

A text dump on David Skrbina

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Skrbina's Anti-Semitism

Quote #1

[Jewish World Government Conspiracy]

Adam: OK, this is what I wanted to get into. The little bit of a topic that I wanted to cover. This is a book that I read the secret doctrine of the giona Villena. He's one of the most famous Kabbalah rabbis in Judaism from the 1700s, and it says here how couture this is their messianic. Agenda the messianic role of science and technology. This requires everyone, especially rabbis and tourist scholars, to familiarize themselves with the new sciences in order to understand the Kabbalah and the secrets of the Talmudic agada. And then it says torus blueprint for the redemption process. They cite the Zohar, in the 600th year of the six Millennium, which is 1840 CE, that's about the time of the Industrial Revolution, the gates of wisdom above Kabbalah, together with the wellsprings of wisdom below, science will be opened up and the world will prepare to usher in the 7th Millennium, which is coming in like 200 years according to the. This is symbolized by a man who begins preparation for ushering in the Sabbath on the afternoon of the 6th day, and they also believe before the Messianic Age. This is the birth pangs of the Moshiach, so we're going to see more painful contractions, chaos, intensifying wars, famines. Dangerous technology plagues all types of that, that kind of. Stuff and then a couple more excerpts. The doctrine that science and technology play a prophetic and mystical role alongside the ancient mystical teachings of Judaism, and that this synthesis depends upon the Jewish nation being recentered in a rebuilt Jerusalem. Again, he wrote this in 1700s. They accomplished that right, and now Israel is a rising. Tech power in the world this is their Kabbalah agenda. Who's going to call me a conspiracy theorist? I'm reading right from the top rabbi, it says. Sanctification of God's name in the eyes of the nations of the Goyum via the unification of scientific wisdom, together with the esoteric wisdom of Israel I played, I played a clip before that all of these, like astrophysicists and scientist, are like, oh, the Kabbalah predicted. String theory and black holes and The Big Bang they're trying to credit cabal. They're like, it's amazing that it knew all of these things highly. And sanctification of God's name is also through military victories of Israel during the final battles

of Gog and Magog, which they believe is end times, wars between Islam and Christianity, and even Russia and the West. They believe one more the teachings of. OK, the teachings of the Kabbalah themselves are the very source of Israel's ascendancy and the means through which Israel can achieve the most elevated status. This is the intention of the verse to grant you ascendancy beyond all the nations. The gentiles. This is the best part. OK, the Gentiles would be able to understand the wisdom of our Torah from its simple literal meaning alone, but not the secret, esoteric meanings. They already do this themselves by simply studying the written Bible. And then it says if on the other hand, the verse is referring to the wisdom of the Torah that is hidden in the depths of its cabalistic mysteries, behold, they will never fully know or comprehend this, their esoteric mystical secrets. And then it says she is your. Wisdom. OK, hold. On the question is therefore how and under what circumstances will the Gentiles recognize this wisdom of Israel as stated in the verse? She is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations. Now the best part right here. First, the Gentiles will recognize Israel's superior wisdom in the natural sciences. Then they will realize that this wisdom is derived from the esoteric secrets of the wisdom of the Torah. Only then will this verse be fulfilled. She is your wisdom, your understanding in the eyes of. The nations and this will grant you ascendancy above all the nations he has made for praise, fame and glory. And again the verse, the Zohar, the 600th year Kabbalah and science will usher in and prepare the world for the 7th Millennium. What are your thoughts on that?

David: Well, that's really interesting. I didn't know anything about the book until you just showed it. So it it's a yeah really that's kind of a fascinating statement from the 1700s. I guess is that what you said? So that's yeah, it's kind of a remarkable statement. Considering the relatively primitive state of science at that time, it was early in the process that would have been the early phases of the industrial revolution. I don't know where. That rabbi lived when he wrote. That, but you know, obviously. He could see these things coming and he could see that that was kind of a source of wealth and power. So he wanted to get on the right side of that one for sure. And that was probably a good call. At his part. I guess, but it also makes me think of the present day, right. So I'm thinking about. Even sort of the Jewish role in in the US, in the high tech industry. So I don't know, Adam, if you've considered that or looked at looked at that, but it's really kind of impressive, right, who's in, who's on top of these technological institutions. I made a little just a little short. List the ones. That came to mind. You got Mark Zuckerberg. At Facebook you got Larry Page and Sergey. Brin at Google. You've got Larry. Ellison and Safra Katz

at Oracle. You got Michael Dell at Dell computer. You got Susan Roode Sickie at YouTube and you got Adam Mosseri at Instagram.

Adam: Sam Altman is Open AI also.

David: And now you... exactly now you've got Sam Altman, who shows up with. This open AI, he's. Big in this a I think it's coming along. So it's really kind of impressive, right? What these guys are doing, they're really in these leading positions on several major aspects of the technological system. So maybe they're taking your Kabbalah claims there to heart and they're really viewing this as some kind of messianic mission on their part to run these things for a minute...

Adam: To heal the world, that's their goal, right? They wanna supposedly heal the world is what they claim. Also, a lot of the top, the top vaccine makers as well. And it's not my opinion.

David: Exactly because for the CDC you could go through right, the, the vaccine makers.

Adam: You can go to Jerusalem Post.

David: Yeah, exactly. We could add those guys to the list as well.

[Click here for the source of the quote.](#)

Quote #2

Paul, Liar Supreme

Recall my explanation above, regarding how Paul and the Gospel writers had two sets of enemies: the Romans and their fellow elite Jews. In fact, they had a third enemy: the truth. Paul and crew knew they were lying to the masses, but they didn't care. The Gentiles were always treated by the Jews with contempt, as I showed in chapter four. They could be manipulated, harassed, assaulted, beaten, even killed, if it served Jewish ends. This was not a problem for them. But what they did have to worry about were any dedicated and persistent truth-seekers in the world, who might take the trouble to expose their hoax. The cabal therefore had to oppose any intellectual methodology that might lead to the truth: empiricism, rationality, logic, common sense, 'science.' All these things would henceforth become enemies of the church, allied with the Devil.

As the initiator of the hoax, Paul earns the maximum amount of credit or, if you will, blame. His 'moment at Damascus,' if that's what it was, kicked off the whole series of events. He constructed a simple and elemental lie,

based on common ideas in mythology and a kernel of actual truth, in order to manipulate the Gentile masses for the benefit of the Jews. It was, quite frankly, a brilliant plan. But to successfully pull it off, Paul must have been a brilliant liar. He had to write down pure fiction as absolute truth. He had to lie to people's faces and pretend to believe it. He had to entice and frighten innocent and simple-minded peasants into believing his outrageous concoction. And he did it. Paul—expert liar, artful liar, master liar.

Not that this is new news. In chapter four I cited numerous ancient sources who criticized Jewish misanthropy, and certainly a willingness to lie is compatible with that complaint. Ptolemy, for example, called the Jews “unscrupulous,” “treacherous,” “bold,” and “scheming.” Unfortunately the label of ‘liar’ has dogged them for centuries. In the early 1500s Martin Luther—founder of the Lutheran church—wrote a rather infamous book titled *On the Jews and their Lies*. There he declared that “they have not acquired a perfect mastery of the art of lying; they lie so clumsily and ineptly that anyone who is just a little observant can easily detect it”¹—a statement that could well be a motto for the present work. I also note the striking irony of a man like Luther who was so opposed to Jewish lies, even as he himself fell for the greatest Jewish lie of all.

In 1798, the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant called the Jews “a nation of deceivers,” and in a later lecture he added that “the Jews...are permitted by the Talmud to practice deceit”.² In his final book, Arthur Schopenhauer made some extended observations on Judeo-Christianity. He wrote, “We see from [Tacitus and Justinus] how much the Jews were at all times and by all nations loathed and despised.” This was due in large part, he says, to the fact that the Jewish people were considered *grosse Meister im Lügen*—“great master of lies”.³ Employing his usual blunt but elegant terminology, Nietzsche said this:

In Christianity all of Judaism, a several-century-old Jewish preparatory training and technique of the most serious kind, attains its ultimate mastery as the art of lying in a holy manner. The Christian, this ultima ratio of the lie, is the Jew once more—even three times a Jew.⁴

Similar comments came from express anti-Semites. Hitler called the Jews “artful liars” and a “race of dialectical liars,” adding that “existence compels the Jew to lie, and to lie systematically”.⁵ And Joseph Goebbels, in his

¹ Luther (1955, vol 47: 253).

² Kant (1798/1978: 33) and (1997: 34), respectively.

³ Schopenhauer (1851/1974, vol 2: 357).

⁴ *Antichrist*, sec. 44.

⁵ *Mein Kampf* (vol 1): ch. 10.4, ch. 2.25, and ch. 11.12, respectively.

personal diary, wrote: “The Jew was also the first to introduce the lie into politics as a weapon. ... He can therefore be regarded not only as the carrier but even the inventor of the lie among human beings”.⁶

Finally, a remark by Voltaire seems relevant here. The Jews, he said, “are, all of them, born with a raging fanaticism in their hearts... I would not be in the least bit surprised if these people would not some day become deadly to the human race”.⁷ If a Jewish lie were to spread throughout the Earth, eventually drawing in more than 2 billion people, becoming the enemy of truth and reason, and causing the deaths of millions of human beings via inquisitions, witch burnings, crusades, and other religious atrocities—well, that could be considered a mortal threat, I think.

This, then, is my “Antagonism thesis”: Paul and his cabal⁸ deliberately lied to the masses, with no concern for their true well-being, simply to undermine Roman rule. This little group tempted innocent people with a promise of heaven, and frightened them with the threat of hell. This psychological ploy was part of a long-term plan to weaken and, in a sense, morally corrupt the masses by drawing them away from the potent and successful Greco-Roman worldview and more toward an oriental, Judaic view.

As we know, it took some time but the new Christian religion did spread, eventually permeating the Roman world. In the year 315, the emperor himself, Constantine, converted to Christianity. In 380, Emperor Theodosius declared it the official state religion. And just 15 years later, in 395, the empire fractured and the classic (western) half utterly collapsed. In the ensuing vacuum, Christianity rose to power—and in Rome itself, of all places. The victory was complete, some 350 years after Paul’s grand vision came to him in a flash, “brighter than the sun.”

[Click here for the source of the quote.](#)

Quote #3

Media, Government, Hollywood

And then perhaps another question comes to mind: Why haven’t we heard anything about all this before? Surely, if the case were so compelling, one

⁶ Entry dated May 13, 1943.

⁷ In Hertzberg (1968: 301).

⁸ I’ve been using ‘cabal’ throughout the present text. It is, I think, precisely the right word. A cabal is “a small number of persons secretly united to bring about an overturn or usurpation, especially

might say, we would have seen it in movies, or heard news stories about it, or had it taught in schools. And yet nowhere—not even in our universities—do we hear this matter discussed. Why is that?

This is an enlightening question. We need to ask this: Who would have an incentive to examine the truth on this whole subject? Christians, obviously not. No one in the Christian hierarchy wants people to explore the truth, even though it's highly likely that many of them do know it. Once you have an organization in place, salaries to pay, mortgages, monthly bills, and taxes, you need the whole business to keep functioning. Christians have every reason to sustain the hoax, not get to the bottom of it.

Jews have no interest in the truth here, either. As the 'bad guys' in the hoax story, Paul and friends threaten to cast a negative light on all Jews. This is particularly true when we look at the millennia-long history of critical comments on the Jews, as discussed in chapter 4. Any unearthing of these facts would require a lot of subtle explaining, to say the least. Rather than admit to a Jewish lie, present-day Jews would rather not bring up the subject at all. Particularly so, when millions of Christian Zionists are ideologically on their side. It's simply a no-win situation for Jews, and so they let that dog lie (pun intended).

One might think that Muslims would be eager to criticize Jews and Christianity, and to expose any hoax. Yes and no. Islam, of course, is part of the Abrahamic lineage and thus is ultimately wedded to Judeo-Christianity, whether it likes it or not. Muslim monotheism derives ultimately from Judaic monotheism, just as it does for Christianity. All the Abrahamic religions worship the Jewish God; Muslims simply changed his name.

Islam furthermore accepts Jesus as a "prophet" and even grants him a kind of divine status—though they disavow his resurrection. The Quran has a number of interesting passages on him. Jesus ("Isa") performs miracles, but only with Allah's "permission" (III.49, V.110). Jews neither killed nor crucified him (IV.157), and so he did not die a martyr's death. In a particularly impressive miracle, the Quran states that the infant Jesus spoke immediately upon birth: "He said: 'Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed...'" (XIX.30-31). Muslims therefore cannot accept either a mythicist Jesus nor even a merely historical Jesus; they need a semi-divine miracle man as well.

Governments are nominally neutral on religion, especially in the United States with its famous "separation of church and state." They should, therefore, have an interest only in historical truth. When they draft school curricula for millions of public school children, it's clear that they should at

least present a mythicist alternative to traditional orthodoxy, as one line of thinking. But such information has yet to appear in any public text, to my knowledge.

But there is a deeper reason, I think, for why they avoid criticizing Christianity. Governments everywhere want compliant populations. They want citizens who will respect authority without question, follow the laws, accept its power, and not be too inquisitive. They like people who simply have faith in government, and who more or less blindly trust them. And in Christianity, rulers have found an ideology that can serve their interests. They can play up the ‘peaceable Jesus’ storyline—love thy neighbor, turn the other cheek, Jesus as “our paschal lamb” (1 Cor 5:7) or our “shepherd” (Jn 10:11), followers as “sheep,” (Mk 6:34, Jn 21:15)—while directing any militant undertones toward the “devil” of their choosing. Governments have no interest in turning over that appletart.

Colleges and universities are somewhat better, often having panels or speakers who challenge the Christian view. But the Antagonism Thesis is particularly difficult to discuss since it casts blame on Jews, and any negative talk about them risks ostracism or worse, even in our “liberal” and “free speech” universities.

What about our irreverent media and Hollywood filmmakers—those who are so willing to commit sacrilege against any social norm or moral standard? I suspect this has something to do with the extensive role played by Jewish Americans. It’s uncontroversial that Hollywood has been dominated by Jews for decades; a relatively recent article in the LA Times cites Jewish heads of nearly every major Hollywood studio.⁹ And it’s not just the movie business. All the major media conglomerates have a heavy Jewish presence in top management. If they should decide that Jewish malevolence at the heart of the Christian story “looks bad,” then they obviously won’t bring it up at all—not in the news, not on TV, not in books.(84)

... (84) For an interesting analysis of the role of Jews in the media, see Dalton (2015: 264-268).

... **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

... Dalton, T. 2015. *Debating the Holocaust* (2nd ed.). Castle Hill.

[Click here for the source of the quote.](#)

in public affairs.” That’s a perfect description of Paul and his band.

⁹ “How Jewish is Hollywood?”, by Joel Stein (Dec 19, 2008).

— **Primary Source Material** —

Know More News w/ Adam Green feat. David Skrbina PhD

Source

June 19, 2023

Adam: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to no more news. I am your host, Adam Green. It is Monday, June 19th, 2023. And we've got a great show for you guys today. The Uni bomber Ted Kaczynski died last week by suicide in prison. And I have joining me, a world expert on Ted Kaczynski. He has been on the show many times. He's been on the show recently. He is Doctor David Skrbina, PhD, philosophy professor, expert in the dangers of technology, as well as of course the Jesus hoax is usually the topic we talk. So we're doing a change of pace. He's got the book, technological slavery, the collected writings of Ted Kaczynski, AKA the Unibot. He was his pen pal for years, exchanged many letters trying to understand his philosophy about technology. It's going to be a good one. Appreciate you all for being here. Let us know any questions you have in the Super chats and Dr. Skrbina, thanks for coming back. How you doing?

David: Yeah, doing good, Adam. Thanks for having me back. Glad to talk about it.

Adam: Course well, I when I heard the news. This and you know, it's big news. He's a very divisive figure. He's I think everybody can acknowledge. He was almost like a mad genius in a way. There's a lot of people online that are almost glorifying his ideas, not what he did, but they have reverence for him. And of course I had to e-mail you immediately to get you on because you wrote the book on Ted Kaczynski, one of the books, one of the top books. So I'm happy to have you here for you to share your thoughts with everybody. You really are a wealth of wisdom. And you told me that you talked to mainstream media, reached out to you for some questions. I'm curious. What did they ask you? What did you tell them? And have they printed it yet?

David: So some good questions. I guess just first to just to quickly clarify that. There's two books by Ted himself, so technological slavery is really by Ted. It's his book, he wrote it. I wrote the introduction, so I've contributed a piece to it and there's a large chunk of that book, which is his letters. To me so about 1/4 of that book is actually responses to letters. That I sent. I mean, he's. And he lists some letters to David Scrubbing. He's got the dates. And everything so we can talk a little. Bit later about how that came to. But I just want to be clear, it's not my book. It's Ted's book. Technological slavery. Ted also wrote a second book called Anti Tech Revolution,

which is a slightly more technical piece came out five or six years ago now, which is also quite an interesting work. Tech slavery has been reissued as a volume. One, because apparently there will be a volume 2. It could be some years yet down. The road I. Don't know how that's going to play out, but I think we can look forward to a third book, basically second volume.

Adam: Is this something that he wrote in prison or before he went to prison and somebody has, like the manuscript and they're just waiting to release it? But how's that work?

David: Yeah, exactly. Well, right, he wrote. He wrote. Well, he wrote basically all of technological. Slavery and anti tech revolution in prison. He was working. I was helping at 1st and then we got him set up with a dedicated public. Sure, by the name of Fitch and Madison. So they've been working with him. They have, yes, an unpublished manuscript, basically in rough form. I don't know what. What stage it's in, but I know there's enough material there to publish the second volume, so that should be coming out in a year or two. I think it will take a while. There's still a lot of issues to resolve. There's some. Legal copyright issues and so forth that are still outstanding, but once those get resolved the book should appear.

Adam: Who gets the proceeds from these books? Do you? You know, is it his estate or something?

David: Well, that's a good question. I mean, Ted didn't explicitly said he did not want to get any proceeds because. He technically owed. I don't know what it was, \$15 million, I think, to his victims. It's a victims fund of which he's really paid nothing because he had nothing and he was sort of more or less bankrupt, had had zero cash. So any money that came into Ted's possession would immediately go to this victims fund and. Did not want to see that happen, so he's he explicitly stated in his book contract that he gets no compensation for his books. I don't get any compensation for his books, so the publishers basically running it on kind of a non profit basis. So the book is actually quite cheap and I think he's just covering his costs and. And trying to get it out there in as much volume as possible to get people thinking.

Adam: So he hadn't he even till his last days? He never had any remorse for the victims and. And who was it? That he was targeting. And why?

David: Well, right. I mean no remorse. I mean, he's really convinced to. Have a strategy the the. I mean at first it was sort of random people. Then he sort of focused later on the technology industry. His stated reason was that he had to become notorious to gain the. Power or the leverage to get the manifesto published in a high visibility. The venue, which he did in the Washington Post, so it's not like he, I mean that Rose is really part of the overall strategy. He never recommended that anybody else do this. He never suggested that people go on sending mail bombs. It was kind of a unique situation for him that he felt was necessary, which turned out to be correct. He had sufficient leverage that he could basically blackmail the federal government into publishing his full manifesto.

Adam: Doesn't that seem like? Did he try to get the his ideas out there like he could have gone on podcast? He could have wrote a book he could have. He could have reached out to professors like you. Like, why did he do such drastic measures?

David: Well, this was back in the early 90s. So there was really no functional Internet back then, so no, no podcast. Social media, nothing like that. the IT was really just traditional options at that point was publish it in a journal, maybe published as a small book. And that was maybe contribute to a conference somewhere, but you know, Ted knew and he was right that even if he got it published in some mainstream philosophy of technology journal or something would have been read by 10 or 20 people and then forgot. So his point was not to publish not just to get a credential. He didn't care about that, he. Wanted to make make an impact on society. For the better, I mean he's he's saying, look technology is crushing us and we need to do something about it so the standard options that just weren't going to work. he knew that would have no, no real effect. So he had to go. He had to. Go big and try to get the real visibility that allow him to get get his message in front of a lot of people.

Adam: And he was willing to do you think that he wanted to get caught eventually, or do you think he tried to? You know, get away with it.

David: No, I've seen nothing. Says he. He was interested in getting caught. He didn't want to stop sending the mail bombs. And that was part of the deal. With the federal. Government, if they would publish the manifesto, which they did, he would agree to. Stop sending the mail bombs. And you know. He we don't really know what would happen because it didn't play out right. He might have just faded into the woodwork. We might never have heard from him again. Don't know. Of course, it turns out that six months after he did publish it, his brother David recognized the style of writing and basically turned his brother into the FBI. And that's how he got apprehended.

Adam: Ohh interesting.

David: So we don't really know what would have happened, but there was a deal that there would be no more bombings if they published the manifesto. And I have every reason to believe he would have held. To his words, there's no reason to think otherwise.

Adam: So how many letters and how long of a? How long was the period of time that you guys were sending letters back and forth and? How many were there?

David: Yeah, in my case there were many. Well over 150 letters I have. From him currently.

Adam: And you still have them all. You could probably sell those.

David: Ohh yeah absolutely.

Adam: He's like the most infamous serial killer ever in a or in modern American history. Maybe those could be worth a lot of money.

David: I suppose it's kind of. Like a neat collector set, I don't. I mean, I'm not gonna sell it. Maybe somebody down the road and my family does, I don't know. But I mean, I would like to publish them because they are really very interesting. There's

just a whole series of correspondences which which would make a really interesting book, and I hope to pursue that at some point. But let us go back to like 2003. This is when I was. Early in my. Teaching career I was building on material. To teach a philosophy of technology. Class I was going to include the manifesto. But I had some questions. It had been several years since you've been in prison. The media said nothing about him whatsoever, so I basically took it on my own initiative to write directly to him in the prison. I have never done that before, didn't know how it was going to work, didn't expect an answer actually, but about 3 or 4 weeks later he gave me a nice long handwritten. Reply to all. My questions and that. Kicked off a long series over several years, that man went on for. 88 or 9 or 10 years I think till the last letter where we exchanged exchange letters back and forth. So it was really. An interesting dialogue for sure.

Adam: 1010 years. Wow. That's amazing. Do you know it? Was there anybody else that? Had, like a pen pal relationship with him that you know of.

David: Well, yeah, he corresponded with a lot of people. I know, certainly early on he mentioned that there's really nobody of substance he could really talk serious issues with he. I think he felt like I was maybe one of. The few or. Maybe the only that was willing to talk seriously about the problems of technology. Other people had silly questions. About you know his upbringing, or his mother, or you. You know what he thought about his brother? And I mean just. You know. The stuff that he thought was trivial or stupid, he wanted to talk about technology, so. I think there were very few people over over the long term that he felt were able to really press hard into the issues, and I I'm sure I was one of the. Few who could do that?

Adam: And you your. Correspondence focus like only on like his technology ideas, right? Not the crimes, not his upbringing. Not anything like that.

David: No, absolutely, that was that was made clear from day one. I said I said, I'm sure you. Have an interesting life story. And you know, I'm sure you have issues with your family. But I don't wanna hear about that. I just wanna talk about technology and that's exactly what he wanted to do. So that was the perfect perfect lead in and that's pretty much all we did. I mean there were other issues that came up, of course we talked about items in the news. We talked a lot about. When we were trying to get the book published early on, it was there was a lot of just technical details bureaucratic stuff and who to contact and how, how to work contracts. And so forth. So there's a lot of practical stuff, but basically it was technology or his work or getting his stuff published.

Adam: Got it, and I'm curious because there's lots of theories about him. Like, I guess this part isn't even a theory. It says that he was. In the he was, so he. Was a genius, right?

David: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I. I don't know 100 and. Was 155 or 160 IQ really, really high? Yeah.

Adam: And he went to Harvard and was involved with like, MK Ultra Experiments says here, psychological torment and humiliation. Do you think this? I mean, it's almost obvious that this led him to do the things that he did.

David: Yeah, actually I think not really. I mean right, I mean part of the well, OK, so part of The thing is he went to Harvard at age 16, so he was precocious. Obviously, probably, maybe emotionally not really prepared. It's really intellectually he was ready for it and I don't know how he got into this little study, but. It was really far less nefarious than I think people are making out there. There was. There were studies that that there were common at the time. As far as I know, funded by the US military establishment that they wanted to put. People, students under stress under psychological duress and kind of test them and see how they would respond to things. And I've seen a transcript of 1 where Ted was interacting with one of these. Questioners and they would basically get the student to tell him about his personal views about something I'd I don't forget what the topic was and then then the guy starts attacking him like, well, that's a stupid view, you know and you know, you must be an idiot. You know why do you think that? You know, you don't know what you're talking about. I mean, just just to deliberately being, you know. Abusive to try to back the student into a wall and see how they respond. Do they respond emotionally? Do they give into local arguments? Do they just sort of shut down? Do they start crying? You know, so I mean it, it was relatively mild sort of thing, probably kind of thing that you and I have put up before multiple times and we've had critics, you know confront us. So it was not. It was not like they strapped something on his head and they put him in isolation chamber and held him there for three weeks. I mean, it was. It was nothing that was so. Extreme that it would have. Wouldn't wouldn't have left any lasting mark, except maybe to increase his distrust. Of authorities. So I can imagine that has something to do with it. But in terms of like turning him to evil or some kind. Of crazy thing. I'm sure that had nothing to do with it. The reason that theory comes up is because some people out there in the world are really anxious to find an excuse why Ted did what he did. And they just cannot fathom the idea that somebody might be completely rational and say. and yet find technology would be so problematic that they would go to the extremes that he went to. So they and. they can't believe this, so they think, well, it must have been something else maybe his mother dropped him on his head when he was one or maybe he had a fever of 130 when he was little or maybe it was. MK Ultra brainwashed him or something. They make all kinds of stupid excuses. To explain away why he did what he did, rather than confronting the likely truth which is he had very strong, rational arguments, he was very committed to his cause and he took. All available action to press his points.

Adam: Yeah, that I. I'm not surprised by that, that they want to scapegoat something else to avoid the actual issues that he was. So thought were so important and it reminds me so much, like trying to take outs to take out scientists that are leading to dangerous technology. That's like the plot of Terminator. Right. They go back in

time or they try to stop the scientists that's creating. the whatever cyberdyne. Skynet technology.

David: Skynet thing. Yeah, yeah. I mean, that's an old science. Fiction plot goes back years, right? In books and movies and so forth. I mean you. Know we tend to. Laugh at it like it's kind of silly. You know these? Terminator movies or whatever, but I mean. Unfortunately, they're not actually that. Far from the truth or the possible. Truth that couldn't could be coming a lot sooner than we think. So it's interesting all the all the dangers that Ted had worried about when he wrote in the early 90s, all those still exist, and now there's a whole bunch of new additional danger. Others that he didn't really know of or wasn't aware of at the time that we can add on top of all the existing dangers and now we face literally dozens of scenarios of technological catastrophe, any of which that could be realized in. The next 1020, thirty years. So it's really a sort of a frightening situation.

Adam: So did did his warnings and his fears fall on deaf ears? And they have played out exactly like he thought he would. Has he been vindicated with his warnings?

David: Yeah, I would say absolutely. He's been vindicated. But it was kind of really interesting how the media handled all this stuff. You know when that? When he. Was on trial, which was basically. From you know, mid 90s, six to mid 97. Took about a whole year. You know that then there's lots of media coverage and they're talking about what he did in the crimes and. Horrible bosses. They show the victims and all this kind of stuff and then he's. Convicted and sent to jail. And then, boom, the media's done. We don't want to talk about him anymore. We don't want to talk about what he wrote. We don't want to talk about the problems of. See, we don't want to talk about. Any of that stuff just dropped it cold. Even when his first book came out. I mean, so I did a lot of work. I helped him being prepared. I was actually kind of one of the stimuli to get the book going in the 1st place helped him find the initial publisher, wrote the introduction Now this book is coming out you showed. The picture of it with the bomb. On the cover right this. Was in 2010. And you know, and that's. Here's the book by Ted, the first book by the most famous terrorist in U.S. He writes and publishes a book with a bomb on the cover. My name is on the cover because I wrote the introduction to the. I think it's going to be a big splash in the media. I mean, it's a famous thing. Right, a terrorist writes a whole book. It's published. It's available out there for people to buy, so I'm kind of sitting back and the same with the publisher, Feral House publisher, a small sort of a renegade publisher out in the West Coast. Adam Parfrey was the head guy there and we were sort of like saying, wow, there's going to be sort of a media storm once this thing comes out. And the book got released. Know and we heard like nothing it was. Like you could hear crickets chirping. Nothing, no stories, lack of media blackout, no stories, no reviews, no interviews, no requests, nothing.

Adam: Blackout media blackout.

David: Just nothing. So that was really impressive to me. I mean, I didn't, I didn't really know what to expect, but to see that happen was really astounding that the that

the media collectively was able to decide. We are not gonna talk about this. Nobody's gonna talk about it. I think I ended up having, like, one interview with I was the Guardian in the UK or something was a British paper. Talked to me for a little for a little bit. They did a they did a story too. There was like 1 little kind of renegade radio station out in Oregon that I talked to one time. But it was like nothing. It was ridiculous, absolutely nothing. So it's it was really astonishing how well the media can coordinate to stifle the issues that it does not want to talk about. And this was a case study in, in, in sort of media censorship.

Adam: Well, I'm not surprised because a lot of the big tech establishment is definitely funding the media and in cahoots with the media. And I think it speaks volumes, the fact that they all turned a blind eye to this. It reminds me a lot of one of your other books, the Jesus hoax, another topic that. Nobody wants to cover.

David: Yeah, it's funny how it's similar stories. I mean, you start to see patterns after a while, when when you deal with these topics, right? Similar story, maybe even similar sort of actors at the top. I wouldn't be surprised if sort of some of the same. Players were involved. You know, to kind of help stifle these discussions of things that they just don't want, they don't want discussed. Don't want to debate it? Don't want it out there. So yeah, absolutely.

Adam: It does have 1100 reviews and 4 1/2 stars. It looks looks like the. The grassroots support of it is good. I've saw lots. Of people online. Talking about how he was right, how he was a genius. Not that he was right in what he did, how how he approached it, but just his ideas were right. He also people admire him for his views on, like, leftism, liberalism, feminism issues. Like that as well.

David: Yeah, he was. Ted was anti woke before anybody was even woke. It was kind of interesting. When you go back and read now in light of how we're talking about things. Yeah, he was definitely already on board, you know 20. 25 years ago. So it's kind of interesting.

Adam: And I want to get more back to the his thoughts on the woke. I was finding some interesting quotes that were quite quite powerful. But one last question just kind of on the back story, you said you stopped. The letters in 2010. Why did they stop? And in the last 1013 years, there's been so much advances in technology, you'd think that this would be like the most. The most interesting. Letters of all in the recent years with the tech, the way it's going.

David: Right. Well, he was involved. I mean, it was. He was still communicating. He was mostly with directly with his publisher. Right. So for a long time, I was the go between and he had to work through me because he didn't really didn't have anybody else he could work with. Once we once we got this outfit, Fitch and Madison set up out in the in the Phoenix area, then Ted. Could work directly. With him. So he was working with him. On the anti tech Revolution book for example. So that one came out in that period of time that focused on sort of revolutionary processes and what it means to conduct a revolution and so forth, not so much on the specific issues there might be. I don't really even know what's in volume to there may be some more. Relevant

discussions on you know, current topics like whether it's social media or cell phones or surveillance state or you know, maybe a I don't, I don't really. Know what's in this volume 2. But that's coming along. The other thing that that sort of inhibited things in the last few years is that Ted was ill, right? So I mean, This is why he. He about two years ago, he was. Diagnosed with cancer. Offhand, I don't. Know what kind, but it was sufficiently severe that they moved him from Colorado to a medical prison medical facility in North Carolina. And he was there the whole. Last, it was almost. A couple of years, I think that since he's been there, getting treatment of various kinds. There were things that he should have been treated for, and apparently he wasn't, so we're sort of worried about the quality of the treatment that he. Was getting there. We still actually know the cause of death. It seems the cancer was serious, but it didn't seem like it was imminent. So it's a little bit of a surprise for those of us who've been. Following him that he suddenly sort of died.

Adam: Well said, he committed suicide. What do you think about that?

David: Suicide does not. Suicide does not fit the profile for Ted. He had a lot of things going on. He had things he wanted done, he was not. Through yet with his work. So it just seems highly unusual at least.

Adam: Maybe he got Epstein. This is what you're saying?

David: Well, OK, that's, I mean that doesn't seem likely either, right? Because, I mean, they had 25 years to to get to Ted. If someone decide they're gonna squelch him like they did with Epstein, they had just years and years to do it, it would have been stupid to even do that now. So. I think that's not likely. The suicide is not likely. Probably it was some medical condition that just flared up or came up relatively quickly and then was either not treated properly or maybe couldn't be treated. I don't know. Maybe maybe we'll find. Out at some point.

Adam: So could you summarize for us what his like main thesis was? About the dangers of tech.

David: Yeah, basically. And a lot of his ideas. I mean they've. Been around for a long time. They go back to predecessors, in particular this fellow Jacques. Who wrote a book called Technological the Technological Society? Which is a. Really interesting book. Quite fascinating, a little bit kind of technical, but for those who are interested, it definitely it's a must read. It was written in 1954 in French, published in English in 1964, and that was a stimulus for me personally, sort of. When I became tech critical way back in the early 80s. Was a key stimulus for Ted. I know as well. He's mentioned that in several letters, but so there we have Jack, a little technological society. Yeah, absolutely kind. Of a key. Work to be read if anybody is serious about learning about the problems of technology, but.

Adam: That was that was part of. Your curriculum too, in. The in the classes you taught, I'm sure.

David: So I took selected excerpts. It was too much for one class for the whole book, but excerpts from that book for sure, Chapter 2 is key. If somebody wants to

just kind of pinpoint read chapter two of the little book and you will get the whole story of technological determinism.

Adam: And what is that?

David: But the basic.

Adam: Yeah, go ahead. Can you explain that?

David: Right. Well, so I mean the basic story is that technology is kind of an integrated phenomenon. It's a holistic. Integrated phenomenon that functions together more or less autonomously progresses more or less according to its own laws and rules, and is more or less out of human control. Now we tend to think that because we've done, we've done the inventing and we run the run the devices that we feel like we're in control. But that's actually kind of an illusion. There's lots of good arguments that says really in any kind of real sense, we really are not in control of this process at all, that it's really kind of pressing ahead no matter what. Any one person or group of persons, or even how powerful people think the process still moves itself along Ted's Ted's main thesis was look people. People recognize that there's problems, but they think, well, look, we can always reform the system if there's a problem, we'll isolate the problem. We'll come up with a fix. We'll fix the problem and then everything will be OK. So that's basically a reform strategy. We'll find the problems, we'll we'll patch the, patch them up, and then we'll move ahead. The problem is that it really never works in the long run. That never works. That those fixes usually are superficial temporary fixes. Because sometimes the fixes introduce new problems that were not anticipated. In any case, the system can produce problems far faster than we can tackle and fix them. So the whole reform strategy is doomed to failure. This is sort of a key conclusion that Ted draws in the manifesto. So the only alternative if you don't like being crushed by technology, which is where it's heading. Is you have to undermine the whole system. You basically have to take a revolutionary strategy which says we're going to undermine the whole system. We're going to, we're going to blow. It all up in. Some sense? Try to collapse the system or try to make its collapse happen sooner and that, he said, was the only way that we can really save ourselves. On this monstrosity and there, I mean, it's a very logical argument. It's a sound argument, and there's very good points in its favour. It's just that nobody wants to really talk about it so we're stuck with just superficial reform actions, and no one wants to deal with the fundamental issues at.

Adam: It's interesting because you always hear about, like people warning that the AI is going to become sentient and, like, take over and wage war against humans. But these guys have been talking about a long time that the machines are essentially already out of our control and it's rolling down the hill and we can't really stop it at. This point.

David: I mean it's really kind of interesting. You know, I've written myself a couple. Of books one of. Them did she mention was metaphysics of technology, which was my philosophical analysis of the book, so that that one's available on Amazon, that was published in by Legend 2015. But there's another. Book which might be interesting

for your for your listeners, and that's an anthology of historical critiques. It's called so there's my. Book metaphysics of technology. I edited a second book called Confronting Technology, which is also available on Amazon. And it's a reader of historical critiques of people throughout past decades and past centuries going back to the ancient Greeks who were expressing concerns and fears about the technology of their time. It's really kind of striking when. You look at the long history. How how many prominent thinkers were really attacking the development of technology? They understood how serious it was, how dangerous it was. One of the most interesting ones was this British writer Samuel Butler, who was writing in the 1860s, and he's seeing the emergence of power machines like. Power, power. Steam shovels. And he can see that these things pose a threat not just to the guys who used to be the manual shovel diggers who they're losing their jobs. To this machine. But he could see. That the machines were more powerful. They were self driving because they had this energy source and that they were evolving rapidly such they were kind of. Like a new A. New order of. Of life on the. Planet and Butler said. You know, this is an 1860. These things are gonna destroy us. We have to declare war against the machines. We need to smash them all now before it's too late. I mean, this is really astonishing in in 1860. So. So it's really kind of a fascinating history. It goes into the early 1900s and. You got people like Nietzsche. And Whitehead and George Orwell wrote a great book called The Road to Wigan Pier. He's really attacking the machine society they lived in in the 1930s. So there's really a long, interesting history of taking extreme action. I mean, even to people like. Herbert Marcuse and the 70s, and Ivan Ilich and Lewis Mumford. They all kind of said the same thing. Look, we got to dismantle this mega machine or or it's gonna. It's gonna be like a doomsday scenario. So a lot of people understood it. It's not. It's not a unique thesis and it's not a new thesis. It's been around for a long time.

Adam: When I think off the top of my head and I and I haven't read these books, it's not a technology isn't something that I've given a lot of thought about. But like some of the dangers could be pollution, centralized control like I think of technology in in, in my lifetime, the big technology has been computers and the Internet and social media. and I see widespread disinformation and algorithm. Teams are controlling people. They're censorship, centralized control, addiction. I'm definitely addicted to my smartphone and social media, and these things, it's like rewiring our brains, making us Dumber. What are some of the other threats that I may have missed that people can like bullet points that people should be worrying about? Like what? Our future holds the way. Things are going.

David: Well, I mean, there's a. Whole right? There's different categories of disaster scenarios. I mean, you can just look at the military for one, right? So the militaries pressing ahead all kinds of advanced advanced deadly technology. So they're making killer autonomous drones that can fly around on their own and kill people. they're working on robots. Systems because they want to make robot soldiers. You know who can can who are agile, who can climb and run and you know, deliver deadly payloads and can operate autonomously. So they. Don't have to follow. They're working on self

repairing systems, which leads very quickly to self building systems. So where these machines can you know, first repair themselves on the fly if they get wounded, you know out there in nature and maybe they can build more of themselves, they can replicate. Through their own initiative, if they have materials, energy source at hand. So I mean. You know these these are like you just you can even imagine the horrendous possibilities when you're. And deliberately killing machines that that have these kind of capabilities there's there's a whole a whole host of problems dealing with, like laboratory experiments and mistakes. You know, we're working with nanoparticles, so extremely small size molecular size. Devices. Chemicals. And machines, they're making nano scale machines that can reproduce. So if you have little molecular sized machines that can make more of themselves or somehow reproduce, and if they can do that out in nature. You know the fresh air and the sunshine and water and whatever else they might need then those crazy scenarios where these things just multiply, like by the trillions and they just you. Know just by multiplying, they just swamp the planet. They could cover everything they could destroy all plant life. They could suck up all the oxygen. I mean, it's just like really these kind of nightmare scenarios that are becoming increasingly technically possible. So I mean it's got nothing to do with just extra pollution making us kind of sick and global warming, which is a technological problem at root because it's technological technological society has produced global warming. Produce climate change pandemics. The COVID pandemic was a technological crisis. Because you had probably created in the lab, certainly studied in the lab, maybe escaped from a lab, maybe was a bioweapon. All those are technological scenarios, right? The thing travel around the world and a high speed jet plane, which isn't possible without a high tech transportation system. The cure for this pandemic was a high tech. Experimental mRNA vaccine, which we all got experimented on by the millions, so it was from A-Z front to start you know COVID pandemic was a technological disaster. Now that would only killed what was it a few million people worldwide. I forgot the statistic. So that was sort of a drop in the bucket, but you know the next, the next pandemic might not be so. Nice. And it could be. You know, hundreds of 1,000,000 or. It could be billion. Yeah, you don't. We don't know but it's guaranteed to be a sort of a technological disaster. I mean, you could write a. Whole book on just the technological disaster scenarios. That that we're facing in the coming years.

