



CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS

The Event that Created Christianity

Eric Zuesse

*Winner of the Mencken Award for investigative reporting,
and author of IRAQ WAR: The Truth, and of
WHY THE HOLOCAUST HAPPENED*

DESCRIPTION

CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS is a work of investigative history. It documents and describes Christianity's creation-event, in the year 49 or 50, in Antioch (present-day Antakya, Turkey), 2 years after Jesus had been crucified in Jerusalem for sedition against Roman rule. On that occasion, Paul broke away from the Jewish sect that Jesus had begun, and he took with him the majority of this sect's members; he convinced these people that Jesus had been a god, and that the way to win eternal salvation in heaven is to worship him as such. Paul here explicitly introduced, for the first time anywhere, the duality of the previously unitary Jewish God, a duality consisting of the Father and the Son; and he implicitly introduced also the third element of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost.

This work also explains and documents the tortuous 14-year-long conflict Paul had had with this sect's leader, Jesus's brother James, a conflict that caused Paul, in about the year 50, to perpetrate his *coup d'état* against James, and to start his own new religion: Christianity.

Then, this historical probe documents that the four canonical Gospel accounts of the words and actions of "Jesus" were written decades after Jesus, by followers of Paul, not by followers of Jesus; and that these writings placed into the mouth of "Jesus" the agenda of Paul. Paul thus effectively became, via his followers, Christ's *ventriloquist*.

A work such as this can be documented and produced only now, after the development (during the past 70 years) of modern legal/forensic methodology. Previously, the only available methods, which scholars have used, simply *assumed* the honesty-of-intent of all classic documents, especially of canonical religious ones, such as Paul's epistles, and the Four Gospels. Only now is it finally possible to penetrate deeper than that, to reach the writer's intent, and not merely his assertions, and to identify when this intent is to deceive instead of to inform. Where scholars have been able to discuss only the *truth or falsity* of particular canonical statements, it is now possible to discuss also the *honesty or deceptiveness* of individual statements. This opens up an unprecedented new research tool for historians, and *CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS* is the first work to use these new methods to reconstruct, on this legal/forensic basis, not just how *crimes* took place, but how and why *major historical events* (criminal or not), such as the start of Christianity, actually occurred.

The author explains: "What I am doing in this work is to reconstruct from the New Testament the crucial events that produced it, without assuming whether what the NT says in any given passage is necessarily true or even honest. Instead of treating the NT as a work that 'reports history,' the NT is treated as a work whose history is itself being investigated and reported. Its origin goes back to this *coup d'état* that Paul perpetrated in Antioch in the year 49 or 50 against Jesus's brother James in Jerusalem, whom Jesus in Jerusalem had appointed in the year 30 as his successor to lead the Jewish sect that Jesus had started. The Gospel accounts of 'Jesus' reflect Paul's *coup d'état* – not actually Jesus, who would be appalled at the Christian concept 'Christ.' That concept was radically different from the Jewish concept of the messiah, and Paul knew this when he created it."

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*“News is what other people want to keep hidden.
All the rest is publicity.”*

Bill Moyers (interview), *KDViations*, Winter 2006

We cannot control the future,
unless we know the truth about the past.
History must be cleansed of myths,
in order to *control* the future.
There’s no other way,
but catastrophe.
The choice
is ours,
now

.

NOTE ON STYLE

Whereas the norm is to italicize the titles of books, except for the titles of the books in the Bible, the titles of all books are italicized here. For example, *Mark* is italicized. This is done not only in order to be consistent, but in order to avoid confusing the reader between a book and the author of that book. The author of the book of *Mark* is referred to here as Mark (no italics) regardless of what that person's name actually was; no assumption is being made here that the person by the name of Mark wrote *Mark*.

Ampersands (&) are sometimes used here to abbreviate strings of references within the same chapter of a biblical book. For example, *Galatians* 1:1&11&12&15&16 is referring to 1:1, 1:11, 1:12, 1:15, and 1:16, in *Galatians*.

Footnotes are used here in order to amplify upon a point in the discussion, not to cite sources – which are identified within the discussion itself.

The References/Sources section at the end provides further information regarding the documentation conventions used here.

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BOXED ITEMS:

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[Why Read This: The Topic's Importance](#)

This book is about our ethico/moral assumptions that are so widely shared they're not even questioned – but that nonetheless might be false. These assumptions are what make Western Civilization Western Civilization. To investigate them is not to prefer other civilizations, but is only to understand our own. And in order to understand Western Civilization, one must accurately know the event that caused it, that shaped it.

Western Civilization – the *shared* civilization of all Christian-majority countries – started when the religion that defines it did. The moral base in each of these nations is Christianity; and though different Western nations may vary in their respective interpretations of Christianity's Scripture, that Scripture – the New Testament – is the *source* of the moral bases in *all* of these many countries. It's what we all share. So, understanding what created the New Testament, is understanding the real source of our common moral base. We cannot comprehend the civilization in which we live, unless we know how the New Testament came about – the event that caused it because the New Testament is the moral foundation for Western Civilization itself.

Some people erroneously think that Christianity is Jesus, not the New Testament. However, in reality, they know Jesus *via* the New Testament, which is the only part of the Bible that quotes him. Some *non-biblical* documents also contain quotations attributed to Jesus, but those alleged Jesus-statements are *not* part of Christianity, and therefore explaining what caused them is of no concern. Even if a person we think of as Jesus existed and uttered those statements, our world hasn't been shaped by them, and so there will be no inquiry here into what caused the writing of *those* "words of Jesus."

"The words of Jesus" that are in the Bible were not written by Jesus, but the Roman Catholic Church canonized them as representing what he said. The present book investigates to determine who actually wrote them, and why. The "why" turns out to be every bit as important as the "who" here, because this investigation finds that the people who wrote those words were followers of Paul, not followers of Jesus as they claimed. Of course, Paul himself claimed to be a follower of Jesus; but this investigation finds also that, in the later part of his career, when Paul wrote the letters by which he subsequently became known to history, he had, in fact, broken away from Jesus's followers, and was competing against those people, no longer working for or with them. Paul's followers were actually enemies of Jesus's followers, and wrote the Gospels. They never met Jesus, and he would have been shocked and appalled at many of the quotations they attributed to him. These preachments being made in his name would have outraged him.

