

# SACRIFICE AND DRAMA OF THE SACRED KING

Genealogy, anthropology and history of the myth of Christ)

Interview with its author:

**ELISEO FERRER**

**A JEWISH CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT EVANGELICAL HISTORY OR CERO POINT**

*«The Messiah-Christ is an ancient and archaic myth reformulated by the sects of apocalyptic messianism and transformed by Gnosticism and the Church of the second century».*

Eliseo Ferrer



At the end of November 2021, the book “Sacrifice and Drama of the Sacred King” began to be distributed, which contains, according to specialists and according to the author himself, a particular vision of Christianity, its most immediate antecedents and its most remote origins. A vision of Christ and the birth of the Church built with a methodology that flees both from the theological visions of Catholic and Lutheran researchers, as well as from the analytical and abstract approaches commonly used by the contemporary academic world. In such a way that the theory of Christianity that this work proposes is that of a varied set of phenomena and cultural references that, in clear and constant evolution, converged in a specific cultural context: that of Hellenistic (and Hellenized) Judaism of the centuries before and after the turn of the era, and before the rabbinical Judaism of the second century.

But nobody better than its author, Eliseo Ferrer, to explain the details of the work.

**—What is it and how would you define the book «Sacrifice and drama of the Sacred Kings»?**

—In the first place, I must say that the phrase that gives the title to the work I have taken from Sir James G. Frazer (who named the ritual of the “*Sacrifice of the Sacred King*”), and I have added the term “drama” because the cult and the rites of all those minor divinities that died and rose again included, always and invariably, a cyclical and tempo-

rary dramatic representation: the ritual of the regenerating myth of the cosmos that Eliade spoke so much about, and that in Christianity, despite of its linear history, translates into the drama of the Passion of Christ. In a very brief way, I can anticipate that, throughout its eight hundred pages, I address the history and evolution of two fundamental myths, which converged, from my point of view, in the letters of Paul of Tarsus. On the one hand, I address the myth of the death and resurrection of the divine king, god or son of god or goddess, from the Neolithic cults to the mystery cults and the birth of the Catholic Church in the second half of the second century. And, on the other hand, and in a parallel way, I address the history and evolution of the savior myth of the Indo-Iranian tradition, which materialized explicitly and with features similar to the later cultural heritage, in the Mazdean Savior of the religion of Zoroaster (Saoshyant) and in Gnosticism. This myth of the Indo-Iranian tradition does not die or revive; It tells us only about the descent to earth and the ascent to heaven of the savior, the son of god. Both traditions, the Zoroastrian and the mystery, came together in a surprising way in the letters of Paul of Tarsus; and I say “surprisingly” because there are Jewish mystical texts of early Christianity (*Gnostic Gospel of Thomas*, for example) that were guided by the myth of the Zoroastrian savior of the apocalyptic literature of the time, and in which Jesus did not die or rise again.

—On the cover of your book you announce "a Jewish Christianity without evangelical history or point zero." Isn't it about something too disruptive and committed?

—Well... This is a simplification, indeed. A slogan the editor came up with. And, like any simplification, it doesn't say much about the book's content. But it didn't seem bad to me, since I think it is something like a kind of visiting card: an invitation to enter a book that is completely different from anything that has been written about Christ and Christianity to date.

—And why 'Jew'? It has always been said that the Jews were the ones who induced the murder of Jesus.

—Look, any student of the history or anthropology of religion knows that there is no revelation; or, at least, there is none in the a priori sense offered by theology. The «revelation», for science, is something that occurs a posteriori and that springs from the life of men. In this sense, I must recognize that Christianity was not born in the Portal of Bethlehem or after the imaginary death and resurrection of the Son of God. Like all spiritual and religious phenomena, Christianity was the result of a long process of interaction between man and the environment; of a long process of concatenation of different cultural contexts, and, ultimately, of the elaboration, re-elaboration, correction and amendment of innumerable texts that emerged from a previous oral tradition.

—But at some point it must have manifested itself... What were those first signs of Christ and Christianity?

—Yes, indeed, if we refer to the texts... The terms "Christ" and "Christianity" are the Jewish equivalents of "Messiah" and "Messianism". And in the pre-rabbinical Jewish context of the end of the Second Temple, the first references to a Messiah-Christ or to a messianism-Christianity of a celestial and spiritual nature can be found in certain Jewish apocrypha, in the literature of Qumran and in primitive texts of a Gnostic nature. It is enough to cite apocrypha such as the *Book of the Parables of Enoch*, *IV Esdras*, the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* or the *Psalms of Solomon* and his Christ Lord; the *Book of Melchizedek*, among the Qumran texts, or the protognostic text the *Odes of Solomon*, in which there are clear references to the cross and the Virgin also conceived by the work of the spirit. Later, the Christianity we know was reaffirmed in the letters