Adam: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That reminds me of a bunch more. Like with technology everywhere. There's way more surveillance and spying. There's AI dragnets, data, bulk gathering. So they. Right. Kind of societal control, cultural engineering. Through technology. There's genetic editing, people playing God. There's going to be all types of repercussions for that. So the negatives outweigh the. Benefits is what you're saying.

David: Yeah even if we don't die, we get enslaved by the system. That was one of Ted's points right. It's so demeaning. And it's really functionally enslaving to people, even if there's none of these disaster scenarios. And we don't get wiped out by killer Robot. Cuts the system just becomes oppressive. There's oppressive heavy systems, surveillance, monitoring, being dictated, being manipulated. You know, all that stuff

that's like a nightmare in itself. Even if we all sort of survive, it's such an undignified and enslaved existence. You know, Ted was saying. Well, look, you'd you'd rather die than put up with that so. You know that's. Again, another whole round of disastrous futures that we potentially are facing.

Adam: And another one of my big concerns is technological control, centralized control because it's just going to be like elites, billionaires that have monopolies, right on all of the top technology. And that's going to almost make them like in a way, superhumans control. Like, almost like God's controlling everybody else.

David: Right. Well, exactly right. I mean, that's where these things came from. They were sort of control and information and database sources for the for the wealth and the powerful because they wanted more information and more power and control. the question is whether they've created a kind of Frankenstein monster that now they cannot control and it's gonna, it's gonna consume them along with everyone else. So we don't, we still don't know which way this little thing is going to go is it going to sort of stay manageable for the foreseeable future? And then it would just be the powerful elite who are using it against us or does it really spin out of their control? And then you know. Then their all. All. All you know, everything's open. And we don't know what's gonna happen so.

Adam: We got a couple super chats in. We'll get to those and then I want to talk to you about Kabbalah and technology and a certain agenda that some messianic fanatics have. No more news. Interesting spelling says I rarely catch you live. It's great. I caught David twice. Thank you both. Yes, we all appreciate David giving us so much. His time and his sharing his knowledge. Anto anti monotheism is the way, says love it. When Doctor Skrbina comes on, always bringing raw ideas and information. Can't believe the disinformation. Fake patriot. Stu Peters stole your 9/11 compilation clip and posted it without credit to in his to be fair, somebody else probably took it from him and he didn't even know he got it from me. That's been other people have reposted that. And Johnny, 5 says. Can you ask David if Bill Gates really has a robot mosquito factory somewhere in South America? And if so, could he explain why someone would do that? I think. Robot Micro what are they called? Micro drones. Genetic editing. Like that's nanobots. That's not conspiracy. That's like a they're open about that, right?

David: They're working on it. I don't know about robot mosquitoes. I know they are genetically engineering mosquitoes to try to become sterile and then to breed with the real mosquitoes, and that that cause them to be sterile and to kind of wipe out mosquitoes. At least that's the story that they're telling us, right, because that that's an easy one to sell because everybody hates mosquitoes. Right. So OK. If Bill Gates can wipe out all mosquitoes, then whether you know. Nobody cares, right? But the problem is. You know.

Adam: I hate mosquito. Those mosquitoes are proof that God. Is not real. Why would he create mosquitoes?

David: There you go. Right. It's got to be the devil but you know the same tools that allow. You to genetically. Manipulate mosquitoes don't doesn't stop there. Right now you're messing with other life forms. Other insects. Now you're doing things that. Make a profit. You know, and then you're using things cause. You think you can? You can control it. Then you release some bioengineered Organism out to nature, and some crazy thing happens. You never thought of. And you get these these bizarre sort of side effects. So yeah, God knows what? Bill Gates is working on. But even in the best scenarios, and they always paint these things in the best scenarios, these guys are ultimate humanitarians. And we're doing it for human well-being. We're doing it for your health. We're doing it. To save the. But these potent technologies are really so dangerous and have so many multiple. Uses that we can't even begin to to. To play out. The disaster scenarios that that are coming from these things.

Adam: Info Channel says Adam trying to spread the word about an insight I had posted response thread to one of your. Teets it tweets teats. It didn't get traction. Think Spike protein vaccine are a kind of spike killing ritual. Got a Paul Revere this. No, I think I think you touched on that the mRNA. Editing and how it was completely untested and they made them mandatory and released them. That's definitely a huge technological concern and I don't even think that's that. Might not even be technology, just getting out of people's hands. That could be there could be nefarious. Of course, there's going to be nefarious uses of technology they'll they'll put out the problem so that they could sell you the solution too, so there's like. Technology on both sides screwing people.

David: That's right. They they.

Adam: What do you think about that anymore about the vaccine? He said. Thank you for the 50. Thank Chris. Jade awesome.

David: Yeah, you. Well, you're. Right. I mean they produce problems and then they produce solutions and they sell you the problem and they sell you the solution. So that's kind of a nice way to do business you know. But if we're too stupid to go along with that then. It's that's on us, right. So we're trying to. Hopefully trying to get people to kind of think critically about the whole system, which is really what they will not talk about. They don't want you to think about that. They don't want you to look at. The large systemic issues because that's. A loser for them and they have. No response to these questions so. You know, reminds me of what? Poor Robert Kennedy trying to get a debate with the vaccines and no one will talk to. Him, right. I mean ohh he's.

Adam: Ohh it's makes me so angry these people.

David: We don't talk.

Adam: About this, we're not going to debate you, but we don't want to give you credibility.

David: No, we're.

Adam: There's such cowards, man. These people do you. You don't want to debate. Just call anybody that disagrees with you a conspiracy theorist and then act like you're

too good to debate them like. This is the oldest trick in the. Book man these people are such frauds.

[Jewish World Government Conspiracy]

Adam: OK, this is what I wanted to get into. The little bit of a topic that I wanted to cover. This is a book that I read the secret doctrine of the giona Villena. He's one of the most famous Kabbalah rabbis in Judaism from the 1700s, and it says here how couture this is their messianic. Agenda the messianic role of science and technology. This requires everyone, especially rabbis and tourist scholars, to familiarize themselves with the new sciences in order to understand the Kabbalah and the secrets of the Talmudic agada. And then it says torus blueprint for the redemption process. They cite the. Zohar, in the 600th year of the six Millennium, which is 1840 CE, that's about the time of the Industrial Revolution, the gates of wisdom above Kabbalah, together with the wellsprings of wisdom below, science will be opened up and the world will prepare to usher in the 7th Millennium, which is coming in like 200 years according to the. This is symbolized by a man who begins preparation for ushering in the Sabbath on the afternoon of the 6th day, and they also believe before the Messianic Age. This is the birth pangs of the Moshiach, so we're going to see more painful contractions, chaos, intensifying wars, famines. Dangerous technology plagues all types of that, that kind of. Stuff and then a couple more excerpts. The doctrine that science and technology play a prophetic and mystical role alongside the ancient mystical teachings of Judaism, and that this synthesis depends upon the Jewish nation being recentered in a rebuilt Jerusalem. Again, he wrote this in 1700s. They accomplished that right, and now Israel is a rising. Tech power in the world this is their Kabbalah agenda. Who's going to call me a conspiracy theorist? I'm reading right from the top rabbi, it says. Sanctification of God's name in the eyes of the nations of the Goyum via the unification of scientific wisdom, together with the esoteric wisdom of Israel I played, I played a clip before that all of these, like astrophysicists and scientist, are like, oh, the Kabbalah predicted. String theory and black holes and The Big Bang they're trying to credit cabal. They're like, it's amazing that it knew all of these things highly. And sanctification of God's name is also through military victories of Israel during the final battles of Gog and Magog, which they believe is end times, wars between Islam and Christianity, and even Russia and the West. They believe one more the teachings of. OK, the teachings of the Kabbalah themselves are the very source of Israel's ascendancy and the means through which Israel can achieve the most elevated status. This is the intention of the verse to grant you ascendancy beyond all the nations. The gentiles. This is the best part. OK, the Gentiles would be able to understand the wisdom of our Torah from its simple literal meaning alone, but not the secret, esoteric meanings. They already do this themselves by simply studying the written Bible. And then it says if on the other

hand, the verse is referring to the wisdom of the Torah that is hidden in the depths of its cabalistic mysteries, behold, they will never fully know or comprehend this, their esoteric mystical secrets. And then it says she is your. Wisdom. OK, hold. On the question is therefore how and under what circumstances will the Gentiles recognize this wisdom of Israel as stated in the verse? She is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations. Now the best part right here. First, the Gentiles will recognize Israel's superior wisdom in the natural sciences. Then they will realize that this wisdom is derived from the esoteric secrets of the wisdom of the Torah. Only then will this verse be fulfilled. She is your wisdom, your understanding in the eyes of. The nations and this will grant you ascendancy above all the nations he has made for praise, fame and glory. And again the verse, the Zohar, the 600th year Kabbalah and science will usher in and prepare the world for the 7th Millennium. What are your thoughts on that?

David: Well, that's really interesting. I didn't know anything about the book until you just showed it. So it it's a. Yeah. Really. That's kind of a fascinating statement from the 1700s. I guess is that. What you said? So that's yeah, it's kind of a remarkable statement. Considering the relatively primitive state of science at that time, it was early in the process that would have been the early phases of the industrial revolution. I don't know where. That rabbi lived when he wrote. That, but you know, obviously. He could see these things coming and he could see that that was kind of a source of wealth and power. So he wanted to get on the right side of that one for sure. And that was probably a good call. At his part. I guess, but it also makes me think of the present day, right. So I'm thinking about. Even sort of the Jewish role in in the US, in the high tech industry. So I don't know, Adam, if you've considered that or looked at looked at that, but it's really kind of impressive, right, who's in, who's on top of these technological institutions. I made a little just a little short. List the ones. That came to mind. You got Mark Zuckerberg. At Facebook you got Larry Page and Sergey. Brin at Google. You've got Larry. Ellison and Safra Katz at Oracle. You got Michael Dell at Dell computer. You got Susan Roode Sickie at YouTube and you got Adam Mosseri at Instagram.

Adam: Sam Altman is Open AI also.

David: And now you... exactly now you've got Sam Altman, who shows up with. This open AI, he's. Big in this a I think it's coming along. So it's really kind of impressive, right? What these guys are doing, they're really in these leading positions on several major aspects of the technological system. So maybe they're taking your Kabbalah claims there to heart and they're really viewing this as some kind of messianic mission on their part to run these things for a minute...

Adam: To heal the world, that's their goal, right? They wanna supposedly heal the world is what they claim. Also, a lot of the top, the top vaccine makers as well. And it's not my opinion.

David: Exactly because for the CDC you could go through right, the, the vaccine makers.

Adam: You can go to Jerusalem Post.

David: Yeah, exactly. We could add those guys to. The list as well.

Adam: Don't call me a conspiracy theorist, just read the headline from Jerusalem Post and actually. One of the. Top guys from. Maderna talks about how he's how how he's Talmudic. He's an Israeli. I can't remember his name, Zach something. And how the Talmud influenced him and stuff, Zuckerberg said the same thing he said. Talked about how his Judaism. Influences him to create things and connect people. And blah blah blah. But yeah, the guy owned Villa, born in 1720. Guyon just means genius. They called they believed he was a top genius in Kabbalah. And where was it? Lithuania, I think. Yeah, Lithuania is where he was. And now just news out today, Intel will build a new factory, most advanced new factory in Israel worth 25 billion. Prime Minister Netanyahu said, calling it the largest ever international investment in the country. So Intel inside now means Israel inside and the brains of the computers are coming from the center of the world. Jerusalem, right? Just like the kabbalist called for.

David: That that's a recipe for disaster right there. Right. Let these guys have the ability to control these key chip productions. So that's, I don't know who the hell is making decisions at Intel, but that's. That's ridiculous.

Adam: And here's from Habad, from Golems to AI, can humanoids be Jewish? Just interesting that they're trying to even think about stuff like that, right? There was the habad AI chat bot, habad rabbi that I took for a spin, and it was shocking. The poll levels on how it was able to obfuscate the truth about what they believe, but I still managed to get it to admit some pretty treacherous things like that. The 10 Commandments prohibits the worship. Of any other gods besides the God of Israel, this is their main goal. Is the whole world worshipping their God, the God that shows them? That's the ultimate goal. The role of the non Jews or goyim in the world to come is to fulfill the seven Noahide laws to basically acknowledge their God that shows them and serve them and not question blasphemy. Their God, their books, their sages. And one other. .0. Wait. Oh, yeah, they're over here. That I wanted to add here is. Netanyahu's tweeting out he's he has a whole thread about. Just recently June 5th like 2 weeks ago he talks about he had a long conversation with Elon Musk. And he said they talked about the opportunities and dangers of artificial intelligence. Look at what he says. Here, second Musk expressed his view that Israel could become a significant global player in the field. I am certain that this is true, and we will do it, he says. And it says Netanyahu convened a limited ministerial forum on national cyber defense and AI Netanyahu has been very clear that this is his agenda for Israel to dominate the world in. Technology, he says. Cyber is the real realm of power and they are accomplishing this largely with it, with America helping them do this. Almost using our technology using our by national agreements and stuff, he says, quote. We are currently starting to advance regulation in the area of cyber defense and we'll combine the worlds of AI, which is gaining significant moment. So I think we we, it's. Pretty clear who is. Spearheading this right, Sam Altman as well. What else do I have here? One more in the coming days, I intend to convene policy teams to discuss in national

artificial intelligence policy in both the civilian and the security spheres, just as we turned Israel into a global cyber power. We will also do so in artificial intelligence. So there you go. People that think they're chosen by God to have all the world worship their God wants to dominate in tech, and they are doing so. What do you think about that?

David: Well, obviously, that's a recipe for disaster itself, right? You've got it. You've got basically a renegade state, a criminal state. You know that suddenly has a leading role in these very potent technologies. They already have nuclear weapons, which is bad enough.

Adam: Stolen nuclear weapons. They won't sign the proliferation agreements.

David: Exactly. So you know, you can see why this goes back even like 100 years. People were saying thinkers were saying. You know, these Jews want their own state. This was back when they had the first Zionist Jews in the late 1800s and they said. How dangerous would that be to let these people have their own state? You know, they, and there's people who, if they would be, I mean, HG Wells and you know or or. Well, and Mark Twain, at least they. Were saying like. That would be like a disaster if these people got their own state because they could kind of see what would be coming and now it's being realized and these guys are going. Have you know all kinds of potent technologies at their disposal? And you know they're sort of a law unto themselves and the International Criminal state and then they gonna do whatever they whatever they want. And no one's gonna hold them accountable. So that's highly problematic that you have a state that's can exist that can do that. Kind of thing, right?

Adam: Here's a quote from absolutely, I agree. Here's from 2014 so. Just to show. That this has been the long term plan, Netanyahu says there should be a sort of UN for the Internet, a coalition of the leading companies in the cyber world, and in my opinion, Israel is the most advanced so. You don't have to speculate on what their agenda is. It's to dominate the world with technology and their prophecies also call for the destruction of Edom, which the Ultra Orthodox and Kabbalists believe is Western Civilization, Europe and America. That is necessary for them to commence in their Messianic age. So such a. Dangerous threat that everybody's scared to talk about? Everybody's scared to talk about.

David: Well, again, that could be a driving factor why they don't want to talk about the issue even now they don't want to talk about technology. Now I was going to mention you said at the beginning you asked about when I when I was contacted when Ted. Ted died here. Last week, it's interesting because the media know who I am. It was within a within one hour. Of Ted dying that I had emails. From the AP and the UPI asking for statements or interviews so you know they didn't do background research, they knew who I was. They immediately went to me and when I talked to them, they were just fishing for, like secret information. Like I had some inside info. That I was going to going to impart. To them and I didn't really have anything to offer. But I said, well, let's talk about the problem of technology, because that's really the issue. That's what drove Ted to do what he did and that's what threatens. Threatens

us all. And he's like. No, no, no, we don't. Talk about that. Ohh no, no, no. We don't want to talk. About that in any way. So you know, as soon as I brought that up and said that's what we kind of need to talk about. No, they shut things. Down and that was it. So it's it's really striking what they want to talk about, what they don't want to talk about, what threatens their larger goals and that's plays right into. What? What? What we were. Just saying.

Adam: It's amazing they've ignored you all these years. When the book came out, did they never do any mainstream media as usually they go in this is this is good content. This gets good ratings. This gets lots of viewers when you go in and interview famous prisoners in jail they never wanted to go do that and in here. Him a microphone to share his concerns, huh?

David: No, I mean, it would have been a natural selling selling point and big story and ratings and all that. You know, there was, there was some things that had gone in in recent years where they. Were starting to. You know, starting to talk a little bit about Ted, probably the biggest thing that I was involved in was the Netflix series Unabomber. In his own words. And that came out a couple of years ago. I was interviewed, they they paid to have me drive up to Toronto, and I did about two hours of interview in a in an old warehouse and a full blown film studio that they had there.

Adam: I gotta watch that you.

David: and yeah, so.

Adam: You're in a Netflix documentary, huh?

David: So I'm in. I'm in Netflix. I mean, it's a it's a four part episode and I'm in parts 3:00 and 4:00. There's not a lot there I. Mean it's only a few minutes in total, but I'm in it and it was.

Adam: Did they represent? You fairly in that.

David: What's that?

Adam: Did they represent you fairly or did they do any like deceptive editing or anything sneaky?

David: No, I mean what they included was what I had said and they didn't really miss. Yeah, there it is right there. They didn't mess misrepresent it, but the point was I gave them so much interesting information. We talked for two hours on camera and we were talking about Ted's background and the and the problems of technology and where we're heading and all these dangers. And all the stuff that we've that we've been talking about in this show. You know the philosophical dangers the philosophical kind of analysis of what's going on, a lot of good stuff. And they cut it down to just a few minutes of just the sort of the. Most benign stuff that, that, that, that I said, I mean, it wasn't misrepresenting, but they left out enough material. They could have made you know, two more episodes with just the material that they had. For me, that was there and they didn't use it, didn't want to talk about it, didn't really want to talk about the technology. We'll just sort of mentioned in passing I squeaked in a couple of comments that ended up in the in the final. Netflix show. But I mean just just really

amazing. They had all this good material and they just weren't going to use it and it wasn't going to show. Up in in that story period.

Adam: So who did you say AP? and somebody else they contacted you right away when the news broke that he was dead, so they knew who.

David: The New York Times, the New York Times and the and the AP.

Adam: You were New York.

David: Within an hour, I had emails. Yeah, the practically, as soon as I knew about it, they knew about it. They contacted me so. So they knew. Who to get to? And you know, again, if they were interested in the actual the substance, and I threw it out to both of them, I said, well, let's talk about the situation with technology. Let's talk about the contest. Let's talk about these risks. You know, AI is a hot topic now. It's a perfect contest. Let's let's talk about that and the threats and then we'll put that in light of Ted's thesis. And we'll and we'll we'll do that. We'll debate it. If you want somebody on this side to get them on there and. I'll debate them. I'm happy to do that. No, don't want to talk about it. Don't want to debate it, you know? Thanks, but no thanks. And that. That was where they left it.

Adam: I have a I kind of get the. Feeling that their angle on covering Ted is to make people that are concerned about the dangers of tech look like insane murderers. Is that kind of the way? That they cover it.

David: Yeah, of course. Right. they don't want to give any credence. To the anti. Tech view they they'll, they'll call you Luddite, right? Some kind of crazy old. Name or, though, or they'll sort of paint you as. A conspiracy theorist. Or someone who's just. A crank or just doesn't really know what. You're talking about.

Adam: They'll say you're paranoid or something.

David: Yeah, right. Whatever right. Exactly so. So again, you know and. And I have seen this kind of in in other related topics. This is typical tactics they will use when they want to slander critics of views that they, they don't wanna talk about and they'll just do polemics against you and use straw man arguments and. All this typical. Stuff that they use over and over, and then they'll just sense you when they can't come up with anything else and. that's how they deal with all. These issues, you know I. I was pissed off the New York Times. I mean, I almost said to their face. I mean, like, you wonder why you guys have a credibility problem. Well, nobody believes you. Well, you don't even get to the real issues, cause you won't even talk about the real fricking issues that are here. And here's a perfect time to do it right. Ted's gone for years. Their excuse was well, we don't want to give him satisfaction. You know, and he's a terrorist and we don't wanna give him a platform for his work. Right. But he's gone. He he's gone. So now we. Can talk about it. No, not if they still don't. Want to talk about it? So it's really. Really kind of eye opening. How, how, how worthless these media institutions. Are that they won't even they won't. Even raise the issues in. In any shape or form.

Adam: And New York Times and the AP, they didn't. They didn't publish any of your quotes from the interview at all. They didn't. Want to use any of it, huh?

David: I've been looking. I've been looking for scrubbing and Univar looking for some quotes. I've yet to find something I don't. Maybe something showed up in the last day or so, but I checked for the first few days I did. I did not find anything. I think you know. I think they find out pretty quickly that Sabina doesn't give them the kind of story that they want and I'm not sure they really want to route people to scrubbing. Because they're not gonna get the kind of views that they want to hear about. So probably better, just actually not talk about him at all. I think they're figuring that one. Out so.

Adam: I agree, I agree, and that leads me to the next question. Is there like a kind of approved favorite spokesperson, other expert out there that that focuses on? On Ted that the media does like the media darling that they do like to always cite and promote.

David: No, that's their problem is they're hurting for somebody who can sort of be the other side of this thing, right? So there's a couple of anti tech critics, you know in the Netflix thing they talked to this guy, John Zerzan, who's? Kind of a kind. Of a goofball anti tech philosopher, sort of a guy who doesn't really write any coherent works, and he's out on the West Coast. They talked to him and he had some sort of semi positive things.

Adam: Hey. Hey.

David: To say about.

Adam: I'm sensing some anti West Coast sentiments here. OK, I take offense to that.

David: I don't. Maybe. That's just a coincidence. I don't wanna bash everybody in. The West. Coast but the. You know, the point was that these these film makers, these and these, these guys who do the stories. They can't find anybody, I mean. I mean, there's me and I'm willing to give them a sort of a nice lucid. Defense of the arguments. But they don't really want that. And so they're looking for a safe defense that doesn't go very far, doesn't talk about serious. Things and they. They don't really find they can't find it. There's really nobody out there that they can go to, so they're really they're really hurting to give a balanced story on Ted.

Adam: OK, couple more super chats here and then I want to finish up asking with what you think the solution is to turn the tide and the trajectory that we're on. How can we stop the direction that the tech takeover is taking? But first Church of anorexia, Vegana says interesting name. Can you mention how all the jab people have Mac addresses? You can use a third party Bluetooth scanner and spot them all. They are already being tracked. I don't know anything about that. I'm sorry. Saltwater and malachite sounds a little wacky too, to be honest, but. They can already track you with your phones. They can track you with your heat signatures. I believe you know they got people tracked. They don't. I don't think they need. Do that. Saltwater plus Bluetooth only goes not very far, so that doesn't sound right, but thanks for the donation. Saltwater Amalekite says they are going to try to convince you that they can interpret natural law through the Torah. It's all BS. Thanks fellas. Keep up the killer

work. Appreciate you, saltwater malachite and yes, I thought this was an excellent discussion. I always love talking with Doctor Skrbina so. The solution what do what do people need to take away? What needs to be our attitude? What can we change? The path that we're on? Is there a good answer?

David: Well, that's a that's a really, really tough one, right. So I guess you know there's different levels of what to do. So I guess the obvious thing to start with yourself, right and your privates here or your Sam, your families here, right, maybe you got a spouse or kids. Right. So probably you want to protect yourself as much. As possible and I try to. Deep unplug from as much stuff as I possibly can. Obviously I'm doing podcasts and other things, but you know. I got a borrowed cell phone which I never use. I'm not on social media I try to minimize my time on e-mail. I mean, I try to do that thing and we were raising two daughters and our family kept that way miles away from tech for as long as humanly possible in this society to kind of keep them as safe as possible. You know, but there's larger sort of. Issues that you want to. Show people that you really cannot stop this process. It's not really under our control in in. A real sense. the dangers are extreme and they're multiplying. I mean, it really leads to kind of really radical solutions, which is something borderline what Ted said, which is deconstruct or dismantle or destroy the system now. Or we think we still have some kind of control. I've talked about myself in my own writings about going taking a long-term, deconstructive process where we spend, maybe, maybe 80 or 100 years, maybe aim for the end of this century and just kind of really back ourselves away from the brink and just kind of extract these most dangerous technologies. From from, from the world, from the world, from society and remember relearn how to live without them, which we obviously did for many years and just try to back ourselves away from the brink. And if we can sort of get the other sort of world powers to agree and just kind of go slowly, carefully step by step, I think that kind of thing. And work, but the problem is there's no real collective motive for that because they don't understand the dangers. So what it's going to take. Is some kind of near. That's clearly a technological disaster. Faster that that's so bad that maybe you know, 10s of millions of people die, but not so bad that you know, 8 billion people. Die and we're all gone. So kind of a near disaster, horrendous in scale, but enough to get to really slap people awake. And they're gonna then make them say good guy. That could never happen again. And then maybe then we'll start to get serious and we'll start to take these ideas. And we'll and we'll roll things. Back but you know. the the, the, the. the paths that that happening are really pretty bleak and pretty, pretty slim. And you know, you you just sort of hope you know the other option that Ted Ted was saying is you know, the technological system might just collapse of its own accord. No matter what we think and. What we want, there's so many instabilities in there. You know, humans are unstable. The global ecosystem is unstable. You know food systems could collapse and God knows what could happen. The system could just collapse of its own accord. And you know you hate to you hate to sort of hope for something like that happening, cause that could. Be rapid, catastrophic. And leads to lots of massive death and. Very

short term. It doesn't have to be that way. We could do it very slowly and rationally, but if we're not rational enough then we then we get what we deserve. And if the system collapses and billions of people die, then, then then we get what we deserve.

Adam: So basically kind of try to slow down, educate ourselves, have more skepticism on the dangers, take our foot off the gas, slam the brakes. Maybe we really could have nuclear weapons, bio warfare, chemicals being leaked everywhere and poisoning us. So, so much to worry about I. Forgot there was. A debate recently with two figures in Alt Media. It's JFG. He's a Frenchman scientist. he was debating with Keith Woods, who is a Irish. Online commentator and they were debating the ideas of Ted. A friend suggested that I get you in contact with them to do a panel or another discussion or something, which I think would be really good. People would like to see that they I think they know a lot more about it than me, so could give you more stimulating discussion there also.

David: Sure, that'd be that'd be great, love. To do it.

Adam: Also I passed your name along to modern day debates to see if anybody was if they could get you on to debate the Jesus hoax and. Didn't hear back from him. But let's see 115. Let's can we just go? Also, I wanted to one more thing. I know your letters didn't cover this topic, but. What were some of? Ted's ideas about leftism and liberalism.

David: Yeah, sure. I mean, that's an early part. Of the manifesto. So if people have read the manifesto, you definitely should read it. If you haven't. A big chunk of. The beginning, I mean like a third of the manifesto is dealing with these kind of issues, problems with leftism over socialization. Then the power process, how people do surrogate activities just kind of time killing hobbies instead of real things. You know, basically, Ted says people who are liberal leftists are over socialized in the sense that they're worried ultimately about human well-being and human life. And sort of all life is sort. Of sacred in some sense. And that leftists will not really follow through on the implications of a revolution because they'll realize it's gone. Cause at least near term human suffering and then they won't like that and they're going to. Back off and they're. Going to pull out. Or they're going to undermine the. A revolutionary process. So Ted said, basically, leftists are sort of cowards, and they're and they're weak and they just sort of want near term happiness at the expense of long term massive suffering and maybe even catastrophe. And they're just too weak minded to kind of see where things are. Doing and, he says these are kind of the worst kind of people to associate with. You don't want to deal with them. You don't want them in your in. Your in your. Anti tech movement because. They're gonna cause nothing but trouble. So yeah, there's a interesting lessons for there from from the early 90s, which is well before a lot of people were talking about these things.

Adam: Well, I don't think anybody can disagree that he was definitely a visionary and on these. Some of these topics, one of the things about the solution that came to mind too, is like the. Concern that if we. We can't really individual maybe on some levels we can individually like you know not be scrolling all day not let our letting

our kids get addicted to technology. Not having Amazon microphones listening to everything in our home and all that, but if we like as a country. Decide like, OK, we're gonna have laws. We're not gonna. Go after these more advanced technologies unless we have like the whole world stopping it, there will be other countries that do do it and then that will give them a technological advance. Advancements in advantage over us. And then we'll we could be technology technologically enslaved. So it's almost like. You know what an arms race that you almost have to do it. Otherwise you're gonna be enslaved by the people that. Is that a concern you thought about?

David: Well, it is. That's that. That's absolutely right. I mean that's one of these arguments where you'll talk to even people like Ray Kurzweil, who is a big gung ho pro tech guy. And he thinks it's gonna do fantastic things to have virtual reality. And nano particles running around in. Your brain and so forth. and then you know when you talk about even. Trying to do. Any limits, he says. Well, well, we can't do that because you know, then the Chinese and the Russians. And God knows who will pass us up, and then they'll use it to their advantage and they might overpower us, you know. So it always comes down to the same argument, right? It doesn't. Doesn't really matter what the situation is. There's this nice little phrase I love that we hear from. Kurzweil from other people. And it's that we have no choice. And so they'll, they'll chase all over all day. The argument at the end of the line at the end of the line, it's like, but we have no choice. And that's really this thesis. It's called technological determinism, which says this process is driving forward. It's dragging us along and we have no choice. So don't let anybody tell you otherwise. We're being sucked along by this thing. Thing you know, we can barely steer it, let alone do anything about it and sort of like literally for competitive reasons and profit and power and all these things. Yeah, we have no choice and that's a that's maybe the most depressing lesson that we can learn from this thing at all is that we're really being sucked down a black hole. You know, we have a very small window of time, if at all, to do anything about it.

Adam: And that kind of supports the idea that Ted had, that this is a machine that we can't stop in a way that that's another element of it, of why it can't be stopped.

David: Yeah, exactly. It's a process. That's rolling along in its own way and. Yeah, like I say, that goes back to. A little Whitehead. Said the same thing in 1925. We've unleashed a process that we cannot stop. I mean, these guys have known it for 100 years, literally 100 years, that this process is rolling, rolling along. It's going to get worse. We can't stop it. And you know, people just blinded their eyes to it and didn't want to talk about it, didn't want to hear about it. And there's a fair chance it's going to end in a. In a disaster.

Adam: Right. I know it looks like it's almost inevitable that our future is going to be a sci-fi dystopian world, even worse than we can imagine, which is why I appreciate you so much for you covering these things. And of course, the Jesus hoax as well. This is a very engaging discussion. Appreciate everybody for the donations and the support. I can't wait to see what everybody has. To say in the. Comments and why don't you

give a final words and a plug where your website where everybody can find all your work, your books and. And all that.

David: So yeah, so I had thanks. I have a personal website davidSkrbina.com. So you can see most of my works there. Again, the two key groups here are metaphysics of technology, which is a philosophical analysis and a critique of technology. And then this confronting technology book, which is kind of interesting historical reader, which basically I was using as a textbook when I was. Teaching my course. So yeah, there's material out there. People are interested if you want to sort of be knowledgeable, you got to know your history, you kind of got to know where people have staked out claims and so. People are concerned. that's a key step, right, kind of kind of know the thinkers there, there's my website. Know the history and yeah. You know, get educated. That's kind of the first thing for. A lot of people.

Adam: All right. Well, I. Really enjoyed the discussion. I thought it was very powerful. I think people are going to enjoy it. They always enjoy you. It's a nice change of pace because we usually talk about the Jesus, hoax and religion. I just had you on like twice in. Last month or so, two months to discuss Jesus hoax, I'll definitely get you back on again pretty soon to talk about that if you're interested and appreciate everybody for watching. Support the channel, subscribe star Odyssey donations much love to everybody. John Garuda says. What happened to paper Jesus, his audio Odyssey channel is missing as well. Did he quit or something? I don't know. I will give him a call. I wasn't aware of that. He got banned. From Twitter and the chat just went down in Odyssey, but it's back up, apparently. I'll reach out to paper. I'm hoping he's alright. And love you all. Appreciate you, Doctor Skrbina. And I will see you guys all again very soon. Have a nice day and take care.

The Jesus Hoax

***How St. Paul's Cabal Fooled the World for Two Thousand Years**

CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE STAGE

Jesus of Nazareth, known as Jesus Christ, known as the Son of God, known as God himself, is widely acknowledged to be one of the most famous individuals in history. We know his story: Born of a virgin, he performed numerous miracles and made many divine pronouncements during his short, 33-year life. He spoke of a dedication to God, of a spiritual inwardness, of love and forgiveness. He suffered greatly for his beliefs, and asked his followers to likewise suffer for theirs. He promised redemption from sin, and eternal life in heaven. Ultimately he gave his life for the salvation of mankind. His bodily ascension into heaven was proof of his promise. In the end, his teachings led to the foundation of one of the great religions of the world.

That Jesus should be counted among the most famous people in history is hardly surprising. Time Magazine ranked him #1 in all of history, and a slightly more technical study done by MIT University ranked him #3 (behind Aristotle and Plato). His followers literally number in the billions. There are about 2.1 billion Christians on Earth today, roughly 1/3 of the planet, making Christianity the #1 religion globally. The United States is strongly Christian; about 77% of Americans call themselves Christians, which encompasses some 250 million people. It's clear that Jesus, as the nominal founder of the Christian church, is among the most important and influential persons who ever lived.

But some historians and researchers have made a startling claim: that Jesus, the Son of God, never existed. They say that Jesus Christ was a pure myth. Is that even possible? Surely not, we reply. This most-influential founder of the most-influential religion of Christianity surely had to exist. And he surely had to be the miracle-working Son of God that is proclaimed in the Bible. How could it be otherwise? we ask. How could a venerable, two-thousand-year-old religion, with billions of followers throughout history, be based on someone who never existed? Impossible! Or so we say.

If that were the case, if Jesus never existed, imagine the consequences: an entire religion, and the active beliefs of billions of people, all in vain. All of Christianity based on a myth, a fable, even—as I will argue—a lie. Why, that would be catastrophic. The Crusades, the religious wars, the burning of heretics, the Inquisition, the countless lives led in hope of heaven and fear of hell—all in vain.

Or consider a slightly less radical but still earth-shaking possibility: that Jesus existed, but he was just a man: an entirely ordinary—and entirely mortal—teacher of morality. What if Jesus was just a simple preacher, a Jewish rabbi, who spoke in defense of the poor and the underprivileged, and through his various social agitations, managed to get himself executed by the Roman authorities? And what if his body was unceremoniously buried in some non-descript grave somewhere in Palestine, never to be seen again? What if there were no virgin birth, no Sermon on the Mount, no miracles, no raising of the dead, no walking on water, no bodily resurrection? Well, that would be nearly as bad as if Jesus never existed at all. All of Christian history would still be founded on a myth or on a lie. It would still be a sham. And all the efforts of Christians worldwide, throughout all of history, would still be in vain. This is the view that I will defend in this book.

Note that it's very important to distinguish between the two conceptions of 'Jesus.' If someone asks, "Did Jesus exist?" we need to know if they mean (a) the divine, miracle-working, resurrected Son of God (sometimes called the biblical Jesus), or (b) the ordinary man and Jewish preacher who died a mortal death (sometimes called the historical Jesus). Christianity requires a biblical Jesus, but the skeptics argue either for simply an historical Jesus—which would mean the end of Christianity—or worse, no Jesus at all.

It's my purpose in this book to argue that the miracle-working, ascended-to-heaven, Son-of-God Jesus never existed. I will, however, accept the historical Jesus: the Jewish preacher who lived and taught at that time, who was a social agitator that incited his fellow Jews against the Romans, and who therefore got himself crucified. (Crucifixion was generally reserved for crimes against the State.) Unlike the other skeptics, I have good reasons for believing that a mortal, historical Jesus did exist. But I agree with them that the miracles, the resurrection story, and most of his alleged sayings were pure myth.

It's my further purpose to explain how and why the biblical Jesus myth—the Jesus lie—came to be constructed, and how it came to influence world history. It is a shocking story, frankly, and one that has only been hinted at before. Bits and pieces of this counter-narrative have been discovered and examined throughout history, but the whole picture has never been clearly pieced together until now. In recent years, political correctness and contemporary liberal dogma both have conspired to suppress any such discussion. The media have no interest in examining this alternate story, for reasons that I will explain. Western governments have little incentive, and much disincentive, for promoting open talk of this issue. Christians obviously don't want to hear any talk of a Jesus myth, nor—as I will explain—do Jews or Muslims. In short, hardly anyone in power, and many ordinary people, have no desire to consider the radical thesis that Jesus, Son of God, never existed. And yet it is of untold importance.

Now of course, I cannot prove my thesis. I cannot give an ironclad, bullet-proof argument that the Jesus story was a hoax. Part of the problem is the notorious difficulty of "proving a negative"—that is, it can be difficult or sometimes impossible to prove

that some alleged event did not happen. The other issue is that the circumstances of that place and time are so obscure, and our hard knowledge so limited, that little of anything can be stated with certainty. Nor, of course, can the Christians prove the biblical account of events. Their entire case rests on the Bible, and this document is riddled with difficulties, as I will show. In this sense, we are on equal footing; neither of us can definitively prove our case. But the weight of evidence, and archeological history, and common sense, all point to the very strong likelihood that a divine Jesus never existed, and that his story was constructed for very specific reasons and purposes.

But there is an additional problem for Christian defenders. It is a common rule of argumentation that whoever makes the more extraordinary claims holds the primary burden of proof. To make claims about a virgin birth, or a miracle-working Son of God, or being risen from the dead, are, to say the least, extraordinary claims. Therefore, in the debate about Jesus' existence, it is the Christian, and not the skeptic, who holds the burden of proof. If I claim that the biblical Jesus did not exist, and a Catholic theologian claims he did, then I merely need to show the implausible and unlikely nature of such an event, along with a lack of any corroborating evidence. The theologian, by contrast, must give definitive, positive evidence that such a miracle man actually existed, and did and said what is claimed in the Bible. My standard of proof is much lower, his is much higher. In other words, it is much, much easier for me to 'win' such a debate. I think this will become clear as my argument proceeds.

Two Defenses, Refuted

When confronted with the case against Jesus, and the strong likelihood of his mythological stature, Christians typically find themselves unable to defend their version of events. Sensing defeat, they frequently retreat to one of two commonly-held views that they see as their ultimate safe havens. It's worth mentioning these briefly now, at the outset, in order to get them out of the way.

First: "Christianity relies on faith, not reason. Therefore, rational arguments against it, or against Jesus, have no effect. We simply believe the Christian story, and that's good enough."

This is a very convenient 'get out of jail free' card that religious people like to play. But it doesn't work. It's worth noting that all of Western civilization is based on the idea of rationality and reason, from its very inception in ancient Greece around 600 BC. Reason is older than Christianity, and is the foundation of everything that we have achieved. It's not that faith has no place, but if we allow faith to override reason in our ideological thinking, we surrender the very basis of our own culture. It's self-defeating and self-destructive.

Furthermore, many of the most famous Christian theologians in history were eminently rational; Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, to name a few, were all justly famous for their reason-based arguments. A true Christian should never have to surrender reason, even in the name of faith.