That's a thumbnail sketch of my findings in this investigation which had started as a search to discover the event that created Christianity – the ultimate *beginning* of all this history.

Originally, the purpose of this book was, indeed, to find and describe this singular event; but, in order to do that, it was necessary at the very start to re-define this goal concretely or operationally, as discovering the precise sequence of circumstances that had caused the New Testament to be written as it is. My process here was thus inevitably one of working backwards in time from the New Testament documents to their ultimate cause, which couldn't be *merely* an individual (either Jesus or anyone else) but which would instead necessarily have to be that individual (*whomever* it was) acting *within the context of the precise circumstances that had motivated him to do* this momentous act, an act which has since turned out to be the most important one in all of human history: namely, the creation of Christianity. Finding the event, that created the Christian faith, was, indeed, my aim at this investigation's start, and it remained my objective after the question was thus concretely defined. This question drove me because I'm an investigative historian, and because I thought that scientifically reconstructing, from the available evidence, the event that created Christianity, was the most important objective an investigative historian can possibly pursue. This is why I undertook to find: What happened at this event – *who did it, when, where, how, and why?*

For an investigative historian, this challenge is like Mount Everest. George Mallory, when asked why he tried to climb the world's highest peak, said famously, "Because it's there." The only way to do such a thing is step by step, and many people think that reaching a peak like this is impossible. So, I invite you to take this trip now along with me, step by step, to experience for yourself the scaling of history's peak.

This book will answer all of these questions (who, when, where, how, and why) in such detail, you'll become like a fly on the wall, present at the occasion when Western Civilization itself started. This event wasn't like anyone today would imagine. It will surprise everyone. New scientific methodology has made its discovery possible – at last, after 2,000 years, excavating from ancient documents the actual circumstances that caused these documents to be created as they are; so that, for the first time ever, they scientifically make sense. However, what these documents scientifically tell us, isn't what they *seem* to tell. The truth behind them is a lot more interesting than the myth in front of them. And the path to this truth doesn't pass through an assumption that that myth is true. Nor through an assumption that it's false. This path passes through no such assumptions, whatsoever. Where other paths assume, this path instead *investigates*.

According to *Matthew* 16:18, Jesus said to Peter, "You, Peter, are the rock upon which I will build my church." However, scholars widely question the authenticity of this alleged quotation; and many scholars (even some who don't question its authenticity) question the *meaning* of this statement, since the Greek term, "ekklesia," which was used there for "church," signified, in that time, *any* sort of an assembly, even a political one; and a Jewish assembly (or – as it was then called – "sunagoge" or else "synagoge") was also a *type* of "ekklesia." Did Jesus start a Jewish sect – a synagogue, or assembly of Jews? Christianity isn't that. Moreover, a few chapters earlier in *Matthew*, 10:5-6 quotes Jesus as telling his disciples, "Don't go to the Gentiles, ... but only to the lost sheep of Israel," and then again in 15:24, Jesus is quoted as saying, about himself, "I was sent [by God] to only the lost sheep of Israel." Thus, this "ekklesia" – relating to those verses at least – would have constituted Jesus's *synagogue*, unless God subsequently changed his mind and his instructions to Jesus, to start a new religion. Furthermore, if the intent in 16:18 was to start a religion, the word for that would have been "threskeia," not "ekklesia." But this "Jesus" didn't start any "threskeia"; he didn't start a *religion*. Therefore, 16:18, even if it was authentic (which is in doubt), fails to answer the key question: *Who started Christianity* – and when, where, how, and why?

The only other Scriptural candidate for Jesus's having authorized Christianity is *Matthew* 28:18-20, in which the resurrected Jesus is quoted as reversing the command of the living Jesus (in 10:5-6), by commanding his disciples, "Go throughout the world to make all peoples my disciples by baptizing them in the name of [the Trinity] the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. However, this command directly contradicts *Matthew* 5:17-20, which quotes Jesus as saying "Do not think I have come to do away with the Law of Moses, ... for it will be eternally binding." The first three of the "eternally binding" Ten Commandments (*Exodus* 20:3-7, and *Deuteronomy* 5:7-11), given from God to Moses and all of God's people, ban permanently any such thing as the Trinity, and demand worshipping *only* the Father, never to include any second object.² Even more emphatically, the Third of these Ten Commandments says "Do not take the name of God in vain." Thus, the alleged resurrectional baptismal command of 28:18-20 (in the *name* of the Trinity) would have been clearly in violation of those "eternally binding" commandments from God. In addition, *Matthew* quotes Jesus in 19:16-19 as saying "Obey the commandments if you want to win eternal life," and as specifically citing some of the Ten Commandments as example of what one must do in order to go to heaven. Furthermore, the early Christian church didn't consider 28:18-20 to be itself binding, and as late as the 16th Century that statement was widely understood as having been directed only at Jesus's disciples in his own time, not at future generations, and the obligation was thought to have been fulfilled by them. In any case, this statement doesn't assert that a person who fails to comply with it will be viewed less favorably by God, or denied salvation. Moreover, only relatively recently did this alleged statement come to be called "The Great Commission," and considered as the start of Christianity. That change of belief occurred at the time critical scholarship on the Bible first emerged, The Enlightenment. It's not how Christianity had seen itself during the religion's first 1,600 years. On top of all this the oldest of the four Gospels, *Mark*, had no equivalent passage. It ended at *Mark* 16:8. Later (after the two most ancient manuscripts of *Mark*, both of which date from the Fourth Century and both of which ended at 16:8), some anonymous person added the current ending (16:9-20), which copies and expands *Matthew* 28:18-20. Thus, "The Great Commission" was apparently concocted long after *Mark* was written. What's the likelihood the earliest-written Gospel would have omitted this statement (which *Matthew* alleged to be Jesus's *last*) if it was *authentic* – if Jesus had actually said this? Would *Mark* have *ignored* such a statement? And, in addition: This earliest-written of all the four canonical Gospel accounts of "Jesus," *Mark*, at its passage 12:29-30, quotes "Jesus" as saying outright, "The most important commandment of all is that the Lord God is one and must be loved with your entire being," which statement paraphrases the First Commandment, virtually identically to the way Moses did in *Deuteronomy* 10:12, and thus this "Jesus" prohibits belief in the Trinity; so, the reason why *Mark* included *no* "Great Commission" (until some anonymous person added it centuries later) is obvious: everyone in the time when *Mark* was written knew that Jesus would never have said such a thing.