of Paul of Tarsus, who, halfway between the apocalyptic, protognostic Jewish mysticism and mysteries, separately inspired the gospels, the texts of Marcion and the general lines of the great masters of Gnosticism. And only very late, in the middle of the second century, did the Pauline letters and "the four gospels" reach the capital of the empire. But, returning to the essence of your question, I must emphasize that all this complexity forces any honest researcher to abandon preconceived ideas and apply historical-critical methods of a textual, holistic and dialectical nature, which always imply different levels of contextual references. I have always insisted on my aversion to analytical methods without more and devoid of historical and contextual references... So that everyone understands me: the context in which the letters of Paul of Tarsus and later the gospels were written was a context cultural Judaic of an enormously heterogeneous, complex and multiform character, in which, among many other traditions, we found the Persian influences of the Achaemenid domination of Judea, apocalyptic literature, the influences of Jewish sapiential literature, the ancient Hasidians, Pharisaism, the Qumran sectarians and, ultimately, the pre-gnostic half-Platonism cultivated by some Jews in Alexandria. There are no stereotyped formulas or clichés to explain the pre-rabbinical and pre-ecclesiastical Judaism in which the spiritual myth of the Messiah-Christ flourished. The texts and their contexts must be thoroughly studied, and the gospels must be placed at the tail end of the investigation, and not at the beginning, as is usually done.

—In effect, in that business card of your book, which appears on the jacket, you also reject the evangelical story. Why does the theory of Christianity that he proposes lack an evangelical history?

—Saying that the gospels were not written with the intention of chronicling or making history is today almost a cliché and evidence that no one can deny. But, even so, the officials of the academic world, I am not saying the theologians, the believers and the professors of the Catholic and Protestant universities, cling to the literalness of these texts with the same energy with which the Baron of Münchhausen pulled his hair so as not to fall into the swamp. In this literature (magnificently written, by the way) there is no directly or indirectly referenced history: there is symbolism, metaphor, analogy, parable, etc. There is midrash and peshet: interpretation of pre-

*Eliseo Ferrer: "The "historical Jesus" is an ideological construction of the nineteenth century created by German intellectuals and "rebounded"*



Eliseo Ferrer

*Protestant pastors who abjured theology, but could not get rid of the amiable and suggestive figure of Jesus. Today, the "historical Jesus" has become a cliché and a commonplace of "Jesusology"; but it is an empty formula and completely alien to the true transcendent meaning of the myth. An invention that feeds today an entire bookish subculture of a commercial nature and its intellectual detritus on the networks and the Internet."*

vius Jewish texts... The texts that we have received from the four canonical gospels, the result of a long process of two centuries of recomposition and manipulation of older texts, were, first and foremost, theological-gnostic texts from the first to the last line; that involved the meanings of the mystery redeemer and those of the Zoroastrian savior. And a clear example of this is the Gospel of Mark, the first in time and from which all the others copied. From the first paragraph of this gospel, what is announced is not a story in the style of Thucydides that occurred on the banks of the Jordan, but the myth of the Spirit's descent to earth, the incarnation of the Son of God and, ultimately, his death and resurrection. That is, the incarnation of the divine spirit in a human figure, Jesus-Joshua, whose only reference was found by the reader of that time in the Old Testament figure of Joshua-Jesus; who, on his way to the Promised Land, had crossed the Jordan, had also chosen twelve disciples and had piled up twelve stones as a symbol of commemoration.

**—According to the legend on the lapel, your theory of Christianity also lacks 'point zero.' What do you mean by it?**

—I said it already. I mean there was no revelation, no virgin birth, no death on the cross, no resurrection, no historically identifiable Jesus-Joshua beyond the texts. There were an infinity of symbols framed, in general terms, in an ancient Platonic tradition collected by Judeo-Christian Gnosticism, which spoke in its story of the emanations and the descent of certain divine entities (Ideas) to earth: Sophia, Jesus Christ, the Spirit, etc. And all this was the result of a long cultural and religious process that also involved previous contexts, such as those represented by the Zoroastrian religion and by the mystery cults. Evangelical literature and its literal and verbatim interpretation was a very late thing brought by the Church at the end of the second cen-

tury because the bishops never knew what to do with the complex mythology of Gnosticism.