Additionally, even if we want to place an emphasis on belief, we still need to have a reason to believe. If our beliefs aren't rational, we are liable to believe absolutely anything: pixies, magic dragons, unicorns, you name it. We might start burning people as witches, or try casting out demons, or rely strictly on prayer to heal serious diseases. A society ruled by non-rational beliefs is a very dangerous one, and not something that anyone would truly want to live in.

Second: "It doesn't matter if the Jesus story is true. Belief still helps people to live better lives and become better people."

This is tantamount to surrender. The entirety of the Christian faith is based on the idea that Jesus was the Son of God, that he actually came to Earth to save us, and that he actually died and was bodily risen. The whole religion collapses into absurdity if the Jesus story is false. If Jesus promises us eternal life, and threatens non-believers with eternal damnation, this only matters if he actually existed, and if he was right. If we are willing to accept that the Jesus story may be a myth, then we must also be willing to accept that his more esoteric ideas, like heaven and hell, might also be myths.

Further, can it really be beneficial to accept a myth as truth? Can one really live a happy, successful, and meaningful life dedicated to a false story, or to a lie? Take the case of Santa Claus. This story may be useful to keep naughty little children in line, but it 'works' only because of their ignorance and naiveté. Even if we could keep up the charade for years, would it be ethical to do so? Surely not; ultimately it would lead to terrible outcomes. And if there were a whole society of Santa-believers, can we envision them leading a truly good life? Of course not. It should be self-evident that a life based on self-deception or falsehood can never turn out well.

Granted, certain ideas attributed to Jesus could be considered beneficial: the Golden Rule, love thy neighbor, aid the poor, human equality, the virtue of hope. (Recall, however, that the 10 Commandments are from the Old Testament; they are, strictly speaking, Judaic rather than Christian.) But one doesn't need to be a Christian to love thy neighbor, or to aid the poor, or to treat others kindly. There are independent and thoroughly rational reasons to do these things, as many other philosophers and religious figures have noted, both before and after Jesus. The fact that some people find these things helpful in no way justifies a general belief in the Christian story.

I therefore have to conclude that it does matter, profoundly, if the Jesus story is true or false. Anyone, any alleged Christian, who tries to claim that it doesn't matter can hardly be taken seriously.

A Few Questions about God

Jesus, we are told, was God. Skepticism about Jesus therefore naturally leads to skepticism about God—that is, the Judeo-Christian God who created the world in six days, who created Adam and Eve, who caused the Great Flood, who sent his only son to save mankind, and who loves each and every one of us. Generally speaking,

in this book I will ignore questions about God's nature and existence, in order to focus on the Jesus story and its origins. Technically, God's existence is independent of Jesus' existence. Even if Jesus were a total myth, there could still be, in theory, a God. Orthodox Jews believe in God but not Jesus. Muslims believe in God (Allah) but not a divine, son-of-God Jesus who died and was risen. The two issues are distinct.

That being the case, I will say just a few words here about God, and specifically, about what is rational and what is irrational about him.

It's common knowledge that there have been many religions in world history—more than 4,000, by some estimates. Each of these has a different conception of God or the gods. Clearly, the vast majority of them must be in error. More likely, all of them are in error. As the saying goes, "They can't all be right, but they can all be wrong." Odds are that every religion has seriously defective beliefs about God or the gods, to the point where we can say almost nothing conclusive about the divine. We cannot even be sure that gods exist.

If we set aside atheism for a moment, it seems that all the world religions could agree on just two propositions about God:

- 1) God is the Supreme Being or ultimate reality.
- 2) God is that which is most revered.

Despite the vast and irreconcilable difference amongst religions, virtually everyone could accept these two claims. If we stuck to just these two views, there would be no religious disagreements, no religious wars, no religious strife at all.

But of course, with just these two claims, one cannot construct a functioning religion—one that builds temples, grows in numbers and wealth, and projects power around the world. You can't have "the Church" without a lot more to God than that. That's why the various religions have been compelled to add additional qualities to God, to create additional stories about him, to bring him to Earth, and so on.

Perhaps surprisingly, there are a number of qualities that we can attribute to God without being irrational, provided that we are careful how we define them. For example, God can logically, rationally, and consistently be said to have the following properties:

- God is uncreated.
- God is perfect.
- God is eternal.
- God is omnipresent.
- God is one.
- God is a mind or spirit.

Rational thinkers throughout history have attributed some or all of these to a divine Being. They are not contradictory, they are not illogical, and they do not lead to irreconcilable paradoxes.

But even these are not enough for most religions. These still don't allow anyone to build up a church, a complex doctrine, or to exert power over people. Therefore theologians have introduced yet additional qualities, ones that do allow for conventional religion:

- God is a ‘person’ (someone who loves, forgives, punishes, etc).
- God ‘speaks’ to humans.
- God is omniscient.
- God is omnipotent.
- God is supernatural.
- God does good acts.
- God saves some and condemns others.

These qualities cause major problems. While I can’t detail it here, they lead to all sorts of problems: contradictions, paradoxes, absurdities, and sheer mysteries.

The biggest problem of all comes when we believe that God is a moral being: someone who is good, kind, benevolent, just, etc. This notion is central to Christianity but it leads directly to what we call the Problem of Evil.¹ In short, the problem is this: The world is plagued by all varieties of evils, including murder, rape, war, violence, illness, disease, accidents, famine, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes. These cause massive human suffering and death, every day. But the world is allegedly overseen by a benevolent and loving God who wishes well for us humans, who are, after all, created in his image. This moral God, furthermore, is all-powerful; he can instantly do whatever he wishes. How is it, then, that humans suffer such vast and unending evils? God has the power to halt or prevent every conceivable evil. And yet he does not. Why?

Suffice it to say that there is no rational answer to this question. It seems that God either does not really care about our suffering—in which case he’s not all good—or he’s not really able to do anything about it—in which case he’s not all powerful. In other words, God is either not a moral being, or he’s not all-powerful. He clearly can’t be both at the same time. And yet that’s exactly what Christianity, and many other religions, want us to believe. It’s an unsolvable dilemma. The Problem of Evil has no answer.

Apart from the Problem of Evil and other paradoxes, we have the simple observation that there is no evidence of God. He doesn’t come and speak to us anymore. He doesn’t appear in burning bushes or clouds of smoke and fire. He doesn’t send down his sons (or daughters) to enlighten us. Science has no need to postulate God, since everything that happens is covered by the laws of physics. Miracles no longer happen—meaning, events that don’t have straightforward scientific explanations. Why is God hiding?²

Because he remains hidden, people cannot agree on God, and hence they fight and die in his name. Why would he allow this to happen? Of the more than 4,000 religions, at least 3,999 of them are wrong about God; how can we tell which is right? Or what if they are all wrong? What if we think we are doing the right thing, but God is secretly

¹ The Problem of Evil was famously criticized by philosopher David Hume in part 10 of his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1778). More recent critiques include John Mackie’s article “Evil and omnipotence” (1955), and in a more popular vein, B. C. Johnson’s essay “God and the problem of evil”.

² It does no good to say that God is “testing” us. He created us how we are, and he knows the future, therefore it can’t be a test.

angry with us? What if all those who rigorously attend church every Sunday are, in God's eyes, unthinking sheep who will ultimately be punished? How can we ever really know what God likes, or doesn't like? We have no answers to these questions, and we never will. It does no good to say, "Well, God is mysterious." This is another religious cop-out. It's a meaningless statement that can be used to cover over any inconvenient problem. It's another sign of surrender.

The only reasonable conclusion is that God—if he exists at all—is limited in many ways. He can be a kind of ultimate reality, and we can indeed revere him. He can have any of the first set of properties shown above, but none of the second group. But even these "acceptable" qualities are arbitrary human constructions. We choose them because we like them, but that's it. We have no real reasons, no evidence, to make any such claims. Based on the actual evidence, it seems that there is no God at all.³ But if it makes us feel better to invent him, and give him a few, limited qualities, there is little harm in doing so.

Enough about God. My focus here is Jesus, and we have many interesting things to learn about him.

The Problem of the Experts

When we try to make a rational and critical inquiry into Jesus, we are immediately confronted with a serious issue, namely, "the problem of the experts." This problem has several different aspects, all of which make it very hard for the average reader to ascertain the truth.

Writers on Christianity tend to fall into three groups: academics, journalists, and independent researchers. In all three cases, we are confronted with the fact that we typically never know the religious beliefs of the writer. And for good reason. All three groups of individuals want to portray themselves as unbiased and neutral investigators, and so they have a strong incentive to hide their true beliefs from the reader. But those beliefs are there nonetheless, and they strongly influence which questions are asked, which ideas are examined, and what conclusions are drawn.

Consider the academics. The vast majority are either (a) faculty of a religious-based institution, or (b) members of a religious studies department in an ordinary, secular university. In either case, if they are experts in Christianity, nearly all are Christians. This obviously colors their outlook, and imposes severe constraints on the kinds of ideas that they will consider. Of the few non-Christian academic writers on Christianity, many are Jews (e.g. Martin Buber, Paul Goodman, Alan Dershowitz), and a few (e.g. Reza Aslan) are Muslims—and these carry their own baggage. For obvious reasons, open-minded, critically-thinking, non-religious faculty members rarely become experts in Christianity.

³ With the possible exception of pantheism, which declares that the universe in its entirety is God.

Journalists have their own issues. They typically have no advanced degrees, and thus do not really understand how to do serious academic research. They furthermore are in the business of selling books—lots of books. This means that they don't really care about serious academic research. Their chief motive is income, not truth. Additionally, their employers would certainly take a dim view of their careers if they decided to publish something outside the conventional bounds.

Independent researchers typically suffer from all the above problems: no advanced education, no understanding of detailed and careful research, religious bias, and the need to sell books.

Of course, everyone has a kind of bias about religion. Even the atheists and professional skeptics have hidden or unexamined assumptions. So be it. The best we can hope for is that our experts are open and honest about their biases, which will allow us, the readers, to better judge their writings.

I too have my biases, I'm sure. But let me be as transparent as I can. I was "raised" Presbyterian but rarely attended and never committed to the church, ever. I have been a religious skeptic since my early teens, and I recall debating my religious classmates even in middle school. I hold advanced degrees in mathematics and philosophy, and I've been teaching philosophy at a campus of the University of Michigan since 2003. I'm not an atheist, but my religious stance changes depending on the circumstances; sometimes I'm an agnostic, sometimes a pantheist, sometimes a polytheist. In no sense am I a Christian, a Muslim, or a Jew. I like to think that I am as unbiased as possible, perhaps more so than nearly any present-day writer on Christianity. I am a paid professor, so I do not need to sell books to make a living. I write what I think is true and important. Whether these facts result in a useful and honest book on Jesus, I leave it to the reader to decide.

Another Jesus Skeptic?

As one can obviously see by now, I am a 'Jesus skeptic.' But I'm far from the first. There have been many such skeptics in the past, and their numbers appear to be growing. In recent times this group has been referred to as "Christ Mythicists," meaning those who deny the existence of the biblical, divine Jesus (though not necessarily the historical human Jesus). Christ Myth Theory, or CMT, is also popular with atheists in general, since it feeds into their view that God too does not exist.

So, why this book? Why do we need yet another Jesus skeptic?

To answer this question, let me give a brief overview of some of the prominent skeptics and their views. I will argue that their ideas, though on the right track, are woefully short of the truth. They lack the courage or the will to look hard at the evidence, and to envision a more likely conclusion: that Jesus was a deliberately constructed myth, by a specific group of people, with a specific end in mind. None of the Christ mythicists or atheist writers have, to my knowledge, articulated the view that I defend here.

But first a quick recap of the background and context for the idea of a mythological Jesus. The earliest modern critic was German scholar Hermann Reimarus, who published a multi-part work, *Fragments*, in the late 1770s. Strikingly, his view is one of the closest to my own thesis of any skeptic. For Reimarus, Jesus was the militant leader of a group of Jewish rebels who were fighting against oppressive Roman rule. Eventually he got himself crucified. His followers then constructed a miraculous religion-story around Jesus, in order to carry on his cause. They lied about his miracles, and they stole his body from the grave so that they could claim a bodily resurrection.⁴ This is quite close to what I will call the ‘Antagonism thesis’—that a group of Jews constructed a false Jesus story, based on a real man, in order to undermine Roman rule. But there is much more to the story, far beyond that which Reimarus himself was able to articulate.

In the 1820s and 30s, Ferdinand Baur published a number of works that emphasized the conflict between the early Jewish-Christians—significantly, all the early Christians were Jews—and the somewhat later Gentile-Christians. This again is a key part of the story, but we need to know the details; we need to know why the conflict arose, and what were its ends.

In 1835, David Strauss published the two-volume work *Das Leben Jesu*—“The Life of Jesus.” He was the first to argue, correctly, that none of the gospel writers knew Jesus personally. He disavowed all claims of miracles, and argued that the Gospel of John was, in essence, an outright lie with no basis in reality.

German philosopher Bruno Bauer wrote a number of important books, including *Criticism of the Gospel History* (1841), *The Jewish Question* (1843), *Criticism of the Gospels* (1851), *Criticism of the Pauline Epistles* (1852), and *Christ and the Caesars* (1877). Bauer held that there was no historical Jesus and that the entire New Testament was a literary construction, utterly devoid of historical content. Shortly thereafter, James Frazer published *The Golden Bough* (1890), arguing for a connection between all religion—Christianity included—and ancient mythological concepts.

It was about at this time that another famous Christian skeptic emerged: Friedrich Nietzsche. In his books *Daybreak* (1881), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and *Antichrist* (1888) he provides a potent critique of Christianity and Christian morality. Nietzsche always accepted the historical Jesus, and even had good things to say about him. But he was devastating in his attack on Paul and the later writers of the New Testament. He viewed Christian morality as a lowly, life-denying form of slave morality, attributed not to Jesus but to the actions of Paul and the other Jewish followers. Along with Reimarus, Nietzsche provides the most inspiration for my own analysis.

Into the 20th century, we find such books as *The Christ Myth* (1909) and *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus* (1926), both by Arthur Drews, and *The Enigma of Jesus* (1923) by Paul-Louis Chouhould. All these continued to attack the literal truth claimed of the Bible.

⁴ This possibility is actually described in Matthew (27:64 - 28:15). The Gospel says, “this story [of

More recently, we have critics such as the historian George Wells and his book *Did Jesus Exist?* (1975). Here he assembles an impressive amount of evidence against an historical Jesus. Bart Ehrman has called Wells “the best-known mythicist of modern times,” though in later years Wells softened his stance somewhat; he accepted that there may have been an historical Jesus, although we know almost nothing about him. Wells died in 2017 at the age of 90.

Similar arguments were offered by philosopher Michael Martin in his 1991 book, *The Case against Christianity*. Though a wide-ranging critique, he dedicated one chapter to the idea that Jesus never existed. Martin died in 2015.

Among living critics, we have such men as Thomas Thompson, who wrote *The Messiah Myth* (2005); he is agnostic about an historical Jesus, but argues against historical truth in the Bible. By contrast, Earl Doherty (*The Jesus Puzzle*, 1999), Tom Harpur (*The Pagan Christ*, 2004), and Thomas Brodie (*Beyond the Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 2012) all deny that any such Jesus of Nazareth ever existed. Richard Carrier, in his book *On the Historicity of Jesus* (2014), finds it highly unlikely that any historical Jesus lived.

Perhaps the most vociferous and prolific Jesus skeptic today is Robert Price, a man with two doctorates in theology and a deep knowledge of the Bible. Though agnostic on the historical Jesus, Price argues that much of Christian theology is a synthesis of pre-Christian mythology, and hence devoid of truth content. He thus qualifies as a proponent of the “Christ Myth” thesis. His extensive writings include *Deconstructing Jesus* (2000), *The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man* (2003), *Jesus Is Dead* (2007), *The Christ-Myth Theory and Its Problems* (2012), and *Killing History* (2014). Price’s central points can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The miracle stories have no independent verification from unbiased contemporaries.
- 2) The characteristics of Jesus are all drawn from much older mythologies and other pagan sources.
- 3) The earliest documents, the letters of Paul, point to an esoteric, abstract, ethereal Jesus—a “mythic hero archetype”—not an actual man who died on a cross.
- 4) The later documents, the Gospels, turned the Jesus-concept into an actual man, a literal Son of God, who died and was risen.

I find some truth in all these claims, as I will show. But there is much more to the story than Price is willing to entertain. Perhaps this relates to his personal situation. Price seems to rely heavily on book sales and speaking fees for income; he is very much in “the Jesus business.” I can’t help but think that this affects what he says and writes.

These men, then, are perhaps the most authoritative critics of the traditional account of Jesus. They know their stuff, and they know how to do research. But of course, this does not make them right, or even guarantee an open and honest assessment. It does guarantee a clever and learned critique, though.

the stolen body] has been spread among the Jews to this day.”

There are many other books attacking the Jesus story, but the vast majority are written by marginally qualified individuals. Some are atheists, some are members of competing religions, some are just out to sell books. Most lack the advanced degrees that would indicate an ability to do careful, detailed research. I leave it to the reader to investigate these as desired.⁵ Hence my suggestion: Examine the qualifications of the writer before buying the book!

With the exception of Nietzsche, all of the above individuals exhibit a glaring weakness: they are loathe to criticize anyone. No one comes in for condemnation, no one is guilty, no one is to blame for anything. For the earliest writers, I think this is due primarily to an insecurity about their ideas and a general lack of clarity about what likely occurred. For the more recent individuals, it's probably attributable to an inbred political correctness, to a weakness of moral backbone, or to sheer self-interest. In recent years, academics in particular are highly reticent to affix blame on individuals, even those long-dead.⁶ This is somehow seen as a violation of academic neutrality or professional integrity. But when the facts line up against someone or some group, then we must be honest with ourselves. There are truly guilty parties all throughout history, and when we come upon them, they must be called out.

Consider this: There are very good reasons (as I will show) for believing that none of the Jesus miracle stories are true. And yet someone, at some point in time, wrote them down as if they were true. The conclusion is clear: someone lied. When you write obvious falsehoods and portray them as literal truth, that's a lie. The questions then are, Who lied?, When?, and Why? I will address these matters in due time. For now I simply note that none of our brave critics, our Jesus mythicists, seem willing to pinpoint anyone: not Paul, not his Jewish colleagues, not the early Christian fathers—no one. A colossal story has been laid out about the Son of God come to Earth, performing miracles, and being risen from the dead, and yet—no one lied? Really? Can we believe that? Was it all just a big misunderstanding? Honest errors? No thinking person could accept this. Someone, somewhere in the past, constructed a gigantic lie and then passed it around the ancient world as a cosmic truth. The guilty parties need to be exposed. Only then can we truly understand this ancient religion, and begin to move forward.

Let me now lay out the basic facts of Christian history, as we understand them today. I use the word “fact” advisedly, because it is very hard to determine such things with certainty, and there are skeptical voices on nearly every issue. Still, in the next chapter I will present the most widely-accepted information that we have that relates to the origins of Christianity and to the tales of Jesus. Today, thanks to on-going scientific research and archeological analysis, we know much more about those ancient

⁵ A few such recent titles include: *Nailed*, by D. Fitzgerald (2010); *Jesus Christ, A Pagan Myth*, by S. Dalton and L. Dalton (2008); *Jesus Never Existed*, by K. Humpreys (2014); *Caesar's Messiah*, by J. Atwill (2011); *The Christ Conspiracy*, by Acharya S (1999); *There Was No Jesus*, by R. Lataster (2013); *Atheist Manifesto*, by M. Onfray (2007).

⁶ There are exceptions, of course. Hitler, Nazis, or Islamic “terrorists” are still open targets, for example.

times than in decades past, and we can have much more confidence regarding what did, or did not, happen.

CHAPTER 2: JUST THE FACTS...

There is so much obfuscation and mystery surrounding Jesus and the Bible that it can be almost impossible to get a straight story on things. It's true that little can be said with certainty. But as with any historical situation, some things about Christianity are generally accepted as true and others are considered highly likely by a majority of experts. This being the case, let me lay out the least contentious and most widely-accepted facts about this religion. These facts will serve as a foundation to later claims about what is likely to have occurred, and what is unlikely.

As we all know, Christianity is more properly understood as Judeo-Christianity. Therefore we must begin with an account of early Judaism and the history of the Jewish people. These facts have a direct bearing on the formation of Christianity and its aftermath, to the present day.

Consider, first of all, the ancient origins of Judaism and the corresponding events of the Old Testament (OT), otherwise known as the Jewish (or Hebrew) Bible. The original patriarch, Abraham, apparently lived some time between 1800 and 1500 BC—he being the traditional father of not only Judaism and thus Christianity but a leading prophet of Islam as well.⁷ The next major figure, Moses, lived around 1300 BC, and some time afterward the “Five Books of Moses” began to take shape, likely at first as an oral tradition.⁸ These five books, as we know, would eventually form the Pentateuch (or Torah)—the beginning of the OT. They are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

We are fairly confident that a people called “Israel” existed at this time, thanks to the discovery of the Merneptah Stele—an engraved stone created around 1200 BC. It is the earliest known reference. The stele includes this line: “Israel is laid waste and his seed is not.” This sentence has some interesting implications that I will discuss later on.⁹

The remaining 30-odd OT books were added over the next one thousand years, with the set becoming complete around 200 BC. These books were written in Hebrew, but a Greek translation—called the Septuagint—was begun about this time, completed circa 50 BC. The Dead Sea Scrolls, which date to the first century BC, contain fragments from every book of the Hebrew OT, and thus are our earliest proof that the

⁷ According to legend, Abraham had two sons: Isaac, who gave rise to the Jewish lineage, and Ishmael, the father of the Arabs.

⁸ I note that some historians have argued that both Abraham and Moses are mythic figures who never lived. But I will set this issue aside.

⁹ A second reference to Israel, and to the “House of David,” comes with the recent discovery of the Tel Dan Stele, dating to around 850 BC. This has similar consequences.

complete document existed by that time. Whether it appeared any earlier is a matter of speculation.

If we are to accept the tradition, then, the OT was written over a period of some 1200 years. Lacking any original texts, we have no way of knowing how much change or editing occurred over that time. We also have no factual information on any of the alleged authors. In essence, all we know of the OT is that it was written and modified over hundreds of years by unknown individuals, and first appears in history with the Dead Sea Scrolls around 50 BC.

Dating of the OT texts is one thing; accuracy is another matter altogether. First of all, the earliest dates cited above are purely conjectural, since we have no recorded reference to the travails of Moses prior to about 850 BC. Furthermore, archeologists have discovered evidence in recent years that refutes many of the historical claims of the OT. For example, Israeli archeologist Ze'ev Herzog has shown the increasing discrepancies between archeological data and the biblical stories.¹⁰ Efforts in the 1900s to confirm the OT yielded a plentitude of new information, but this “began to undermine the historical credibility of the biblical descriptions instead of reinforcing them.” Scholars were confronted with “an increasingly large number of anomalies,” among these are, first, “no evidence has been unearthed that can sustain the chronology” of the Patriarchal age. Second, of the Exodus, “the many Egyptian documents that we have make no mention of the Israelites’ presence in Egypt, and are also silent about the events of the Exodus”.¹¹ Third, the alleged conquest of Canaan (Palestine) by the Israelites in the 1200s BC is refuted by archeological digs at Jericho and Ai that found no existing cities at that time. Even the famed monotheism of the early Jews is undermined by inscriptions from the 700s BC that refer to a pair of gods, “Yahweh and his consort, Asherah.”

An overall picture thus comes into view: There was a Jewish people, called “Israel,” in the region of Palestine from at least the 1200s BC who engaged in a number of conflicts with the surrounding peoples, including the Egyptians. They recorded their own history in the books of the OT, but with substantial amounts of embellishment and speculation, such that many claims are unsubstantiated by modern research. And from the texts themselves, we know that this people viewed themselves as specifically

¹⁰ The following quotations are from his article “Deconstructing the walls of Jericho”, Ha'aretz Magazine, October 29, 1999.

¹¹ “Most historians today agree that, at best, the stay in Egypt and the Exodus events occurred among a few families, and that their private story was expanded and ‘nationalized’ to fit the needs of theological ideology.” There is one later Egyptian documentation of such an event, by the high priest Manetho from the third century BC, which comes to a similar conclusion. As recounted by Lindemann, “the Jews had been driven out of Egypt because they, a band of destitute and undesirable immigrants who had intermarried with the slave population, were afflicted with various contagious diseases.” The Jews were thus expelled “for reasons of public hygiene.” In sum, “the account in Exodus was an absurd falsification of actual events, an attempt to cover up the embarrassing and ignoble origin of the Jews” (Lindemann 1997: 28).

chosen or blessed by their god, Yahweh or Jehovah, and that they saw all others as pagan non-believers, to be treated with contempt.¹²

Enter the Roman Empire

In the wake of the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, his great empire became fragmented. One large piece fell to the Macedonian general Seleucus in 312 BC, who promptly began his own expansion, now known as the Seleucid Empire. This empire included present-day Palestine and the Jewish people. The Jews were naturally unhappy with foreign rule and continually opposed Seleucus' government. Eventually, in 165 BC, the Maccabees led a successful revolt against it, reestablishing Jewish rule over Palestine. The resulting Hasmonean dynasty was formed in 141 BC and reigned for some 80 years.

Farther to the west, however, was growing another and greater empire, that of the Romans. They were rapidly expanding to the east, and in the year 63 BC they incorporated the territory of Palestine. Suddenly the Jews were once more subject to foreign rule.

The Jews have had a long history of foreign occupation. In past centuries they lived under the Persians, the Babylonians, Alexander the Great, and Seleucus, to name the major figures. All this time, they apparently adapted to their foreign rulers, even as they continued to periodically resist and revolt.

Things were different under the Romans. The Jews were rather quickly and dismissively subsumed into the Empire. Jewish resistance began almost immediately, and the Romans pushed back. Within two years of taking power, the Romans were deporting Jews and selling them as slaves.¹³ By the year 6 AD at the latest, the militant Jewish "Zealot" movement had formed, becoming a so-called fourth sect of Judaism.¹⁴ They advocated violent resistance toward Romans, Greeks, and even fellow Jews who collaborated with the foreigners. Notably, there are reasons to believe that both Jesus and Paul were Zealots.¹⁵

Pressure on the Jews increased in the first decades of the Christian era. In the year 19, Emperor Tiberius expelled the Jews from Rome for aggressive proselytizing and for criminal activity. In 30, a high-ranking Roman official, Sejanus, made efforts to "destroy the Jewish nation," presumably for similar reasons.¹⁶ In addition to allegedly passing judgment on Jesus, the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate, who governed Palestine from

¹² Recall this passage: "For you [Jews] are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (Deut 7:6). I will elaborate in chapter four.

¹³ Mass deportations occurred in 61, 55, 52, and 4 BC. See Fairchild (1999: 519).

¹⁴ The others being Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.

¹⁵ I discuss the evidence for Paul below. For details on Jesus as a zealot, see Brandon (1967) or Aslan (2013). I provide a critique of Aslan's book in Appendix B.

¹⁶ According to Philo (In Flac I.1). See also Eusebius, Ecc Hist II.5.

26 to 36 AD, was known for his aggressive treatment of the Jews. But things grew even worse for them after his removal from power and the ascension of Emperor Caligula in Rome. Hayim Ben-Sasson writes, “The reign of Caligula (37-41 AD) witnessed the first open break between the Jews and the Empire. ... [R]elations deteriorated seriously during [this time].”¹⁷

Jesus, we presume, was crucified in the year 30.¹⁸ And Jewish opposition, and repression, accelerated. In 38, the governor of Alexandria, A. A. Flaccus, took harsh action to restrict Jewish power and influence in that city. According to Philo, he also initiated violent pogroms that resulted in many fatalities.¹⁹ Just three years later, Emperor Claudius issued his third edict, Letter to the Alexandrians, in which he accused those Jews of “fomenting a general plague which infests the whole world.” This is a striking passage; it suggests that Jews all over the Middle East had succeeded in stirring up dangerous agitation toward the empire. It also marks the first occurrence in history of a “biological” epithet used against them. By the year 49, Claudius had to undertake yet another expulsion of Jews from Rome.

All this set the stage for the first major Jewish revolt, in the year 66. Also called the First Jewish-Roman War (there were three), this event was a major turning point in history. It eventually drew in some 75,000 Roman troops, who battled against perhaps 50,000 Jewish militants and thousands of other partisans. The war lasted for four years, ending in Roman victory and the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in the year 70. It remains in ruins to this day; only the western wall (“Wailing Wall”) still exists.

There would be two more Jewish wars: in 115-117 (the Kitos War), and in 132-135 (the Bar Kokhba Revolt). Thousands died in each, but both ended in Roman victory.

“We Are Among Jews”

Returning specifically to Christianity, I must note a central fact of the entire religion: The Bible is an entirely Jewish document. Front to back, cover to cover, A to Z, Old Testament and New—the Bible is an entirely Jewish document. The morality, the theology, the social attitudes, the worldview...all thoroughly Jewish. The Old Testament obviously so; it was written by Jews, about Jews, and for Jews. The same holds with the New Testament, although with a slight twist: it was written by Jews, about Jews, but for non-Jews. This twist is crucial to the whole Jesus story.

So let’s look specifically at the New Testament. Regarding this most important document, Nietzsche put it well, I think: “The first thing to be remembered, if we do

¹⁷ A History of the Jewish People (1976), pp. 254-255.

¹⁸ This assumes he was born in 3 BC. If we accept the traditional date of the year zero, then the crucifixion would have occurred in 33 AD.

¹⁹ In Flac IX.65-71.

not wish to lose the scent here, is that we are among Jews.”²⁰ That is, all the characters are Jews, and all the writers—as far as we can determine—were Jews.

Let me start with Jesus. Everything, the sum total, of what we know about Jesus comes ultimately from the four Gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Paul is no help here; his 13 epistles (letters) contain virtually no factual information about Jesus. The other NT letters are likewise useless. So we are stuck with the Gospels. The immediate problem is that the Gospels are unreliable when it comes to factual, historical information. They seem to be a mixed bag—some fact, some fiction. The hard part is separating the truth from the falsehood.

If we temporarily set aside the various miracle stories, let’s assume for now that the rest is factual information. What do we then know about Jesus? The first fact, above all, is that he was Jewish. If the Gospels tell us anything of certainty, it’s that Jesus was a Jew. In fact, he was a Jew from birth, because both his father Joseph and his mother Mary were Jews. Joseph, we read, was “of the house of David” (Luke 1:27), and the Gospel of Matthew opens with a lengthy genealogy leading to him from Abraham. Mary was a woman “born under the law [of Judaism]” (Gal 4:4), and she was a blood relative of Elizabeth, of the tribe of Levi (Luke 1:5, 36). Both parents attended Passover every year (Luke 2:41) and both “performed everything according to the [Jewish] law of the Lord” (Luke 2:39).

Jesus himself is repeatedly called ‘Rabbi’ (Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; Matt 26:25; John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31). He celebrated Passover (John 2:13). The Gospel of Matthew opens with these words: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.” We read in Hebrews that “it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah” (7:14). He regularly attended the local synagogue (Luke 4:16). Jesus himself told the people that he came “to fulfill the [Jewish] law and the [Jewish] prophets” (Matt 5:17) and called on his followers to “keep the [10] commandments” (Matt 19:17). He even claimed to be the Messiah, the Jewish savior (John 4:26). And of course everyone thought of him as “king of the Jews” (Matt 2:2; John 19:3).

This much, then, is clear: Jesus, Joseph, and the Virgin Mary were all Jews.

For some Christians, this will come as a shock in itself. Jesus is “the original” Christian, they will say; he can’t be Jewish! But this arises from an understandable confusion about what it means to be a Jew. Jewishness refers to two distinct qualities: ethnicity and religion. There are ethnic Jews and there are religious Jews, and the two are independent. Ethnicity is a matter of genetics; you are born with it, and it cannot change. Religion, of course, is entirely a matter of choice, and it can change from day to day. Ethnic Jews, like any ethnicity, carry distinct genetic markers that are passed on to each new generation. These can even be identified by DNA analysis; they are real and objective signs of a Jewish ethnicity. But the Jewish religion, Judaism, can be adopted by anyone.

²⁰ Antichrist, sec. 44 (Ludovici, trans.).

Jesus (the man) was born to ethnically Jewish parents,²¹ and thus he was ethnically a Jew. All his physical characteristics, including such things as height, facial appearance, eye color, hair color, and so on, would have been consistent with all other ethnic Jews of that place and time. As for religion, from the passages above we see that he also was raised with, and practiced, Judaism. On both counts, then, Jesus was a Jew.

What about the 12 disciples (later, apostles)? We know so little about any of them that it's hard to be conclusive, but it seems certain that all 12 were Jews. The mere fact that there were 12 seems to mirror the "twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt 19:28). When Jesus takes the 12 to Jerusalem, he predicts that he himself will be turned over "to the Gentiles" (Matt 20:19), that is, to the non-Jews; Jesus would not speak this way unless his disciples were all Jews. Furthermore, as noted, they frequently called him 'Rabbi,' a term that only Jews would use. Clearly, "we are among Jews."

Paul and the Gospels

In our focus here on the facts, it seems that the next person we know with some certainty is Paul. Paul is a major figure in our story, the key to understanding what happened at that time. I note, first of all, and despite what many people think, that Paul was not one of the 12 disciples. He never knew Jesus personally. He was not even a Christian until the year 33, some three years after the crucifixion.

Born as Saul in Tarsus (modern-day Turkey) around the year 6 AD, Paul was a Pharisee, an elite, orthodox Jew, "a Hebrew born of Hebrews" (Phil 3:5). He also may have been a Zealot, advocating violent resistance to Rome. Speaking in Acts (22:3), Paul says "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia." He continues: "I was a zealot for God..." (CJB, DLNT) or "I was zealous for God..."—the translations vary. Elsewhere he says, "I was more of a zealot for the traditions handed down by my forefathers than most Jews my age..." (Gal 1:14). There is a subtle difference between him saying "I was a zealot..." and "I was a Zealot..."; the text is not clear, and interpretations differ. But it seems clear that he was an ardent Jewish nationalist opposed to Roman rule, as was the case with most elite Jews of the time.²²

Saul was not only anti-Roman; he was anti-Christian. As a younger man, he "laid waste to the church" (Acts 8:3) and imprisoned its followers. He was even complicit in murder. He consented to the stoning death of the Christian Stephen (Acts 8:1). Even after the crucifixion in the year 30, Saul was "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1). At one point he admitted directly that "I persecuted this Way [of Jesus] to the death" (Acts 22:4).

But he had an epiphany in the year 33. On his way to Damascus (now, Syria), Saul allegedly saw an intense bright light in the sky and then heard a voice, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4, 26:14). It was the risen Jesus, informing him that he

²¹ If God was his 'father,' it was still the Jewish God, Jehovah. Either way, Jesus' father was Jewish.

²² For details of the case for Paul as a Zealot, see Fairchild (1999).

was now to be a “chosen instrument” to “carry [Jesus’] name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel” (Acts 9:15)—in other words, to build the Christian church. So he changed his name from the Jewish ‘Saul’ to the Gentile ‘Paul’ (Acts 13:9) and began his work.

For the next 20 years we have no recorded documentation of any kind by Paul. The Book of Acts, which was anonymously written sometime in the 90s,²³ claims that Paul undertook his so-called first journey to Cyprus and parts of present-day Turkey, but the dates are utterly unclear. Acts simply uses phrases like “for a long time” or “no little time,” but, oddly, gives no precise dates. We presume it was in the late 40s and lasted perhaps two years.

Starting around the year 50, we do have, apparently, some actual concrete evidence: the first letters by Paul himself. Of the 13 Pauline epistles, the earliest two are Galatians and 1 Thessalonians, both now dated to about the year 50 or 51. This was also the time that he began his second journey, which ran through present-day Turkey, into northern Greece, through Athens, and then back to Jerusalem. Paul’s remaining 11 letters appear to date between the mid-50s and the mid-60s.

At some point Paul was imprisoned in Rome, probably around the year 60, and lived there under house arrest for two years. Oddly, this is where his story ends. Acts simply stops at those two years (28:30). It says nothing of what happened afterward, and nothing of Paul’s death. This is doubly odd because Acts was written at least 20 years after Paul died; it’s almost as if the author deliberately chose not to finish Paul’s life story. Much later, in the 100s and 200s, various writings appeared that claim he was beheaded or crucified, possibly in the late 60s or the year 70. But these accounts are so far removed from the actual events that they have little credibility.

If Paul was dead by the year 70, then he just missed the destruction of the Temple that dealt a shattering blow to the Jewish community. But something else happened around that time, something equally significant: the appearance of the first Gospel, Mark. It’s an astonishing fact that, in all of Paul’s letters, nothing indicates any knowledge of any of the four Gospels. Surely, in 13 letters, Paul would have wanted to quote his savior or to cite a fact from his biography.²⁴ But we find nothing like this; no quotes from Jesus, no facts about his past, no virgin birth, no miracle stories. All these are found only in the Gospels. So why didn’t Paul cite the Gospels? The conclusion is obvious: They did not yet exist. And indeed, this is what modern scholarship confirms.

Mark, as mentioned, seems to have been written around the year 70, nearly four decades after the crucifixion. It was the first text to mention any details about Jesus’ life, to record his sayings, and to document his alleged miracles. The next two Gospels, Matthew and Luke, were written in the mid-80s. They largely repeated, but also em-

²³ Most scholars assume that Acts was written by the same author as Luke, at about the same time.

²⁴ With perhaps one exception: in 1 Cor 11:24, Paul quotes Jesus referring to the bread as his body, and the wine as his blood. Apart from this, it remains true that there are no quotations of Jesus by Paul.

bellished and supplemented, many of the same stories.²⁵ And John was not written until the mid-90s—a full 60 years after the death of Jesus. These late dates raise many problems for the conventional Jesus story, as I will explain.

The other major problem with the Gospels is authorship. Formally they are anonymous. Mark is “the Gospel according to Mark.” It’s written in third-person grammar, like a textbook, rather than as the personal account of a specific man. The same is true of Matthew. Luke is different; it’s a first-person essay directed to a generic person, “Theophilus,” which simply means “beloved of God.” The fourth Gospel, John, returns to the third-person style of Mark and Matthew.

Many people, including most scholars, assume that each Gospel was written by its namesake, i.e. Mark by someone named Mark, Luke by Luke, etc. But even if true, we have absolutely no information on who these individuals actually were. Some like to believe that “Matthew” was the apostle named Matthew, and that “John” was apostle John, but again, this is sheer speculation. “Mark,” we are told, was a friend of apostle Peter. A “Luke” is mentioned by Paul as his friend (Col 4:14; Phil 1:24), but we have no way of knowing if this is the (later) Gospel author. It’s significant that all we get are generic first names, and no biographical details at all.

In any case, it’s almost certain that all the Gospel writers, whoever they were, were Jews. All four contain numerous references to the OT, something that would only be expected of elite and educated Jews. Matthew has the most references—something like 43 direct citations. Mark and Luke have about 20 each, John around 15. But if we include indirect references, parallel wording, and other allusions, the numbers double or triple.

Matthew is clearly and heavily Jewish, the “most Jewish” of the Gospels. No scholars dispute this. Mark has been challenged by some writers, calling him, if not a Gentile, then “a heavily Hellenized” Jew—but still a Jew nonetheless. The confusion seems to arise because he was writing to and for Gentiles; this is an important fact, as I will explain. But it doesn’t change the Jewish authorship.

Luke, though, is claimed by some to be a Gentile work. But this doesn’t hold up to critical analysis. First, Paul himself claims that the word of God was given to the Jews (Rom 3:2) and therefore the Gospel, as the word of God, must have been written by a Jew. Second, the claim that ‘Luke’ is a Gentile name is irrelevant; other Jews, notably Paul, changed their names upon conversion to the cause. Third, Luke is never cited as a Gentile, and his alleged companion, Paul, is never condemned for fraternizing with such a Gentile. Luke furthermore had detailed knowledge of Jewish religious customs, as we see in (1:8-20); Gentiles would not know this. Finally, he claims intimate knowledge of the Virgin Mary, including what is “in her heart” (2:19)—something that a non-Jew would be unlikely to know.

