilable within a line of cultural evolution in time), and the rabbinic pharisaism of the beatitudes (completely unassimilable and refractory to previous streams).

10) ...Not understanding or not wanting to understand that "Jesus" and "Joshua" are the same name, expressed through two different signifiers. Christians in general, most theologians and many academic officials easily forget that the first thing that Joshua-Jesus (the son of Nun) did before entering the Promised Land was to cross the Jordan (as an initiatory rite or baptism), choose twelve disciples (one from each tribe of Israel) and pile up twelve stones as a sign of commemoration.

Latin and Western translators, in a very special way, have ruthlessly played with the original Greek terminology. And a good example is the manipulation of the name of the evangelical hero; although there are many more examples whose enumeration would go beyond the purpose of this text.

11) For the rest, the ignorance and denial by Christians, theologians and many academic officials of a protognostic Judeo-Christianity prior to Paul of Tarsus is inexcusable, and which, consequently, cannot be considered as Pauline. It is a Christianity in which there was no death or resurrection of Jesus Christ (there was no mystery); only descent of the revealer or savior to earth and return to heaven after having fulfilled his salvific mission. Evident examples of this non-Pauline, early Jewish "Christianity", are the *Gnostic Gospel of Thomas* (I rely on the

temporality criterion established by Koester, Crossan, Pagels, and others) and the *Odes of Solomon* (Jack T. Sanders).

It is clear that the *Gospel of Thomas* is not a hypothesis constructed from theology and philology, like «Source Q»: it is a real Gnostic gospel that narrates the sayings of a Christ-Revealer who does not die or rise again. The *Odes of Solomon*, a Jewish apocryphal of a Gnostic character, spoke (before Paul of Tarsus and Mark) of the incarnation of the Son of God, and there the Virgin also conceived by the work of the Spirit, who appeared in the form of a dove. The cross was the sacred tree on which Christ-Savior extended his arms (just as the Sibylline Oracles presented Joshua, the son of Nun (the fish)), while the Messiah-Christ also walked on the waters: "His footprints stood firm on the water, without any problem, because they were as firm as the tree that is truly raised." The *Odes of Solomon* spoke, in short, of a Jewish Christ-Messiah of a Gnostic (or proto-Gnostic) character who overcame the death to which his persecutors led him, finally ascended to glory and also descended to hell.

12) Finally, I extend the ignorance expressed in the previous point to the very generalized ignorance of what is known as "Intertestamental Jewish Apocrypha", who, together with the work of Philo of Alexandria and certain texts from Qumran (all this amalgamated in the vulgarized Platonism tradition), constitute the basis of the theologies-mythologies of Christian Gnosticism and Catholic Christianity of the Church. These are textual constructions based on *Midrash-Pésher* methodologies that invariably rescue figures and scriptural themes to graft them onto the problem (apocalyptic, sapiential or protognostic) and offer answers to the questions and concerns of their historical moment. Thus we find the "Odes of Solomon"; the "Wisdom of Solomon"; the "Psalms of Solomon"; the "Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (II Baruch)"; "IV Esdras"; the "Book of the Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch)"; the "Sibylline Oracles"; the "Assumption of Moses"; the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs"; the "Apocalypse of Moses"; the "Life of Adam and Eve"; "Joseph and Aseneth"; "Manasseh's Prayer"; "2 Enoch"; "3 Enoch"; "Ascension of Isaiah"; "Adam's Testament"; "Job's Testament"; "Testament of Moses"; "Testament of Abraham"; "Testaments of Isaac and Jacob"; "Testament of Solomon"; "Apocalypse of Adam"; "Apocalypse of Abraham"; "Apocalypse of Elijah"; "Apocalypse of Zephaniah"; "11QMelchizedek"; etc., etc., etc.

I conclude by emphatically affirming that he will not know the true origins of Christianity who does not know in depth all these Jewish apocryphal texts.

Greetings to all readers.

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Eliseo Ferrer es autor de [«Sacrificio y drama del Rey Sagrado. «Genealogía, antropología e historia del mito de Cristo\)».](#)

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