

Introduction in the gospel of james is different



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Introduction

“ Gnosticism is mainly influenced by the comprehension of the Hellenistic religion that the spirit is good while the material world is evil” (Keller). The teachings of the Gnostics about Jesus heavily contradict what the Bible teaches about Jesus. Some of the most common texts of the Gnostic Jesus are the Apocryphal of James, The Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Truth and The Gospel of Phillip (Keller, 2010). It is not easy to describe the conception of Jesus from the Gnostic perspective because they fractioned him into various entities. According to them, Jesus was different from Christ, the savior as different and the begotten was also different as well as the logos. They also explained that there were two Christ. It was taught that Jesus was a man, just like any other and born usually by Joseph and Mary, thus disregarding the virgin birth (Samsel, 2008). Comparison of the “ Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior: and the “ Infancy Gospel of James” to the Infancy Narratives in Matthew 1: 18-2: 23 and Luke 1: 26-2: 52. Several similarities and differences exist in the three accounts of the infancy of Jesus as will be seen in the following discussion.

Mary and Joseph

Chapter 1 to 9 of the infancy gospel of James gives a detailed account of the lives of the parents of Mary, the birth of Mary and her childhood until she got espoused to Joseph in her teen years. This is not so in the Gospel as given in the Bible passages from Matthew and Luke. The history of Mary’s parents and her upbringing and how she got espoused to Joseph is not explained, we only get to know Mary at the point where the angel Gabriel appears to her, a

virgin, espoused to Joseph, and tells her that she will conceive a child by the power of the Holy Spirit (Hock; Keller). The Joseph that is spoken of in the gospel of James is different from the Bible one: He was a widower who had children already while the Bible one had not yet married, Mary was espoused to him and they had not come together, and he knew her not until she brought forth her first son, Jesus.

The Jesus in the Bible does not speak to her mother while lying in the manger (King James Bible).

The message of the angel to Mary

In both accounts, the angel of the lord comes to Mary, calls her blessed and favored among women and delivers the news of the birth of a son who shall be called Jesus and who shall deliver men of their sins. However, the gospel of James posits that Mary will conceive from the word of the lord, but the passages in Luke and Matthew are clear that that which she will conceive will be of the Holy Ghost.

Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth

The account of Mary at her cousin Elizabeth are same the gospel of Luke and Matthew and James. However, the claim by the gospel of James that Mary had forgotten the mysteries she had been told by the angel Gabriel concerning being called blessed by the generations is not so in the Bible. Mary and Joseph did not have to go through any ritual to prove their purity as is the case in the infancy gospel of James (Keller).

Jesus' birth at Bethlehem of Judea

Joseph took with him his wife Mary to Bethlehem of Judea to be taxed according to the decree of Caesar Augustus, which is also the case in the infancy gospel of James and the Arabic gospel. However, Joseph was not ashamed of Mary and did not complain about having to get a place for her to birth her baby.

Furthermore, the Bible does not say that they were in a desert as is the case in the infant gospel of James, they were in the city of Judea where they had gone to be taxed (King James Bible). The Biblical Joseph did not go to look for a Hebrew midwife to help Mary and did not put Mary in a cave as is the case in the Arabic and James' gospels. Mary gave birth to her son alone and put him in the manger because there was no space in the hotel and Joseph did not look for a midwife as the two gospels posit. In the Arabic gospel, the old Hebrew midwife asks for payment and having been affected with palsy, is asked by Mary to place her hands upon the child upon which she receives immediate healing and makes up her mind to be the servant and attendant of the child the rest of her life. Likewise, Salome, who was with the Hebrew midwife in the gospel of James receives healing by lifting the baby, for her hand that was falling away and being consumed by fire after she put her finger on Mary to confirm the virgin birth. This is not so in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew (Hock). The Arabic gospel is in agreement with the Bible concerning the baby being wrapped in swaddling clothes.

However, He, according to the gospel of Luke and Matthew, was placed in a manger and not on a stall as in the Arabic gospel (Keller). A star stood over the place where the child lay and not lights more beautiful than the gleaming

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of candles and lamps filling the cave as in the Arabic gospel, or the great light appearing in the cave that the eyes of the midwife and Joseph could not bare as in the infancy gospel of James, which also claims that the light, which had replaced the dark cloud that hovered over the cave, had withdrawn again until an infant appeared and went and took his mother, Mary's breast.