But what about the final Gospel, John? This appears to be the most anti-Jewish—some would say, anti-Semitic—of the four. This could not possibly have been written

²⁵ Mark, Matthew, and Luke are called the ‘synoptic’ Gospels because of their considerable overlap.

by a Jew, true? Not quite. We need to observe an important point here. The nascent Christian movement, occurring entirely within the Jewish community, found substantial internal dissent. Orthodox Jews did not believe that their Messiah had come in the form of this “Jesus,” and they strongly resisted any claims to the contrary. In a sense, they wanted to “kill” the Jesus story (we can see where this is leading!). Paul and his small band of Jewish Christians thus had to combat the anti-Christian sentiments of the majority of Jews, particularly the Jewish elite of the day. John, then, reads much more naturally as an account of intra-Jewish squabbling rather than as a Gentile attacking “the Jews.”

John is, indeed, heavily critical of the Jews. They “sought to kill” Jesus (7:1). In his Gospel we read of Jesus’ own harsh words:

You [Jews] are of your father the devil... He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.²⁶ (8:44)

But this and other strong language does not indicate a Gentile-written anti-Semitism. Again, there is a compelling argument to be made that this is best seen as Jewish in-fighting. As James Dunn says, “John, in his own perspective at least, is still fighting a factional battle within Judaism rather than launching his arrows from without, still a Jew who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, Son of God, rather than an anti-semite.”²⁷ John was targeting the Jewish elite, his main adversaries. Michael Coogan agrees:

Although its scathing portrayal of “the Jews” has opened it to charges of anti-Semitism, a careful reading of the Gospel reveals “the Jews” to be a class designation, not a religious or ethnic grouping; rather than denoting adherents to Judaism in general, the term primarily refers to the hereditary Temple religious authorities.²⁸

And Delbert Burkett offers this commentary:

John once appeared to be a Hellenistic Gospel, full of non-Jewish ideas. Now, however, scholars have come to recognize that it arose among a community of Jewish Christians. ... Several passages in the Gospel indicate that it arose among Jewish Christians who were being expelled from the synagogue. These [Jews] came into conflict with the larger Jewish community because of their high esteem for Jesus and their rejection of the traditional institutions of Judaism.²⁹

Even if the Gospels underwent later modification by Gentiles, as Price and others suggest, this does not change their essentially Jewish nature.

The remainder of the NT also seems very likely to have had Jewish authors. The lengthy Hebrews—which is claimed by some to have been written by Paul—is addressed

They have much in common but also many notable differences.

²⁶ Such talk is mirrored in the later Book of Revelation (“to John”), where we read of the Jews and their “synagogue of Satan” (2:9, 3:9).

²⁷ Dunn (1992: 201).

²⁸ Coogan (2007: 147)

²⁹ Burkett (2002: 215-216).

to Jews and contains at least 36 direct references to the OT. James is addressed to “the twelve tribes in the Dispersion,” and so is 1 Peter. It’s clear that Gentiles would not be lecturing to Jews about God. The other short letters are ambiguous but contain nothing to indicate Gentile authorship.

At some point, of course, Gentiles did join the church and start writing about it. The earliest Church Fathers were probably Gentiles, including Clement of Rome (died ca. 100) and Ignatius of Antioch (d. 110). The same holds for the second generation of Fathers, which would include Quadratus (d. 129), Aristides of Athens (d. 135), Polycarp (d. 155), and Papias (d. 155). Certainly by the time of figures like Marcion, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen—in other words, mid-second century to mid-third century—we are dealing strictly with Gentiles.

As an aside, I note here that, by the late 300s, the intra-Jewish squabbling recorded in the Gospels had converted to true anti-Semitism, by Christian Gentiles directed toward the Jews. Thus we witness the harsh statements by the likes of Gregory of Nyssa (Jews are “murderers of the Lord, murderers of prophets, rebels and full of hatred against God... leaven of the Pharisees, Sanhedrin of demons, accursed, utterly vile, quick to abuse, enemies of all that is good”), John Chrysostom (the synagogue is “a brothel... It is a den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts... [T]he Jews themselves are demons”), and Jerome (the synagogue is “a den of vice, the Devil’s refuge, Satan’s fortress, a place to deprave the soul”).

To summarize this section: Paul now appears as a religious fanatic and ardent Jewish nationalist, willing to resort to violence and even kill non-Jews in order to drive out the Romans. (Later I will also affix to him the label ‘master liar.’) Paul knew nothing of “the four Gospels,” because they did not exist in his lifetime. The Gospel writers themselves were all Jews, as likely were the anonymous authors of the remainder of the NT. The Gospels as documents were likely written between 70 (Mark) and the mid-90s (John).

With this factual background in place, we can now examine precisely why the traditional Jesus story is not true. Then we will be one step closer to my central argument: namely, that since the biblical Jesus story is false, it was evidently constructed by Paul and his fellow Jews in order to sway the gullible Gentile masses to their side and away from Rome.

CHAPTER 3: WHY THE JESUS STORY IS FALSE

The Bible makes a number of ordinary and extraordinary claims regarding Jesus. The most dramatic of these qualify as miracles: a star appeared in the sky and led men to his birthplace; he was born of a virgin; he walked on water; he fed thousands with a few fish; he healed some two dozen people; he raised at least three people from

the dead; and he himself bodily ascended to heaven. Such events are the prime basis for believing that he was a divine man, a Son of God, even a god himself. They are the ultimate justification for accepting Jesus as our ‘savior’ and thus as worthy of a new religion.

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary justification. At a minimum, they require some justification. At a bare minimum, they require any justification. In the case of Jesus, unfortunately, we have no justification. In other words, we have no evidence for anything like these miracles occurring at all, let alone by a Jesus of Nazareth. In fact we have no evidence that an historical Jesus even existed, until decades after his death. We have no bodies, no tombs, no physical remains, no letters, no engravings—nothing that counts as evidence. We have no evidence.

In addition to this, we have documented dates for the various writings of Paul, of the Gospels, and others who commented on the Christians. But these spell big trouble for the standard view. In no sense do these dates align with what we would expect for the appearance of God incarnate. They are not merely ‘puzzling’; they strongly suggest that there are drastic errors in their portrayal of events.

So we have two major categories of problems. I will call these (1) the Problem of the Evidence, and (2) the Problem of the Chronology. The first considers that which we do not have, and the second that which we do. Let me examine each of these problems in turn.

(1) The Problem of the Evidence

Miracles are funny things. First, they seem to be, by and large, things of the past—the distant past. We just don’t have miracles anymore. Of course, there are “miraculous” recoveries from illness and disease, and the “miraculous” finding of lost children. But these have entirely natural explanations. Their alleged miraculous nature can never be proven. Rather, I’m referring to the grand and glorious kind of miracles: parting of seas, voices booming out from the sky, the raising of the dead, large-scale physical transformations, storms ceasing upon command. Such things would be very impressive indeed. Yet, for some reason, they just don’t seem to happen anymore.

A second fact about miracles is that, in many cases, they are somewhat like rainbows: they appear, and then they vanish without a trace. Or at least, over the course of time, all possible evidence of them vanishes. It’s very easy to posit miracles in the past when all traces of evidence are gone.

Take, for example, the Virgin Mary. How could we demonstrate that she was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus? We have no hope of proving such a thing, one way or the other. Even if we had her full bodily remains, we could not prove or disprove her virginity. This situation is, of course, very convenient for those promoting the conventional story; it’s very useful to be able to make claims that can never possibly be refuted. Unfortunately, most of the ‘Jesus miracles’ are of this sort; there is no conceivable evidence that could prove or disprove them. People risen from the dead

eventually (I presume!) die again anyway. People divinely healed don't, presumably, have 'miracle scars' or other traces of their miraculous recovery. Physical remains are all but non-existent.

The best we can hope for in such cases is corroboration: that is, of someone else—an independent, unbiased (or even biased!) observer—acting as a witness. This is not proof, but it is at least a kind of substantiating evidence. Every one of the 'Jesus miracles' had at least one witness—someone who, in theory, could have written, spoken, or otherwise recorded what he or she had seen. Some of the miracles had many witnesses; some, thousands. There were many, many opportunities for documentation of the miracles. And yet, nothing exists.

Let's take a look at a few of the specific miracles, in order to better understand the problem of the evidence.

Apart from the virgin birth (or rather, pregnancy), the very first Jesus miracle was the Star of Bethlehem. We know the story: a star appears "in the east" and guides three wise men to the manger where baby Jesus lay. This simple story is rife with problems. The first is a kind of chronological problem: Paul never mentions the star, or Bethlehem, or anything about Jesus' birth. The first Gospel, Mark, does not mention the star or the birth; instead, it starts right in with the adult Jesus. The star does not appear in Luke, and it does not appear in John. The only place it appears is in the Gospel of Matthew (2:1)—written some 85 years after the alleged event. This fact alone argues against its veracity.

But more to the point, if a miraculous star did appear in the heavens, as an actual celestial event, most likely someone would have documented it. Ancient astronomers have been doing similar things for millennia. Eclipses have been documented as far back as 2,000 or 3,000 BC. Halley's Comet was documented in China in 240 BC, and again by the Babylonians in 164 BC. Surely, if the star were so impressive, someone would have documented it. But no such record exists.

Furthermore, we have the embarrassingly obvious fact that one cannot "follow" a star, certainly not to any specific point on Earth. Stars, or any celestial object, "move" throughout the night as the Earth rotates. Your star that is first in "the east" will soon be, perhaps, over your head, and then later to "the west." To follow this star would be to walk in circles. And even someone were to take a "snapshot" view of a star and move in that direction, that of course could not direct you to any specific place. At best you are simply walking in a straight line. The story makes no sense. Perhaps, as some have said, the entire star incident was a "pious fiction." No harm there, surely—unless it was the first of many.

The Miracle Men

Let's move now to the specific miracles performed by Jesus. Depending on how we count them, there are something like 36 specific miracles claimed of him—all recorded in the four Gospels. By Gospel, the numbers are:

Mark:19 miracles

Matthew:22

Luke:21

John: 8

(Note that many overlap, with different Gospels recording the same miracle.)

We can break down the 36 miracles into three categories: raisings from the dead (3), healings (24), and natural events (9). These are all listed in Appendix A.

We note some interesting trends. Mark, for example, has only one raising of the dead—Jairus’ daughter. Matthew repeats this. So does Luke, but he adds another: the widow’s son. John, for some reason, ignores both of these but comes up with a new one, the famous Lazarus tale. Strange how the most famous raising-of-the-dead story appears not until the very last Gospel, some 60 years after the alleged event.

Mark recounts 13 miracle healings (which include exorcisms). Matthew repeats 11 of these, and then adds four new ones. Luke covers 12 of the Mark/Matt miracles, but then adds another four of his own. John, inexplicably, ignores all the previous healing miracles, but then describes three brand new ones.

It’s a similar story with the nature miracles. Mark has five. Matthew repeats these, and then adds one of his own. Luke cover two of the previous ones, then adds a new one. John includes two old miracles, but then adds two new.

What are we to think of this? Did the miracle stories just not quite make the rounds back then? Especially, we recall, since all these documents were written 40 years or more after the crucifixion. Did the writers, perhaps, feel a need to increase the miracles over time, to make the Jesus story just a bit better? Or to take ordinary events and make them extraordinary?

Amazingly, it’s not only Jesus who performs miracles. I think many would be surprised to learn that Paul, Peter, and in fact all the apostles have done them. Paul’s are documented in Acts. There we read that he makes a man blind (13:11), heals the sick (14:10, 28:8), and even raises the dead! (20:9-12). Paul generally performed “extraordinary miracles” (19:11), and indeed was viewed as “a god” (28:6)—at least, by the author of Acts.³⁰

For his part, Peter walked on water (Mt 14:30), healed the sick (Acts 3:7, 9:34), and also raised the dead (9:40). Apostle Philip healed the sick (6:8). Generally speaking, all the apostles performed “signs and wonders” (2:43, 5:12), and in Matthew we read that Jesus specifically directed his apostles to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons” (10:8). Quite a task that Jesus has laid at their feet.

Vanishing Evidence

But let me return to the question of evidence. Most of Jesus’ miracles were conducted in front of only a small number of people—in some cases, just one. Still, each

³⁰ Presumed to be Luke.

witness then had an opportunity to tell his story, to write it down, or to engrave something in stone. Imagine the interest today, for example, in finding Lazarus' tombstone: "Here lies Lazarus. Died age 40, raised from the dead by Jesus Christ, died again aged 78"—or something similar. That's not proof, but it would be a compelling bit of evidence. But nothing like that exists.

Some of the miracles had many witnesses, the prime example being the 'fishes and loaves' story. Not many people realize that there were two such incidents. Mark (6:30-44) tells us, first, that Jesus fed "five thousand men" with "five loaves, and two fish." Then a bit later, Mark (8:1-13) informs us that he fed "about four thousand people" with "seven loaves...and a few small fish."³¹ Therefore we have 9,000 witnesses to a miracle. Surely some of those people, perhaps many, would have somehow documented the event. Even if they were illiterate peasants, they still knew rabbis or other men who could write. And according to John, they did tell such men. He writes that the Pharisees were worried by all the miracles: "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation" (Jn 11:47-48).³² This is revealing: the masses knew about the miracles, the elite Jews knew about them, and surely the local Romans had heard rumors, at least. And yet, no one documented anything.

The point bears repeating. During Jesus' entire lifetime, from, say 3 BC to 30 AD, not one person—not a Christian, not a Jew, not a Roman, not a Greek—wrote anything about the miracles, what Jesus said, or what his followers did. No one wrote anything. It's as if nothing extraordinary happened at all.

This would be all but impossible if the Jesus story were true. Consider the situation of Pontius Pilate. Here he is, governor of Palestine, located some 1,400 miles from Rome as the crow flies. He has his hands full already with rebellious Jews. He is struggling to keep order, when appears...the Son of God, a Jew, who is working all sorts of miracles. Undoubtedly he would be writing furiously back to Rome, asking for help, advice, extra centurions, you name it. The Romans were excellent record-keepers; surely any such astonishing letters would have survived. And yet we have not one.

At the same time there lived a famous Jewish philosopher, Philo. He was born around 20 BC, and thus was an adult at the time of the Bethlehem star. He lived well past the crucifixion, dying about the year 50 AD. He would have been the ideal man to record everything about a Jewish miracle-worker and savior.³³ He wrote about 40 individual essays, which now fill seven volumes. Yet he says not one word about Jesus or the Christian movement.

³¹ The two incidents are repeated in Matthew (14:13 and 15:32). Luke and John only record the first feeding.

³² This was after John had documented all eight of his listed miracles.

³³ He did live in Alexandria, not Palestine. But by his own account, he visited Jerusalem at least once.

It gets worse. For the next 20 years after the crucifixion, we still have no evidence. From the years 30 to 50 AD, not one thing has survived that documents Jesus or his miracles: not a letter, not a book, not an engraving, nothing. Nothing by Jews, nothing by Christians, nothing by Romans—nothing. This is utterly inexplicable, if the Jesus story is true. On the other hand, if Jesus were simply a minor insurrectionist who was executed one day, it's not at all surprising that nothing remains. In fact, it's exactly what we would expect.

And yet, it's worse still. We know that, from the year 50, we have a few letters by Paul. These letters are finished when Paul dies around the year 70. Now, of course, his letters cannot count as evidence, because it is exactly his accounts of Jesus that we are trying to validate. Apart from Paul's letters, from the years 50 to 70, we still have no evidence. Nothing by other Christians, nothing by Jews, nothing by Romans—nothing.

And still it gets worse. The Gospels appeared between 70 and the mid-90s. But they, too, cannot count as evidence because it is precisely these documents that need confirmation. Apart from the four Gospels, from 70 to the mid-90s, we still have no evidence.

In sum: for the entire period of the early Christian era—that is, from say 3 BC to the mid-90s AD—we have no corroborating evidence from anyone who was not party to the new religion. Not a shred of anything exists: documents, letters, stone carvings...nothing at all. It's hard to overstate the importance of this problem. This fact alone argues for a huge inconsistency with the Biblical account.

When confronted with this damning situation, Christian apologists typically have two excuses. First: "All evidence was lost." Of course this is theoretically possible, but it is extremely hard to believe. A body of material, consisting of surely hundreds or thousands (including copies) of contemporaneous documents citing the miracles of Jesus, some written by friends, some by enemies, some by neutral bystanders, all lost to history. This, despite having countless historians, researchers, journalists, and others searching hard for two thousand years. This is all but impossible.

The second excuse: "All documents of the time were repressed or destroyed, either by the Jews or the Romans." Is it possible that both the Jews and the Romans—all of them—were so shocked by the appearance of the Son of God that they both deemed it an unspeakable secret of some kind, never to be written or spoken about? And to have all remaining evidence utterly destroyed? The Jews, perhaps, had something to fear in this Jesus, but they were not so scared that they couldn't push for his execution. And once he had arisen, did they then realize the magnitude of their crime, and vow to say or write nothing? Perhaps.

But the Romans, particularly those back in the imperial capital, would not have been so equally frightened. They didn't believe the superstitions of the Jews, and surely would have placed no weight on any alleged miracles or resurrection. Any panicked letters from Pilate would have been given calm and pragmatic replies. Even Pilate would not have been overly-impressed. Once Jesus of Nazareth was executed, he was done and gone forever. The sheer fact of his crucifixion proved to all Romans that

he was no miracle man, no Son of God. There likely would have been a few final ‘case closed’ letters to Rome, and that was that. Certainly no mass suppression or destruction of evidence. The Romans had no reason to do so.

And it wouldn’t have only been government officials doing the writing. Many important intellectuals of the day would certainly have been in a position to document the coming of God. Men such as Petronius, Seneca, Martial, and Quintillian all lived in the immediate aftermath of the crucifixion and would have been ideally situated to write about Jesus’ extraordinary life. So too with Philo, the Jewish philosopher, as I noted above. And yet not one of these men wrote a single word about him.

And apart from Romans and Jews, there were many neutral parties who might have commented: Phoenicians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks—all had no vested interest in the Christian story and thus could have easily written about the alleged miracles. But not one of them did.

I must conclude, then, that neither the ‘lost’ excuse nor the ‘repression’ excuse holds any water. It is simply not possible for such a monumental event to have occurred and yet not a shred of documentation from that time remains.

(2) The Problem of the Chronology

Given the above, one could be excused for thinking that there is no corroborating evidence at all of an early Christian movement. But of course that’s not true. There is evidence, along with fairly well-accepted dates. The problem for Christians is that it’s not at all what we would expect. Rather than helping, the evidence that we do possess is actually detrimental to their cause.

Recall that the very first documented bits of evidence are the letters by Paul. They date from around 50 AD to his death in the late 60s. Next comes the Gospels: Mark (ca. 70 AD), Matthew and Luke (ca. 85), and John (ca. 95). Paul’s dates are to be expected, given that he was the founder of the movement. It does seem strange that his first 20 years are lost, with no letters or other documentation at all. Perhaps most of his early work was local, not requiring letters. Or perhaps he was so unknown that no one felt an urge to save his correspondence. But when his new church began to go global around the year 50, then we should rightly expect to see some documentation—and we do. The Pauline chronology poses no real concerns for us.

The Gospels, however, are very problematic for Christians. Consider this obvious question: Why did it take someone nearly 40 years to write down what Jesus had said? Wouldn’t that have been the first thing someone would have done, once it was clear that he ascended to heaven? What about his 11 surviving disciples (not including Judas, of course)? Each one of them should have been furiously documenting every word, every sound that they could recall from their savior’s lips. There should have been 11 well-written, complete, and consistent gospels within a year of Jesus’ death. Instead

we have—nothing. The 11 men, now apostles, more or less vanish from the face of the Earth. No letters, no books, no engravings, no tombstones, no life histories—nothing.³⁴

Then Paul comes along, and he too gives us nothing on the life of Jesus. No—we must wait 40 years after Jesus’ death for Mark to document his life history and teachings; forty years after death, and 70 years after birth. By all accounts, Mark never knew or met Jesus. Therefore he got all his information second-, third-, or fourth-hand. If the information was written down, it is lost. If it was not written down, then it was sustained orally, and this is a notoriously unreliable method of transmission. In essence, we have no way of determining how accurate Mark is, and good reason to think it is highly altered, perhaps centering around a core of rather ordinary information about a rather ordinary Jesus of Nazareth. The other Gospels, being later in time, are even less likely to be reliable.

But it gets worse. The dates that we have for the four Gospels, cited above, are conjectures based on much later manuscripts and fragments. It’s not as if we have an “original Mark” from the year 70. Not even close. The oldest existing portion of Mark is the Chester Beatty fragment P45, which includes about half of the Gospel. It dates to about the year 250. We have no idea how many changes, transcription errors, or other modifications may have occurred in those intervening 180 years. The oldest full copy of Mark comes in the Vatican Codex, which is even later, dating to around 350. So half of Mark underwent unknown changes for 180 years, and the other half for 280 years. And yet we are expected to have complete confidence in this document as the literal word of God.

The oldest fragment of any Gospel comes with Rylands P52, a mere scrap of papyrus that contains a few words from John. It supposedly dates to 125, but this is based strictly on handwriting analysis and not carbon dating or other physical techniques. The earliest Matthew fragment, P104, again containing just a few words, dates to 175. The oldest Luke fragment, P75, to around 200. We can see that we have no access to any of the original Gospels, and all underwent unknown modifications for decades or centuries.

Enter Josephus

The dating of the Gospels represents a kind of ‘internal’ chronology problem. But there is also an external one. It relates to the question of corroborating evidence from outside the sphere of the church. Above I showed that, for nearly the entire first century, all we have are Paul’s letters and the four Gospels. And since these documents are the very ones in question, they cannot serve as their own confirmation. We need something independent, and that’s what we do not have.

But then along comes Josephus. Born around the year 37, he, like all Jewish elite, was a member of the resistance to Rome. He fought in the first Jewish-Roman war and

³⁴ Acts contains a few references to Peter and John, but little of verifiable content.

was captured in 67. Emperor Vespasian decided to free him in 69 to serve as a high-level slave and translator. In exchange for a modest freedom, Josephus willingly sided with the Romans, changing his name to Flavius Josephus. In time he wrote two major books: *The Jewish War* (ca. 75) and *Antiquities of the Jews* (ca. 93).³⁵ The former told the story of the first Jewish war, and the latter gave a history of the Jewish people.

As an elite, educated Jew living in Palestine just after the crucifixion, Josephus was perfectly situated to comment on Jesus. He would have known all the stories and legends inside and out. As a writer, he certainly would have recorded these events in his books.

So, what did he write? His first book, *The Jewish War*, contains nothing on Jesus or the Christians. Granted that the topic was the war and not religion, but even so, it would have been difficult to avoid mention, had he heard about Jesus. The most reasonable conclusion is that, as of the year 75, he had heard nothing. His void on Christianity is inexplicable if the Jesus story is true, but it's exactly as expected if the early Christian movement, now post-Paul, had barely begun.

By 93, though, things change. Now, for the first time in history, we find independent, non-Christian confirmation of an actually existing Christian movement. In *Antiquities*, Josephus writes one paragraph, and then one additional sentence, on the Christians. Here is the first passage, known as the 'Testimonium Flavium':

About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared. (Bk 18, Ch 3, 3)

A fascinating passage, to be sure. Here we have all the basics of the Christian story in a nutshell. And yet even here, there are problems. Almost no one accepts that this passage was originally written by Josephus. Rather, the literary analysts have determined that words were added or modified at a later date. But the experts cannot agree on what was changed, when, or by whom. "He was the Christ" seems an obvious interpolation (insertion), but it's very likely that other edits occurred.

Unfortunately, like most ancient documents, we have no "original." What we have are copies of copies from much later dates. In this case, the oldest copy of this critical passage comes from the Christian apologist Eusebius, from roughly the year 324. We can only imagine what changed in the intervening 230 years.³⁶

Josephus' second passage includes this line: "Albinus...assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose

³⁵ A third important work, *Contra Apion*, was composed near the end of his life, around 100.

³⁶ The earliest full copy of the book dates to the 1000s.

name was James, and some others” (Bk 20, Ch 9, 1). But nothing more here on Jesus. The reference to a brother James is consistent with Paul’s letter to the Galatians: “But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother” (Gal 1:19).³⁷

I’ll not debate the authenticity of these passages here. For my purposes, it doesn’t really matter. It’s not at all surprising that, by the 90s AD, there would be a visible Christian movement. But by all accounts, it was small and insignificant, based on the scant space that Josephus allows to the topic. Of course, it doesn’t prove that any of the reported things actually happened; all it shows is that someone believed that it happened.

The Roman Perspective

Josephus is important because he is the first non-Christian to confirm that a Christian movement existed, at least by the late first century AD. But what about the Romans? I already noted that Pontius Pilate evidently wrote nothing about Jesus, nor did any other early Roman commentator. Eventually, though, the Romans did get around to mentioning the new religion. And the first to write about it was the great historian Tacitus.

Tacitus was born in the year 58 to an aristocratic family. Between 98 and 105 AD he wrote four books, including the highly important work *Histories*. As it happens, not one of them so much as mentions Jesus or the Christians.

But his final work, *Annals*, which dates circa 115 AD, does include two sentences on them. In section 44 of Book 15 we read the following:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

Nero, it seems, was anxious to blame someone for the Great Roman Fire of 64 AD. Apparently he placed it on a “hated” group, the Christians, “a most mischievous superstition.” The passage is likely authentic but yet odd in that we have no other reference to Christians in Rome at the time of Nero, or of Nero actually blaming them for anything. Perhaps Tacitus is recording what he heard or read elsewhere, and was unable to actually confirm.

But this is not relevant here. What matters is the stunning fact that it took until the year 115—80 years after the crucifixion, nearly 120 years after the miracle birth—for the first Roman to document the Christians. And even then, he grants them all of two sentences.

³⁷ Mark (6:3) also mentions a brother James, along with brothers Joses, Judas, and Simon.

A second Roman reference—and the third non-Christian—comes from Pliny. Like Tacitus, Pliny was an educated and highly literate aristocrat. By the year 110, at around age 50, he had assumed the position of imperial governor of a province in the north of present-day Turkey. In a letter to Emperor Trajan, from about the same time as Tacitus' *Annals*, he writes an extended critique of the Christian movement. Over the course of about five paragraphs, Pliny explains his need to repress the Christians, including executing the non-citizens and shipping citizens to Rome for punishment. Christianity is described as a “depraved, excessive superstition,” and Pliny is worried that the “contagion of this superstition” is spreading. But still, he thinks it “possible to check and cure it.”

Pliny's suggestions aside, what we find here is a fascinating account of a growing but troublesome new religion. The Romans were generally tolerant of other religions, and thus we must conclude that there was something uniquely problematic about this group. It may perhaps have been their Jewish origins, or the fact that they embodied particularly repellent values. We lack the details here to determine the cause of the enmity. But in any case, it seems clear that the early Christians were not simple apostles of love. Something else was going on with this group that the Romans found truly galling and, indeed, a kind of threat to the social or moral order.

In this chapter I hope to have shown that the utter lack of expected evidence is damning for the biblical Jesus, and what evidence we do have is equally damning in its own way. There is nothing to be said for the Christian side of the story. It's a lose-lose proposition. Therefore the only reasonable conclusion is that the traditional Jesus story must be false.

And yet, something happened. We know for certain that by the mid-90s or early 100s latest, Christians were becoming noticed and causing trouble for the empire. We are fairly sure that Paul lived and wrote between the mid-30s and late-60s, and that the Gospels first appeared between 70 and 95. The issue now before us is to reconstruct the details regarding what may have actually happened.

But we have a bit more preparatory work to do first. We know that the first Christians were all Jews, from Jesus and Mary down to the apostles and Gospel writers. We know that the Jews had been under pressure from Rome since the occupation began in 63 BC. What we have yet to examine is why the Jews were so antagonistic to Rome, the depth of their hatred, and the extent to which some of them, at least, were willing to go to drive out the Romans. Jewish attitudes toward others, and the attitudes of others toward them, need to be made clear so that we can better understand the milieu in which Paul and his band of friends were able to construct such a monumental Jesus hoax.

CHAPTER 4: ONE AGAINST ALL

In the early years of Christianity, Jews are front and center. As I have already shown, the entire early Christian movement and the entire Bible itself are thoroughly and completely Jewish. We have seen how the traditional Jesus story cannot be true, due to the lack of contemporaneous evidence and the many internal and external chronology problems.

Let's now examine, first, how the Jews viewed themselves and others. Then we will take a look at how others—mostly Greeks and Romans—viewed them. An understanding of these attitudes, on both sides, is critical to a proper perspective of the origins of Christianity.

Jewish Attitudes, Within and Without

Fortunately for us, Jewish attitudes are clearly documented in the Bible. We can see there, simply by reading the OT text, how they felt about themselves and the other nations around them.

Earlier, in chapter one, I cited the well-known fact that the Jews consider themselves the “chosen people” of God. There are a number of passages that support this idea. Already with Abraham, in the Book of Genesis, we read that God made special promises and commitments to him: “To your descendents I will give this land [of Canaan/Palestine]” (Gen 12:7). Later God adds this: “I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendents after you, throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant... And I will give to you, and to your descendents after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (17:7-8). Not quite yet ‘chosen,’ but still a privileged people, to be sure.

Then in Exodus, God speaks to Moses: “You [Jews] shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex 19:5-6).

But things don't become clear until the last book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy. Moses recalls the words of God: “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth” (Deut 7:6). For emphasis, God repeats this proclamation: “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth” (14:2). The point could hardly be more succinct.

If the Jews are chosen by God, then everyone else is, of necessity, not chosen. If Jews are first class humans in the eyes of God, everyone else is second-class at best. And indeed, Jews do view themselves as distinct, special, and superior to others. As Exodus states, “We are distinct...from all other people that are upon the face of the earth” (33:16). Similarly, the Hebrew tribe is “a people dwelling alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations” (Numbers 23:9).

Furthermore, and to the point, if God gave the Jews a kind of dominion, they can then feel justified in imposing upon others—and harshly. Already in Genesis we read: “Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you” (27:29). In Deuteronomy, God promises the Jews “houses full of all good things, which [they] did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which [they] did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which [they] did not plant” (6:11). Moses adds that “you shall rule over many nations” (15:6), and “they shall be afraid of you” (28:10).

And outside the Pentateuch, we read in Isaiah: “Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you...that men may bring you the wealth of the nations” (60:10-11); or again, “aliens shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers...you shall eat the wealth of the nations” (61:5-6). In light of all these passages, Jewish attitudes become somewhat more comprehensible.

Now of course, we have to be clear that all this is really their view of themselves. No one believes that God literally came to Abraham and Moses and said those things. These religious documents are a reflection of how the Jews viewed themselves. They saw themselves as special, different, ‘select,’ and thus they put these ideas into the mouth of their God. Certainly, no one would deny a people pride in themselves. But these extreme statements go far beyond normal bounds. They indicate a kind of self-absorption, a self-glorification, perhaps a narcissism, perhaps a conceit. To be chosen by the creator of the universe, and to be granted right to rule, ruthlessly, over all other nations, bespeaks a kind of megalomania that is unprecedented in history.

Views from the Outside

Clearly, when other people began to encounter these ideas and the attitudes that derived from them, one would expect a backlash. And there was. Hence we find a consistent thread of opinions from non-Jewish observers, for centuries, who are repelled by such arrogance.

The first sign of trouble comes with the very first mention of a people called “Israel.” As I mentioned in chapter 2, we have a large engraved stone, the Merneptah Stele, from around the year 1200 BC that references that nation. The one relevant line is this: “Israel is laid waste and his seed is not.” Evidently there existed a people called Israel at that time; they got into some kind of conflict with the people who carved the stone; and Israel was badly defeated. It’s hard to infer much more, but clearly this is an inauspicious start to the Jewish people.

A second ancient, and also negative, reference comes from another stone, the Tel Dan Stele. Carved around 850 BC, this engraving records a King Hazael boasting of his victory over the kings of Israel and the “House of David.” It seems that Israel had invaded his father’s country in the past, and Hazael was now exacting revenge. The details are hazy, but it’s clear that Israel was once again a belligerent people, and once again paid a price.

Next we shift to the Bible itself, and the story of the Exodus. Early in that book we read that the Jews are still in Egypt, having travelled there at the end of Genesis. An unnamed new pharaoh arises, and he has an issue with the Jews. “Behold,” he says, “the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us...” (Ex 1:10). In general, “the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel” (1:12). Eventually the pharaoh drives Moses and the Jews out of Egypt and into Palestine, where they establish the Kingdom of David by 1000 BC.

It should be clear that, even back then, that mass expulsions were an extraordinary event, not to be undertaken lightly. There was evidently something about the Jews—perhaps their arrogance, perhaps their deceit, perhaps, as the pharaoh said, their disloyalty to their host nation—that caused this action. Below I will cite a few later and illuminating commentaries on this particular event.

Another revealing incident occurred in the year 410 BC, in the southern Egyptian city of Elephantine. A Jewish community and temple existed there since about 650 BC, and in 525 BC the Persian king Cambyses invaded and incorporated the territory into his empire. Pragmatic people that they were, the Jews quickly allied themselves with the new ruler, but this had the negative effect of placing them on the side of the foreign invaders and against the indigenous Egyptians. Peter Schafer writes, “the Jews are the supporters of the hated foreign rule and do not join...in the struggle against the oppressors”.³⁸ It was furthermore only the Jews who were targeted: “[A]lthough members of different ethnic origin were stationed at Elephantine, it is solely the Jews against whom the Egyptian priests direct their animosity”.³⁹ Despite official directive to support the Jewish community, local Persian commander Vidranga found them objectionable and indeed intolerable; he soon sided with the Egyptian rebels, against the Jews. Vidranga pillaged and destroyed the Jewish temple in 410 BC. Once again, where the Jews settled amongst other peoples, they seem to have made enemies.

The first outsiders to explicitly comment on the Jews were the Greeks. Through sea-faring trade and imperial expansion they came into contact with many groups of the eastern Mediterranean, including Egyptians, Phoenicians, Syrians, and Jews. The earliest direct references come from Aristotle’s star pupil Theophrastus. He had a concern about one of their customs: “the Syrians, of whom the Jews (Ioudaioi) constitute a part, also now sacrifice live victims... They were the first to institute sacrifices both of other living beings and of themselves”.⁴⁰ The Greeks, he added, would have “recoiled from the entire business.” The victims—animal and human—were not eaten, but burnt as “whole offerings” to their God, and were “quickly destroyed.” The philosopher was clearly repelled by this Jewish tradition.

³⁸ (1997: 134).

³⁹ (ibid: 135).

⁴⁰ In Stern (1974: 10).

Hecateus of Abdera, working somewhat after Theophrastus, wrote a text: On the Jews. Two fragments survive, one by Josephus and the other by Diodorus. Generally speaking both fragments are sympathetic, and thus it's striking that the latter includes this observation on the story of the Exodus: "as a consequence of having been driven out [of Egypt], Moses introduced a way of life which was to a certain extent misanthropic and hostile to foreigners".⁴¹ One can certainly understand the anger of any people who have been driven from their place of residence. But why should this translate into misanthropy—that is, hatred of mankind in general? It's as if the Jews took out their anger on the rest of humanity. Perhaps it was a case of extreme resentment combined with extreme stubbornness. Or perhaps an outcome of their self-perception as embodied in their religious worldview.

It was around that time that the Macedonian general Ptolemy I came to rule Egypt. His military, for various reasons, could not conscript Egyptian citizens, and so a mercenary army was necessary. Ptolemy had a ready supply at hand in the Jews. Emilio Gabba relates that the king employed 30,000 Jews, chosen from among his many prisoners of war. "Well paid and highly trustworthy, they served to keep the native population at bay, and the natives apparently retaliated against them from time to time"—a situation that recalls the previous events in Elephantine.⁴² This, in addition to the cultural and religious quirks, was another basis for indigenous animosity towards Jews. But again this incident is revealing. It's understandable to want to get out of prison, but one must wonder at the evident readiness of the Jews to side with their enemies, for pay, and to do so enthusiastically, with little compunction.

But there is still a lingering question here: Why were the Jews driven out of Egypt? Egyptian high priest Manetho (ca. 250 BC) tells of a group of "lepers and other polluted persons," 80,000 in number, who were exiled from Egypt and found residence in Judea. There they established Jerusalem and built a large temple. Manetho comments that the Jews kept to themselves, as it was their law "to interact with none save those of their own confederacy." As the story continues, the Jews ("Solymites") marshaled allies from amongst other 'polluted' persons, returned to Egypt, and temporarily conquered a large territory. When in power they treated the natives "impiously and savagely," "set[ting] towns and villages on fire, pillaging the temples and mutilating images of the gods without restraint," and roasting the animals held sacred by the locals.⁴³ This is a very different version than we read in the Jewish Bible.

Into the Roman Era

The Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes ruled over the territory of Judea in the early second century BC. Internal Jewish disputes elevated to a general insurrection,

⁴¹ In Gabba (1984: 629).

⁴² (1984: 635).

⁴³ In Stern (1974: 82-83).

which angered him. His army invaded Jerusalem in 168 BC, killing many Jews and plundering their great (second) temple. Greek philosopher Posidonius adds that, upon seizing the temple, Epiphanes freed a Greek citizen who was being held captive, only to be fattened up for sacrifice, and eaten. This was allegedly an annual ritual. He further remarks that the Jews worshipped the head of an ass, having placed one of solid gold in their temple.

The decline of the Seleucids coincided with Roman ascent. Rome was still technically a republic in the second century BC, but its power and influence were rapidly growing. Jews were attracted to the seat of power, and travelled to Rome in significant numbers. As before, they grew to be hated. By 139 BC, the Roman praetor Hispalus found it necessary to expel them from the city: “The same Hispalus banished the Jews from Rome, who were attempting to hand over their own rites to the Romans, and he cast down their private alters from public places”.⁴⁴ In even this short passage, one senses a Roman Jewry who were disproportionately prominent, obtrusive, even ‘pushy.’

Perhaps in part because of this incident, and in light of the Maccabean revolt some 30 years earlier, the Seleucid king Antiochus VII Sidetes was advised in 134 BC to exterminate the Jews. Referring to the account by Posidonius, Gabba explains that the king was called on

to destroy the Jews, for they alone among all peoples refused all relations with other races, and saw everyone as their enemy; their forbears, impious and cursed by the gods, had been driven out of Egypt. The counselors [cited] the Jews’ hatred of all mankind, sanctioned by their very laws, which forbade them to share their table with a Gentile or give any sign of benevolence.⁴⁵

Needless to say, Sidetes did not heed his counselors’ advice.

Two or three decades after Posidonius, around the year 75 BC, prominent speaker and teacher Apollonius Molon wrote the first book to explicitly confront the Hebrew tribe, *Against the Jews*. From his early years in Caria and Rhodes he would likely have had direct contact with them, and thus was able to write from personal experience. Molon referred to Moses as a “charlatan” and “imposter,” viewing the Jews as “the very vilest of mankind”.⁴⁶ Josephus adds the following:

[Molon] has scattered [his accusations] here and there all over his work, reviling us in one place as atheists and misanthropes, in another reproaching us as cowards, whereas elsewhere, on the contrary, he accuses us of temerity and reckless madness. He adds that we are the most witless of all barbarians, and are consequently the only people who have contributed no useful invention to civilization.⁴⁷

The Jews are ‘atheists’ in the sense that they reject the Roman gods. The ‘misanthrope’ charge recurs, having first appeared some two centuries earlier in Hecateus. But the complaints of cowardice, villainy, and recklessness are new, as is the statement

⁴⁴ Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta* (1.3.3).

⁴⁵ (1984: 645).

⁴⁶ In Stern (1974: 155-156).

⁴⁷ In Stern (1974: 155). See also *Contra Apionem*, II.148.

that the Jews have contributed nothing of value to civilization. The rhetoric is clearly heating up.

