

Paul clearly spoke only of a spiritual Christ, not a human one.

It is well recognized by all but the most fanatical fundamentalist bible scholars that Paul, writing between approximately 54 C. E. and 65 C.E., was not a “witness to Jesus.” By his own admission, he saw Jesus “in a vision” while on the road to Damascus. This Jesus was a purely mythical, “spiritual Christ,” not in any sense a human being Christ. Paul “received” this Jesus through a kind of divine revelation. I believe that Doherty explains this sort of “Jesus” best when he says that the message Paul received, “Šwas about a heavenly Son of God who was both an intermediary between God and the world, and a Savior figure. He was variously called Jesus, or Yeshua (meaning ‘Yahweh Saves’ in Hebrew), the Christ (Greek for the Hebrew “Mashiach,” or Messiah, meaning ‘Anointed One’), and the Son. Some looked upon this new Son of God as a Reveler who bestowed saving knowledge of God, others as one who had undergone a sacrificial death and a resurrection. [In another heavenly realm] All manner of apostles like Paul were going about preaching this divine being and often not agreeing among themselves about him; indeed, they could be at each others’ throats, as certain passages in Paul’s letters revealed. This Son and Savior was not identified with a recent human man or placed in an earthly setting, much less given a ministry of teaching and miracle-working in Galilee.

[Paul knew no details of the yet to be written, gospel ‘historical’ Jesus.] Instead, he was a heavenly deity who had done his redeeming work in the supernatural dimension.” (The Jesus Puzzle p. 5.)

This kind of thinking is very difficult for the modern mind. Remember that since every reader of this paper was born he or she has been constantly bombarded—well, except when you were in your church, synagogue, or mosque—with cause and effect, logical, scientific thinking. For the residents of Galilee two thousand years ago, however, nothing could have been more natural. The whole culture and the entire “civilized world” was saturated with this way of thinking. It was, as Doherty explains, “The view shared by a whole range of pagan salvation cults, each of which had its own savior god who had performed deeds in the mythical world. Like Paul’s Christ, savior gods such as Attis and Osiris had been killed; like Paul’s Christ, Osiris had been buried (after being dismembered); like Christ on the third day, Adonis and Dionysos had been resurrected from death. All these things were not regarded as historical; they had taken place in the world of myth and higher reality.” (Doherty, op cit. p. 16.)

In summary, all of the parts of the New Testament attributed to a probably historical Paul are of no help at all in establishing a “historical” Jesus, since they never speak of such a person.