Finally regarding *Matthew* 28:18-20, Moses is quoted in *Deuteronomy* 10:20 as saying that God told him to tell everyone, "Worship only Him. ... Make promises only in His Name." Contrast that with the statement alleged from Jesus at the end of *Matthew*, 28:19-20, "Go then to all peoples everywhere, and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey all my commands." This supposed "Son" isn't merely telling his followers to violate the Father's command "Worship only Him," but to violate the Father's command "Make promises only in His Name." This "Jesus" is moreover telling his followers to obey the "commands" of the Son, even though those "commands" violate the first three of the Ten Commandments from the Father. And yet this "Son" *also* supposedly said (as was earlier noted) in *Matthew* 5:17-20, "Do not think I have come to do away with the Law of Moses, ... for

it will be eternally binding.” So, *yet again*, the author of the first-written Gospel, *Mark*, had good reason for *not* alleging that Jesus claimed to have overridden any of God’s commandments: unlike the authors of *Matthew*, *Luke*, and *John*, the author of *Mark* wasn’t writing late enough to be able to get away with so blatant a fabrication.

Thus, no evidence whatsoever exists that Jesus started Christianity.

If Jesus *didn’t* create Christianity, if a different person created it, then would Jesus have approved of what that individual was doing? Might Christianity even have been created by an *enemy* of Jesus? But why would an enemy of Jesus have produced a myth that “Jesus” was a god who should be worshipped? Wouldn’t any enemy of Jesus be, to the exact contrary, extremely *disinclined* to do such a thing?

All that’s clear here, at the outset, is that the event that created Christianity – whoever did it, whatever it was, and wherever it occurred – was the most important event in all of human history, because the world 2,000 years later has been so profoundly affected by it. If Christianity had not been created, then the world today would be so different that it would be unrecognizable.

Try, if you can, to visualize the world without Christianity: you’ll quickly realize that it would be a very different place, *EVEN* in Muslim lands.

Islam, after all, is based upon the Quran, and the Quran accepts both the Old Testament and the New. (See, for examples, Quran verses 2:31, 2:85, 2:136-7, 3:03, 4:47, 4:136-7, 10:37, 10:94, 21:7, 29:46, 35:31, and 41:9-12.) The New Testament is itself the *DISTINCTIVE PRODUCT* of Christianity’s founding event, and so Islam would be very different if this event had not taken place.

Jews, too, have been immensely affected by it: for more than 1,500 years, they’ve been surrounded by Christian culture, and their lives have been largely shaped by it.

Thus, on a global basis, not just in the Christian realm, this event has emerged as our culture’s very kernel, an essential reality, for virtually all of humanity.

In other words, by creating the world’s largest religion, this event has shaped the lives of practically everyone today, all the way down to our cultural roots, so that humanity could be said to be virtually sleepwalking through our days and years with this occurrence constantly in the invisible background, unheralded and unrecognized, not even discussed, but still always present, guiding us unknowingly in what we do and have done, throughout our entire wakeful, conscious lives.

Furthermore, for Christians, this event doesn’t concern just a person’s ritual behaviors, such as going to mass, or crossing one’s heart. Even though we’re ignorant of this event’s existence, every Christian’s ethical-moral viewpoint is *ROOTED*, ultimately, in this single historical occasion, which was the conception of Christianity.

As will be made clear in the later part of this book, this event also transformed, throughout the Christian-majority areas of the world, the relationships between law and morality, and between Church and State, and thus profoundly shaped the *political* world that we live in today. Politics is the very opposite of the ritual sphere; and yet, politics, just as much as religious ritual *per se*, has been transformed by this single event.

Though many people assume that if an event is historically important, the event must be known to the public, this assumption is sometimes false, because things that occur in secret, or that are known to only a restricted number of people, can occasionally have an enormous impact – sometimes even bigger than the impact of any famous event. The present book documents and describes one such private event, which occurred 2,000 years ago, and which has never even been publicly recognized until now: the event that created Christianity.

Since the news of this event will be coming only now, two millennia after the fact, this

news might shock believing Christians (people who believe the Bible). These readers' concerns ~~should be specifically addressed here, and now will be.~~ (Readers who don't find the following of interest might prefer to skip ahead here, straight to the Introduction.)

A well-established central finding of psychological research, concerning "confirmation bias" or "motivated reasoning" (which are two phrases referring to people's tendency to believe whatever they want to believe, *regardless* of any contrary facts), is that individuals evaluate whatever they read according to their *pre-existing* ideas about the given subject. Specifically, psychologists have found that people tend to pay attention to whatever *confirms* their existing ideas, and tend to ignore whatever *contradicts* those pre-established beliefs.³ This tendency most people have (though the research studies make clear also that some rare individuals do not possess this unfortunate tendency), to reinforce their beliefs, even in the face of contrary evidence – even in the face of contrary evidence that *disproves* those beliefs – has been found to be *especially* strong if a person is conservative in his/her beliefs (such as the studies show that most people are who think Jesus started Christianity).⁴

That research explains why most people interpret the Bible (or any other writing) in whatever way they want. A typical example of this phenomenon is the issue of rich and poor, in the Bible. Some people (usually conservatives) interpret the Bible as indicating that the rich are especially blessed by God, while others (usually liberals) interpret it as indicating that the poor are especially blessed by God. The Bible actually supports and contradicts *both* views, as the following shows:

On the side of the rich, are these biblical passages:

In *Matthew* 10:24, "Jesus" says: "A student is never superior to the teacher, just as a slave never superior to the slave-master. It is sufficient for the student to aspire to become a teacher, and for the slave to aspire to become a slavemaster." This "Jesus" accepts slavery, and also accepts the rights of slave-masters.⁵

In *Matthew* 13:12, "Jesus" directly instructs his disciples, that, in the Kingdom of Heaven, "The person who has something will be given still more, until he possesses more than enough; but the person who has nothing will find even that taken away from him."