In 63 BC, as we know, Roman general Pompey took Palestine. Thus it's unsurprising that we find a quick succession of anti-Jewish comments by notable Romans. Four are of interest, beginning with Cicero. In the year 59 BC Cicero gave a speech, now titled *Pro Flacco*, that offered a defense of L. V. Flaccus, a Roman *propraetor* in Asia. Flaccus was charged with embezzling Jewish gold destined for Jerusalem. Strikingly, Cicero begins by noting the power and influence of the Jews:

You know what a big crowd it is, how they stick together, how influential they are in informal assemblies. So I will speak in a low voice so that only the jurors may hear; for those are not wanting who would incite them against me and against every respectable man.⁴⁸

It's rather shocking that Cicero, speaking near the height of Roman power, should voice this concern—if even as a mock concern.

He continues on, noting that the senate had a long-standing policy of restricting gold exports, and that Flaccus was only enforcing this rule, not withholding the gold for himself. Here was his downfall: “But to resist this barbaric superstition (*barbarae superstitioni*) was an act of firmness, to defy the crowd of Jews (*Iudaeorum*) when sometimes in our assemblies they were hot with passion...” All the gold is accounted for, Cicero hastens to add. The whole trial “is just an attempt to fix odium on him” (recalling present-day attempts to smear ‘anti-Semites’). The Jewish religion is “at variance with the glory of our empire, the dignity of our name, the customs of our ancestors.” That the gods stand opposed to this tribe “is shown by the fact that it has been conquered, let out for taxes, made a slave.”

Ten years later Diodorus Siculus wrote his *Historical Library*. Among other things, it again recounts the Exodus:

[T]he ancestors of the Jews had been driven out of all Egypt as men who were impious and detested by the gods. For by way of purging the country of all persons who had white or leprous marks on their bodies had been assembled and driven across the border, as being under a curse; the refugees had occupied the territory round about Jerusalem, and having organized the nation of Jews had made their hatred of mankind into a tradition... (34, 1)

The *Library* then includes a retelling of Antiochus Epiphanes' takeover of the Jewish temple in 168—the same event found in the earlier work of Posidonius. But this is no mere duplication; it demonstrates an acceptance and endorsement of that account. Here, though, it is Antiochus Epiphanes, not his successor Sidetes, that was urged “to wipe out completely the race of Jews, since they alone of all nations avoided dealings with any other people and looked upon all men as their enemies”.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ In Stern (1974: 197).

⁴⁹ HL 34, 1. Also see Stern (1974: 183).

Upon entering the temple Antiochus finds a statue of a bearded man on an ass—Moses, the one “who had ordained for the Jews their misanthropic and lawless customs.” Antiochus’ advisors were “shocked by such hatred directed against all mankind,” and therefore “strongly urged [him] to make an end of the race completely.” In his magnanimity, he declined.

The great lyric poet Horace wrote his Satires in 35 BC, exploring Epicurean philosophy and the meaning of happiness. At one point, though, he makes a passing comment on the apparently notorious proselytizing ability of the Roman Jews—in particular their tenaciousness in winning over others. Horace is in the midst of attempting to persuade the reader of his point of view: “and if you do not wish to yield, then a great band of poets will come to my aid...and, just like the Jews, we will compel you to concede to our crowd” (I.4.143). Their power must have been legendary, or he would not have made such an allusion.

The last commentator of the pre-Christian era was Lysimachus. Writing circa 20 BC, he offers another variation on the Exodus story, placing it in the reign of the pharaoh Bocchoris (or Bakenranef) of 720 BC. On his version, the Jews, “afflicted with leprosy, scurvy, and other maladies,” sought refuge in Egyptian temples. The oracles advised Bocchoris to cleanse the temples, to banish the impious and impure, and “to pack the lepers into sheets of lead and sink them in the ocean”—which he did. The exiled ones, led by Moses, were instructed to “show goodwill to no man,” to offer “the worst advice” to others, and to overthrow any temples or sanctuaries they might come upon. Arriving in Judea, “they maltreated the population, and plundered and set fire to the [local] temples.” They then built a town called Hierosolyma (Jerusalem), and referred to themselves as Hierosolymites.⁵⁰ If indeed they persecuted the indigenous population, one can see in this a distant predecessor to the current Israeli atrocities in Palestine.

The charge of misanthropy, or hatred of mankind, is significant and merits further discussion, especially in light of the Christian story. It has recurred several times already—in Hecateus, Posidonius, Molon, Diodorus, and now Lysimachus. This is striking because the Romans were notably tolerant of other sects and religions, owing in part to their polytheistic worldview. A society of many gods implicitly recognizes religious diversity; if there are many such beings, who can claim complete knowledge of the divine realm? Monotheism, in contrast, claims exclusive and absolute knowledge; it has one God and one truth. Therefore other religions with other god(s) are necessarily false. Thus it’s reasonable to assume that the Jews, as the first monotheists of the Middle East, did not reciprocate Roman tolerance.

In fact this seems to have been a general rule throughout history: religious intolerance derives from the monotheistic fundamentalists (Jews, Christians, Muslims), not the polytheists or religious pluralists. In the case of the Jews, though, monotheistic arrogance was combined with racial distinctness and other cultural characteristics, resulting in a deeply-embedded misanthropic streak. This likely sanctioned abusive and

⁵⁰ In Stern (1974: 384-385).

brutal treatment of Gentiles. Sometimes this appears explicitly, as in a recent statement by leading Orthodox Rabbi Yosef, who said, “Goyim [non-Jews] were born only to serve us. Without that, they have no place in the world—only to serve the people of Israel. They will work, they will plow, they will reap. We will sit like an effendi and eat” (Jerusalem Post, 18 Oct 2010). It would be difficult to find a cruder statement of Jewish misanthropy.

Romans of the Christian Era

The turn of the millennium was significant on several counts. Rome had formally become an empire under Augustus, as of 27 BC. Jesus of Nazareth was (allegedly) born 3 BC. Jewish philosopher Philo was active at this time, as was perhaps the most infamous ‘anti-Semite’ of that age, Apion. Apion’s notoriety derives not so much from his accusations—which for the most part were preexisting ones—but instead for his renown amongst the upper classes of Alexandrian society, and because Josephus elected to title one of his own books *Against Apion*. A sample of the criticisms laid by Apion in his book *Against the Jews* include:

- the leprosy-ridden Exodus story;
- an etymology of the Jewish term ‘Sabbath’ that derives from ‘tumors of the groin’;
- numerous tales of Jewish foolishness or naiveté;
- well-deserved mistreatment by Cleopatra (withholding of corn during a regional famine, and various conflicts with the Jewish king Herod);
- Jews’ failure to erect statues of the emperors;
- tendency “to show no goodwill to a single alien, above all to Greeks”;
- unjust laws;
- sedition;
- “erroneous” religious practices;
- failure to produce any geniuses in the arts or crafts;
- not eating pork;
- circumcision.

Again, little in the way of original criticisms, but apparently sufficiently influential to warrant a refutation.

Additionally, there were solid, objective reasons for the Roman public to be wary in that first century. With the Roman incorporation of Judea in 63 BC, Jews flocked to the imperial capitol in ever-greater numbers. Once again, the authorities took action. Emperor Tiberius expelled them in the year 19 AD:

He abolished foreign cults, especially the Egyptian and Jewish rites, compelling all who were addicted to such superstitions to burn their religious vestments... [Other Jews] were banished from the city, on pain of slavery for life if they did not obey.⁵¹

⁵¹ As recorded by Suetonius. See Stern (1980: 112-113).

The expulsion did not succeed. Eleven years later, as we recall from chapter two, Sejanus found reason to oppose them again.

Back in Rome, anti-Jewish actions continued. In 49, Claudius once again had to expel them. In a fascinating line from Suetonius circa the year 120, we find mention of one ‘Chrestus’ (Latin: Chresto) as the leader of the rabble; this would be perhaps the fourth non-Jewish references to Jesus. “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, [Claudius] expelled them from Rome”.⁵² This is an important observation that, even at that late date, the Romans still identified Christianity with the Jews.

Despite all this, the beleaguered tribe still earned no sympathy. The great philosopher Seneca commented on them in his work *On Superstition*, circa 60. He was appalled not only by their ‘superstitious’ religious beliefs, but more pragmatically with their astonishing influence in Rome and around the known world, despite repeated pogroms and banishments. Seneca first derides the Jews as lazy because they dedicate every seventh day to God: “their practice [of the Sabbath] is inexpedient, because by introducing one day of rest in every seven they lose in idleness almost a seventh of their life...”⁵³ “Meanwhile,” he adds,

the customs of this accursed race (*sceleratissima gens*) have gained such influence that they are now received throughout all the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors.

Seneca is clearly indignant at their reach.

Then came the historic Jewish revolt in Judea, during the years 66 to 70. The Romans were surely gratified; to their mind, the Jews received their just deserts.

Tacitus and the Second Century AD

The second century of the Christian era saw a continued string of critical comments, for the most part reiterations of past complaints that were evidently still valid. Quintillian (circa 100) observed that, just as cities can bring together and exacerbate the problem of social undesirables, so too Moses knit together scattered individuals into a single Jewish tribe: “founders of cities are detested [when] concentrating a race which is a curse (*perniciosa*) to others, as for example the founder of the Jewish superstition”.⁵⁴ Additionally, Damocritus’ book *Peri Ioudaion* (*On the Jews*) remarked that “they used to worship an asinine golden head, and that every seventh year they caught a foreigner and sacrificed him”⁵⁵—in contrast to the story by Manetho in which the sacrifice was an annual event.

This brings us once again to Tacitus. In the previous chapter I quoted his early remarks on Christianity—the first, in fact, by any Roman commentator. There I cited

⁵² Divus Claudius, 25:4. See also Stern (1980: 113).

⁵³ In Stern (1974: 431).

⁵⁴ In Stern (1974: 513).

⁵⁵ In Stern (1974: 531).

his late work *Annals*, but here it is his other main work, *Histories*, that is relevant. In Book V, Tacitus recounts historical events from the year 70 AD. Roman general Titus had been sent to subjugate Judea once and for all. He found allies in the indigent Palestinian, “who hated the Jews with all that hatred that is common among neighbors” (5.1). The enmities of that region are deep-seated.

Tacitus then breaks off the narrative to give an account of the origin of the Jews—that “race of men hateful to the gods” (*genus hominum invisium deis*). He offers two or three variations, apparently siding with Manetho. The religion of Moses, he adds, is diametrically opposed to that of the Romans: “The Jews regard as profane all that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they permit all that we abhor.” He continues:

Whatever their origin, these rites are maintained by their antiquity: the other customs of the Jews are base and abominable (*sinistra foeda*), and owe their persistence to their depravity. For the worst rascals among other peoples...always kept sending tribute and contributions to Jerusalem, thereby increasing the wealth of the Jews; again, the Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity (*hostile odium*).

“As a race,” he adds, “they are prone to lust,” and have “adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples” (5.5). Tacitus notes their abstract monotheism, suggesting that this is yet another cause of friction. He closes the section with the comment that “the ways of the Jews are preposterous (*absurdus*) and mean (*sordidus*).”

In besieging Jerusalem, and consequently the mighty Jewish temple, Titus had the Jews trapped. There was thought of sparing the temple, but Titus opposed this option. For him, “the destruction of this temple [was] a prime necessity in order to wipe out more completely the religion of the Jews and the Christians.” These two religions, “although hostile to each other, nevertheless sprang from the same sources; the Christians had grown out of the Jews: if the root were destroyed, the stock would easily perish”.⁵⁶ The passage closes by noting that 600,000 Jews were killed in the war.

Such are his comments on the “obnoxious and superstitious race” (*gens superstitioni obnoxia*; 5.13)—a group who are the “most despised” (*despectissima*) of subjects and “the basest of peoples” (*taeterrimam gentum*; 5.8).

The second Jewish war, in 115, gave further cause for critique. Cassius Dio describes the Jewish brutality graphically in his *Roman History*:

Meanwhile the Jews in the region of Cyrene had put a certain Andreas at their head, and were destroying both the Romans and the Greeks. They would eat the flesh of their victims, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood, and wear their skins for clothing; many they sawed in two, from the head downwards; others they gave to wild beasts, and still others they forced to fight as gladiators. (Bk 68.32)

⁵⁶ These last two quotations are from a supplemental work now called *Fragments of the Histories*. Its date is uncertain.

The third and final Jewish uprising occurred just a few years later, in 132. The reasons for this were many, but two stand out: the construction of a Roman city on the ruins of Jerusalem, and Emperor Hadrian's banning of circumcision: "At this time the Jews began war, because they were forbidden to practice genital mutilation (*mutilare genitalia*)".⁵⁷

Dio describes the conflict in detail. "Jews everywhere were showing signs of hostility to the Romans, partly by secret and partly overt acts".⁵⁸ They were able to bribe others to join in the uprising: "many outside nations, too, were joining them through eagerness for gain, and the whole earth, one might almost say, was being stirred up over the matter." For those today who argue that Jews were perennially the cause of wars, this would provide some early evidence. Hadrian sent one of his best generals, Severus, to put down the insurgency. Through a slow war of attrition, "he was able...to crush, exhaust, and exterminate them. Very few of them in fact survived."

Two final figures close out the second century. Famed astronomer Ptolemy was also a bit of an astrologer, and took to using the stars to explain earthly conditions. In his *Apotelesmatica* of 150 AD, Ptolemy observes that the tribes of Palestine, including Idumaea, Syria, Judea, and Phoenicia, have some common characteristics.

These people...are more gifted in trade and exchange; they are more unscrupulous, despicable cowards, treacherous, servile, and in general fickle, on account of the stars mentioned. [The Judaeans in particular] are in general bold, godless, and scheming. (II, 3)⁵⁹

Given the four centuries of conflict with the people of that region, Ptolemy can hardly be blamed for viewing them as cursed by the heavens.

Finally we have Celsus, a Greek philosopher who composed a text, *The True Word*, sometime around 178. The piece is striking as an extended and scathing critique of the increasingly prominent Christian sect. Celsus' main target is clearly Christianity, but in the process he makes a number of remarks on the Jews—all negative. Beginning with Moses, the Jews "were deluded by clumsy deceits into thinking that there was only one God" (I.23). They were "addicted to sorcery" and thus "fell into error through ignorance and were deceived." Celsus mocks "the race of Jews and Christians," comparing them all "to a cluster of bats or ants coming out of a nest, or frogs holding council round a marsh, or worms assembling in some filthy corner, disagreeing with each other about which of them are the worse sinners" (IV.23). "The Jews," he adds, "were runaway slaves who escaped from Egypt; they never did anything important, nor have they ever been of any significance or prominence." Fate has been justifiably harsh to them, and they are "suffering the penalty of their arrogance" (V.41).

Judeo-Christian theology, says Celsus, is a mish-mash of mythology and absurdity. "The God of the Jews is accursed" because he created, or allowed, evil in the world—a

⁵⁷ *Historiae Augustae*, 14. See also Stern (1980: 619).

⁵⁸ *Roman History* 69.13.

⁵⁹ See also Stern (1980: 165).

classic statement of the Problem of Evil.⁶⁰ The cosmogony of Genesis is ridiculous, as is the creation story of mankind; “Moses wrote these stories because he understood nothing... [He] put together utter trash” (VI.49). In the long run Jewry is doomed—“they will presently perish” (VI.80).

Conclusions

So what can we conclude from this brief overview of some 600 years of the ancient world? To say that the Jews were disliked is an understatement. The critiques come from all around the Mediterranean region, and from a wide variety of cultural perspectives. And they are uniformly negative. I note here that it’s not a case of ‘cherry-picking’ the worst comments and ignoring the good ones. The remarks are all negative; there simply are no positive opinions on the Jews or early Christians.

A reasonable conclusion is that there is something about the Jewish culture that inspires disgust and hatred. As the saying goes, “When one person hates you, it’s probably them; when everyone hates you, it’s probably you.” Arrogance, insularity, superstition, self-absorption, and misanthropy surely all play a part. Monotheism is also a likely contributor, though indirectly.

In any case, it’s clear that the Jews had few if any friends in the ancient world. Their religion instructed them to despise others (Gentiles), and others in turn despised them. But the originating source was the Jews themselves: their religion, their worldview, their values. They were willing to use and exploit non-Jews for their own ends. They were willing to kill, and to die.

This situation feeds directly into the circumstances of the Roman occupation and Paul’s reaction. The preceding analysis suggests that Paul was interested in nothing other than saving ‘Israel,’ the Jewish people. We have seen a few textual clues indicating that he was willing even to commit murder in order to further his ends. Surely he hated the Romans with a vengeance, and yet he also could see the futility of confronting them directly. The violent Zealot movement would likely be crushed. Something much more subtle and clever would be required to undermine their position of power.

In the next chapter I will lay out my vision of the truth—of what I believe actually happened back in those murky days of the ancient Middle East.

CHAPTER 5: RECONSTRUCTING THE TRUTH

We now have the background in place to begin to reconstruct the likely truth of what happened during the early years of Christianity. Again, I’ll not claim certainty

⁶⁰ Recall my brief discussion in chapter one.

here; no one can do that. But I think the ensemble of facts points to a clear scenario, one in which Paul and his band of fellow Jews constructed a Jesus hoax in order to weaken Roman rule and ultimately lead to its demise. It took a few centuries, but in the end, amazingly, it worked.

As an invading force in Palestine, the Romans were numerically a small minority, but they had access to limitless power. The Jews were also a small minority but had been able, prior to Rome, to acquire and hold power over the Palestinians. (The Hasmonean Dynasty held a territory roughly equal to present-day Israel, although it included the entire West Bank and a small portion of present-day Syria.) For their power, Rome required at least the tacit consent of the masses—and by and large, they achieved this. The Romans came, not as bloodthirsty slaughterers, but as bringers of civilization. They only fought if they encountered resistance. Their aim was not to kill masses of people, but to expand the Empire. As proof of this, they granted immediate citizenship to all qualified individuals who were absorbed into the newly-expanded realm. The general public held no predetermined antipathy to the Empire, and in fact may have welcomed it if they disliked their previous rule—as was likely the case in Palestine prior to Rome.⁶¹ Rome brought many benefits and few drawbacks; taxes always had to be paid, no matter who was in charge. And in any case, there were clear advantages to being a citizen of the greatest power on Earth.

Paul, as we have seen, was likely a member of the violent Zealot movement that was militantly opposed to the Romans and anyone collaborating with them. Paul even sanctioned murder to achieve his ends. As a teen, he likely remembered Tiberius' expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 19 AD, and he certainly would have known of Sejanus' attempt to “destroy” the Jews in the year 30. He likely was aware of Apion's anti-Jewish tract that was circulating in educated society. All the while, Jews were actively and passively fighting against Roman rule. He would have seen his fellow Zealots rounded up and executed, some by the highly visible form of crucifixion, a punishment reserved for rebels, insurgents, and other criminals against the State. All in all, it would have been a highly depressing situation.

Many Jews were resolved to live and let live with the Romans. Herod Antipater (“Antipas”), nominal ‘king’ of the Jews, was one such collaborationist. He feared incurring the wrath of the Empire and urged his fellow elites to tamp down any insurrectionist activity. Most of them evidently heeded his advice. It surely didn't take much of an argument; any sober-minded individual could see that militant resistance was futile.

Thus it was that, in the early 30s AD, Paul, as a (say) 28-year-old young man, came to contemplate his options. He hated the Romans, and detested the common Palestinians who were happily acquiescing to foreign rule. He must also have despised the entire Roman project—a civilizational force that began with the innovations of ancient Greece. The Greeks founded the Western worldview, an outlook that emphasized

⁶¹ Recall the comments by Tacitus in chapter four, in which he observes the animosity between Palestinians and Jews.

reason and rationality, empirical study of nature, and logic. The Greeks embraced life and sought to live it to its fullest. Any afterlife was sheer speculation for them, and so they placed all value on this life, their real life, rather than live for some unknown future. Like the Jews, the Greeks viewed themselves as superior to their ‘barbarian’ neighbors, but this was by dint of their accomplishments in life rather than some divine blessing. The Greek value system, now absorbed into the mighty Roman Empire, was visible for the world to see. Its success was transparent to all.

How could Paul oppose such a thing? Militant action was virtually suicidal. Political machinations, which might have worked with a regional power, were hopeless here. The Empire was too big, and Rome too far away, for anyone living in Palestine to have a direct impact. The Jews themselves were divided; some were willing to fight but most were resigned to sit it out, however long it might be. The Jews were, after all, famous for always taking the long-term view of things.

Then one day, perhaps while on his way to Damascus, young Paul had an idea: What if he could work on the masses—the poor, misguided, superstitious masses—to steer them away from Rome and toward the Jewish side? The local power of Rome rested on them, as a foundation, but they were like a shifting sandbar; if they could be ‘eroded,’ then perhaps the mighty Roman superstructure might begin to wobble and crack—at least in Palestine. If the masses could be subtly moved toward the Jews, or even simply morally degraded somehow—or best of all, both at once—then they would be of little use to Rome. The Romans might then eventually just give up and go away. And under the circumstances, that would certainly count as victory.

But how? This must have seemed an impossible task. Only a god, only a new religion could perform such a trick. And then it came, like a flash from the blue, “a light brighter than the sun”: an epiphany, a wondrous idea, Paul’s great innovation.

We can imagine him thinking to himself...

Jesus! He was that popular young rabbi from Nazareth that drew such large crowds of ordinary Jews. They loved and adored him. But he couldn’t keep his mouth shut! He would constantly talk about the need for the Jewish people to “rise up” against the Romans. Eventually—what was it, three years ago?—he got fingered by the Romans and was crucified along with two of his friends.

As I recall, he also had a penchant for speaking in esoteric terms, about a new kingdom of God that was coming soon, and about the evil, sinful nature of those devils, the pagan Romans. “Fight the devils,” he would say, and then your salvation is at hand.

People said that this Jesus was utterly divine. What if...he actually was God? A god in human form, as Homer and others wrote about? Or maybe, like the Egyptian pharaohs, a “son” of God? If that was the case, then the Romans crucified God! Why, that would make them the Devil incarnate.

What a great story. But what proof could we offer for it? Wait—didn’t his followers say that he arose from the dead to continue his ministry? There were some stories about how they stole his body from his grave only to claim a miraculous resurrection.

No one really believed it. But...what if it were true? Or at least, true enough? That could be our proof.

And who's going to know, anyway? That was three years ago and most people have already forgotten about him by now. But more importantly, the Gentile masses never heard about him at all. For them, his story would be brand new. And they're the ones we need to reach.

But what message could our "Jesus" take to the masses? We need to build sympathy to our side, of course, and to counter the Roman ideology. We need them to be pro-Jewish, but not make them Jews—no, that would never work. We need something new, a "third way" between Judaism and paganism.

Maybe, as a start, we could get them to worship our God, Jehovah, and not that ridiculous Roman pantheon. We need to convince them that God loves them, and that he sent his son to Earth to "save" them. Sure it's ridiculous, but those superstitious, ignorant peasants will swallow almost anything. I think it could work...

Or so we can imagine.

It's not a terribly farfetched or complicated story. A god-man comes to Earth, preaches love for the masses, and promises to "save" them. He gets unjustly killed by the evil ones. He then rises up from the dead, proving to his followers that they, too, will be risen up, and bask in eternal life, if they follow him and his God. Those who don't believe, or who side with the devils, will suffer God's eternal damnation—notably, Paul never directly uses the word 'hell,' but the idea is there. This carrot-and-stick approach, Paul knows, is perfect for manipulating the superstitious masses.

This, in fact, is all we read in Paul's letters. No complicated theology, no life history of Jesus, not even any miracle stories—just a god in human form who preaches love for all, and who was resurrected after death. Furthermore, the god-man is a Jew—that's perfect. His "father" is Jehovah, the Jewish God—that's also perfect. The story focuses on the afterlife, and thus is able to keep the masses in perpetual suspension, in a state of "hope," for which they will expend their entire lives. The story also invites, even welcomes, suffering; all the better when it comes time to sacrifice for the cause. The whole outlook is thus simultaneously pro-Jewish and anti-Roman—an ideal situation.

But Paul needed one more thing: a message of resistance. It couldn't be explicit; that would be too obvious, would never draw in the masses, and would probably get him executed. It had to be more subtle. No explicit mention of Rome at all; just "evil," "Satan," "the worldly powers." That would suffice.

With these concepts in hand, Paul set off to build his church.

Of Men and Myths

Before proceeding further, let me elaborate on a few of the above points. Some Christ mythicists have emphasized the mythological similarities between the traditional Jesus and other, more ancient god stories. Doherty, Price, and Thompson, among others, have argued that the many parallels with older mythologies suggest that Paul or the Gospel

writers (or others) simply stole from more ancient traditions when they constructed the life of Jesus. I think this is true, although it's probably less complicated than the mythicists suggest. All that matters for present purpose is the fact that there were preexisting ideas in circulation, for centuries, which would have made it easy for Paul to construct his limited Jesus story.

Let me just mention two sources here. First, consider the 14th-century BC pharaoh known as Akhenaten. Famous as the husband of Nefertiti and the father of King Tut, Akhenaten was almost certainly the world's first true philosopher-king. As a young man and absolute ruler of Egypt, he demonstrated a remarkable capacity for deep metaphysical thought. His primary accomplishment was the displacement of the ancient Egyptian pantheon for a single god, Aten—the sun. As such, he created the first monotheism in world history. It may well have been the root source of ideas that ultimately became Judaism and Christianity.

Very little of Akhenaten's writings remain, and much of his philosophy is obscure, but what little we have shows some intriguing parallels to the Jesus story and Christian theology generally. In particular, Akhenaten himself seems to take on a Christ-like aura. In the Longer Hymn, Akhenaten speaks in prayer directly to the Aten. He calls himself "your beloved son" and adds that "no one knows you [Aten] except Akhenaten, your son." And further: "You have revealed yourself to me."

The Aten, as the sun, brings light and life to the world: "You are the light of the Earth." Indeed, "You are life itself, all live through you." Near the end of the poem Akhenaten says, in a very Christ-like fashion, "You raise up the people for the son of your body." At the close, Akhenaten speaks of his beloved queen Nefertiti, stating that she "lives and is rejuvenated forever and ever."

We see similar themes in the Shorter Hymn. Again directly addressing the Aten, Akhenaten says "Your love is great, immense. ... [Y]ou fill the Two Lands with your love." Notably, this "rising" god actually, literally, rises! "Every heart acclaims your sight, when you are risen as their lord." Akhenaten calls himself "your holy son" who "performs your praises." In the final stanza, we read: "I am your son who serves you, who exalts your name. Your power, your strength, are firm in my heart." He then reaffirms the monotheism: "You are One." The parallels are truly fascinating.⁶²

A second likely source would have been much more well-known: Homer. Consider just the Iliad, which was composed sometime around 700 BC. Here we have numerous gods actively intervening in human affairs, somewhat as we see in the OT. As the arch-deity, Zeus plays the role of Jehovah. Homer's universe didn't really have a Satan, but he did have Hades, lord of the underworld. And there wasn't really a hell, but they did have Tartarus, which was the darkest depth of the House of Death.

Of special interest are Homer's many demi-gods—those who are half-human, half-god. Technically speaking, Jesus Christ was a demi-god. Christians like to speak about

⁶² For a fuller account of Akhenaten and his philosophy, see *Son of God, Son of the Sun*, by Savitri Devi (2015).

the “miracle” of immaculate conception, of God impregnating Mary, but that was a very old and well-worn idea. The Iliad is filled with such demi-gods, the most famous being Achilles (son of sea goddess Thetis and mortal Peleus). Zeus was notably prolific, having produced nearly a dozen “sons” by mortal women: Aeacus, Amphion, Dardanus, Heracles/Hercules, Iasus, Minos, Perseus, Pirithous, Polydeuces, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon. Other gods had sons as well: Aphrodite was the mother of Aeneas, Poseidon fathered Theseus, and Hermes fathered Eudorus, to name three. Sometimes they had demi-god daughters; Helen of Troy was one such person (daughter of Zeus). One gets the impression, in fact, that demi-gods were all over the place in the ancient world; at one point Hera exclaims, “Many who battle round King Priam’s mighty walls are sons of the deathless gods” (16.533). As a demi-god himself, Jesus was old news.

There are other relevant themes. For Homer, gods frequently come to earth in human form. In Book 5, war god Ares appears on the battlefield “shaped like the runner Acamas” (5.532), to whip up the troops. Later, in Book 13, the god Poseidon appears “in a prophet’s shape” (13.84) to embolden two warriors; specifically, he “takes the build and tireless voice of Calchas” (13.57). Additionally, we find that the dead are occasionally “raised up” by the gods; when the demi-god Sarpedon was killed, Apollo “lifted Prince Sarpedon clear of the weapons, bore him far from the fighting, off and away...” (16.792). We also see Christ-like descriptions; for example, demi-gods “shine” and are a “light” unto the world: “the [mortal] woman bore the god [Hermes] a radiant son, Eudorus...” (16.220). Once again, we find a series of remarkable parallels. Paul and his cabal had plenty of material to draw from.

Jesus Reborn, as Rebel

Paul likely employed these mythological precursors in his construction of Jesus. But as I said, he didn’t need any complicated storyline. For his purposes, he only needed Jesus to be God in human form, and to be risen after death. That’s it. The life history and teachings are largely irrelevant. We see all this directly in the writings. Take Jesus as God. In Philippians, Paul refers to “Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God...” (2:6). Elsewhere, Jesus “is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation” (Col 15:1). Such talk doesn’t recur until the very last Gospel, John.

Even more important for Paul is an emphasis on the resurrection. We see this even from the earliest letters, Galatians and 1 Thessalonians. In the former he refers, at the very beginning, to “Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” (1:1). In the latter, he writes, “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again...” (4:14). In Romans we read of “Jesus Christ...designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead” (1:4). Later in the same letter Paul says “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (6:4). And again: “Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead...” (8:34). In 1 Corinthians, Paul offers a more detailed and extended

discussion: “Christ died for our sins..., he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures” (15:3). The importance of this event is then elaborated:

Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. (15:12-20)

Without a resurrection, all of Paul’s grand plans “are in vain.” No one will be convinced of Jesus’ divinity, and thus they won’t follow him. Again, even the life and sayings of Jesus were irrelevant for Paul. The divine resurrection was everything. Nietzsche, as usual, was to the point:

[Paul] invented his own history of earliest Christianity. ... The Savior type, the doctrine, the practice, the death, the meaning of death, even what came after death—nothing remained untouched, nothing remained even similar to the reality. Paul simply transposed the center of gravity of the whole existence after this existence—in the lie of the ‘resurrected’ Jesus. At bottom, he had no use at all for the life of the Savior—he needed the death on the cross and a little more.⁶³

And that’s the core of the hoax. Everything else follows naturally.

The Message of Rebellion

With this simple theology in place, Paul was well-situated to interject his message of resistance to Rome. Throughout his letters we find numerous references to enslavement, revolution, insurrection, war, the importance of the disempowered masses, and so on. In the early Galatians we read of the need for Jesus “to deliver us from the present evil age” (1:4). Later, the “elemental spirits” seem to be an allusion to the Roman pantheon:

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are no gods; but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more? (4:8-9)

‘Be not enslaved to the Roman gods,’ he seems to say. And again: “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1).

⁶³ Antichrist, sec. 42.

The same idea of turning away from the Roman “idols” appears in 1 Thessalonians: “For they themselves report...how you turned to God from idols” (1:9). It will only get worse under the Romans, but thankfully “Jesus...delivers us from the wrath to come” (1:10). Jesus won’t come, however, until there is a revolution first. Paul is explicit: “Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness [i.e. the emperor] is revealed, the son of perdition, who...takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God” (1 Thes 2:3-4). This likely refers to the fact that the Jews were appalled when the Emperor Caligula insisted on placing his own statue in their temple.

The letter to the Romans contains some revealing passages. We learn, first of all, who the real priority is in this scheme: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (1:16). To be saved, the Greek and Gentile must worship Jehovah: “is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also” (3:29). And indeed, the Gentiles are needed—to save Israel: “a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved” (11:25). “For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed” (15:18). If all goes according to plan, “then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (16:20).

The most passages of interest, however, are found in 1 Corinthians. Paul speaks of a coming “end” in vague terms, but understood as an end of all earthly power—which of course was Rome. When Christ returns, “then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father [i.e. Jehovah], after destroying every rule and every authority and power” (15:24). And again, “the rulers of this age...are doomed to pass away” (2:6). By “kingdom of God,” Paul explicitly intends a concrete ruling authority: “For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power” (4:20). To achieve his ends, Paul is clear that he will do or say anything: to the Jews, he will be a Jew; to the Gentiles, a Gentile; to the weak, he will be weak; indeed, “I have become all things to all men” (9:19-22).

His emphasis on the “the weak” is interesting. Paul needed to reach the lowly Gentile masses, and thus he had to portray them as specially chosen by God. As in society, so too in the human body: “the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable” (12:22). God himself gives “greater honor to the inferior part” (12:24). This is even more explicit in the anonymous letter of James: “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs to the kingdom...” (Jam 2:5). We of course see this idea later, famously, in Jesus’ proclamation that “the meek shall inherit the earth” (Matt 5:5).

But in Paul, the concept is presented with stunning clarity at the outset of 1 Corinthians. He aims directly to undermine the powerful, the wise, the learned—the Romans—in favor of the weak, ignorant, and dispossessed. At (1:19) Paul paraphrases

Isaiah: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.” Then comes the decisive passage:

For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are... (1:26-28; italics added)

Here he lays out the essence of the plan. The Romans are the powerful, the noble, the wise and learned; but God did not choose them. He chose you, the weak and ignorant masses. He explicitly chose “the foolish,” “the low and despised,” he even chose things that are not—in order to bring down the “things that are,” namely, the Roman Empire. All in all, a remarkable passage.

Again and again we see that “the weak” or “the meek” are the key to success. Christ himself is portrayed as meek (2 Cor 10:1), and Jesus himself allegedly told Paul “my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). Paul is thereby “content” with his own weakness: “for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

The message of rebellion is perhaps best summarized in Ephesians:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (6:11-13)

Paul goes on to speak cleverly of “the shield of faith,” “the helmet of salvation,” and “the sword of the Spirit”—nice cover language. No doubt, the real message got through.

Recall that all this was written prior to the first Jewish rebellion of 66-70 AD. War was in the air, but had not yet broken out. The Jews were ready to fight, but the Gentile masses had to be psychologically prepared for a coming esoteric “battle with Satan.” Thus we see, time and again, a message of conflict, war, insurrection. And where is that famed ‘message of love’ so endemic to Christianity? Love comes later; now it’s time to fight.

The Truth of the Gospels

To recap, I am reconstructing the likely sequence of events, based on a total picture and complete analysis of the situation. Just as Paul’s life was ending, war broke out and the great Temple was destroyed. We can only imagine the distress and outrage of the Jewish community. Their hatred of Rome must have reached atmospheric heights. If the Jews had any illusions about peaceful coexistence, those were crushed. Military responses were no longer an option. Perhaps Paul’s ‘psychological’ ploy, the Jesus hoax, would work after all. But it would have to be taken to the next level.

Thus it was that Paul's surviving followers—perhaps Mark, Luke, Peter, John, and Matthew—decided to pick up the game. This band of “little ultra-Jews”⁶⁴ needed a more detailed story of Jesus' life; Paul's vague allusions to a real man would no longer suffice. Someone—“Mark”—thus decided to quote Jesus extensively and directly. Unlike Paul's letters, this “gospel” (Paul's word) would be intended for mass consumption. It had to be impressive—lots of miracles from their miracle-man. It would end up with 19 Jesus miracles wedged into the smallest of the four Gospels. And there were several other firsts. Here we read, for the first time ever, about the 12 apostles, Jesus as a carpenter, and the concept of hell. Here too Jesus makes a clever “prophecy” that the Jewish temple would be ruined (13:1-2)—an easy call to make, given that the temple was just actually destroyed!

Here we also get first details of the crucifixion process; interestingly, both the Jews and the Romans come in for blame. Jesus predicts that “the chief [Jewish] priests and scribes” will “condemn him to death,” and then “deliver him to the Gentiles [Romans]” who will “kill him” (10:33-34). This is revealing. Paul, Mark, and friends, of course, were working against two sets of opponents: the Romans, and their fellow ‘non-believing’ Jews, mostly the Pharisees and priests who could never accept that this “Jesus” was the Jewish Messiah. In fact, they almost certainly encountered far harsher resistance from their fellow Jews than from anyone else. The Pharisees in truth wanted to “kill” Jesus; they were his internal enemy. But Mark had to finger the Romans as the literal executioners, so that anger would be directed against them. It seems that Mark's anger against his fellow Jews, however, got the better of him; for centuries afterward, Christians would blame the Jews for killing Christ, not realizing that the whole tale was a Jewish construction in the first place. Perhaps there's a kind of justice in that irony after all.

Lastly, hints of rebellion now had to be downplayed by Mark. We now have to be like “mustard seeds,” small and inconspicuous, bidding our time, all while spreading the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, if push comes to shove, one must be ready to lay down one's life for the cause: “For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for [Jesus'] sake and the gospel's will save it” (8:35). Don't give up hope, and never forget that “the last [will be] first” (10:31). Chaos is still in the cards: “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (13:8). The Jews' ultimate victory is coming soon: “there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power” (9:1). The end is near.

The Gospel of Mark evidently sufficed for some 15 years. It must have been effective at drawing in Gentiles and building a functioning church. But then perhaps things stalled a bit. Maybe the little Jewish band got impatient. Maybe they splintered over tactical issues. Whatever the reason, some time around the year 85, two of the group—“Luke” and “Matthew”—decided that they needed to write an even more detailed account of Jesus' life. But evidently the two couldn't agree on a single plan, so

⁶⁴ Nietzsche, *Antichrist* (sec. 44). In German original: kleine Superlativ-Juden.

they worked apart, drawing from Mark's story while weaving in other new ideas they had jointly invented. Each man went off on his own, drafting his own new gospel.

The new documents had much more detail than Mark; in fact, both were nearly twice as long as their predecessor. They had to keep the same basic story line, of course, but each man added his own embellishments. What was new? The virgin birth in Bethlehem, for one, and the whole manger scene. These now appeared, for the first time ever, some 85 years after the alleged event. We scarcely need to ask how much truth is in them. (I note as an aside that Matthew included the bit about the star, whereas that was apparently an unimportant detail to Luke, since he omitted it completely.) Luke included a vignette about Jesus as a 12-year-old (2:41-51), something utterly lacking in the other three Gospels. The Sermon on the Mount appears for the first time, though Matthew has a much longer version than Luke. In the sermon we find a number of famous sayings, all of which were never seen before: "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Mt 5:5), "you are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14), turn the other cheek (Mt 5:39; Lk 6:29), love thy enemies (Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27), "cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24), "judge not" (Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37)—all now recorded, for the first time, some 50 years after they supposedly occurred.

Other points were simply elaborations of themes from Mark. The anti-Jewish rhetoric now heats up a bit; the Jews are called "a brood of vipers" (Mt 3:7, 12:34, 23:33) and "lovers of money" (Lk 16:14). Hell becomes more prominent (Mt 5:22, 5:30, 10:28, 25:46; Lk 10:15, 12:5); evidently Paul's scare tactics weren't quite working. And there's a greater emphasis on the virtue of suffering (Mt 10:22, 24:9; Lk 6:22).

Finally, revolutionary talk also increases. Mark's passages are carried over in both, but we now find a number of strikingly explicit lines in each new Gospel. Followers must now virtually abandon their families for the cause:

- "Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for my name's sake" (Mt 10:21).

- "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (Mt. 19:29).

- "I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother... He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:35-37).

- "He who is not with me is against me" (Mt 12:30).

- "Henceforth in one house...they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Lk 12:52-53).

- "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26).

These are remarkably cult-like dictates, but perhaps appropriate for the Jewish-led Christian movement.

Then we have passages of outright militancy. In Matthew, Jesus says, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (10:34)—how very un-Christ-like! Luke has Jesus say, “I came to cast fire upon the earth... Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division” (12:49-51). Every man must do his part: “let him who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one” (Lk 22:36). Jesus becomes downright ruthless: “as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me” (Lk 19:27). All this is necessary because “the devil” rules all the kingdoms of the world (Lk 4:5-6). But not to worry; if we all stick to the plan, and “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world,” then “the end will come” (Mt 24:14). And so, sometime around the year 85, two new Gospels were released into the world.