The three wise men

The commotion as a result of the astrologers in Judea as posited in the gospel of James is not the case in the Bible. The Arabic gospel, on the other hand, says that as Zeraduscht had predicted, magi came to Jerusalem from the east and brought with them the gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense, adored Jesus and presented him the gifts (Knight).

Mary took one of the swaddling bands and gave it to the magi (Hock). The Bible talks of three wise men, not astrologers, and not magi, seeking, just like James' astrologers, and the Arabic magi, where Jesus had been born after seeing his star. Herod inquired, in the Bible, about the time the star would appear and not what sign they saw about the messiah (Keller). The star the wise men had seen led them to where the baby was, but this was not the cave, mentioned in James' and Arabic infancy gospels. James says the men were warned by the angel to depart to Judaea.

In the bible, God himself warned them through a dream not to return to Herod, but return to their country, and not Judea, as in James' gospel. The Arabian gospel posits that an angel, in the form of a star appeared to the magi and led them until they reached their country. The wise men in the

Bible went to their country using another route, but were not led by the star that had led them as they came to see the baby Jesus (King James Bible).

Herod's command to kill children under age 2

Joseph, in the Bible, being warned of Herod killing children under age 2, and being instructed on what to do by an angel in a dream took Mary and the child and went to Egypt by night.

On the other hand, it is posited by the Arabian gospel that Joseph took Mary and the child and set out to Egypt towards cockcrow. The infant Gospel of James is different and posits that Mary, hearing about the destruction of children, wrapped the child and put him in a stall of cows, while Elizabeth was guided through the mountain with her child, John, guided by the angel of the Lord, and Herod not finding John, ordered that his father Zachariah be murdered, and in his place, Simeon appointed (Keller). This is not so in the Bible.

Simeon and the baby Jesus

In all the three accounts, it had been revealed to Simeon by the Holy Ghost that he would not die before seeing the Messiah, but not in the flesh, as is the case in the gospel of James.

“ Simeon is, in the Arabic infancy gospel, said to have seen the child Jesus shining as a pillar of light his mother was carried him and rejoicing over him with the angels too were praising him as they stood around him in a circle as life guards standing by a king” (Wesley Center for Applied Theology) . In the Bible, Simeon, led into the temple by the spirit of God, took up Jesus in his hands and blessed God. He did not speak to baby Jesus and the Holy Spirit, <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-in-the-gospel-of-james-is-different/>

and Jesus is not the one who revealed to him about his seeing the messiah before dying. The angels, stated as standing around them, are no existent in the Bible. Hanna, a prophetess also present in the temple came up, thanked God and referred to Mary as blessed (Keller).

In the Bible, she is named Anna and she thanked God and spoke of him to all that required liberation in Jerusalem.

The shepherds and the baby Jesus

The shepherds in the Arabic gospel are said to have lighted a fire were greatly rejoicing when a heavenly host appeared to them celebrating and praising God and the shepherds were doing the same at which time the cave was made like the a temple of the upper world since both earthly and heavenly hosts glorified and magnified God at the birth of Jesus (Keller). This is different from the Biblical account in which the angel of the Lord came to the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night and the glory of the Lord shone around them and scared them (King James Bible). The angel delivered the news of the savior's birth to them and the sign of the baby enclosed in swaddling clothes in a manger.

The angel was all of a sudden joined by a large number of heavenly hosts praising God. After the departure of the angels, the shepherds went to see the baby and told the news to all abroad.

Circumcision of Jesus

Circumcision is on the 8th day is in both the Biblical and Arabic gospels (Keller; King James Bible).