In *Matthew* 25:29-30, "Jesus" tells a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven, a realm where: "To every person who has something, even more will be given, until he possesses more than enough; but the person who has nothing will find even that taken away from him. And unproductive slaves will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there is want and weeping."

In *2 Thessalonians* 3:10, "Paul" says: "Whoever refuses to work must not be permitted to eat."

On the side of the poor, are these passages:

In *Matthew* 6:24, "Jesus" says: "No one can serve ... both God and wealth."

In *Matthew* 19:21, "Jesus" says: "If you wish to be perfect, sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor."

In *Matthew* 19:24, "Jesus" says: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."

In *Luke* 6:20, "Jesus" says: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is God's Kingdom."

In *Luke* 6:24, "Jesus" says: "Woe to you rich, for you have already received your comfort."

Thus, in order to understand the will of Jesus, or otherwise to carry out God's will, one must actually first discard one's ego, so as to avoid believing *merely* what one *wants* to believe. One must start this quest by *accepting* the reality that the Bible *contradicts* itself. Rather than merely assert "The Bible says" this or that (as is usually done), one must open-mindedly seek a coherent

non-self-contradictory, explanation of its self-contradictions. The alternative – to *choose* this or that *side* of a given biblical contradiction (such as rich/poor) – is only to follow one's own will, *not* to follow the will of *God* (if *God* exists). Whoever does that, carries out solely his personal preference, whenever the Bible contradicts itself – as it often does.

A primary purpose here will be precisely this: to *explain* the Bible's contradictions, and *not* merely to endorse this or that – and to oppose that or this – in the Bible. Explaining the Bible's contradictions entails indicating *where these contradictions came from*. The *basic belief of Christianity* is that *the entire New Testament comes from God and Christ*, but the present work does not confirm this belief; to the contrary: it *disconfirms* Christianity, by scientifically finding that the New Testament was actually created by enemies of the Jewish sect that Jesus had started.

For this reason, fundamentalist Christians will tend to ignore the findings here. However, if this work is true, then it is fulfilling the intention of Jesus, who has thus already been misrepresented for two thousand years, and who would definitely not wish to *continue* being so misrepresented. In a situation such as this, Jesus would want *every* Christian to read and consider the present work, because he would oppose misrepresentations of himself, and he would thus want any such misrepresentations to be exposed. Consequently, a fundamentalist Christian, who presumably wishes to follow the will of Jesus, is *obligated* by his commitment to Jesus, to keep an *open mind* to the *possibility* that Jesus is misrepresented in the New Testament. And, if this work turns out instead to be false; and if Jesus did, after all, start Christianity (and so himself said *both* sides of the contradictions that the New Testament attributes to him); then the reader, after finding a falsehood in this work which discredits this work, will have thereby come to know Christianity's truthfulness *with even higher certainty than before*, as a direct outcome of having found such a falsehood in the most rigorous case against Christianity. In that case, the contradictions that are attributed to Jesus came from Jesus. Even if this means that Christianity is morally ambivalent, Christianity's *basic* belief is confirmed. The belief that Jesus advocated Christianity will then have survived its stiffest test; and, to paraphrase *Matthew 16:19*, even the gates of hell will then not be able to hold out against Christianity's truth. However, you cannot make this judgment *unless* you have first considered this case.

In *either* eventuality, the will of Jesus will have been served, and the truth will win out. As *John 8:32* says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." What you believe after you've been freed will depend upon what you find in this search.

However, even at the present stage, this much is clear, and it's substantial: The words of "Jesus" in the New Testament contradict themselves on core issues, such as rich and poor, and the Trinity itself. Such self-contradiction insults Jesus (*if* he existed – and the investigation presented here will confirm that he did, and that scholars who allege otherwise haven't put forth a single valid argument for their position). A "Jesus" like that is obviously not worth taking seriously, much less worshipping (if he even *intended* to be worshipped). He is his *own* opponent on important matters. What would the *real* Jesus think of a self-styled "Christian" who cares so little about the alleged religion that "Christian" holds, as not to investigate whether those words and the other words attributed to Jesus in the New Testament, *misrepresent* what he said, and what he stood for; and as to care so little about whether these words might even have been placed into Jesus's mouth by Jesus's actual *enemies*? If an alleged believer doesn't care enough about the religion he professes, so as to investigate whether its Scripture lies about the person's very object of worship and basic beliefs, then what would Jesus – or anyone else – think of such an individual? That's yet *another* reason to consider this investigation.

This work is written for *anyone* who seeks a scientific investigation of Christianity. If its findings are true, Jesus would passionately want Christians to read it. If its findings are false,

Jesus wouldn't care whether Christians read it, because the self-contradictions that the New Testament attribute to Jesus would then reflect Jesus, not distortions of him by enemies, and such a Jesus would nullify himself.

Introduction: The Methodology

Methodology is even more important than findings, because it *determines* the findings. This work differs from others on earliest Christianity because its methodology is different – far more rigorous.

Any reader who is interested in a straight historical account of Christianity's start will find that in the next section ("Summary: The Findings," starting on page 30), but this book is not like others about history; it's not presenting (except on those pages) merely a story that is *alleged* to be nonfictional. Except for those fifteen pages, this work is a historical, real-life, who-done-it (and when, and where, and why, and how) *investigation*, laying out the evidence to the reader in a very systematic way, like in a court of law, so that the reader can judge *for him/herself*, what the history was, that's "told" *by this evidence*. The evidence *itself* will tell the story. (That fifteen-page narrative merely summarizes the broad outlines of this history.) The reader will therefore be reading history here in a different way – the way that a jury reconstructs, *from the evidence*, a history of how and why and when and where, and by whom, a crime was committed, and renders a verdict saying that this is the history (of the crime), and that any other alleged account (of this event) should be considered to be partly or wholly fictional, on the basis of the evidence. However, a verdict is rendered not *only* on the basis of the evidence; it's rendered also on the basis of the *methodology*, which here is legal/forensic methodology – what's used in courts of law in democratic countries. Legal/forensic methodology is the scientific methodology for reconstructing history from evidence; and, on this basis, you, as a juror, will be reading, *directly* from the evidence, the actual history – no mere story, no fiction at all – the event that, *in fact*, started Christianity.