**—Does that mean Jesus didn't really exist?"**

—Look, today there is a lot of talk about the «historical Jesus», indeed, but this within a very little historical and very theological vision or, failing that, inherited from theology. There are even people out there who, trapped in their hermeneutical circle, commit the monstrous methodological error of separating and confronting the idea of a "historical Jesus" with a "Christ of faith." This, of course, clearly entails a begging the question (*petitio principii*) and supposes a monumental methodological nonsense that disqualifies those who propose such barbarity. There is no separate "historical Jesus" and "Christ of faith"... There is a Jesus, a Christ or a Jesus Christ, whatever you want to call it, who, from an *emic* perspective, was the Son of God and the one sent to save to the human race: the divine spirit that descended, approached men (incarnated within them) and thus made them participants in the divinity. We have the first reference to the humanization of the myth very late, around the year one hundred and forty, in the Acts of the Apostles, a work of very doubtful historicity. And then Justin Martyr, right in the middle of the second century, who spoke of a "crucified teacher." Subsequently, conciliar theology conceived of Jesus Christ as "true god and man", and with this the theses of the school of Antioch (a teacher) and those of the school of Alexandria (a son of God) were jointly satisfied.

**—Conclusion... So, did Jesus exist or did he not exist? What is his position?**

—Jesus existed and exists in theology as the Son of God, who, from an *emic* perspective, descends like the divine spirit into the Jordan to save men. Yeoshúa (Jesus-Joshua) existed as a mythical construction of Hellenized Jewish mysticism, which, after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem,

used literary materials from alluvium to write and rewrite the texts of the Gospels. What she can be sure of is that the "historical Jesus" as currently conceived (a seditious anti-Roman) is an ignorant fabrication. In the same way that "the Jesuit community" did not exist: the *urgemeinde*, as conceived by the Lutheran churches. Although it would be long and difficult to go into details in this area, believe me when I tell you that there is not a single piece of evidence to support such a proposition of a "historical Jesus", a "Jesuan community" or a primitive Christianity in a state of purity. The "historical Jesus" is a nineteenth-century ideological construct created by German intellectuals and "rebound" Protestant ministers who abjured theology but could not rid themselves of the lovable and suggestive figure of Jesus. And a good example of this is the erroneous interpretations of classical Marxism about Jesus and Christianity. Even so, today, the phrase "historical Jesus" and its erroneous meaning have become universal; it has become a topic and a commonplace of "Jesusology." But it is an empty formula and completely foreign to the true transcendent meaning of the myth of Jesus Christ. An invention, in short, that today feeds an entire bookish subculture of a commercial nature and its intellectual detritus on networks and the Internet.

**—Could you summarize, then, who or what was Jesus, Christ or Jesus Christ?**

—Jesus was and is, above all, an illuminating myth, a posthumous son of Platonism; a personalization of the idea of salvation in the face of irremediable death: the Offspring of Good, the Son of the Most High, the Logos mediator between earth and heaven... Understand me, Jesus is an intellectual product of the Platonic tradition reformulated by the Jew Philo of Alexandria, by the letters of Paul of Tarsus, by the Gnosticism of Alexandria, by the Gospel of John and by the Hellenized Judaism of Jerusalem and the Syrian diaspora. Hence, Nietzsche could define Christianity as "a Platonism for the people."

**—Can we therefore consider Christianity as a variant of the Platonism of the time? How would you define, in a few words, the creative religion of Western civilization and in which, in one way or another, we all participate?**

—To a certain extent, as I say, primitive Christianity was a product of Platonism, because that was Proto-Gnosticism and Christian Gnosticism, from which,

like it or not, the (Catholic) Church sprang up in the second half of the second century. And in very few words, as you suggest, I would dare to define the essence of Christianity as the interpretation that the Platonizing Jewish mysticism (protognosticism) made of the heavenly Messiah (Christ) through the Savior of the Zoroastrian religion and the Redeemer of the mystery cults. This seems excessive and very daring, I know... But we must not forget that Jesus-Joshua-Yehoshua was also, according to the primitive Gnostic texts, the prototype of the Zoroastrian savior contained in the apocalyptic literature of the time. That is to say, he was the savior who judged the living and the dead on the day of final judgment, or who, in his most evolved form (gnosis), descended into the world as an illuminator to show the divine nature of men; that this is what the idea of the incarnation of the Son of God refers to: the interior Christ of Gnosticism. And in addition to all this, Jesus also represents, according to the letters of Paul of Tarsus, the functions and values of the mystery redeemer (death-resurrection), in tune with the previous meanings of the apocalyptic judge and the primitive Gnostic savior. In Paul of Tarsus, the resulting figure of these different traditions (the cosmic Christ) died and was resurrected in the timeless realms of metaphysics, in the same way that the deities of the mystery religions died and were resurrected.

**—Well... You are not a believer.**

—I'm not a believer, actually. I'm an atheist, in my own way. And I don't know if with this suggestion he intends to ask me what I am doing here, or how I got into all this.

**—To a certain extent, yes; that's how it is.**

—Well, look, I think this is an inexhaustible and exciting field of research, which in the twenty-first century is completely unexplored, still dominated by theology and by the most varied ideologies (confessional and atheist) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I simply try to be honest with myself and with my readers, to which end I apply my methods (anthropological, historical-critical and textual) with the same *etic* attitude with which geologists study the strata of the earth's crust or entomologists study to insects. □



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