In the Bible, the baby was named Jesus, as had been prophesied. However the Arabic gospel posits that Jesus was circumcised in the cave and the old Hebrew woman took the foreskin while some say she took the navel string which she laid in a jar and instructed her son, a dealer in ointments, not to sell the jar (Keller). This jar is believed to be the one Mary the sinner used to pour expensive oil on the feet of Jesus. “ It is claimed that after 10 days, the baby was taken to Jerusalem and on the 14th day, after his birth, was taken to the temple, put before the Lord and sacrifices offered to him as per the Law of Moses which according to which every firstborn male was to be the lord’s holy” (Wesley Center for Applied Theology).

Jesus at 12

At 12years, Jesus was taken to Jerusalem for the feast and at its conclusion, they went back but Jesus remained in the temple with the teachers, elders and educated men of Israel who wondered at his understanding and knowledge.

His parents came to seek him after three days and he told them he was after his father’s business. This is true in both the Arabic and Biblical accounts.

The two thieves

It is said, in the Arabic gospel, that Mary and Joseph met two thieves and one of them showed them kindness.

The Arabic gospel posits that baby Jesus told Mary his mother that when he, Jesus, will reach 30 years, the Jews will crucify him at Jerusalem and the two robbers, whom they were with, Titus and Dumachus, will be hang on the cross alongside him, Titus to his right side and Dumachus to his left side and

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that Titus shall be in paradise on that day before him, Jesus gets there (Keller; Hock). While it is true in the Bible that Jesus was crucified alongside two thieves and one went to paradise after asking Jesus to have mercy on him, it is not true that Jesus told his mother about this and the names of the thieves are not given in the bible as is so in the Arabian gospel.

The Arabic gospel and miracles

The Arabic gospel of the infancy of the Savior is entirely about the miracles of Jesus Christ, who is referred to as the Lord and Master and Savior Jesus Christ. An account of the miracles of all sorts of the child wherever he and his parents passed is recorded. Among the many miracles he performed include: demons left a possessed boy after he put upon his head the washed clothes of Jesus, idols were broken at the presence of Jesus in the surrounding, robbers ran and left all their plunder and captives at the approaching of Jesus carried by his parents, Satan left those he had possessed just by Mary looking at her and pitying her or by those possessed holding the baby Jesus, a dumb bride spoke by holding the baby Jesus, various illnesses like leprosy were healed by pouring on the sick individuals the water used to wash Jesus and life was also restored in the same manner, impotence was loosed by Jesus and his parents spending the night in the victim's house, a city of idols was turned to sand hills as they came near it, in Bethlehem, Mary instructed a woman to sprinkle water she had washed Jesus in on her ill son and his eyes were healed, a child healed by Mary's child could not be burnt in a hot oven or drowned in the well after his step mother did this to him, a dying boy arose after being laid in the bed Jesus

was lying in and covered by Jesus' clothes. It is claimed that this child is the Bartholomew in the gospel.

Jesus, at 7 years, playing with other boys, modeling, is said to have made his models walk, fly, eat and do everything he ordered. These miracles are not in line with what Jesus in the bible did, especially the manner in which they are done (Hock).

Additional personal reflections

The gospel of James puts a lot of emphasis on the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus and gives a lot of details. The Arabic stresses on the miracles experienced by people who came in contact with Jesus while the Bible accounts of Luke and Matthew are centered on Jesus himself, his birth, the prophecies being fulfilled and his kingship. It is my opinion that we be faithful to the picture of Jesus presented in the biblical narratives about narratives. This is because they are consistent with earlier prophecies given and thus the Biblical account can be relied on. The biblical gospels were written earlier than the Gnostic ones hence can be relied upon as authoritative.

The biblical ones were written in the 1st century by the apostles and their close associates while the earliest the Gnostic ones were written was in the second century. The details of Jesus as depicted by the Gnostic accounts are different. They are not consistent and are not coherent in terms of the life and ministry of Jesus. Gnosticism hides a lot of knowledge concerning salvation since they present a variety of views on Jesus. The bible, however, gives a coherent view. Most of the Gnostic accounts are combined material from the bible and from other religious traditions which may not be reliable

historically as compared to the bible (Small) thus the importance for us to stick to that. Gnosticism is described as the perverted Christianity due to speculation and learning.

Gnosticism changed Christianity into a philosophy. It is a mystic religion and mystifies Jesus thus the need to stick to the Biblical account of Jesus.

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