Being a responsible juror requires immense attention and care, far more than does simply reading a mere narrative "history" of an alleged event. In the present instance, investigating what might possibly have been the biggest deception in all of history requires a degree of intellectual concentration that will greatly sharpen the mind. Anyone who is prepared to engage in such an analysis will find the process itself to be rewarding, not merely because of the new information and understandings that result, but also because the methodology, that's used in this discovery, possesses wide applications, far outside courtrooms. A skill in recognizing liars (and their lies) protects one against deception, no matter what the subject might happen to be; and this increases one's intellectual capacities. The same process of discovery can be applied (for example) to such things as identifying when politicians are lying, or when an advertising claim ought to be discounted – and when to discount it to zero.⁶ However, perhaps its greatest usefulness is to disentangle faith from fact, which happens to be the objective in the present instance.

A full discussion of this methodology will be presented in the final chapter, the "Conclusion," where it can be consulted as you go along in this work, if you should happen to

have any methodological question about how this history is being documented. Since ~~methodology is even more important than the findings (in any scientific work, not only in this one)~~, that explanation will culminate this work. Methodology is king here. However, a summary of this methodology will now be presented, up front, so that you will know, right at the start, the evidence on which this historical account is based, and what the basic rules of modern legal/forensic methodology are, which will produce this history from this body of evidence:

The highest-ranked source here, which is considered by scholars to be the gold standard of authenticity regarding earliest Christianity, is Paul's letter to the Galatians. (The reasons why it is considered #1 are discussed more fully in our final chapter, the Conclusion.) This document is recognized by virtually all scholars as having been written before not just the canonical, but *all* (including *non*-canonical), accounts of Jesus's life. Furthermore, *Galatians* is entirely a first-person account, not based upon hearsay but instead providing authentic witness testimony. Part One of this book will thus be a line-by-line analysis of *Galatians* – the first such analysis ever to employ modern legal/forensic methodology, which is the scientific methodology for interpreting documents (and the methodology that's described in detail in our Conclusion). This will be the first occasion anywhere in which Paul's testimony is, essentially, being cross-examined, by using new legal/forensic methods for interpreting documentary evidence. For example, Paul's honesty will not be assumed here. Nor will there be any assumption here that Paul is lying. No assumption whatsoever will be made regarding these and other matters which, in a standard scholarly analysis, are loaded with such assumptions. Though this evidence has existed for thousands of years, this methodology for interpreting it is new.

The second-highest-ranked sources, which will be used here to explain additional details of the meaning of *Galatians*, are the 6 other letters by Paul that scholars consider authentic: *Romans*, *Philippians*, *1&2 Corinthians*, *1 Thessalonians*, and *Philemon*. These 7 documents (including *Galatians*) are the 7 earliest-written documents pertaining to earliest Christianity, the ones written closest to Jesus, and written only to people who definitely had access to representatives from Jesus's disciples – individuals who might criticize anything that was inaccurate in them – and all are furthermore virtually universally accepted as being authentic first-person accounts of the people and events they describe. No other evidence about earliest Christianity is at all like this.

In addition, whenever a given assertion that Paul made was paraphrasing a passage from the Old Testament, for authority, that source-passage also is 2nd quality – unimpeachable for interpreting Paul, but still not *Galatians* itself.

All other evidence (including *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, *Acts*, Josephus, etc.) was written after Paul, might have been influenced by Paul, and is lower-ranked (#3). Its only usefulness is for expanding upon (or filling in gaps of) the historical narrative, or "theory of the case," that is constructed from the best evidence. Such expansions are not as reliable as is the theory of the case itself, but are likely true, rather than likely false.

Speculation by scholars (or anyone else) about what Paul was trying to say, or about the meaning of any document, is speculation, *not* evidence, and therefore cannot be cited here at all (except to point out *that* it's *not* evidence). Only the evidence is evidence, and only the reader/juror will interpret it; no scholar can serve that function (of interpretation). Scholars can serve to *authenticate* documents, and these documents have been authenticated by them; but only you can *interpret* the evidence. The present work is intended merely to assist you in interpreting by providing you the relevant evidence, which no one can interpret *for* you, *except* you. The only aspect of the evidence that you cannot evaluate for yourself is its *authenticity*; scholars' opinions are thus accepted as constituting expert opinions on matters of authenticity, but differences of

opinions among these experts will be noted, where applicable (such as, for example, regarding the authenticity of the passage 2:13-16 in Paul's letter *1 Thessalonians*, which some scholars consider to be a later addition – not authentic). Where there are such differences of opinion, modern legal/forensic methodology will be applied to make the final determination as to authenticity. (In this example case, 2:13-16 will be demonstrated to be authentic.) However, you will always be the final *interpreter* of the evidence. That's a juror's function. Any reader who would rely upon some "authority" to interpret the evidence excludes himself from this (or any) case.

As was noted, modern legal/forensic methodology does not (like scholarly methodologies do) assume whether a given writer wrote with the intention to inform, rather than to deceive: the honesty of the documents will not be assumed, nor will their dishonesty. Instead, the honesty/dishonesty of each given statement will be investigated here, in the light of the *other* evidence. On this basis, an *explanation* will be presented, of any *contradictions* within the evidence.

In a nutshell, then, this is the methodology:

- (1) Assume as little as possible.
- (2) Always rely on the best (most reliable) evidence.
- (3) Explain (instead of ignore) any contradictions within the evidence.

Summary: The Findings

(Everything from this point onward in this book is intended only for readers who accept that methodology, which has just been summarized in the Introduction – and which is more fully described in our final chapter, the Conclusion. Since that methodology is basic to this work’s findings, and since no previous work has applied this methodology to historically reconstructing the start of Christianity, anyone who doesn’t accept that methodology would be simply wasting time to read any further here. On the other hand, readers who accept that methodology will find the following history of Christianity’s start to be amply documented in this work. This summary encapsulates the historical narrative that that methodology will be documenting from the evidence:)

TIME-LINE OF KEY EVENTS

c. 30: Jesus, the founder of a Jewish sect, is executed for sedition against Rome.

c. 32-33: Paul, an enemy of Jesus’s sect, joins them after alleging that he was told to do so by Jesus’s ghost.