Once again, these apparently sufficed for a good decade or so. But then one more member of the cabal, “John,” breaks rank and moves in yet a different direction. He feels the need for an intellectual and esoteric Jesus story, and so constructs a gospel using abstract, almost philosophical terms and concepts. It ends up as mid-length essay, between the short Mark and the longer Matt/Luke. Miracles are still there, but they are now down-played—just eight appear. We can imagine that John understood that his new, more intellectual audience would likely not be taken in by such nonsense. Also discarded is nearly all rebellious talk. Evidently the intellectual crowd would not be the ones taking up swords.

This fourth Gospel begins with a famously cryptic passage: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). I have analyzed this line in detail elsewhere,⁶⁵ but in short, “Word” in the original Greek text is “Logos,” which is an ancient and complex philosophical concept meaning ‘speech,’ ‘word,’ ‘reason,’ or ‘logic.’ The notion that “Logos is God” or “Logos is with God” comes ultimately from Heraclitus, circa 450 BC. He believed in a kind of cosmic mind or intelligence, the Logos, that directed all events in the physical realm. This was a perfectly ‘weighty’ concept for John to equate with the esoteric Jesus, and so he borrowed it with impunity.

Correspondingly, John places a renewed emphasis on the idea that Jesus is literally God. Jesus says, “I proceeded and came forth from God” (8:42), and furthermore, “before Abraham was, I am” (8:58). “I and the Father are one,” he adds (10:30). And again: “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9).

Also new is an emphasis on the masses as being a sheep-like herd, and Jesus as their head sheep or shepherd. Jesus is “the Lamb of God” (1:29), and later we read an extended passage on Jesus as “the door of the sheep” (10:7), “the good shepherd,” one who “lays down his life for the sheep.” Near the end of the Gospel, the risen Jesus instructs his disciples to “feed my lambs” and “tend my sheep” (21:15-17). This is all consistent with a de-emphasis on revolution.

⁶⁵ See Skrbina (2015: 19-20).

The Gospel ends, abruptly, with a suitably outrageous final line: “But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (21:25). An appropriately absurd closing for the final Gospel.

Thus understood, the whole sweep of events now makes sense. From the Roman invasion to Paul’s “vision” at Damascus, to his letters, to the first Jewish-Roman war, to the Gospels—it’s all now a coherent and consistent story. Far more coherent, in fact, than a literal tale of a demi-god come to earth to save humanity. But my alternate account has at least one important consequence: “Saint” Paul and his Jewish cabal turn out to be blatant liars. In fact, the epic liars of all recorded history.

Paul, Liar Supreme

Recall my explanation above, regarding how Paul and the Gospel writers had two sets of enemies: the Romans and their fellow elite Jews. In fact, they had a third enemy: the truth. Paul and crew knew they were lying to the masses, but they didn’t care. The Gentiles were always treated by the Jews with contempt, as I showed in chapter four. They could be manipulated, harassed, assaulted, beaten, even killed, if it served Jewish ends. This was not a problem for them. But what they did have to worry about were any dedicated and persistent truth-seekers in the world, who might take the trouble to expose their hoax. The cabal therefore had to oppose any intellectual methodology that might lead to the truth: empiricism, rationality, logic, common sense, ‘science.’ All these things would henceforth become enemies of the church, allied with the Devil.

As the initiator of the hoax, Paul earns the maximum amount of credit or, if you will, blame. His ‘moment at Damascus,’ if that’s what it was, kicked off the whole series of events. He constructed a simple and elemental lie, based on common ideas in mythology and a kernel of actual truth, in order to manipulate the Gentile masses for the benefit of the Jews. It was, quite frankly, a brilliant plan. But to successfully pull it off, Paul must have been a brilliant liar. He had to write down pure fiction as absolute truth. He had to lie to people’s faces and pretend to believe it. He had to entice and frighten innocent and simple-minded peasants into believing his outrageous concoction. And he did it. Paul—expert liar, artful liar, master liar.

Not that this is new news. In chapter four I cited numerous ancient sources who criticized Jewish misanthropy, and certainly a willingness to lie is compatible with that complaint. Ptolemy, for example, called the Jews “unscrupulous,” “treacherous,” “bold,” and “scheming.” Unfortunately the label of ‘liar’ has dogged them for centuries. In the early 1500s Martin Luther—founder of the Lutheran church—wrote a rather infamous book titled *On the Jews and their Lies*. There he declared that “they have not acquired a perfect mastery of the art of lying; they lie so clumsily and ineptly that anyone who is just a little observant can easily detect it”⁶⁶—a statement that could well be a motto

⁶⁶ Luther (1955, vol 47: 253).

for the present work. I also note the striking irony of a man like Luther who was so opposed to Jewish lies, even as he himself fell for the greatest Jewish lie of all.

In 1798, the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant called the Jews “a nation of deceivers,” and in a later lecture he added that “the Jews...are permitted by the Talmud to practice deceit”.⁶⁷ In his final book, Arthur Schopenhauer made some extended observations on Judeo-Christianity. He wrote, “We see from [Tacitus and Justinus] how much the Jews were at all times and by all nations loathed and despised.” This was due in large part, he says, to the fact that the Jewish people were considered *grosse Meister im Lügen*—“great master of lies”.⁶⁸ Employing his usual blunt but elegant terminology, Nietzsche said this:

In Christianity all of Judaism, a several-century-old Jewish preparatory training and technique of the most serious kind, attains its ultimate mastery as the art of lying in a holy manner. The Christian, this ultima ratio of the lie, is the Jew once more—even three times a Jew.⁶⁹

Similar comments came from express anti-Semites. Hitler called the Jews “artful liars” and a “race of dialectical liars,” adding that “existence compels the Jew to lie, and to lie systematically”.⁷⁰ And Joseph Goebbels, in his personal diary, wrote: “The Jew was also the first to introduce the lie into politics as a weapon. ... He can therefore be regarded not only as the carrier but even the inventor of the lie among human beings”.⁷¹

Finally, a remark by Voltaire seems relevant here. The Jews, he said, “are, all of them, born with a raging fanaticism in their hearts... I would not be in the least bit surprised if these people would not some day become deadly to the human race”.⁷² If a Jewish lie were to spread throughout the Earth, eventually drawing in more than 2 billion people, becoming the enemy of truth and reason, and causing the deaths of millions of human beings via inquisitions, witch burnings, crusades, and other religious atrocities—well, that could be considered a mortal threat, I think.

This, then, is my “Antagonism thesis”: Paul and his cabal⁷³ deliberately lied to the masses, with no concern for their true well-being, simply to undermine Roman rule. This little group tempted innocent people with a promise of heaven, and frightened them with the threat of hell. This psychological ploy was part of a long-term plan to weaken and, in a sense, morally corrupt the masses by drawing them away from the potent and successful Greco-Roman worldview and more toward an oriental, Judaic view.

⁶⁷ Kant (1798/1978: 33) and (1997: 34), respectively.

⁶⁸ Schopenhauer (1851/1974, vol 2: 357).

⁶⁹ *Antichrist*, sec. 44.

⁷⁰ *Mein Kampf* (vol 1): ch. 10.4, ch. 2.25, and ch. 11.12, respectively.

⁷¹ Entry dated May 13, 1943.

⁷² In Hertzberg (1968: 301).

⁷³ I’ve been using ‘cabal’ throughout the present text. It is, I think, precisely the right word. A cabal is “a small number of persons secretly united to bring about an overturn or usurpation, especially

As we know, it took some time but the new Christian religion did spread, eventually permeating the Roman world. In the year 315, the emperor himself, Constantine, converted to Christianity. In 380, Emperor Theodosius declared it the official state religion. And just 15 years later, in 395, the empire fractured and the classic (western) half utterly collapsed. In the ensuing vacuum, Christianity rose to power—and in Rome itself, of all places. The victory was complete, some 350 years after Paul’s grand vision came to him in a flash, “brighter than the sun.”

CHAPTER 6: TAKING STOCK, LOOKING AHEAD

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...

— 2 Peter 1:16

I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying...

— Paul, Romans 9:1

In what I am writing to you, before God,

I do not lie!

— Paul, Galatians 1:20

Let’s take stock at this point by briefly recapping the central facts. The oldest existing Bible dates from the year 350; as we move backward in time from there, our confidence in the actual text diminishes significantly—some parts being much more uncertain than others. Expert consensus is that the four Gospels date to the years 70 to 95 AD, and Paul’s letters to 50 to 70 AD. Paul, the Gospel authors, Jesus, Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and all twelve apostles were Jews. Many Jews had been in active and passive resistance to Rome from virtually the beginning of the takeover in 63 BC. Between the years zero and 93 AD we have absolutely no independent, corroborating evidence for such things as the Bethlehem star, any of Jesus’ 36 miracles, any of the apostles’ miracles, or any of the Christian-specific events depicted in the New Testament. Josephus’ brief reference in 93 is the first independent confirmation of the mere existence of a Christian movement, followed by Tacitus and Pliny around the year 115.

We further know for certain that the Jews had been in a confrontational and adversarial relationship with their neighbors from the very beginning, circa 1200 BC. We know that they viewed themselves as special, different, and superior to the rest of humanity, and that this attitude engendered a reactive hatred toward them by non-Jews that has resurfaced periodically ever since. All these facts are widely accepted by all parties, Christian and non-Christian alike.

Four Theses

How, then, can we account for the apparent discrepancies and inconsistencies? I have considered various approaches to this situation throughout this book. Let me summarize these, expressed in terms of four possible theories, each with a different response to the many problems that we face. The first is the conventional story:

1) Biblical Thesis: Jesus was the miracle-working Son of God who came to earth to save humanity. The Biblical account of his life is largely or entirely correct as written.

On this view, the reason we have no contemporary evidence of Jesus is either (a) it was destroyed by the Romans, or (b) it was accidentally lost to history. Paul's account is true because he met personally with some of the apostles. Two of the Gospel writers were apostles (Matthew and John), and the other two were close colleagues of apostles, and thus they can all be trusted. Paul and his fellow Jews had no malicious intent whatsoever; they were honestly converted to Christianity and selflessly sought to bring the Good Word to all of humanity.

The large majority of Jesus skeptics, those mentioned in chapter one, seem to adopt a variation of the Mythicist Thesis:

2) Mythicist Thesis: Jesus was an entirely fabricated personage, based on ancient myth-archetypes. His story was created either by Paul, the Gospel writers, or various other later figures, out of whole cloth, in order to promote a religion and a church that would somehow benefit them personally.

The problems of evidence and chronology all point, they say, to a wholly constructed mythical man, a divine Jesus, that tapped into the human subconscious by calling upon classic archetypes. Paul's (or whoever's) motives are either unknown or, presumably, were a desire for self-glorification and power by placing themselves at the center of a new religion. For this they risked persecution and death.

I have argued for something else:

3) Antagonism Thesis: Jesus was an historical person but not the Son of God. His story is a fanciful elaboration of a few grains of truth, created by Paul and his friends, in order to create an anti-Roman ideology aimed at corrupting and confusing the masses and thus undermining the empire.

My thesis addresses the question of motive, something that's utterly lacking in the other skeptics. I have shown how the Jews had a deep hatred for the Gentile masses and the Romans in particular, and thus how individuals would have done anything—including lie, and including placing themselves at mortal risk—to benefit the Jewish people. The mythicists and other skeptics have no good account of a motive; the mere quest for personal gain is highly dubious. The low chance of success, combined with a high risk of imprisonment and/or execution, would more than offset any nebulous anticipated advantage.

But there are other possibilities, some less pernicious than a mythicist or antagonist analysis. For example, what if Jesus was merely an historical figure, but his accomplish-

in public affairs." That's a perfect description of Paul and his band.

ments became embellished over time, ultimately acquiring legendary and even divine status? And what if someone, upon hearing these amazing stories, then decided—with all good intention—to document them? We can call this the Rumor Thesis:

4) Rumor Thesis: Stories of an exceptional but mortal man, an historical Jesus, got exaggerated and embellished over time through oral retellings. After some 40 years, “Mark” heard the stories, innocently believed them, and wrote them down as literal truth. This happened again, after 50 years, to “Matthew” and “Luke,” and again after 60 years to “John.”

This is theoretically possible but highly unlikely. Even in ancient times, people were not idiots. How could a Mark accept, without any apparent evidence or confirmation, such fantastic tales? And accept them so completely that he would write them down as factual truth, as real and actual events? And then how could the same thing happen three more times, to three different individuals?

Furthermore, the Rumor Thesis cannot account for Paul. He was too close to actual events to have innocently believed any such stories, which in any case could not likely have become so incredibly exaggerated in a few years. Paul was a clever man; could he really have fallen so completely for a bogus tale of a Jewish messiah, that he would dedicate his life to spreading the story? It seems highly dubious, to say the least.

Are there other possible theses? Perhaps, but I am unaware of any other plausible options. I think we must opt for one of these four.

Of the above possibilities, I think it’s clear that the Biblical Thesis is simply untenable; the problems of evidence and chronology jointly demonstrate that the miraculous life of a divine Jesus is a virtual impossibility. The Mythicist Thesis is possible but has a major flaw, namely the lack of sufficient motive. The Rumor Thesis presumes that Paul and the Gospel authors were gullible idiots who couldn’t tell fact from fiction; but from what little we can discern, that seems most unlikely. The Antagonism Thesis is by far the most credible analysis. It best accounts for all the known facts, and identifies an actual and fact-based motive for the whole construction. All signs point to a Jesus Hoax.

Critiquing Antagonism

So, what’s the counter reply to the Antagonism Thesis? The basic elements of it have been around for over a century. Obviously it had been considered before and apparently rejected, since none of the recent Jesus skeptics defend it. What would they say in reply, to challenge that thesis?

In fact I have raised this question with a number of experts, precisely so that I could gauge the strength of the thesis. Let me mention their comments and then offer my responses.

“It’s not clear that all the Gospel authors, apart from Matthew, were Jews. John certainly was not.”

As I've replied earlier, the Gospel of Mark was written for a Gentile audience and thus takes on the superficial appearance of a Gentile work. There is a strong consensus that Mark himself was Jewish. The extensive OT references in all four Gospels argue strongly for Jewish authorship. There is no real evidence that Luke was a Gentile save his name, but as we know from Paul, it was not unheard of for Jews to change to Gentile names. The scattered anti-Jewish statements in all the Gospels—especially John—more reflect an internal Jewish battle over ideology than an external, Gentile attack. Paul is clearly and obviously Jewish, although some skeptics, such as Robert Price, argue that the letters weren't even written by a "Paul" but by a much latter Gentile Christian, such as Marcion. This is a very fringe view, but even if true, it doesn't undermine my thesis; it just shifts priority for the hoax to the Gospels. The letters then simply become late-added "substantiation," also fraudulent, by some duped Gentile.

"You are making sweeping generalizations. Not all Jews opposed Rome, and not all NT writers and characters are necessarily Jewish."

On the first point, of course, as I stated, many Jews acquiesced to Roman rule. Probably a large majority accepted it, even if begrudgingly. But the elite Jews were sure incensed, and there was certainly a substantial minority of Zealots and others violently opposed. My thesis doesn't require that all or even most Jews opposed Rome, only that a small band—Paul and friends—did so, and acted on that basis. Regarding the NT writers, that's addressed above. Regarding the characters in the story—Jesus, Mary, Joseph, et al—we can only go by the words written down, and the text is conclusive: all were Jews.

One knowledgeable colleague listed a number of specific problems for any such hoax theory:

- Needs a motive. Discussed above. The motive was revenge against Rome, and an attempt to undermine its support by confusing and corrupting the masses.

- The Gospels are "rooted in history." Of course, as intelligent fraudsters, the authors would include as much factual information as they could, in order to enhance the respectability of the document. But not so much that someone could easily ferret out the falsehood.

- The Gospels have "self-damaging" material, such as cowardly disciples and women at the tomb, and numerous inconsistencies, which wouldn't have happened in a hoax. Given that we had semi-independent fraudsters—Paul, Mark working after his death, Matthew and Luke working in evident disagreement—it's not at all surprising that some would incorporate storylines that would be contradicted by the others. In fact, it's almost inevitable.

- The depiction of Jesus as Messiah conflicts with Jewish expectations of the time. Certainly, and that's why the majority of the Pharisees opposed Paul's gang. Paul

didn't concoct his hoax for the Jews; it was strictly for the 'benefit' of the gullible Gentiles.⁷⁴

· The Gospels include material that could be falsified by opponents. True, if anyone had the time, money, and energy to track down all possible witnesses and to visit all relevant sites. But they generally took place in obscure locations (apart from events in Jerusalem). They had a verifiable core—an historical Jesus with a real crucifixion. And they weren't widely circulated for years or decades after the alleged events. Who would have bothered to refute the miracles, for example, at that point? Paul and company knew that their lie was safe.

· There are no ancient opponents of Christianity who argue that Jesus was a hoax. Generally true, but that's probably because the story had a true and verifiable core—the historical Jesus. Then why didn't ancient critics simply say that the miracles were fabricated? They would have had no basis for making such a claim, given the nature of miracles and the dearth of physical evidence available to writers in, say, the 300s or 400s, or indeed any time prior to the modern scientific era.

· These are a tall order for any hoax theory to fill! Order fulfilled!

There is another popular response that needs to be addressed: Who would die for a lie? That is, why would Paul and the others undergo persecution, harassment, and risk of imprisonment or death for their hoax? I think there's a clear answer here: as Jews, they were all, already, under persecution by the Romans. As extremist, fanatical Jews, they were willing to do anything, and suffer any punishment, in order to help "Israel." And the more their nascent movement seemed to catch on, the harder they would have been willing to push it. Gentiles have a hard time understanding this, but Jews, like Arab and Muslim extremists, are quite willing to die for their cause.

Regarding specifically the idea that Jesus was a revolutionary Zealot rather than a Son of God, Christian apologists have another ready reply: "That's an old and discredited thesis, put forth by the likes of S. G. F. Brandon in the 1960s. No one accepts that idea anymore".⁷⁵

This is worth examining for a moment. Samuel George Frederick Brandon was a British professor of religion who died in 1971. In his books *Jesus and the Zealots* (1967) and *The Trial of Jesus* (1968) he indeed argued that Jesus was a Zealot. He certainly made some observations that are consistent with my antagonism thesis. He rightly understood that the Jewish Christians' main aim was "the restoration of Israel's freedom and sovereignty," and that therefore, they would have been "instinctively hostile to the Gentiles" who wanted to join the church.⁷⁶ Later he correctly notes that "the end which that 'gospel' [of the Jewish Christians] had in view, namely, the vindication of Israel, implied both an overthrow of Rome and the punishment of the Gentiles."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Paul famously declared himself to be "Apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13, Gal 1:16).

⁷⁵ This line was recently resurrected with the publication of Aslan's controversial book *Zealot* (2013). See my discussion in Appendix B.

⁷⁶ (1967: 169).

⁷⁷ (1967: 182).

That's exactly right, but he never considers the possibility that the Jews actively lied precisely in order to deceive the detested Gentiles, as a means to overthrow Rome.

Midway through *Jesus and the Zealots*, Brandon offers a concise explanation for why the 'revolution' thesis—precursor of antagonism—is not well-received today:

The mere idea that the Jewish Christians might have countenanced violent resistance to the Romans provokes an instinctive rejection in the minds of most people today, inured as they are to a long-established tradition that the original disciples must have been quiet and peaceable men, if not actually pacifists. But, on analysis, that tradition is based upon no clear and irrefutable New Testament evidence. ... [A] parallel series can also be produced indicating an opposite attitude, such as "I have not come to bring peace but a sword"...⁷⁸

In his other book Brandon continues to develop the revolutionary angle: "Jesus' activity in Jerusalem coincided with an insurrection there, in which the Romans were directly involved".⁷⁹ And again later on, he adds, "Judaea was seething with unrest from the natural Jewish resentment of the Roman yoke and the activities of the Zealots".⁸⁰ But even with all this acknowledgement, Brandon again never considers the possibility that the Jews lied to further their cause—and that changes everything.

In his analysis of Brandon, Price hits the nail on the head, explaining where he went awry: "On Brandon's hypothesis, Christianity has mutated from a failed revolutionary movement...into a quietistic, Rome-accommodating faith community and sought desperately to hide their now-repudiated anti-Roman roots".⁸¹ But the convergence of evidence does not support that view. There is no reason that the militant Jews would have given up; rather, they changed direction. Brandon's best defense is that the last Gospel, John, does indeed drop most all talk of revolution, as I noted previously. But that is better attributed to John's new, more intellectual audience than to any utter resignation on the part of the cabal.

The main point, though, is that the apologists never quite get around to explaining how exactly the Zealot thesis has been "discredited." And they can't. They can point to Jesus saying "love thy neighbor" and "turn the other cheek," but that's about it.

Some Questions Answered

Let me take a moment to respond to a number of questions that may arise at this point—some of which I've covered already, and some not.

Question: "Okay, as a Christian I've read and absorbed your whole shocking message. What am I supposed to do about all this?"

Answer: First, try to confirm as much of the evidence cited here as possible. Check my quotations, pull out your Bible and confirm the passages I cite. Satisfy yourself

⁷⁸ (1967: 202).

⁷⁹ (1968: 88).

⁸⁰ (1968: 101).

⁸¹ Price (2014: 129).

that I have given you a straight story. Next, go to your local church leader and confront them with the evidence (or lack thereof). Their response will confirm everything you need to know. Then, make it clear to them that you have been swindled. Tell them you want your money back. And your time. And your life—everything that you’ve invested, and lost, in the most famous hoax in history.

Question: “Lots of Christians actually don’t take the Bible literally. For them, the miracles and all that other stuff are just stories intended to give lessons in morality. They don’t really believe that they happened. So why isn’t it ok to just accept that sort of ‘minimalist’ Christianity?”

Answer: If you allow that the miracles aren’t real, how do you know that the rest isn’t real? Where can we draw the line between fact and fiction? We have almost no reason to believe that any of it is real. The most important miracle of all was the resurrection—was that one, too, just a story? If so, the whole basis for Christianity goes down the drain. Then it’s just some guy saying, “be kind to the poor,” “help your neighbor,” “love God,” etc. Do we need a church and a religion to tell us that?

And what were those guys thinking who wrote that fiction about the miracles? Did they know they were writing fiction? But they sold it as truth—why did they lie? These are precisely the questions I’ve tried to answer here.

Question: “What about all those pro-Roman, anti-war passages?: ‘Render unto Caesar’ (Mark 12:17), ‘let every person be subject to the governing authorities’ (Rom 13:1), ‘pay your taxes’, ‘perish by the sword’ (Mt 26:52), ‘turn the other cheek’ (Mt 5:39)—not to mention, ‘love thy neighbor’!⁸² Don’t these undermine your thesis?”

Answer: This is the “peaceable Jesus” reply. We all know those famous lines, and they get repeated ad nauseum. My general reply is (a) the Jewish cabal was compelled to insert such lines for cover; too much explicit talk of rebellion was dangerous. Also (b) these relatively few lines are outnumbered by far more that imply rebellion and war—see my discussion in chapter five. And in any case, “rendering to Caesar” says nothing about not also working for his downfall. And sure, you may perish by the sword, but that’s what happens in war. I particularly appreciate “love thy neighbor”: Who, after all, was “the neighbor” if not the Jew?

Question: “What about all the OT prophecies fulfilled in the NT?”

Answer: This is clear: When you have extensive knowledge of the prophecies, you can bake their realization right into the text that you are constructing. Not to mention the actual historical events that Jesus “predicted” in the year 30, when you are writing his lines in the year 80 or 90. The prophecy game was rigged.

Question: “Why do you accept the idea of an historical Jesus?”

A: Paul needed a kernel of truth for his hoax. What better way than to take a real person who was really crucified for his pro-Jewish, anti-Roman activities, and turn him into God? This makes complete sense. Other than this, neither I nor anyone else

⁸² Gal 5:14, Rom 13:9, Mark 12:31, Matt 19:19, 22:39, Luke 10:27.

has evidence for an historical Jesus. The execution of a minor insurrectionist would not be expected to leave any trail, and he didn't.

Question: "The Jews come off looking pretty bad here. Isn't all this terribly anti-Semitic?"

Answer: Not at all. Just because I claim that a handful of Jews lied to the public two thousand years ago, this has no necessary connection to Jews in general or Jews today. People are overly sensitive these days, particularly about Jews, probably because we hear so much about them and anti-Semitism in the media. It can't reasonably have anything to do with World War Two or the Holocaust, since that ended more than 70 years ago and nearly all the actual victims are now gone—despite the fact that the media and Hollywood are working hard to continually remind the public of Jewish suffering during the war and of the evils of Nazism. I see no good reason why Jews should continue to merit special sensitivity.

Question: "How could so many people be fooled for so long? It doesn't seem possible."

Answer: Actually there have been several famous examples in history when many people, even many smart people, have been fooled for a very long time. The Donation of Constantine was a fraudulent document in which Emperor Constantine allegedly gave his empire to the Catholic Church in 315 AD. In fact it was forged in the 700s and not exposed until 1440 by Lorenzo Valla. As a second example, consider the "celestial sphere" that supposedly held the stars. This was postulated to exist as far back as the 300s BC, and was endorsed by Plato and Aristotle. The sphere was widely held to be true well into the 1500s—a false belief that was sustained for nearly two thousand years. The same time period corresponded to a belief in "the four elements": fire, air, earth, and water. Witches have been condemned and burned since at least 300 BC, and during the peak period in Europe—from 1450 to 1750—some 500,000 were killed. In all these cases, millions of people were fooled, deceived, or otherwise attached to false beliefs for centuries. It's no surprise that millions could still be wrong.

Question: "Why is all this even important? It was so long ago, and no one really knows what happened back then."

Answer: Even for those who aren't religious, it should still be clear that any forgery that holds the belief of three-quarters of Americans, and one-third of all humanity, is a matter of greatest importance. Those in academic or intellectual circles may find all this much ado about nothing. But we can easily forget how seriously some people take the Bible. Roughly 42% of Americans believe in Biblical creationism, and about the same number think Jesus will return to Earth by 2050. About 53% of all Americans say that religion is "very important" in their lives. Let there be no doubt: this is a subject of greatest importance.

For those who don't take religion all that seriously, many of them see church as more of a social club than anything else. But even so, who above age six would be happy to join a 'Santa Claus Club' or an 'Easter Bunny Club'? Christians need to own up to the fact that they have been swindled, and then see if anything can be salvaged

of their religion. Keep the social club, do charity work, help the poor—just dump the bogus metaphysics.

Question: “I’ve read all your points, and even though I have nothing to say in reply, I frankly don’t care. You have your opinion, I have mine, and I’m never going to change my mind.”

Answer: Then good luck to you, my friend!

Media, Government, Hollywood

And then perhaps another question comes to mind: Why haven’t we heard anything about all this before? Surely, if the case were so compelling, one might say, we would have seen it in movies, or heard news stories about it, or had it taught in schools. And yet nowhere—not even in our universities—do we hear this matter discussed. Why is that?

This is an enlightening question. We need to ask this: Who would have an incentive to examine the truth on this whole subject? Christians, obviously not. No one in the Christian hierarchy wants people to explore the truth, even though it’s highly likely that many of them do know it. Once you have an organization in place, salaries to pay, mortgages, monthly bills, and taxes, you need the whole business to keep functioning. Christians have every reason to sustain the hoax, not get to the bottom of it.

Jews have no interest in the truth here, either. As the ‘bad guys’ in the hoax story, Paul and friends threaten to cast a negative light on all Jews. This is particularly true when we look at the millennia-long history of critical comments on the Jews, as discussed in chapter 4. Any unearthing of these facts would require a lot of subtle explaining, to say the least. Rather than admit to a Jewish lie, present-day Jews would rather not bring up the subject at all. Particularly so, when millions of Christian Zionists are ideologically on their side. It’s simply a no-win situation for Jews, and so they let that dog lie (pun intended).

One might think that Muslims would be eager to criticize Jews and Christianity, and to expose any hoax. Yes and no. Islam, of course, is part of the Abrahamic lineage and thus is ultimately wedded to Judeo-Christianity, whether it likes it or not. Muslim monotheism derives ultimately from Judaic monotheism, just as it does for Christianity. All the Abrahamic religions worship the Jewish God; Muslims simply changed his name.

Islam furthermore accepts Jesus as a “prophet” and even grants him a kind of divine status—though they disavow his resurrection. The Quran has a number of interesting passages on him. Jesus (“Isa”) performs miracles, but only with Allah’s “permission” (III.49, V.110). Jews neither killed nor crucified him (IV.157), and so he did not die a martyr’s death. In a particularly impressive miracle, the Quran states that the infant Jesus spoke immediately upon birth: “He said: ‘Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed...’”

(XIX.30-31). Muslims therefore cannot accept either a mythicist Jesus nor even a merely historical Jesus; they need a semi-divine miracle man as well.

Governments are nominally neutral on religion, especially in the United States with its famous “separation of church and state.” They should, therefore, have an interest only in historical truth. When they draft school curricula for millions of public school children, it’s clear that they should at least present a mythicist alternative to traditional orthodoxy, as one line of thinking. But such information has yet to appear in any public text, to my knowledge.

But there is a deeper reason, I think, for why they avoid criticizing Christianity. Governments everywhere want compliant populations. They want citizens who will respect authority without question, follow the laws, accept its power, and not be too inquisitive. They like people who simply have faith in government, and who more or less blindly trust them. And in Christianity, rulers have found an ideology that can serve their interests. They can play up the ‘peaceable Jesus’ storyline—love thy neighbor, turn the other cheek, Jesus as “our paschal lamb” (1 Cor 5:7) or our “shepherd” (Jn 10:11), followers as “sheep,” (Mk 6:34, Jn 21:15)—while directing any militant undertones toward the “devil” of their choosing. Governments have no interest in turning over that applecart.

Colleges and universities are somewhat better, often having panels or speakers who challenge the Christian view. But the Antagonism Thesis is particularly difficult to discuss since it casts blame on Jews, and any negative talk about them risks ostracism or worse, even in our “liberal” and “free speech” universities.

What about our irreverent media and Hollywood filmmakers—those who are so willing to commit sacrilege against any social norm or moral standard? I suspect this has something to do with the extensive role played by Jewish Americans. It’s uncontroversial that Hollywood has been dominated by Jews for decades; a relatively recent article in the LA Times cites Jewish heads of nearly every major Hollywood studio.⁸³ And it’s not just the movie business. All the major media conglomerates have a heavy Jewish presence in top management. If they should decide that Jewish malevolence at the heart of the Christian story “looks bad,” then they obviously won’t bring it up at all—not in the news, not on TV, not in books.⁸⁴

Sometimes, of course, we do hear about the Jesus controversy in our media. But always in carefully crafted ways. A good example came during Easter 2017, in an article on the British website Guardian.com, written by Cambridge University professor Simon Gathercole.⁸⁵ The subtitle notes that “some claim that Jesus is just an idea, rather than a real historical figure.” “But,” it adds, “there is a good deal of written evidence for his existence.” Gathercole says that evidence for an historical Jesus is “long-established and widespread.” “Within a few decades”—if 60 to 80 years counts as “a few decades”—Jesus

⁸³ “How Jewish is Hollywood?”, by Joel Stein (Dec 19, 2008).

⁸⁴ For an interesting analysis of the role of Jews in the media, see Dalton (2015: 264-268).

⁸⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/14/what-is-the-historical-evidence-that-jesus-christ-lived-and-died>

is “mentioned by Jewish and Roman historians”—actually, one Jewish (Josephus) and one Roman (Tacitus), for a total of about ten sentences. The evidence, says Gathercole, “is early and detailed,” citing Paul’s letters and the Gospels. But we have seen the many problems with those, and in any case they don’t count as independent evidence. “It is also difficult to imagine why Christian writers would invent such a thoroughly Jewish savior in a time and place where there was strong suspicion of Judaism.” Actually, not difficult at all: the “Christian” writers were Jews who were trying to build an anti-Roman church based on a Jewish God and a Jewish savior. They just had to make sure that the enemy was “the devil” and not “Rome.”

When asked about the present controversy over Jesus’ existence, Gathercole cites only the Frenchman Michel Onfray, and deftly avoids mention of any other skeptic. He cites two pseudo-skeptics—Maurice Casey and Bart Ehrman—as declaring any mythicist approach to be “pseudo-scholarship.” When asked about any archeological evidence for Jesus, he offers a few confusing words about Cleopatra and the Shroud of Turin, only to conclude that “the documents [Epistles, Gospels, Josephus, Tacitus] form the most significant evidence”—which is a virtual admission of failure. As Gathercole well knows, there is no physical evidence. In the end, he never makes clear the distinction between the historical Jesus (the man) and the biblical Jesus (the Christ). We can accept the man, even if there is very little actual evidence, but we cannot accept any of the miraculous biblical account. And the man alone, as I’ve said repeatedly, means the end of Christianity.⁸⁶

Whither Christianity?

I rest my case. By all accounts, and despite protests to the contrary, Christianity indeed seems to be a “cleverly devised myth” (2 Pet 1:16)—a lie, a hoax—foisted upon the innocent and gullible masses simply for the benefit of Israel and the Jews. Jesus perhaps spoke the truth when he said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” (Mt 15:24), and a few true words even slipped from Paul’s mouth, as he was awaiting “the full number of Gentiles [to] come in” so that “all Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26). But it’s in the Gospel of John that we read one of the bluntest statements of truth, wherein Jesus says, “You [Gentiles] worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews” (4:22). We know what we are doing, say the Jews. You Gentile Christians don’t even know what you’re worshipping—which in fact is us and our God. But that’s okay. Just leave everything to us; “salvation is of the Jews.”

But it’s Paul who’s really the star of this show. Paul comes across as a masterly and artful liar—one of the all-time greats in world history, a man who can lie with impunity about the soul, the afterlife, God, everything. This unprincipled scoundrel, who admits to being “all things to all men,” would do anything or say anything to win

⁸⁶ I contacted The Guardian and offered, as another university professor, to write a reply to Gathercole; they never responded.

his “kingdom of God” here on Earth. His mournful cries of “I do not lie!” are revealed as nothing other than an inveterate liar caught in the act.

Let me close by citing Nietzsche one more time. At the end of *Antichrist* he brutally condemns the lying, world-maligning, soul-destroying Saint Paul:

Then Paul appeared—Paul, the chandala hatred against Rome, against ‘the world,’ become flesh, become genius, the Jew, the eternal Wandering Jew par excellence. What he guessed was how one could use the little sectarian Christian movement apart from Judaism to kindle a ‘world fire’; how, with the symbol of ‘God on the cross,’ one could unite all who lay at the bottom, all who were secretly rebellious, the whole inheritance of anarchistic agitation in the Empire, into a tremendous power. “Salvation is of the Jews.”

Christianity as a formula with which to outbid the subterranean cults of all kinds, those of Osiris, of the Great Mother, of Mithras, for example—and to unite them: in this insight lies the genius of Paul. His instinct was so sure in this that he took the ideas with which these chandala religions fascinated, and, with ruthless violence, he put them into the mouth of the ‘Savior’ whom he had invented, and not only into his mouth—he made something out of him that a priest of Mithras too could understand.

This was his moment at Damascus: he comprehended that he needed the belief in immortality to deprive ‘the world’ of value, that the concept of ‘hell’ would become master even over Rome—that with ‘the beyond’ one kills life. (sec. 58)

With his fabricated “Jesus” and his fabricated “afterlife,” Paul drained all value from this world, the real world. It turned believers into weak and subservient sheep, ones whose lives are oriented around the manufactured sayings of a marginal rabbi and of prayer to Jehovah, the invisible God of the Jews. It took a few hundred years, but when enough people fell for the hoax, it helped to bring down the Roman Empire. And when people—lots of people—still believe it after two thousand years, it cannot but degrade society, weighing us down, blocking us from attaining that which we are capable of, that which was only hinted at in the greatness of Athens and Rome. And all for the salvation of the Jews.

Jesus saves. I truly believe this. Jesus—the real Jesus, and his real story—will someday save us from a two-thousand-year-old nightmare. As he himself said, “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:31). Then he really will deserve his title as the most famous man in history.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B: A CRITIQUE OF ASLAN'S ZEALOT (2013)

The idea that Jesus was a rebel against the Roman Empire is an old one. It goes back at least to Reimarus' work in the 1770s, and was repeated in the 1960s by S. G. F. Brandon in such books as *Jesus and the Zealots*. Recently it has been articulated again, in Reza Aslan's book *Zealot*. *Zealot* has a superficial resemblance to the Antagonism Thesis that I have promoted in this book, and so I feel compelled to give a short analysis and critique. Despite points of agreement, Aslan misses entirely the main thrust of the present book.

As always with such books, we should start with the author. Aslan is a Muslim-turned-Christian-turned-Muslim who has a PhD in modern sociology, and now teaches creative writing at UC-Riverside. He has published two prior books on religion with major (non-academic) publishers, and thus has some claim to expertise, although certainly an unconventional one.

On the positive side, Aslan views Jesus in strictly an historical sense, as a Jewish man who rebelled violently against Roman rule and against those elite Jews who acquiesced. The late BC and early AD period, he says, was a time of upheaval and revolt by the various Jewish tribes. Jesus was part of this ferment, and sought to drive out the Romans and reestablish Jewish rule according to Judaic orthodoxy. As a zealot, he was eventually arrested and crucified. Following his death, his followers—the 11 apostles, Paul, and a few others like Mark and Luke—constructed a version of his life that fit their particular needs. All this is consistent with my own thesis.

But there are several points of divergence from my approach, and several independent weaknesses to Aslan's book. Consider the divergences first. Of the Gospels, Aslan rightly says "the gospels are not, nor were they ever meant to be, an historical documentation of Jesus' life. These are not eyewitness accounts of Jesus' words and deed recorded by people who knew him" (p. xxvi)—which is true. He notes their pseudographical nature, but immediately adds that such works "should by no means be thought of as forgeries." He does not explain why. If the accounts are known to be false but are portrayed as true, and published under a false name, then that is a forgery. Aslan doesn't consider this option because he relies on the Gospels as mostly literal truth, in contradiction to his view just quoted.

Later he repeats the same mistake, entirely neglecting the possibility of forgery. "All of Jesus' miracle stories were embellished with the passage of time and convoluted with Christological significance, and thus none of them can be historically validated" (p. 104)—true, but that's because they are fictional constructions, which he does not admit, or even consider.

Paul does not appear in the book until very late, and then plays only a relatively minor role. He correctly notes that Paul's Jesus is "almost wholly of his own making," but never quite manages to place any blame on Paul at all. On Aslan's reading, Paul is always an innocent and upright fellow, just doing his best to build a church as he sees fit. Paul never lied. In Aslan's world, no one has any malicious intent, no one ever does anything bad or wrong, no one is to blame for anything.

There are structural problems as well. Aslan rehashes in great detail the New Testament account of things, in a very novel-like format, as if everything mentioned there is reliable and true. He rehashes Josephus' *The Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews* in further detail, again accepting virtually everything as written. He doesn't consider the view of either fellow skeptics or critics, except in a lengthy, disconnected, and highly unconventional "Notes" section at the end of book, which does not relate to any specific "notes" in the text at all.

His scholarship is also in question. Apart from Biblical passages, there are almost no exact quotations (source plus page number) in the entire book, "notes" included. The citations he does have are mostly of the lazy sort—simple reference to a book or article title, with no details or quotation. His most important and obvious predecessor, S. G. F. Brandon, is almost invisible; one listing in the bibliography, and two passing mentions in the notes. This is very poor scholarship. There is likewise no mention of major scholars of the skeptical stance: nothing on Price, Thompson, Wells, or Doherty, not even the likes of Bart Ehrman. There is no mention of Nietzsche at all.