35 or 36: Paul, for the first time, meets two of Jesus’s disciples in Jerusalem. He receives two weeks training from Peter, the disciple who headed the mission to the uncircumcised or Gentiles; and he also is introduced to Jesus’s brother James, the leading disciple.

49 or 50: James orders Paul to return to Jerusalem so as to defend his practice of accepting into Judaism uncircumcised men, in blatant contradiction of Judaism’s signature commandment, *Genesis 17:14*, in which God had allegedly told Abraham “No uncircumcised male will be one of my people.” At the end of this council in Jerusalem, James rules that, at least for the time being, Paul’s followers will continue to be accepted as Jews despite that blatant violation.

49 or 50: Shortly afterward, James sends Peter and other representatives to Paul’s Antioch headquarters to tell Paul that *Genesis 17:14* must be enforced after all. Paul refuses and announces that God’s religion is no longer Judaism (obedience to God’s laws) but Christianity (faith in Christ). James decides not to expel Paul’s followers from the sect, and Paul decides not to tell his followers that they aren’t really Jews.

After 50: Paul tells his followers, in *Romans 13:1-5* and elsewhere, that the ultimate lawmaker and enforcer of the law is the Emperor, and that the Emperor is actually God’s representative on Earth to perform such legislative functions.

Jesus of Nazareth started a new sect in Judaism. He was then crucified by the Romans in

approximately the year 30. The Romans crucified him because he claimed to be the King of the Jews. ~~The Romans crucified everyone who made that claim (there were others who made this same claim).~~ All of these men were crucified because the Romans had appointed solely the Herodian family to that kingly position. For anyone else to claim this title was automatically viewed as being – and it actually was – sedition against Rome. This is why Jesus was crucified by the Romans, for sedition. (Though the Gospels say that Jesus was crucified for violating Jewish blasphemy laws, that was a lie, as will be documented and explained in this work.)

Jews were at that time a conquered people, who had lost their independent nation of Israel, and who were being ruled by these kings appointed by Rome. Moreover, Jesus taught that the Law came from God, not from Rome's Emperor or Caesar, and this made his sedition especially threatening to Rome's continued rule over Jews.

Consequently, if for no other reason, Rome actually had little other choice but to crucify Jesus, as a public example and warning to any Jew who might similarly challenge Rome's authority to make the laws, and to appoint the kings.

Furthermore, according to Josephus's *Antiquities* 18:2:2, Rome appointed not merely the Jews' kings but also the chief Jewish priest, in Jerusalem, Caiaphas. If Caiaphas advised his people to tell (his actual employer) Pilate to kill Jesus, as is alleged in *John* 18:14, then this wouldn't have been done "so that one man should die for all the people," as that Gospel alleged, but instead done to halt and block any spread of such sedition. And it also wouldn't have been done to suppress "blasphemy" against Jewish laws, as is alleged in *Matthew* 26:65 and *Mark* 14:64. Pilate's job wasn't to assure "that one man should die for all the people," nor to suppress blasphemy against Judaism; it was simply to crush sedition. Moreover, Jesus did not blaspheme against Judaism; he taught Judaism; he was, in fact, a recognized rabbi. He never abandoned Judaism. The idea that he did was created, starting twenty years after his death, by enemies of the sect that he had established.

Jesus's disciples were followers of this convict who had been executed by Rome for sedition. Rome was wary of them.

Furthermore, Jesus's disciples were poor people, not serving or affiliated with the owners most wealth, the ruling Roman authorities.

This historical background is essential in order to understand why Jesus's remaining followers, in Jerusalem, were vulnerable both politically and economically.

Shortly before Jesus's crucifixion, he appointed his brother James to head the young sect. (Though the Gospels say that Jesus appointed Peter as the group's new leader; this, too, was an intentional falsehood, documented and explained herein.) James took over leadership of this Jewish sect. Within approximately three years after Jesus's crucifixion, Paul joined the sect. Then, three years after joining, Paul traveled to Jerusalem, in order to receive missionary training specifically from Peter, who was the sect's chief missionary selling this sect to Gentiles, or to *non-Jews*.

Peter had had only modest success converting Gentiles to join this Jewish sect, but Paul became the star missionary or salesman to the Gentiles. In fact, Paul brought in such a great number of new members, so that soon most of the sect's members were actually Gentiles who had been converted to Judaism by Paul.

As the years went by and Paul brought more and more Gentiles into this sect throughout the Roman Empire, he was bringing into the sect a wealthier and less threatening-to-Rome class of members, people who hadn't been raised to believe that God and not Rome was the ultimate arbiter of the laws. Paul collected funds from these higher-social-status people to maintain and support the very weak-status disciples in Jerusalem. Consequently these disciples grew

increasingly dependent upon Paul.

However, this soaring number of new members who hadn't been born as Jews created a problem for the members who had been so born: These new Jews weren't circumcised. According to the Jewish legend, which as Jews they all believed to be history and not myth, Judaism had started at *Genesis* 17:12-14, with God telling Abraham: "Circumcision will be your signature on our agreement [God's agreement with the Jews], a physical sign that our covenant is eternal." In *Genesis* 17:14, God said: "No man who is uncircumcised will be one of my people." God's agreement was thus *only* with circumcised men; no uncircumcised man would be one of God's people. Then, in *Genesis* 17:19, God made clear that this would never change; he said: "This agreement will extend through all future generations – everlasting." Abraham complied, and thus the Jewish covenant began, according to the Jewish legend. In ancient cultures, and in cultures that are pre-literate or maybe just becoming literate, "signing" a contract (like the contract with God, which is the Jewish covenant) was sometimes done "in blood"; and the signature in this case was done on a private part of a man's body, a part which moreover represented the future; it represented coming generations: the penis.

So, the question is: were these new men, whom Paul had brought in, *actually* Jews? Not according to the commandment that started Judaism: they certainly weren't. Circumcision was Judaism's signature commandment; a man didn't even qualify to be a Jew unless he had first signed the covenant with God by becoming circumcised, and Paul's men had *not* signed. This was in black and white, in *Genesis*. It was undeniable.

By the time of the 17th year of Paul's employment with the sect, 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem, Paul's congregations included so many members, that James called Paul back again to Jerusalem. In *Galatians* 2:2, Paul said that what was at stake in this Jerusalem conference was the success or failure of all of his missionary work up to that time. The crucial moment for him had finally come.

If circumcision were to be imposed upon his men, Paul would have lost almost all of them and the reason for this was quite simple:

Anesthesia didn't yet exist, and therefore any medical operation was a living terror. This is why few medical operations occurred that weren't absolutely necessary. The circumcisions of male Jewish infants on their eighth day, in accord with *Genesis* 17:11, were exceptions. Those infants didn't even choose it; this was something that their parents did to them. Paul's converts, by contrast, were grown men. They would have been terrified to be subjected to that requirement. Most would have refused.

In addition, antibiotics and antiseptics didn't exist; germs weren't even known to exist; the microscope hadn't yet been invented. Consequently, the death-rate in any type of operation was very high, due to infections. When death occurred to an infant, it was no major concern, because infants possessed no property, and thus no power. But adult males possessed all the property, and so all the power in society, and therefore Paul knew that he would lose his life's success if he demanded that his men become circumcised.

All scholars have ignored these determinative realities about circumcision during the First Century, and many scholars have even said that circumcision was only a small concern to those of Jesus's followers who were trying to convert uncircumcised adult males. For example, Harvard's Krister Stendahl said (in his 1963 *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, Part 6) that "circumcision ... was not a barrier to Christianity but quite attractive to Gentiles, who were enamored of what was Oriental. ... Even ritual laws like those from the Old Testament were not a liability but an asset – as any reader of *Galatians* can see." He provided no documentation for his opinion regarding circumcision, because none exists: You'll be investigating *Galatians* yourself.

in the pages here to follow, and you won't find anything in *Galatians* to support this commonly held scholarly opinion of the innocuousness (if not attractiveness) of circumcision during the First Century – nothing whatsoever there. Scholars don't have to document their opinions, because (unfortunately), even without evidence, scholars are deemed to possess authority of their own. Only scientists are obliged to cite evidence for their views. (We're not doing it here in this Summary, but we do it throughout the rest. Even a scientist may summarize.)

James understood that if he demanded that Paul's men become circumcised, then he'd lose most of his members; and so James, too, didn't want to do that. Furthermore (as has been noted) Jesus's disciples were poor people; they were Jerusalem Jews, who had been defeated by Rome and almost all of the rich people were associated with the Roman regime, and they were Gentiles – uncircumcised. Paul's congregations were thus contributing money to the upkeep of these poor Jews in Jerusalem. James strongly wanted this financial assistance to continue.

Paul wrote in *Galatians* 2:10 that at the conclusion of the conference James required only that this money keep coming. Paul seemed, at first, to have had his way.

But then, only shortly after Paul returned to Antioch, Peter came, and, later that same day, other agents from James also came, and they told Paul that James had changed his mind, and that Paul's men would have to be circumcised, after all. According to Paul's account in *Galatians* 2:14-21, Paul responded by saying that the covenant was at an end as a result of Jesus's crucifixion, and that "a person is viewed favorably by God only by means of possessing Christ-faith, never by following God's laws [which are set forth in the covenant in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible]." In other words, Paul said that the agreement that God had with the Jews was now replaced by Paul's "gospel of Christ," in which a faith that Jesus was the Messiah is all that God requires, in order for a man to become one of God's people and so go to heaven instead of to hell after death. Paul said, in *Galatians* 2:21, "If a person is put right with God by adhering to the covenant, then the Messiah died for nothing!"

That was the first time this doctrine, Christianity's basic doctrine, personal salvation by means of faith instead of by the Jewish means (which is via obeying God's commandments), had been stated anywhere. It occurred in the year 49 or 50. That's the occasion when Christianity actually started: the doctrinal break away from Judaism, the creation of Paul's gospel of Christ. Paul was virtually forced into it, by circumstances, or else he would fail in life; his entire prior 10 years as the sect's best salesman would have gone down the drain, if he had required his men to go under the knife. In *Philippians* 3:1-2, he warned his men, "As I've said before, I am concerned about your safety," because "those evil people, those dogs, who insist upon cutting the body," are wrong, and (*Philippians* 3:8) the entire covenant is "garbage" (or "dung"), which the Messiah's death has made superfluous. Judaism was here trashed.

Paul knew that discarding circumcision meant discarding the covenant to which it signed. (A contract doesn't exist *unless* it's accepted; and, according to *Genesis* 17:10-14, God's contract wasn't accepted unless it was signed *via* circumcision.) But Paul couldn't afford to tell his men that he was rejecting the covenant on account of rejecting the circumcision requirement – and that he wasn't *really*, as Paul claimed, rejecting the circumcision law on account of rejecting the covenant. Paul understood that, if he were to say to his men, "I reject the covenant because I reject the circumcision law," then his phenomenally successful sales career would end. He would be confessing his own fraud. His followers would reject his fraud, and he'd soon have no followers. An honest statement of his concerns here would have transformed him from a success to a failure in his own eyes, because of this loss of his followers. He would have told them, in effect: For you to be a member of the Jesus (or, indeed, of *any*) sect of Judaism, you must *first* become circumcised, because no uncircumcised man is one of God's people; no uncircumcised

man is a Jew *at all*. They would have left not only Judaism but also his congregations, in order to avoid the terror and danger of an operation. So, Paul never told them this.

Galatians 2:11-21 presents an embarrassed and nervous Paul recounting to the Galatians the event that had actually started Christianity (as noted, he couldn't afford to admit to them that the occasion *was* its start); and, in this account, Peter simply lacked the stomach to inform Paul of the bad news from James. Peter instead sat down to dinner at Paul's headquarters, with Paul's uncircumcised followers. Then, James's backup team suddenly arrived, and saw that Peter was dining with Paul's uncircumcised men, not telling Paul that they needed to become circumcised before they could be authentic followers of Jesus. Peter backed away from the table and seconded James's demand. This precipitated the blow-up, which caused Paul to assert 2:16-21 – Christianity.