Granted the book is aimed at a popular audience, but it reads too much like a fictional novel to really be taken seriously. It's filled with unsubstantiated assertions, speculations, and flat claims of fact that are highly questionable. His portrayal of events reads like a soap opera—which perhaps it is, but at least Aslan should admit as much. Instead he casts it as the likely truth.

This is a shame because the general thesis is correct: Jesus was almost certainly just a man, a Jewish rabbi, who advocated for the poor and oppressed, and got himself killed. Beyond this mere skeleton of a life, we can say almost nothing about the real Jesus—and yet Aslan offers page after page of what Jesus "said" or "did."

The many weaknesses allow critics to pick the book apart while avoiding the valid central theme. One critical reviewer, Craig Evans, claims that Aslan "heavily relies on an outdated and discredited thesis"⁸⁷—the Zealot thesis—but without telling us why or how it is "outdated" and "discredited." Just because it's old, that doesn't make it "outdated." And it can only become "discredited" by argumentation and a superior theory, which I think does not exist. Certainly the biblical account, with its myriad inconsistencies, incoherencies, and patent falsehoods, is no superior theory; not even close.

⁸⁷ Christianity Today, August 2013.

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Debate: Is Jesus (Isa) a HOAX? David Skrbina v. Peter Williamson at Wayne State University

Ratio Christi at Wayne State University
Nov 25, 2018

A debate between an atheist, David Skrbina (University of Michigan Dearborn) and a theist (Peter Williamson, Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit) on the credibility and reliability of the New Testament narration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Adam Jakubik: Good evening. My name is Adam Jakubik. I am a senior here at Wayne State studying psychology and pre medicine with a minor in philosophy. I'm also a member of the Newman Catholic Center here at Wayne State. Welcome to this debate, which is sponsored by ratio Christie, a Christian apologetics and critical thinking club here at Wayne State. It's my pleasure to invite you to this evening's debate. The debate question is, is Jesus or ISA as? He is known in. The Koran? A hoax? Tonight's debate is the first of two debates sponsored this school year by ratio Christie Campus Apologetics Alliance. The second one will take place on Wednesday, the February 27th between 2 Wayne State professors, Doctor Bruce Russell and Doctor Albert Spalding on the question does God exist? In a few minutes, I will introduce the moderator of our two speakers. But first I'd like to recognize and thank two other groups who helped promote this event. The Wayne State University philosophy Club and also the Newman Catholic Center. We also appreciate the Co sponsoring of the Wayne State University's Dean of Students office, whose assistants made this debate possible. This event has been organized by ratio Christie apologetics, a an apologetics club. If you are interested in joining a follow-up discussion on tonight's debate, there will be two opportunities. 1st at University of Michigan, Dearborn, both of our speakers, doctor Skrbina and Dr. Williamson, will meet with students on Thursday, October 25th from 2:30 to 4:30 PM for a small group. Follow up session in Room 1086 at the CA SL building. 2nd for Wayne State students ratio, Christie will send out invitations for a brainstorming breakfast that will take place in the next few weeks on a Friday or Saturday morning. Breakfast will be provided. If you would like to receive an invitation, please fill out one of the white ratio Christie cards and leave it in the box on the table outside of this auditorium. When you leave this evening, there are extras around so.

Also, as you may have noticed, there are book tables outside of the auditorium. Doctor Skrbina's book that Jesus hopes is available for sale, and there are some other resources provided by Doctor Williamson. By ratio Christie and by the Newman Catholic Center as well. Handouts for the gospel, according to John, are free. New Testament Gospels will be sold for \$1.00 apiece. And one last detail. Tonight's event is being streamed on a Facebook group called Faith and Reason, and also Tao and Tawheed. Feel free to text, tweet or e-mail anyone you know who might be interested in viewing this debate online in the Facebook Facebook group called Faith and Reason, or Tao and Tawheed. OK, now let me introduce the speakers. Our moderator is John Bayon. John is the area director for Christian Medical and dental associations, a network of medical and dental student groups. He has also served on the staff of the graduate and faculty ministries of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. He holds a master degree in theological studies from Moody Theological Seminary and an engineering degree from University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Please welcome John Bayon. Our first speaker is Doctor David Skrbina. Dr. Skrbina is a senior lecturer in philosophy at U of M Dearborn and has been teaching there since 2003. He has published 4 books with major academic published publishers, including Panpsychism in the West and the Metaphysics of Technology. His most recent publication is the Jesus Hoax. C at www.jesushoax.com. Please welcome Doctor David Skrbina. Our second speaker is Doctor Peter Williamson. Doctor Williamson has several degrees. He occupies the Adam Cardinal Mita chair in Sacred Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI. He received his MA in theology from Sacred Heart in 1995 and his doctorate in biblical theology from the Gregorian University in 2001. He is the author of Revelation and Athenians in the Catholic commentary on Sacred Scripture. And Co editor of the series, along with Doctor Mary Healy and Kevin Perotta. Please welcome Doctor Williamson. And now let me turn it over to John Bayon.

John Bayon: Well, welcome. Glad to be with you tonight. Our format is really rather straightforward for the evening. We're going to have each of the professors present for 20 minutes with an interim 5 minute cross examination or conversation. Between the both of them and then they'll have a Part 2 where they will be doing shorter presentations of 15 minutes each and again with 5 minutes of cross examination and convert. After that, we'll have a short, very short break and allow students and audience members who wish to come up to the microphone right over here to ask a one minute question of the presenters. We ask that you focus that question towards one of the two presenters, though. You're welcome. I suppose to ask either one or both at the same time, but I do want to caution you. Please limit that to one minute. It's very tempting when you get in front of a mic to start making a a. Counter lecture and I'll be pretty. Uh, not strict, but just encourage you to move along the question after a minute. OK. So without further ado, Doctor Sabina is up next.

David Skrbina: Alright, great. Well, we'll get going here. Let me get this slideshow. Rolling good. OK, good. Yeah, well, I want to thank everyone for organizing this the Wayne State guys did a great job of pulling everything together. A lot of details, even

a relatively simple event like a two person debate. It's amazing how much work goes in. So I really want to thank those guys for pulling everything together. Did it did a really good job, I think. Getting everything going. So, right, so the topic we'll get right into the topic topic, of course is Jesus, the Jesus hoax. So a lot to be said here. Obviously, we're sort of pressed for time, so I'm going to give you the concise version of the argument. I think we all know there's a lot of problems with the biblical story, problems with the Jesus story, a lot of inconsistencies and illogical. And I think it adds up to it's not just problems just I think the tendency is to believe that there are minor problems in the story or little little issues that can be explained away. But I think there's a far larger narrative that's generally not well understood. And to me, I think it's pretty good case as it adds up to an actual hoax. An actual. Yeah, a construction of a story for a particular purpose. So this is what I'm going to present to you tonight. So basically it's a two-part presentation. First of all, why the Jesus story as told in the Bible is false. So we'll run through the case against the. Then there has to be a truth, a true side to things. So I'm going to give you at least an interpretation of the truth, which I think is fits under the heading of a Jesus hoax scenario. So that's what we'll see. Again, I'm going to give you the compressed version of the arguments. The full version, of course, is in the Jesus hoax book. So this is my book was published just last summer, about a year ago. It's available on Amazon. They have copies, some copies out at the desk. Slight discount for you guys for coming today, so. So let me begin with two facts here and I think these are probably accepted by all parties pretty much. It's not a question of proof. We cannot supply proof. I cannot prove my case. I'm going to argue that it was a hoax. I cannot prove it. Of course, Dr. Williamson cannot prove his side either. We cannot prove that the biblical Jesus actually existed, so it's not really a question of proof, I think. It's more of. Constructing what is logical, what's likely what's rational and what's probable. So that's the case I'm going to be making. That's the first fact, the second fact. Is this Jesus character is really quite a mystery. I guess I'm tempted to say we know almost nothing about the quote. Real Jesus, what he really said or what he really did. So if anyone tries to tell you what Jesus said or did, you need to be very cautious about that. I think I think you may be being. Either deceived or uhm somehow misled, because really this character is really quite quite a mystery, as I think we'll find out. So let's say I guess we need to know what we're talking about. So we're talking about Jesus, right? And there's at least two conceptions of Jesus here in, in the context. On the one hand, we have the biblical Jesus, so this is the miracle working son of God that we read about in the Bible and in the one that goes along with standard Christianity. And then in a counterpart we have what we would call historical Jesus, an actual person, a flesh and blood person who lived at a certain time, lived, died, and presumably buried somewhere in the in the Middle East today. So there's a difference between the biblical Jesus, the son of God, and the historical Jesus, which was just a mortal human being. So if someone talks to you about did Jesus exist, or do you believe in Jesus, you need to know what we're talking about. Do you talk about the biblical Jesus or the historical Jesus? Now in my

case here, I'm going to say the biblical Jesus did not exist. That was the myth that was constructed. Folks, I'm going to accept that there was a historical Jesus, an actual person who lived and died, was actually crucified, and he forms the core of the hoax. So that's the case I'll be making today. Uhm, my central argument is pretty pretty simple. This is it in a nutshell. There was very likely. The fact that there was number biblical Jesus, it's almost certainly the case. Later on in time, they someone. Said that, there was. Therefore, somebody lied, somebody lied. There was no biblical Jesus. The Bible says there was somebody lied. So to me, I want to know who lied when and why. Those are the questions that I'm interested in. So that's what we'll be exploring here. So part one, why the Jesus story is false? There's two basic issues with the Jesus story. First of all, we have what I call the problem of the evidence, namely that we don't have any, that we're lacking in evidence. The second major issue is what I call the problem of the chronology. It relates to the datings of the writings in the Bible. In the New Testament and in some other contemporaneous writings. So we'll see that in a moment. So we'll walk. Through each of these two problems very briefly here. Number one, on the evidence side. So the main evidence for Jesus being the son of God was the miracles, right? So we all know about Jesus's miracles. In fact, in the New Testament there are 36 documented miracles. They typically fall into 3 categories. We have the nature based miracles we have the healings, and then the raisings from the dead. So in total we have 36 of those in the New Testament. We also of course have the virgin birth and then we have the resurrection. So I guess we can call it 38 miracles, if you like. My claim is that if the miracles were real, they would leave evidence real miracles would have some evidence. So for example Eyewitness's writings. Virtually all the miracles had eyewitnesses, people who were there that saw them or were the subject of the miracles. Some of the miracles had many thousands of people, the fishes and loaves feedings. We had two of those in the Bible. And that's a total of 9000 people at those. 2 miracles 9. 1000 witnesses, we would expect witnesses to miracles to document. Say something. Tell somebody who wrote something down, but we don't have anything like that from eyewitnesses, nor do we have it from any contemporaneous sources who lived at the time. So this is actually a very big problem. You would expect somebody. In the area at the time who had heard about the miracles, maybe didn't see them, but heard about them would be writing about them. The primary source, of course, would be the Romans, because the Romans were of course in charge of Palestine or Judea at the time. And we would expect the Romans they were documenting things. They were the formal authorities. They would have documented things had they heard or had any any evidence that there were these Jesus miracles. Unfortunately, we find nothing. We might even expect some physical evidence, depending on the nature of the miracle. Some kind of? I don't know an icon a, a remnant, A relic, something that would actually be physical evidence of a miracle. And unfortunately, we have nothing, absolutely nothing, nothing from the whole life of Jesus, which runs roughly from three BC to the year 30. We have no evidence from that time. We have no evidence for decades after the time of Jesus. No contemporaneous writings, no eye witness writings,

no physical evidence, nothing, absolutely nothing for years. So I think the I think we're faced with a few apps, maybe just three options when it comes to the miracles. First of all, either the miracles happened and no one wrote anything. That seems highly implausible. Secondly, the miracles occurred, people wrote about them, and all the writings were lost. Not just most of the writings, all of the writings that also seems highly implausible. Or, more likely, there were no miracles at all. And I think that's far more likely case. The problem with the chronology? Let's look at the dates for a minute and then we'll see a little bit. Give it an idea what's going on here. So Jesus dies, he's crucified in the year 30 AD. And 33 AD Paul converts from Judaism to Christianity. He has a vision of the Risen Christ. Paul is a key figure in the hoax, will come back to him a little bit later. But we have a huge gap in time after Jesus dies, Paul converts. We have 20 years fully 20 years and we have nothing at all. No writings, no documentation by any of the Christians, by Paul, by the Romans, anybody. No writings for 20 years. In the next 20 years, from 50 to 70 AD, this is the dating of the 13 letters of Paul. You're probably familiar with the 13 epistles of Paul. Those dates, according to the experts, between 50 and seven. 20 at least half of those letters are fraudulent, so yeah, we won't worry about that. We'll put those aside. I think even the Doctor, Williamson would agree that at least half those letters are not truly by Paul, but we'll set that aside for time being in the year 70. The first gospel appears. This is the gospel of Mark. This is generally dated to the year 70. That's the earliest of the four Gospels. That shows up in the year 70. The next two gospels to appear seem to have been Matthew and Luke. Those were apparently written about the year 85 and the last gospel was John, written about the year 95 AD. I guess the thing that stands out is those gospel writings. The Gospels are the only source of the documentation for our knowledge about Jesus. Documentation of his life, his life history, what he said, the miracles, everything comes from those four gospels and yet they date extremely late much later than you would expect. Particularly if two of the four Gospels were written by the Disciples of Jesus, you would expect I would expect as soon as Jesus dies and has risen to. Immediately you would think his followers would document his life story. It's a miracle he's risen to heaven, his body is gone. It's clearly clearly true that he's the son of God. Immediately you would start writing down life as his life story. What did Jesus say so we don't forget we won't have to document it right now. You should have had gospels written immediately in the year 30 as soon as Jesus dies. But we don't see that. We don't see any gospels. When Jesus dies, nothing for 20 years. The first gospel shows up 40 years after Jesus dies. Then we get other Gospels 50 and 60 years after Jesus dies, somebody waited a very long time to write those gospels. That's a very strange situation in itself. But it's even worse than that. If we look at the actual fragments, the physical remnants, pieces of the gospels that we own, those are even later than those dates. It's not like we have gospels from those early dates, not even close. So, for example, the oldest fragment from the Gospel of John, it's called P52. It's just a fragment of the gospel. That dates to the year. 125 AD the oldest fragment of Matthew dates to 175 AD. Of Lucas 200 AD and of Marcus 250

AD. So if Mark for example was written in the year 70, but the oldest scrap that we have is from the year 250, that's a huge gap of yeah, almost 200 years of which we have no documentation. We have no idea of what happened, what was changed was the mark from 2:50 the same as the mark from 70. We have no idea. Absolutely no idea. Even the Bible itself, I think people don't realize that the oldest physical Bible is actually much later than those periods. The oldest physical Bible piece of actual document is from is the Vatican Codex. It's held in Rome. It dates to the year 350 AD. So if the Bible was completely written by the year 100 AD, the Old Testament and the New Testament, but we have to wait 250 years to have a complete. Physical Bible. Once again, we have lots of problems. We don't know what changed, what edits occurred, what insertions were made. We have a huge. Gap in our knowledge. The other problem is for the non Christian writings, the Christian writings cause a problem. The non Christian writings are also a problem. The earliest non Christian to write about the Christians was Josephus. He was a Jewish writer. In the year 93, he wrote a book called Antiquities of the Jews and he gave. One paragraph, one paragraph mentioned that there were Christians that they existed and there was this fellow named Christ that they followed, and that was it was just one paragraph in a long work, and he mentions them in the. Year 93 and that's it. The earliest Roman mention of the Christians is even later in the year 115. Tacitus was the Great Roman historian. He writes a book called Annals. He gives 2 sentences to the Christians in his work of the year 115. Also in 115, Pliny is writing a letter to Trajan, the emperor Trajan, and he's going on for four or five small paragraphs. He's complaining about the Christians. They're causing trouble, plenty wants to punish them. But clearly they exist. But again, this is a very, very problematic issue from the Christian side. If the Romans, who are documenting everything that was going on in Judea at the time they spent almost 100 years before they even wrote a single word about the Christians, that's really an astounding story. If Jesus died, was crucified. he commits he. Performs his miracles, dies in the year 30 decades go by and finally in the year 115 the Romans start to write about the Christian movement. Then clearly it was so inconsequential or non consequential that the Romans wrote not nothing about it until almost a century later. And I think that's quite damning in itself. So the conclusions then from this first part is I think we just did not have any Jesus miracles that seems to be the most likely conclusion. If that's true, then Jesus was not divine. He was not the. Son of God. I think he did exist. I think he was a mortal man. I'm not totally sure. I'm probably I could. I'm kind of on the fence on this one, but let's for the sake of the debate, let's say he. Existed. He was a mortal. Man, a human being, he was also a Jewish rabbi. I don't know. I'm not sure if people are familiar with that with that Jesus being a Christian was actually a Jewish rabbi. Is that familiar to people? I used to think so, but I guess I wasn't really sure. Just to give you a little bit of background. So Jesus, in fact, was Jewish, at least if we believe the Bible. So and Luke. It says he regularly attended the synagogue. Matthew says he came to fulfill the Jewish law. Of course he was declared King of the Jews in Matthew and the Gospel of John. He admits that he's the Jewish

Messiah. And in Romans letters to Romans, he's descended from David. So it's pretty clear that in fact he was Jewish. If that's not clear, there's many times in the New Testament that Jesus is, in fact is. Called the rabbi. I won't read through all of them, but yeah, three. At least three of the four Gospels, Jesus is called Rabbi. It's good to be here. Peter said. Rabbi, look, Judas said is that I, rabbi. Rabbi, where are you staying? So he was Jewish. He was a rabbi. He was an actual man. But of course he was not an ordinary rabbi. Apparently he was a social agitator and a. Kind of a rebel. We know this because. He was crucified. Crucifixion is not a Jewish punishment. It's a Roman punishment. Crucifixion was reserved for political criminals, so people who were seditious or rebellious against the Roman Empire, which ruled in Palestine at the time. If you were treasonous against the empire. You were considered a political criminal. You were crucified. It was the worst form of death. Worst form of punishment. So if we can accept the fact that Jesus was a moral person, and if we can accept that he was in fact crucified, that pretty much conclusively tells us that he was a a political rebel, a rebel against the Roman Empire. That's why he was crucified. That's probably the core. Of the hoax. So that brings us to the actual Jesus hoax itself. So we have a little bit of background, we know something about the problems with the situation. Let's at least start to outline the the. Plan of the hoax. OK. I'll I'll least start to outline the hoax here and then we'll, we'll take a break and then I'll continue with the presentation in Part 2. So we'll do a little bit of justice short history here. So in the year 165 BC, the Jewish tribes came to rule in Judea. This was the Maccabean revolt against the Selucid Empire of Southern Europe. It created the Hasmonean dynasty, which ruled in that area. The Jewish tribes ruled in that area came to power in 165. They ruled for about 100 years. They were the minority, by the way. Just like today, the Jews are the minority in the Middle East. At the time the Jewish tribes were the minority population. In the year 63 BC, the Roman Empire comes to town. The Romans invade. They take over. So when the Roman Empire comes, they do what they always do. They come into it to a territory they don't come in to slaughter or kill people. They just want to take over so they move into Jerusalem. They ask who's in charge here and everyone says it's the Jewish tribes. The Jews are in charge. The Romans go to them and say you're out of power. Sorry, you're out of power. We're in charge. You're part of the Roman Empire. That's just how it's going to. Be so that's. Typically what they did, if you fought back, the Romans would kill you, but in general they just moved in and took over and absorbed regions into the Roman Empire. So of course, whoever was in power who was thrown out of power by the Roman Empire, they're not happy in Judea. It was the Jews. They were outraged. They vowed revenge against the Roman Empire. As far as far back as 63 BC. In five ad, the key figure in our hoax, Paul of Tarsus, Born Saul, he was born in the year 5AD. He was a member of the Jewish elite, almost certainly, like all the Jewish elite. He hated. The Romans, wanted to undermine the Roman Empire, wanted them to leave, would do anything to get rid of them. So there's a need to resist. You've got the Roman Empire. They've moved in. They've taken over. How do you resist the Roman Roman Empire? It it's

a difficult task. Well, I think there's two ways to oppose a larger organization either. Overtly or covertly. Overtly, there were groups of militant Jews. They were known as Zealots, also called Sicarii, who were dagger, dagger men. They would stab people, assassinate them with knives, fighting militantly violently against the Romans and anybody who cooperated with the Romans. That was the overt resistance. Covertly, though, is a more clever way to oppose you work as an insider to the system, not as an outsider. To do so, you have to be stealthy. You have to be deceptive. You have to be. An artful liar. And that's our man, Paul. He's an artful liar. As I'll show. And so he was working inside the Roman Empire, covertly creating a lie to undermine Rome from the inside. This is kind of the beginning. Of my case, so I'll. Stop here and we'll. Turn it over to Doctor Williamson.

John Bayon: Doctor Wellington will now have 5:00. Minutes to interact with doctors Rubina.

Peter Williamson: So David, it's nice to be here again publicly having a conversation that we started in Moon Wings Cafe this summer.

David Skrbina: Yes, right. Thank you.

Peter Williamson: David and I have communicated, he told me about his book when it was published, and I got it and read it. He asked me for feedback and he pressed me. So I wrote him. Oh, I don't know. 10-20 pages of feedback and then we got together and had a chance to talk about it. So OK, I. Have a few questions. David, how many? How many authors published authors were there in the 1st century, to your knowledge from the area of Palestine? Do you have?

David Skrbina: Any idea so there? Were well, there were major authors who wrote at that time. So you have Philo Petronius.

Peter Williamson: Philos from Egypt, from Alexandria. I'm just saying authors from Palestine, from the area where Jesus was.

David Skrbina: Well, I guess I don't know who lived in Palestine. I know who lived in the in the. In the area.

Peter Williamson: We'll name some and I'll tell you if.

David Skrbina: They were there. Well, like I said, so the people who could have written at the time would have been Philo, Strabo, Petronius, Seneca.

Peter Williamson: Nope, none of them. None of them. None of them. So the. Ones that lived. In Palestine were 8. And two and six of the eight were Christians were Christians and our authors there were Jews because they were Jews living in Israel, but they resided in the area where Jesus ministered, and they saw his ministry, and they wrote, and their books are written. In the New Testament, so six of the eight the other.

David Skrbina: Two like who are.

Peter Williamson: The six OK the 6th are Matthew, Mark, John. James, Jude and Peter.

David Skrbina: The writers of the Gospels and the letters.

Peter Williamson: And some of the letters that's.

David Skrbina: And something else, right?

Peter Williamson: Right, that's. OK, OK, Now the other two, the only two non Christians from that period are Josephus, but he was born. After Jesus died, he was born in like 37. And I think he died around 100. He rode in the late part of the century, so he couldn't have been a witness to Jesus. There's only one other author that's known to historians, whose works have survived. There were many people who wrote things, but less than 1% of anything written has survived to the present time that one other author is a man named Justin. Of Tiberius and none of his works are found. We only know about him because he's mentioned in another word. So my point here is. Doctor Skrbina's argument that we would have known about the miracles if somebody was working all those miracles is yes, we do actually have eyewitnesses. They're the authors of books of three of the Gospels. You know that are in the New Testament, and then three others. And that there are simply no other non Christian authors who have. Lived, whose work has survived from that period.

David Skrbina: But of course, the writers that you're talking about, they wrote the Gospels. Those were 40-50 sixty years later, so they were not written contemporaneously with the miracles. That's the first problem. The second problem is.

Peter Williamson: Well, that's a, that's an assumption. That's what some scholars say.

David Skrbina: That's what most scholars say.

Peter Williamson: That's what maybe a majority scholars say, but I would say that there's a there's a good trend of both older scholars and younger scholars, and I draw attention to a book by. Called the case for Christ by Brant Petrie, just published a year or two ago where he argues for dating of the Gospels a full 15 years earlier, and I subscribed to it. In other words, that all all that the three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. And probably yes. And Luke was probably written before 62 because acts speaks about Paul in 19 in, not 19 in 1st century 6. YouTube in Rome but let. First another question.

David Skrbina: Ask you, Peter. Peter, you're Peter. You're forgetting, though the Romans. Of course. The Romans Pontious pilot was there in Jerusalem at the time he was in charge. He was. He was surveying everything that was going on. If the son of God comes and you're in charge, you're going to know about it. You're going to be writing back to Rome, saying this guy shows up and he's walking on water. He's raising the dead. What do I do? There's going to be letters back and forth to Rome. Send help send more soldiers. I mean, those documents surely would have existed if their if that truth had.

Peter Williamson: Is the truth is, no documents from Pontiac? The pilot remain or exist. They are all gone. Certainly, he wrote letters. They're all gone. Not only that, the very existence of Pontius Pilot was not actually known or proven from a non biblical source until the 20th century when an inscription was found in Cesarea Maritima. That that named him, but prior to that people were saying, oh, maybe there wasn't really a Pontius pilot. But that was simply because so much of the evidence has disappeared

with time. We're dealing with quite a quite a limited selection of resources, but I had another question. You speak about how late it is that we're relying on how late the information is that we're relying on for Jesus, but do you have any idea? Of what the primary sources are for the most famous person of Jesus Day, namely Tiberius.

David Skrbina: The dates that he.

Peter Williamson: What are the sources that we rely on for the most information we have about Tiberius Caesar? Who was the contemporary of Jesus? He was emperor when Jesus was crucified.

David Skrbina: Yeah, it must have been later. Must have.

Peter Williamson: Been Tacitus or yes, it was Tacitus around 1:00. 09 or your date is 115? Yeah. Sweet Tonus who was a little bit later in the 2nd century and then third. Dom Cassius in the 3rd century. So the point is for the for ancient history you deal with information that is often written significantly later for your main sources of information. OK. Thank you. All right. So here's the Christian Jesus or Isa a hoax. I want to begin. By talking about Jesus and his message, that will be the first presentation. What does history tell us? And then the second presentation is going to evaluate the Jesus hoax hypothesis. It's first important to think about historical method. Determining the truth about history is different from determining the truth in other disciplines. In mathematics, formula and theorems can be proved by formal proofs in the physical sciences, claims be can be proved by repeatable experiments. But just as Doctor Skrbina said, history is different. The historians job is to examine the available evidence. And to arrive at the most probable explanation that accounts for the data. The historical method is like a courtroom procedure or the courtroom procedure is a type of historical method. It involves examining witnesses and other evidence, evaluating the credibility of witnesses, interpreting the evidence to develop, if you will, a theory of the crime that explains all the facts available as convincingly as possible, and that's what. Doctor Skrbina has been doing and has. Come up with a. And then you reach a verdict which, and the way you do that is there may be alternate theories. Always the prosecution has one theory and the defense has a different theory and the jury has to decide which explanation is most probable. And then the jury may have to decide how certain that explanation is. Is it proof beyond a reasonable doubt? Or is it that the preponderance of the evidence supports one theory or another? Now, if we're looking for historical data for information that will enable us to make a judgment about what happened, we look to these sources. If we're trying to learn about Jesus of Nazareth and I've listed them more or less in their order of importance, the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Written between 60 to 90 according to or close to, according to Doctor Skrbina's estimate, others I would put them maybe 15 years earlier than. Then 23 other New Testament writings, 13 letters of Paul, ten other books and letters from the 1st century, from the second-half of the 1st century. And then Roman and Jewish histories in letters Trajan, Plenty's letter to Trajan, Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus of people who doctor Skrbina also mentioned other Christian writings of the 1st and 2nd century Clement of Rome. Ignatius of Antioch,

whose feast is today and others, and then archaeological remains. Up the four Gospels are our primary historical sources for the life and teaching of Jesus and what I object to about to doctor Skrbina's presentation is that he doesn't examine them. He, in a certain sense, writes them off as the Biblical Jesus and doesn't actually look at them as historians do. Which is to kind of consider what's the content of each of these and what do they say and then how do we judge it, you know? It's not legitimate for the prosecution to say all of the defense witnesses don't count because they're friends of the accused. In other words, it's important to take into account all the witnesses and then evaluate their evidence and. So on so. The four Gospels are considered important by historians. Because their genre is biography, like that of Greco-roman philosophers, not novels, not folk tales, not myths, not legends. They're written in a very historical way. They're not anonymous. The authors names appear in the titles of every manuscript. The authors were companions of Jesus who witnessed the events in the case of Matthew and John, or writers who got their information from eyewitnesses. Mark, who was a companion of Peter and Luke who was a who actually was, was a companion of Paul, but he, he says in his gospel right in the first verse. He says actually, it's the second verse. The accounts passed on to us by those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word from the beginning, so he draws his his information from eyewitnesses. So doctor Skrbina objects to the evidence from the Gospels. Bias miracles don't happen. Lack of non Christian contemporary confirmation manuscripts from decades or centuries afterwards. And he says that there's a chronology problem, a time gap between the events. 30 to 33 say in the life of Jesus, or 27 to 30, whichever you give dates, you give for the date of Jesus, and then the time of the writing of the letters and what Doctor Skrbina is saying is that Paul inserted a divine Jesus of Biblical Jesus story. Well, all witnesses have a point of view, but they're, but they still need to be heard and then their credibility weighed. The belief that miracles can't happen, which I know well, is not fact based. It's, if you will, it's a matter of faith that miracles don't happen. Instead, what what science job is is to try to explain things, and sometimes it runs across things that it can't explain. Miracles still occur. Things that people can't explain by scientific means and believers recognize or believe. These are things that come from God and others may not say that they don't know what they may say. They don't know where they come. From or, they may. Imagine that some other cause, but it's not the same as a fact that because there are miracles, they didn't a a a document is not true or to be discounted. I think I pointed out that the absence of non Christian contemporary accounts is not surprising. What about the trustworthiness of the manuscripts? I meant? I wish I'd had the chance to ask Doctor Sabina when he thinks the oldest manuscript of Tacitus, the historian from the 1st century, comes from. In fact, it comes from the year 1100. The earliest manuscript we have of the Roman historian Tacitus. And yet we trust it. And in fact. It's the nature of. Of the historical science of textual criticism, to evaluate the quality of the text, the likelihood that it accurately represents what was originally written. On the basis of a few criteria, one is how close in time is it between the manuscript we have and when

the work was originally written. Another is how many manuscripts do we have? And then the third is what's the geographical spread? Because if you have manuscripts in widely diverse places. And they have the same content. You have a pretty good knowledge that you're dealing with one original source that has kind of developed and been copied many times over, but it's still consistent. Well, when it comes to the New Testament, the texts are better attested than any other ancient works. They are much, much more numerous. You see, it's 5700 texts in Greek as compared to, say, 20 copies of Tacitus. Annals and you see that we have much older manuscripts. They say the time lapse between the writing and the actual manuscripts is much shorter in the case of the New Testament. This says 310, the year 310. Doctor Skrbina said 350 for when we have the whole New Testament. But in other words, we're dealing with earlier manuscripts, many more manuscripts. Much greater geographical distribution. The bottom line is the manuscripts of the New Testament are better than those of any other ancient documents, period in terms of their antiquity, and therefore their reliability from the point of view of textual criticism. And then finally, I'd say that there is. No void to fill that Paul could fill, or anybody else who wished to insert a story between Jesus and the Gospels in the ancient world, disciples memorized what they learned from their teachers. They rehearsed their memories by recitation and teaching, so there was some kind of consistency in repeating the words of Jesus, that scholars believed to have characterized the early church, that was the way it was customarily done in Judaism. Also, Christian communities sprang up quickly in Judea, in Samaria, in Antioch and in Rome, and it's not easy to rewrite the Jesus story once it starts going. It isn't the case that Christianity as a movement grew into existence after Paul in, you know, at the end of his ministry in the early 60s or even starting in the 50s, there was already a Christian movement and existing communities in a number of places prior to Paul's missionary activity, which began in about 49 so. It was too late to try to change the story then. Also we know from Luke as I maybe mentioned that many writings preceded the Gospels. Actually, I didn't say that Luke in the first verse of his Gospel says inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished, I also am now applying myself to this task. So in other words, there were many writings, it's just that the only ones that have survived for us are the four canonical gospels from that period. Scholars also point to a document they have they have called Q for the German word Kela for source, which they believe gathered the sayings of Jesus that are found in both Matthew and Luke and various kind of reasons they have for that, but that they estimate was written in the 30s or 40s. The point is there were written things there. It wasn't possible to change the story. And then finally, even by Doctor Skrbina's late dating, the Gospels, written within the lifespan of eyewitnesses, were able to confirm or disconfirm events. If you think about this, I graduated from high school here in Detroit in 1968, fifty years ago, and began studying at the university. Of Michigan, that's about the same gap in time between the between the death of Jesus, which was in 33, and the writing of Matthew and Luke, which is thought to be between 80 and 85 in a certain kind

of conventional dating that. Being is relying on. That's 50 years, so I could tell you things that did happen or didn't happen back then pretty easily. I could confirm you know that that was the year that Robert Kennedy was assassinated. That was the year that Martin Luther King was assassinated. That was the year that Richard Nixon was elected. That was the year I went to Washington for the counter inauguration. You know, these are all clear things. So people were still alive in. At the time these gospels were written so it wouldn't be possible to change the story so. Historians accept the gospel as credible sources. Historians of Judaism of the Roman Empire and studies of the historical Jesus. All of the main scholarly studies, except the Gospels and pay attention to them. I know of no history historian who says the four Gospels were a deliberate fabrication or hoax. And why? Because they're historical genre, characterized by names, places, locations and so on. Information confirms the Gospels wherever it's available. Corroboratory information there's presence of embarrassing information, Peters denial Jesus's family thinks he's mad. Rejection by Jewish religious authorities. Female testimony to the resurrection, things like that. So I think there's some good. Reasons to think that these are very credible sources and need to be primary in any consideration of what the what the historical Jesus is. So what do the four gospels tell us about Jesus? And I'm going to have a give you a pretty lightning tour of this in in about 7 minutes. OK, Jesus was an itinerant preacher from Nazareth, followed by large crowds and smaller band of disciples regarded as sent by God because of miracles of healing, exorcism over nature, exorcism, and miracles over nature, calming storms, and so on. Regarded as an eschatological figure, is he Elijah is he, is he? The Messiah. Is he the Prophet who is to come? What was Jesus preached message? The Gospel of Mark tells us after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. Gospel means good news and the time has fulfilled means that God's promises through the Hebrew. Profits are coming to pass. In my day in my life, in my life. The Kingdom is the coming reign of God and its hand. It's beginning to start. Judgment and salvation are going to unfold, and then the response that was called for was repent. Turn away from wrongdoing. A turn to God believe. Accept Jesus's words and become his disciple. His ethical teaching was. About love loving and it was inconsistent with the Torah of Israel, the love God with all your heart, soul and strength and your neighbors yourself and. He taught the Torah the taharat. As the way Muslims. Pronounce it or understand it in Arabic. That's the term, but set a higher standard. Not only do not, he says, not only you have heard it said, do not kill. I say to you, don't be angry with your brother. Don't insult your brother. Don't hate your brother. You've heard it say don't commit adultery. I say don't look at a woman to lust after her. Jesus moved the law to an interior dimension. He called for. Sacrificial love, greater love has no man than this. That a man lay down his life for his friends, love your enemies, he says. Do good to those. Who, who, who? From you. Forgive others if you want to be forgiven. He taught a radical attachment from possessions and called for a radical generosity towards the poor. Taught quite a

bit about himself, which is something we often don't think about. He referred often to God as his father and to himself as God's son in a unique way. He does this both in the Gospel of John and in the Synoptic Gospels. He referred to himself as the son of man and if you know the Hebrew scriptures in the book of Daniel in Chapter 7 it describes one like a son of man ascending on the clouds, who goes to God and receives from him Eternal Dominion over all nations. In other words, a second divine figure. And even within Judaism, this was something that was recognized as a very special figure. And the requesters in Judaism, who is this? Jesus called himself the son of. And he also forgave sins, something that only God is allowed to do. He walked on water. He referred to, you know, this is, of course, a miracle. But when he did this in the story he, he said, they said, who is it? And he said I am using the holy name of God that was. Revealed to Moses in the Book of Exodus, he also demanded required of his disciples A loyalty to himself above every human relationship, something that wouldn't ordinarily be considered a moral thing to ask of anybody. Ultimately, the Jewish leaders executed Jesus for the crime of blasphemy, not that he claimed to be the Messiah, because that isn't blasphemy, but because he claimed to be divine. How do we interpret Jesus divine claims? CS Lewis, the 20th century Oxford and Cambridge Don, who was once an atheist, says this. I'm trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him. I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man who and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic. Someone who thinks he's God but he actually isn't, or else he would be the devil of hell. Someone who's a liar, who knew he wasn't God, but Cled claimed to. Me so. Let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He's not left that open to us. He did not intend to. So Lewis comes to the conclusion he says now it seems to me obvious that he was neither a lunatic nor a fiend, and I consequently, and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that he was and is God. What else do the gospels tell us? They tell us about Jesus death on the cross and the meaning of that death in Jesus's own words. The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom. For many, Jesus gave his life for others, and then a little later, he says, this is my blood of the covenant. And again at his Last Supper with his disciples, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus teaches that his death had an atoning value that was its purpose was for the good of others to bring forgiveness. I have one minute left to tell the evidence for Jesus resurrection, and I'll say it quickly. Jesus to all four gospels agree on these main points. Jesus tomb was empty. Jesus appeared first, second Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene and other female disciples. The names vary in all the gospels, but the apostles didn't believe them. Everybody knows that's true, right? Then third, Jesus appears to the apostles both in Jerusalem and Galilee. 4th Jesus has a physical body he can eat. He can be touched. It is, recognizably, recognizably the same. He can point to the wounds in his hands and his feet from the nails, but

it's also different in appearance. He and his body is different. He's able to show up in locked rooms where the disciples are gathered and. Talk to them. Many witnesses on multiple occasions saw the Risen Jesus until his Ascension 40 days later. Well, I don't have time to talk about the alternative theories that people have, so we'll just leave it right there. The evidence for Jesus resurrection is actually rather quite quite startling and quite strong, but we'll. Leave that for now. Thank you.

John Bayon: 5 minutes to respond, doctor.

David Skrbina: OK. Thank thank you, Doctor Williamson. Quite, quite interesting. I have a few questions.

Peter Williamson: For you. OK, fair enough.

David Skrbina: So I've made some notes as you were talking on on on your points. I guess one just the general thought strikes me as your. Don't take it wrong, but. You seem to be very. Naive in the sense in the sense that you believe what's written and someone shows you something in writing and you just believe it. And that's a very, very simplistic approach to things. And we know throughout all of history that in general, things aren't always just as they seem. But there are many other. Windows things going on behind the text, superficial appearances that turn out to not be true. So you take many of these things very literally and very superficially. And I guess I would say in a in a very naive sense and you don't look at alternative explanations, I guess that's kind of. A general comment. Let me.

Peter Williamson: Just is there a question there? Well, it's.

David Skrbina: Just a general comment. Let me ask a question. I just went through some of your slides. You talked about archaeological remains for Jesus. I don't believe there are any. Do you have dates? Do you know? Do you have? Anything specific that? You talked about for archaeological remains, yeah.

Peter Williamson: Not of Jesus physically, but we do have, for instance, ossuaries bone boxes that are how are engraved on the outside, and one of them is from James, brother of Jesus, son of Joseph found in Jerusalem. We have another one found in Bethany, the area where Lazarus was. That has the names Mary, Martha and Lazarus on it found in Bethany, the place where those three are recorded in John Chapter 11 we have another ossuary of Caiaphas, the high priest who presided over the trial of Jesus. Then we have lots of other things we've got. Let's see. I had a good little list there, so let me see.

David Skrbina: I guess the question is, do you know the dates? I don't doubt something like that exists. The question do they do the?

Peter Williamson: Do the dates of those things, the dates of the 1st century, those 3 Austin Aries that I just mentioned. Well then there's the pilot inscription. But also there's the pools of Bethesda. They're in John Chapter 5. It speaks about a uhm, healing that took place at a pool that had five porticos, and everybody said there's no pool with five porticos and sure enough, they. Found it and. It's there today at Saint Anne's Church is built over it. They've excavated it and it's from the first centuries. Clearly there lots of other sort of confirming details. But I'm OK keeping my mind.