Paul, in *Galatians*, didn't mention that James had changed his mind and had decided that *Genesis 17:14* needed to be imposed after all in order for Paul's men to continue being members of the Jesus sect of Jews. Paul simply couldn't bring himself to admit this, because if his Galatian readers were to be *informed* that the sect's leader, James, now demanded circumcision, then those Galatians would be made conscious that by their staying in Paul's congregations they'd no longer *be* members of the Jesus sect, and they'd then abandon *both* James and Paul. They'd abandon the Jesus sect on account of refusing to go under the knife in an era without anesthesia, antibiotics, and antiseptics; and they'd abandon Paul's congregations because they'd know that Paul's congregations were in violation of Jesus, and weren't even Jewish *at all*; they'd learn that this was really just a hoax. (The case presented in this work will be that Paul perpetrated not just an "error" but a hoax when he created Christianity – that he was *intending* to deceive; that his deceptions here were the result of careful planning and scheming, not of mere sloppiness on his part. That will be our case.)

Paul and James were now locked in the equivalent of a bad marriage that couldn't be ended. Divorce was too painful for either to carry out. If James were to announce publicly that Paul's men were no longer his followers, then James's poverty-stricken group in Jerusalem would no longer continue to receive the financial contributions coming in from Paul's far better-off Gentile congregations throughout the rest of the Roman Empire. James's desperate followers had simply become financially too dependent upon the far larger number of Paul's followers. Thus, James remained quiet about his change-of-mind. And Paul, for his part, continued telling *his* followers to continue contributing to the group in Jerusalem, because Paul needed the at-least-tacit acceptance by James's group to continue for a long enough time for Paul's new faith to be able to go out ultimately publicly on its own, as an entirely new religion, abandoning its Jewish status. If Paul were to become *publicly* known as being no longer Jewish, then his claim to be a follower of the Messiah would be blatantly fraudulent, since no *non-Jewish* context yet existed for even the very concept of the Messiah ("Christ"). Paul walked a fine line: he had to preach a new religion, by using terms that *seemed* to his contemporaries to be consistent with an established religion, when he was actually *negating* the latter.

James's group faded away. But Paul's blossomed and thrived. One reason why Paul's group grew was that Paul was telling people that they don't need to go under the knife in order to win a eternity in heaven; just Christ-faith (as described in *Galatians 2:16-21*) will do the job. In other words, Paul said that God changed everything after Jesus's crucifixion, so that heaven was now on sale at a far lower price than in Judaism. No longer did one have to follow Jewish Law in order to go to heaven, but now mere faith in Jesus's being the Christ was sufficient.

Another reason Paul's group grew was that in *Romans 13:1-7* and elsewhere, Paul and his followers told their followers that the laws they should adhere to weren't the ones from

Judaism's God, but were instead the ones from the Roman Emperor of the time. *Romans 13:1-7* and other passages presented Rome's Emperors as, in effect, God's agents upon Earth, imposing God's will, and legislating on God's behalf, so that, as *Romans 13:5* put it, "You must obey the political authority [the Emperor] not just because, as God's agent, he'll punish you for violating the law, but also as a matter of conscience." This teaching by Paul and his followers was enormously helpful to the Emperors; it served as a huge inducement for Emperors ultimately to impose Christianity throughout their realm.

When it's understood that the four canonical Gospel accounts of Christ were written not by Jesus's followers but by Paul's, both the truths and the lies in the New Testament become fully explained, and make 100% sense. Even the NT's internal contradictions now make sense, without any exception whatsoever.⁷ Reality makes sense; only myths do not.

Paul, in his account in *Galatians 2*, had been faced with an extraordinarily painful choice: either he would carry out his instructions from James and demand that his perhaps thousands of men become circumcised, or else he and his congregations would leave the sect and go off into the future as an entirely new religion, which renounces the Jewish covenant (wherein, following God's laws is a person's pathway to an afterlife in heaven), and which replaces that by Paul's Christian "gospel of Christ" (in which Christ-faith is Paul's *new* pathway to heaven). Replacing Judaism – Jesus's own religion – would be traitorous to Jesus. But remaining Jewish would have led here to Paul's oblivion, because few of Paul's men were willing to risk their lives (via circumcision) in order to stay with him. Paul took the path to his personal success, rather than to his personal oblivion. This is what caused Paul to start an entirely new religion, which was custom-tailored by him to become the world's largest, because it placed heaven on sale, and also because it created for the Roman Emperors a new universal or "Catholic" religion to replace the old parochial and merely local Roman gods.

Already before Paul's time, the Emperors had been struggling with the inadequacies of the old religion: the Roman gods provided *no moral authority for the laws the Emperors dictated*; and these gods were also *purely local tribal Roman deities, who possessed no authority outside of Rome anyway*. Paul's solution to both of these pressing problems provided the only way to make the Emperors' subjects – not just in Rome but elsewhere, throughout the Empire – follow the Emperors' commands as if those commands came from God. (E.g.: *Romans 13:1-5*.) This solution emerged to become a powerful inducement for the Emperors ultimately to adopt Christianity.

However, in order for Paul and his followers who wrote the Gospels to win support from the Emperors, a way also had to be found to explain Jesus's crucifixion by the Roman authorities. After all, no Roman Emperor would ever endorse a religion that worshipped a man who was *acknowledged* to have been executed by one of the Emperor's *own* predecessors. Paul and his followers came up with a solution to this problem, too: They alleged that the Jews (despite having been conquered by the Romans) somehow (and they didn't say how) managed to force the supposedly reluctant Roman authorities to crucify Jesus for "blasphemy" *against Jewish Law*. This lie didn't only present in a frighteningly bad light the very thing (Jewish Law) that Paul in *Galatians 2:16*, *Romans 3:28*, and elsewhere, had said that God was now abandoning in favor of Paul's gospel, Christ-faith. More to the point here, this lie *freed the Roman Emperors from any Deicide charge, that they had killed God*. Without this lie, Paul and his people would have stood no chance at all of ultimately winning over the Emperors.

Thus, securing his support from both the mass base and the Imperial elite, Paul emerged to become the most powerful person in history, the creator of the world's largest religion, just as he hoped. Paul said, in *1 Corinthians 9:24-25*, "Run life's race so as to win the prize." For him,

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