David Skrbina: At the moment you say the genre of the Gospels was biography, and I'm agreeing with you. It was certainly written as if it was a biography. That doesn't mean it's a completely true biography, no under the hoax thesis. Yeah, it's not a complete fraud. Any any good hoax or will include many factual details in his story to give credence to the general hoax, right? This is pretty obvious even in a simple minded sense. You wouldn't write a complete fictional story. It would be mostly true. So someone could check it, you would find it was mostly correct and then you would insert your hoax woven into in amongst the facts. So the fact that it was written as a biography, and the fact that there are many confirmable facts in the Gospels says nothing against the hoax thesis, because that's exactly what you would expect. Would you agree with that?

Peter Williamson: Yes, if if a person is trying to do a hoax, it's it's.

David Skrbina: It's compatible with the host thesis.

Peter Williamson: Wise to include some truth in there mingle. Truth are. There with lies, I'd agree.

David Skrbina: With that, the fact that we don't have contemporary writings is not of Jesus is not the same as you don't have contemporary writings of a philosopher or historian. Those are relatively mundane writings, and we can understand how those got lost. But if you're talking about the son of God who's come here in person, he's working miracles. That's the highest possible standard. That would be the least likely thing to get lost in history of the son of God who's come and perform. The miracles, so that's the most implausible thing I think you would agree that those would.

Peter Williamson: OK, may I?

David Skrbina: Those would be the last thing that would be lost to history is the. Coming of the son of God and.

Peter Williamson: That's why. I think that the that so many copies of the gospel and the New Testament survive. There's an explosion, a publishing explosion. It happened in the 1st century. Far more manuscripts than of all these Roman emperors you know of the histories of the Roman Empire and the Roman emperors. There's just an explosion of these manuscripts, handwritten manuscripts, every one of them are handwritten, and that and there were people. It's Matthew, Mark and John and Peter and James. And Jude, so we have and besides them only Josephus and he comes from later in the century. So I'm I'm trying to say there actually is testimony there now you you you say that it it it may be false I'll you know let's take it the idea that maybe it's well let's examine it. Let's not just say. It's either all true or all false. Let's let's take.

David Skrbina: OK, OK.

Peter Williamson: A look at it and consider it.

David Skrbina: All right. You said that the Jewish leaders executed Jesus for the crime of blasphemy. When Jews executed people back then, it was typically through stoning and crucifixion. In fact, was a Roman punishment, wouldn't you agree? And

doesn't that fact suggested it wasn't the Jews who executed Jesus that it was the Romans who executed? Would you agree with that?

Peter Williamson: Or not. Yeah, well, the Gospels indicate that it was the Jews that put the Romans up to. Including Jesus, and at the time it was because the Jews did not have the legal authority to execute. It's true that on occasion they sometimes did is, in the case of Steven, but a little bit later. But if I'm not mistaken, that was also linked to the governor of the Roman governor being away. And they took matters into their own hands. So the ordinary way of doing things was that only the Romans had the authority to execute capital punishment. Crucifixion was one that they particularly reserved for insurrectionists, and so that was one of the charges that was brought against him. He claims to. Be a king, yeah.

David Skrbina: One last point, I guess the time gap, I mean we talked about the time gap between the dates of. Jesus and then the. The writings of the Gospels, I argued for a relatively late dates, arguing for relatively earlier dates. I guess it would seem to be either set of dates would be compatible with a hoax thesis, so even if we accept your earlier dates, I think that that would not undermine the hoax thesis because if mine isn't reliant on the fact that the Gospels were written later, they could have been written at exactly the same time. I can still argue that there are hoax, so I think you would have to agree, would you not that the dates are not? Crucial to the hoax thesis, well, I think that.

Peter Williamson: It becomes harder to argue that the story was changed the closer the writing of the Gospels is to the events. But I think it's very hard to think about. How Paul who I know you think is responsible, could have persuaded all these people to write this, this hoax theory. But we'll let you present that now.

John Bayon: Thank you. Doctor Sabina has 15 minutes to present again.

David Skrbina: So we'll continue where I was. Thank you, Doctor Williamson. So yeah, I need to spell the hoax thesis. And we again talked about resistance, overt resistance, covert resistance. Covert resistance, which is what Paul's approach was, requires him to be an artful liar. So, Paul has to have a plan. So what's Paul's plan? Paul wants to convince the non Jewish masses of two things. One that Rome is evil. It was not obvious to the masses that Rome was evil. They brought civilization, they brought power to the region. People became citizens of this great empire. It was not clear that that was a bad thing, but Paul had to convince the masses that Rome was evil. Secondly, Paul had to get the masses on his side, so he had to convince them that Judaism, or something like it, represented goodness and hope. So here's Paul's plan. He's going to take Jesus, who was crucified 3 years earlier, and he's going to change him into the son of God. That's the first thing. Jesus original mission was to save the Jews. He was a rebel on behalf of the Jews because he was a Jewish rabbi opposing Roman rule. So Paul changes his mission to save the Jews, to save all of humanity. This is a way of bringing all of humanity into the fold. There's a there's a regurgitation of an Old Testament story of Jonah and the whale. So you're familiar with the story of Jonah and the whale, right? He swallowed. Jonah swallowed by the

whale. He's inside the whale, presumably dead for three days. The way he'll vomit Jonah back out, he comes back to life and he carries on to preaching. This is an Old Testament story of John. So Paul, who knows the Old Testament very well. He takes the Jonah story, puts it in the terms of Jesus. So now here's Jesus. Jesus goes in, not into the whale. He goes into The Cave, into the tomb. He's hidden away for three days. He comes back, he's reborn and he and he carries on his mission for 40 days. It's a direct parallel to the to the Old Testament. Wanna story? And then the last piece of the plan is that you have to have faith. So Paul can't convince people because it doesn't have evidence. He wants people to just believe it, primarily in two things. You have to have faith not in the Roman gods, but faith in the Jewish God. This is Yahweh or Jehovah. And you had to have faith in the Jewish rabbi named Jesus. If you had faith in those two things, you would be saved. Now, Paul's plan it wasn't. Wasn't that hard to figure out? He's relying on ancient myths that were well known for centuries at the time. So he we can imagine him drawing, for example, from Homer, which had been in, in in existence for at least 800 years. At that point, Homer, particularly in the Iliad, has many stories of the demigod. A Demi God, of course, is someone who is half human, half God, and if you read the Iliad you see there's many stories about the demigods Hercules, Achilles and Helen of Troy were all demigods, so Jesus is in fact a demigod. His father is God, his mother is Mary, he's a demigod. It's exactly like the stories in Homer. The demigods typically come to Earth. They fight on the battlefield, they save the good guys. They beat the bad guys. This is exactly what we see in the Jesus story. Paul's plan also employs a carrot and a stick, so you know the carrot and stick is right. The carrot is trying to get you to move the little incentive. If you're the donkey, and of course if he doesn't, you have to whack him with the stick. So in the Christian story, Paul has a carrot and the stick. The carrot is if you believe my story, you get to go to heaven and live with God forever. What's the stick? Hell yeah, you're going to hell, right? Carrot and stick. Get to go to heaven if you believe otherwise, you go to hell. And it works on the superstitious masses. It works. They buy the carrot and stick story they know about the demigods. Yeah, they buy this. The last element of Paul's plan is a message of resistance because he wants people to oppose Rome. So when we look at what Paul writes, we see many messages of subtle resistance against the Roman Empire. In Galatians, he says we need to turn away from the weak and beggarly elemental spirits of Rome, the Roman pantheon of gods, he says, do not submit to the yoke of slavery. Paul says no victory unless the rebellion comes first. He's openly proclaiming here rebellion in the letter to the Thessalonians. In Romans he will say anything to win the obedience from the Gentiles from the non Jews. With luck, he says, the God of peace will soon crush Satan. And we know who Satan was. Satan was Rome. And there's mar. First Corinthians. He says the end will come when God destroys every rule and every authority and power. That's exactly right. The rulers of this age are doomed to pass away. The Kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in power. And finally, he calls on us to put on the whole armor of God against the world. Rulers of this present darkness. Resistance to the Roman

Empire. Then comes the year. 73 interesting things happened in the year 70. First of all, Paul dies or he's dead. By then the late 60s, we're not sure. In the year 70 is the culmination of the first Jewish revolt. They actively, violently, violently resist against the Roman Empire. They lose because they're fighting the Roman Empire. The Romans destroy the temple. It remains destroyed to this day. And as we said, the first gospel mark magically appears just as the Jews are defeated by the Romans. That's not a coincidence. There's a reason for that. Mark has to explain to the masses who just the people who just got defeated, the Jews who just got defeated by the Romans. He wants to really convince the masses of this miracle man. So Mark is packed with miracles. We find 19 miracles packed into the shortest, the smallest of the four Gospels. Mark, for some reason doesn't start with the origins of Jesus. He goes right to the adult Jesus, so we don't have the virgin birth story yet there's no childhood. That was evidently not important to mark. Also in Mark for the first time ever in history, we hear mention of the 12 apostles. That's never mentioned by Paul in any of his letters. We find the first emphasis on Hell in Mark. That was not really there explicitly in in the letters of Paul. And finally, we see a prophecy that the temple would be destroyed, but of course that was very easy to. Prophesized when it just was actually destroyed. It's easy to say Jesus in the year 29 prophecy that the temple would be destroyed when of course it just actually was. Finally, in Mark, we see this story of resistance. So we see passages like this, whoever loses his life will save it. The last will be first. Nation will rise up against nation. And the Kingdom of God will come with power. So that gospel suffices for about 15 years. Then two more gospels appear about the same time Luke and Matthew. Some new things show up here. First ever mention of the Virgin Mary. No one in history has ever heard of the Virgin Mary until about the year 85. That's a very strange situation. The first ever mention of Bethlehem, the Manger scene, the three Wise Men, 85 years after they allegedly happened. We get the first talk of the Sermon on the Mount. First time ever in history, in the year 85 or so. And we get more messages of resistance, as we would expect. So we see in both in Luke and Matthew, we see passages like this, the meek shall inherit the Earth. Brother will deliver a brother to death. All who abandon their families will inherit eternal life. I've come to set a man against his father. A follower must hate his own father, his mother, his wife, his children. If that sounds cult, like that's not surprising. The Romans refer to the Christian movement exactly, literally, as a cult, and we can see it. In these passages. There's more striking passages in these gospels. Jesus says I've not come to bring peace, but a sword. I came to cast fire upon the earth. Let him who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. Bring my enemies here and slay them before me. And with luck, the end will come. That's my antagonism thesis. As I call it, Jesus was historical, not biblical. He got crucified because he was a political rebel. Paul and friends turned him into the son of God. The purpose was to corrupt and weaken the masses and thus to undermine Roman rule. And to achieve this, they had to be the most artful liars in all of history. Now I think it's almost correct, Doctor Williamson said. No one really talked about the Christian story being a hoax or a fraud. Almost

correct. Of course there was one person who talked about it this way. And was this. Guy Friedrich Nietzsche. He talked about this whole story as. A as an. Outright lie. Let me just give you one passage on Nietzsche. Nietzsche said an in Christianity, all of Judaism, a several century old Jewish preparatory training and technique of the most serious kind, attains its ultimate mastery as the art of lying in a holy manner. The Christian, the ultimate ratio of the lie is the Jew once more, even three times the Jew. That's from the Antichrist. We know how the story ends. In the year 312 AD and per Constantine converts to Christianity. In 380, the empire itself becomes Christian. In 395, the empire fractures into Western and eastern halves. And about 100 years later, 476 the Roman half, the classic half collapses. So in the end, Paul wins, he wins. He achieves his goal, Rome collapses, it takes about 500 years, but he wins. So who was the whole Hulk story written for? Who was it addressed to? I don't think we really have to ask, it says. It tells us right there in the Bible, and I'll kind of close with this. The Bible tells us who this was directed to. And Matthew, Jesus says, I thank you, father, that you have hidden these things from the wise and from understanding and have revealed them to babes. Paul in first Corinthians says this. God shows what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak to shame. The strong God chose what is low and despised, even things that are not to bring to nothing. Things that are. So who's the story for the foolish? The weak, the low, the despise the childlike? That's who the story is for. That's who it appeals to. That's who who finds it compelling. That's not my that's not my. That's the Bible. The Bible tells you that itself. Thank you.

Peter Williamson: Thank you, Doctor Savina. Yeah, I'm not clear what you're saying about the chronology here. When is it that that Paul and others and when and how did they ever pull off this? Change I mean how if Jesus was just a kind of ordinary human being or rabbi a kind of teacher? Of the law. But but a bit of a rebel against the Romans. How do you get from there to being able to spread this other story? When did it?

David Skrbina: When did it happen? Well, I guess we can take if anything about this is true. Paul has some kind of insight if we can believe it's about the year 33 when he has his vision, we can imagine it's it's a, it's an insight, he said. Because I could create a story of a demigod, come to Earth. Who is here to save humanity. So he must have had a light bulb moment at some time. Perhaps it was the year 33. We can accept that. And so he starts to construct a story. It's a very simple story. If you look in the in the letters, as you know it's not a complicated theology. There's no life history. There's no Manger scene, there's no virgin. Earth there's there's not even any miracles. It's just the Demi God who came to Earth and he's here and he's died for your sins. That's all we see in Paul, so it's. A very simple story.

Peter Williamson: Why do you think?

David Skrbina: And Paul, what makes you think that?

Peter Williamson: That a Jew would buy the idea of a demigod, that is to say, that is that was part of paganism, that was something, but. But of course, the whole

was a very, very highly educated, you know, and very rigorous said you, what what would be?

John Bayon: Via load.

David Skrbina: Well, right. But but, but there's a clear answer. The hoax was geared towards the pagans. It was geared towards the non Jewish masses. So it's going to use things that they that they respond to, superstition, demigods, stories about humor. That's what, that's who he's geared towards, not towards the Jews. It's for the for, it's for.

Peter Williamson: The for the masses. Do you have any evidence of a hoax that is, say, not just speculation? Or suspicion. Is there any evidence that there was? Well, it's deceptive intent?

David Skrbina: It's it's inference to the best explanation we have. We have good reason to think none of these things happen. We have people later who said that they did happen. They had no reason to say that they did happen. Those guys were liars. Either they were liars or they believed somebody who was a liar. It's got to. Be one of the two. So I mean, we're just, we're just putting the facts together as how they add up that's kind of the only logical conclusion. If they lied, why did they lie? They had a motive to lie. They wanted to undermine Rome. They could appeal to the superstitious masses. That's the most... I guess I would claim that's the most plausible explanation.

Peter Williamson: It's not exactly evidence. It's interpretation. It's a suspicious interpretation.

David Skrbina: It's an interpretation. It's an interpretation, but I think it's to the. Best plausible conclusion.

Peter Williamson: But back to the thing. When did the invention of the Jesus who worked miracles come about? And the and the Jesus Jesus who made claims to be the son of God and the Jesus who called himself the son of man? Was that all made-up?

David Skrbina: Yeah, sure. Of course that was made-up in that it appears in the Gospels. that's a latent construction.

Peter Williamson: Now, so when when when did?

David Skrbina: That's the Gospel of Mark. Gospel of Mark is the first time we hear Mark miracles. There's miracles, no miracle stories. In Paul, the Miracle stories show.

Peter Williamson: Up in Mark, just because something is written down in the year 70 doesn't mean that it didn't happen. Tacitus didn't write till 109, but Tiberius certainly existed. You know, at the beginning of the 1st.

John Bayon: Right.

David Skrbina: Century, of course, but we would expect confirming evidence from someone who was not Privy to the story who was not in on the fraud you would expect. Confronting evidence from from Pontious pilot, from the Romans, from the Jews.

Peter Williamson: But we shouldn't expect it because we know that there's no other existing evidence, even for tiberius's life, we're relying on somebody from, you know, the beginning of the 2nd.

David Skrbina: Century but but again, you're not. You had the highest possible stand. You got the son of God who's come to Earth to save humanity. That's far. More important than any.

Peter Williamson: and we have 6 and we have 6 published authors from Palestine.

David Skrbina: So that's the most important. That's the most.

Peter Williamson: Yeah, in the 1st century. Who were contemporaries of Jesus and witnesses. So we actually have. Kind of publishing explosion in terms of books that have remained from the.

David Skrbina: From the period of gospel writers, the gospel writers don't count as confirming evidence. They're part of the.

Peter Williamson: Why? Why not?

David Skrbina: Because they're part of the fraud, they're part.

Peter Williamson: Of the hoax they that that's a circular argument.

Peter Williamson: Well, well you're assuming your conclusion, but if you if you just look at what they present themselves as, yeah, you know sources of information as biography.

David Skrbina: But just on the face of it, if you. Have 9000 people. Who are there to witness the fishes and the? Stories there should be many stories of accounts like I was there, I ate that bread. I saw those fishes multiply in front of my eyes. There were many possible cases of contemporary witnesses, and we have nothing. We have zero. That's very hard to.

Peter Williamson: Explain, though we do have Luke mentioning that there are many people who've who've written it down.

David Skrbina: OK, the fraudster tells us there were people, but we have no evidence of those. If he could produce some evidence, then I might believe it, but he can't just say that he's part of the. So we really can't trust him, that's the problem.

Peter Williamson: So then that's again a circular argument. You're presuming he's a hoax, and therefore you can't take anything that he says, but that's reading your premises into your conclusion.

David Skrbina: That's my thesis. That's... I'm not presuming...

Peter Williamson: That's a difficulty for your thesis.

David Skrbina: So that's interpretation, correct.

Peter Williamson: Are we done OK? Thanks. There's part two Dave.

David Skrbina: OK. Thank you.

John Bayon: Doctor Williamson, now for 15 minutes.

Peter Williamson: All right. Thank you. So evaluating the Jesus hoax hoax thesis and the message of Jesus and Paul, and let me. Sit my little. Timer here so that I know what's going on. Historical study is not enough. 1st we there are four. Explanations OF Jesus and Christianity that doctor Skrbina presents in his book the Mythicist

theory that Jesus never existed. The rumor legend. That that the Jesus story grew and got exaggerated in the telling, and he rejects those as I also reject them. Then his antagonism Jesus hoax theory that Paul created Divine Jesus to undermine the Roman Empire and to liberate the Jewish people. And then there's the New Testament understanding of Jesus. Jesus really is the son of God who died for our sins. Rose from the dead ascended to God and is coming again to establish God's Kingdom. Positives of the Jesus hoax is that it's true that Jesus and the growth of Christianity requires an explanation. It's it's a big historical event to over a few centuries went over enough people and eventually the emperor, so that a whole civilization changes its orientation. That that deserves some explanation. And as I said, Doctor Skrbina rejects the mythicist theory and the legend rumor theory, and I think there's also something to be admired in his updating and representing Nietzsche's theory of Christian origins. I think it's. Completely mistaken, but I do think it's it's good to kind of have all the possibilities. Out there so that we can weigh the various theories, the various hypotheses about how best to understand the facts. And he has done that. I think that the conclusion that we need to come to about it is that the Jesus hoax theory is not well founded and should be set aside. That Nietzsche's thesis has been has in some ways been superseded, or is or is maybe was a mistake in the first place. And here are three reasons I'm going to present 1st, that the Jesus hoax view is not evidence based. There's no evidence that Paul had anti Roman attitudes. Let me grab the sheet that he has. Here are my notes from them. Because I'm a Paul scholar. That's what I do. I've written two books, commentaries on Paul and, you know, his explanation of Paul's meaning here is is just wrong. He doesn't read it in context. For instance, he has. He cites the text in Ephesians put on the whole armor of God. Against the world rulers of this present darkness, then the next line is against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Paul is speaking about spiritual warfare, about the spiritual powers that he does acknowledge lie behind worldly powers. But nevertheless, his focus is on the spiritual dimension. I'm I don't find in Paul at all the political interest that Doctor Skrbina points to so but continuing now with the problem of the evidence here. There's no evidence that Paul invented any stories about Jesus. No evidence of a cabal of early Christian authors who wrote at different times in different places. One of the things that's puzzling is how could Paul have influenced people that wrote so many, you know, years after he died 10 years or 20 years? If Paul died in 65 and they wrote in 80? That's 20 years that Paul's stories of Jesus are being repeated by Matthew and Luke. It seems unlikely, but there's no evidence that that there was any kind of cabal with those purposes. No evidence that Paul did not believe what he preached. To the contrary, you know. A second problem is that the antagonism thesis of Nietzsche and as reflected in Doctor Skrbina's book which kind of represents a lot of this stuff, is marked by racial prejudice against Jews. It misinterprets what the Bible says, where in fact Jews understand themselves to be specially chosen, to be a blessing to the nations. Not so as to be A to bring harm to the other nations, not to be superior to them, but to be a means through which all. The nations of the world. Blessed many texts in the Old

Testament speak about this. For instance, in Isaiah 2, where it speaks about all nations coming to Jerusalem and the word of the Lord going forth from there. Abraham, of course, many of the examples in the Bible are very gracious towards people of other nationalities, and so I think there's a distortion there of Jewish origins. But the book also accepts at face value of various hostile caricatures, stereotypes, and absurd accusations against Jews or, or at least gives credence to them by reprinting them about. Jews being cannibalistic, you know eating children and so on. And then finally, it bases its argument on racial profiling. Jews, it says, are known to be liars. Paul was a Jew. Therefore, Paul is a liar and we know that that's not the correct way of judging things. You know, it could be said most terrorists. Are are young Muslim men and then you could say my friend Ibrahim is a young Muslim man. There for a terrorist, that's. Now what we have to say is. So that application to a particular person to pull of something that is, in my view, a slander against Jews, that they're liars is is, is racially prejudice and I don't feel it should be an acceptable explanation. And I don't think it's a true or reliable way of making a judgment. And then finally, it seems to me that the Jesus hoax theory is highly improbable. It's highly improbable that Paul now remember that the historical method examines the available evidence and seeks the most probable, most probable explanation of the facts. Now, I admit that that resurrection and miracles are kind of out of the ordinary, but. And I think probably that's at root the issue for Doctor Skrbina, but it seems to me that these things are extremely improbable also. That Paul or anyone could have believed that Rome could be overcome by preaching A crucified Messiah. It's not unless it looks like it's going to turn the Roman Empire around, or that Paul secretly believed in the superiority of Roman virtues. Because if you follow that to scare being. His view, Paul. Has to think that the Roman virtues. Which their master mentality and so on. This is the way Nietzsche puts it, their master ethic. Paul has to think that that really is the superior ethic, but he's going to overcome it by advocating secretly, one that teaches meekness, humility, charity, forgiveness, love of enemies, and so on. So Paul would have to be a believer in the Roman ideals rather than in the Christian. Deals and I just think that that. Is extremely improbable, especially if you read the letters of Paul. I want to encourage everybody read the Gospels and read the letters of Paul yourself. Read them yourself and make a judgment on this. All right, then the next improbability is that the movement would grow so rapidly on the basis of a deliberate hoax of, if you will, fake news. Presented as fact. People are a little smarter than just buying fake news. There are some people who always buy it. You know, you can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people, some of the time. But you can't fool all the people all the time. And I just think it was a big sell to have put across that false fake news that's about Jesus. If there wasn't a long standing basis in the communities finally that. Paul and Peter and the other apostles died at Mar as martyrs for what they knew to be on. True people will die for their country. They'll die. For what? For their beliefs. But I've never heard of anyone dying for what they knew to be a lie. So for that reason, I think that the antagonism thesis needs to be

set. Aside, So what? What about the biblical Jesus? What is the message of Jesus and Paul? What is that message to us? I think it could be summarized in maybe five points, and it's the preaching of the apostles and of representing the message of Jesus. And it's simple. God created the world in humanity because of love. His intention was to establish a family, to make human beings his adopted sons and daughters to live with him forever in a world of peace and blessing. God lives every person on the face of the earth, including you and me. You know I. I go to a bar in ipsilanti, the sidetrack and all the wait staff wear on their back. Something that says a a poem, a religious poem. It says this beer is the proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy. And I think that that's very true. I'm a beer lover. But I would also say that I think nature is the proof that God loves us and wants to be happy. I think fall. Colors I think marriage. I think family life. I think sex. I think all things are the proof that God loves us and he wants us to be happy. And he gives us these things. And I'm saying that the whole world that has these good things is a reflection of God's desire to bless. But we know that everything isn't all good and what the Bible and teaches is that there's a problem. Sin damages are has damaged our relationship with God and with one another. That because of a human choice shown in that symbolic history of the fall of man at the beginning of the Book of Genesis. Evil entered into our world, so sin has entered into our world into our deepest selves, our motives and our actions are often deeply flawed. We human beings have polluted our environment. The good world that God has created and intended for us, and not only polluted it with chemically, you know, by toxins and by greenhouse gases and all that kind of stuff, but we've polluted it by our moral and social conduct, which has brought harm and evil. That's the bad news. Is that the human condition is not a happy one. There's a lot of sadness, there's a lot of sickness. A lot of death. You know there's wars there. There's basically there's, you know, there's there's rich and poor, there's a pression. You know, there's there's rape, there's sexual abuse, there's there's a lot of evil in the world in. Which we live. We read about it every day in the newspapers and what Jesus says, what Paul says, what the Bible says is at the root of it is human. Alienation from God through sin through wrongdoing. So the third thing that is the message is that God has provided a solution by sending his son Jesus. You know, it's expressed in that most famous scripture verse that you see at Super Bowls and other places are. Used to seeing. Super Bowls for God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him. Might not perish but have eternal life. The reason for this is because Jesus died and atoning death taking on himself. The guilt and sin of the world, and by his resurrection putting us in a position where we could change by giving us his Holy Spirit. Christ died in our place. Well, the 4th point is that people, human beings, need to make a personal response to accept. God's gift, our part is to believe the good news, to turn to God and away from doing what's wrong, and to be baptized. That was Jesus's message. You know, he was baptizing people then. And then the apostles did that, too, calling people to turn away from their old life, to die to the old life, to rise to a new life in Christ, to believe in in, in Jesus as the son of God. And his part

is to forgive us. That make us his sons and daughters and fill us with the Holy Spirit, a spirit that will transform us from within and enable us to become a new person, to become transformed people. Paul says it's no longer I who live, but Christ, who lives in me and the life I now live in this body I live by, faith in the son of God, who loved me. And gave himself for me. And this has implications for the way we live living a life of love and imitation of Christ. We're to have a different kind of character, the kind of character that Nietzsche did not approve of. The character of someone who shows love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. That is what Jesus thought. That's what Paul believed. That's what I believe. That's what Jesus thought. Lump it. OK, then. The ultimate future is that Jesus will return again at the end of history. Raise the dead to life established, established, perfect justice and peace. And everyone will be judged on the basis of their conduct in this life. Jesus is the perfectly just judge who knows all our actions and motives better than we know them because he's divine because he's God, because he's all knowing. The future destiny of every human being is either life forever with God, where we get the continuation of all those good things you know, love and nature and beer and all those blessings. Or in a life forever with God, or it's a world completely free in a world completely free of evil and of suffering, or its eternal separation. From God and from everything good. People's responses vary. People find it difficult to be objective about Jesus. There's big difference between making a historical judgment. OK, well, Christianity is is maybe more plausible than that or or, you know, maybe something like that happened and making a personal commitment because commitment involves my life. Only the action of God's spirit within can enable a person to know the truth and can draw a person the truth. The good news is that truth is available for everyone who sincerely desires and seeks it, and I just want to encourage everybody. To do what I did when I was, you know, 25 or 50 years ago when I was at the University of Michigan, I reached a point in my life where I said, God, if you. Exist? I don't know. I can't figure. It out show me I want to. Know you if. You exist. Show me the truth and. This goes beyond history. It goes to. To a relationship, and if Jesus really is God, he can show himself to you. So that's my conclusion.

John Bayon: Thank you. Before Doctor Skrbina cross exam. Thank you. Before Doctor Skrbina cross examines after the 5 minutes, we will have a time for Q&A, so I encourage you right now if you have a question that you've been preparing that one minute well honed question that I mentioned at the beginning. Please come on up front and do lead quickly to a question. You'll have one minute to do so.

David Skrbina: OK, my short cross examination here. Yes, Sir. Fire away. I liked the picture. I didn't realize we had photographic evidence of Jesus. Does that date from the year 30?

Peter Williamson: See I told you so.

David Skrbina: I'm impressed you have. You have a video dealer. Is he on YouTube too? I'd like to see that.

Peter Williamson: I think it's on YouTube actually. It's wonderful.

David Skrbina: I'm impressed I...

Peter Williamson: Anybody it can see it. It's actually it's the Jesus film which is all words from the Gospel of Luke and it is available on the Internet. So.

David Skrbina: Let me ask you a personal question. Yes, Peter, when, at what point in your life did you first begin to? Believe the Christian story. What age, roughly?

Peter Williamson: I was raised a Christian, so in childhood, but then I there were a couple of times in my life when I. Turned away from that. And didn't believe it. And in in you know, when I was a freshman at the University of Michigan. That was for me, a kind of crisis of faith, because all of my good Jewish friends who were Marxist revolutionaries and. Sex, drug, drugs and rock'n'roll and I wanted. To go with them.

David Skrbina: That sounds like racial profiling, by the way. We don't do that so.

Peter Williamson: All right. Thank you.

David Skrbina: But I guess the point is and I can believe you probably were raised as a child. Yeah, in a in a Christian family. Yeah, to believe in Christianity.

Peter Williamson: Yes, I was.

David Skrbina: So those of us who study the history of philosophy, philosophy of religion. You know, you come across people like Bertrand Russell, who says the number one reason why people are Christians is because they were taught when they were five years old. So this is a very vulnerable time you're taught by your parents that God loves you, that Jesus is there. You need to believe in Jesus and so it's natural when you're taught as a child, you just to believe these things are told by your father or mother. So you're not gonna doubt that. So if this is probably the case for the vast majority, would you agree that vast majority of Christians come to Christianity because they were taught? When they were little.

Peter Williamson: By their parents.

David Skrbina: By their parents.

Peter Williamson: Yeah, I would say that.

David Skrbina: So this of course is a completely non rational argument. It's just that somebody told you someone that you trust, but they've told you when you were little and in in a sense that's a kind of a vulnerable sort of indoctrination. When a child as young as being told things by their parents naturally. I believe them. I guess I would find it much more compelling if there were many people who converted to Christianity later in life for rational reasons, because they read the evidence they read the stories, and then it made sense to them. That would be far more plausible that something like this might be true, rather than the fact that you were brought up that way, and that's, you know, there's there. There's a very. It loses a lot of rational credibility when the fact of the matter is, as you say, most people were. Brought up to believe, right?

Peter Williamson: Let me let me reply to that. I think it's true that most people do come to faith through being raised that way by their. But there are also many people who were not raised religious who come to faith being convinced by reasons. CS Lewis the person whom I quoted is one of those who was not a believer and who he says was

dragged kicking and screaming in into the Kingdom of God. He was reluctant believer, but he became convinced of the truth of it. Chuck Colson was another. There's a whole book called Philosophers who believe. I think I'm going to give you that book because, OK, it tells the story of a number of philosophers who worked it through, thought it. Through and came to that kind of.

David Skrbina: But again, this must be a fraction of a percent. I would assume me is certainly in a in the in a in just a general audience. The vast majority what 99% probably would come to it because they were taught, so that's not really a rational argument. That's really that's the I guess the point is you can't really build Christian on a rational basis. It has to be indoctrinated from youth and that's the reason why. It sustains itself.

Peter Williamson: This is my claim. Well, I wouldn't say that because. I think that first of all, there is an aspect of Christianity that is not simply a matter of historical evaluation. That's the point I was trying to make there is that Christianity is not just like reaching the conclusion which of these hypotheses is the best way of explaining Christianity because. I think one of the big things that's an issue for people that makes them want to not come near it is because Jesus says. I mean, if you acknowledge God, that means it's going to have implications for your. And I think that a lot of people have a kind of approach avoidance to it because they are concerned about, I don't really want to make the kind of changes this is going to call for. I don't want Jesus to be Lord of my life. I don't want to surrender my life. To God, that's a hard thing to do. But a lot of times people are, you know, a lot of times people are attracted or come to Christianity because they have a need in their life. An example of I can think of alcoholic friend who came to a. Learned about a higher power. Got the help that he needed and then came to find that that higher power was actually.

David Skrbina: They were in some personal crisis, which creates a personal or they were taught as a child that how.

Peter Williamson: His life. A crisis that worked, those are those are a couple of those covered.

David Skrbina: They covers 99%, so yeah.

Peter Williamson: A lot of those circumstances.

David Skrbina: Not all. I guess from a rational standpoint, I don't find. That very plausible. To me, there's a different explanation. Just want to make a couple of points. We only have a minute. Left when you said the hoax view was not evidence based, I guess I gave you the evidence. Some of the evidence. Right, you said Paul was not anti Roman. He was not a liar, was not political. I gave you 10 quotes from Paul. There was another 15 quotes that I could have given you. There's at least two dozen passengers, and for every one of the quotes.

Peter Williamson: I'd be happy to. Go through every one of the quotes.

David Skrbina: OK, well, we can't do that here, maybe in our follow-up session, we could do that.

Peter Williamson: Yeah, yeah.

David Skrbina: You said I do racial profiling. Actually, I make no generalizations at all. All I'm claiming is that there was a small group of liars that could happen in any population, so I'm not making any generalizations, so I guess I would object to that claim that there's some kind of prejudice thing going on. I'm just targeting a few people. I'm drawing no larger conclusions. All I'm saying is that seems to be the case in this instance right?

Peter Williamson: I think your book's a little stronger on that in Chapter 4, but we could take a look at some parts of that.

David Skrbina: And you said that the that Paul and Peter and the other apostles would not die for what they knew to be a lie. This is a kind of a common claim that we hear. Why would they die if they were lying? But I guess the point of course is they were ready to die. Already, the Jews were already in immortal struggle against the Romans. They died by the thousands in the year 70. They were already prepared to die for their cause, so it's not in the least surprising that Paul and Peter and Matthew and Luke would also be willing to die for their cause. So I guess that's that says nothing against the hoax thesis.

Peter Williamson: How do you explain the fact that the Christians did not participate in the defense against Rome or in in the revolt against Rome, either in 70? Or 60?

David Skrbina: Because they were not yet convinced that Rome was the evil empire, Paul had not had a chance to work against them in the year 70. That certainly was not soon enough to convince.

Peter Williamson: Well, well, wait a minute. Paul was already dead by then. All of Paul's ministry had been prior.

David Skrbina: Yeah, but there wasn't enough time. There wasn't enough time to convince the masses that that took 100 years. That's the problem you talked about the rapid growth of Christianity. That didn't happen till the 2nd century AD, in the 1st century, there was not that rapid growth of Christianity. that's the thing. So alright, we'll leave it at that.

Peter Williamson: Great.

The Jesus Hoax Wars - Know More News w/ Adam Green feat. David Skrbina PhD

Source
June 8, 2023

Adam: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to no more news. I'm your host, Adam Green. It is Thursday, June 8th, 2023. And today we've got a powerful interview and discussion for you guys. I have back on the show, Doctor David. Skrbina PhD, author of the Jesus. Folks and today we are going to be discussing the Jesus Wars, the Jesus Hoax Wars as I see it, Jesus, easily the most divisive, controversial, debated disputed character in the last 2000 years most influential character in the last 2000 years, and I say. Character instead of person because I'm a mythicist, right? But today, we're going to talk about. Skrbina's theory that it is a Jesus hoax by Paul's cabal and the gospel writers. We're going to talk about competing theories like the baseless. Conspiracy theory, Roman Providence, Caesar's Messiah, that it was the Romans that created it. We're going to talk about the historicist like Bart Airman and the whole Jesus mythicist debate appreciate appreciate you, David, for coming back on. And I think the Internet is going to go perfect today. Sorry for the last few streams, you've been on twice in the last month or month and 1/2. We had some good shows but tech difficulties, so hopefully it'll be smooth today.

David: Hi, Adam, thanks. Glad to be back, I'm sure it'll go fine.

Adam: Yes, it's going to be a good one. I've got a lot of clips and topics to bring up with you, a lot of material that we're going to comment on and including some the rabbis view on all of this on Christianity and the purpose it's served in the role it's played, we're going to play some clips from esoteric. And a little bit from Rabbi Shapiro and the rabbis meet the secret agents who started the Christian deception according. To the rabbis. And rabbis say that Christianity is like a cabalistic midrash peshet. This is what Richard Carrier says. This is what the rabbi say. This is what esoterica. Now just had a video out a month ago saying that basically Paul was a cabalist and created a. Mystical visions that he created. Going to talk about how the academics

are very dismissive of anything that they deem as a quote conspiracy because we all know conspiracies don't exist, right?

David: That's a bad word. If they call you a conspiracy theorist, that's a major insult obviously, right?

Adam: Right. And the idea that, like, no conspiracies ever exist like I see Christianity as a conspiracy in the simplest way. In a nutshell, that. In the Old Testament, they wanted all the nations to worship the God of Israel, the God that chose them, and to be obedient and on their knees for the Torah Messiah. They accomplished that through Christianity. They brag about that today. Our leaders are going over and bowing down to a wall in a foreign country that they believe is the Holy Land. They think these people are gods chosen. People, they believe the Old Testament is the word of God, and that they're cursed if they curse them, blessed if they bless them. And the rabbi say yes, it it accomplished and fulfilled all our goals. But it's not a conspiracy. We're just going to dismiss all of that by calling it a conspiracy. Have you experienced?

David: Oh yeah, absolutely. I mean it's it's like defined to be something that's fake or false, right? So by definition, a conspiracy can't be true, which is ridiculous. I mean, it's just a terrible distortion of the words in the language. They do this all the time. They'll take ordinary words and they'll and they'll contort it or distort it or throw it into the opposing meaning. And imply that it means one thing when it means something else. I mean, conspiracies happen all the time. You know, people get together behind closed doors, they make plans. It happens in the corporate world. It happens in academia. I mean, it happens everywhere, I mean.

Adam: In religion.

David: It's just... Yeah, certainly in religion, obviously, I mean you got leaders anywhere. You got leaders of. Any organization, they're working somewhere, you know. In some back. Back room making plans. You know, strategizing, I mean, that's all it is. It's just a conspiracy, right? That happens. All the time. So yes.

Adam: Yeah, people never get together in plots to advance their goals and their objectives. That never happens.

David: Ohh no, no, they're all just benign. You know, Humanists who are just looking out for the well, good, good of humanity. that's all they do, right?

Adam: Yeah, this is. This is what you get into a lot in the book and in your interviews. Like the idea that none of these biblical scholars want to attribute any motive to the creation of the Christian religion that has been the most dominant religion taken over theologically conquest of the whole world for the last 2000 years. Almost the whole world.

David: Well, right. Yeah, that you know, that's a that's. A key question right the question. Of motive, right? So why would Paul do this? Why would his followers, you know, continue the story after he was gone? Nobody ever really ever wants to talk about that motive question, because that leads down some some dark alleys that they just don't want to go to. So yeah, that's something we need to talk about for sure today.

Adam: MM. OK, so I think we should probably start with. Let's start with this one, OK. This is just one of the many Rabbi clips I have of them very clearly expressed in the idea that Christianity and Islam are God's plan. They weren't in accidents. They accomplished an important goal in Judaism. To get the nations to be monotheistic and worship the one God of Israel, and they all say this. Almost gloating about it. We'll play this one.

Unnamed Rabbi: First time in history. The Bible makes the incredible prediction that one day the entire world will acknowledge the truth that is in the possession. Of the Nation of Israel, Zachariah chapter 8. Verse 23. And that they will ultimately follow God's true servant, we...

Adam: That's them, by the way. He says Jesus, the Christians believe Jesus is the suffering servant of Isaiah, but it's really all of the Jewish people are the suffering servant, so they need to get the Christians not to worship the one king of the Jews, but like all follow all of the nation of priests. Is what he means by that, which is important.

David: Yep, Yep.

Adam: He's saying he wants the world to worship them basically, and that they're the nation of priests. And they're gonna we're their flock and they're going to lead us.

David: Oh yeah, they're the representatives of God on Earth, right? They're the chosen ones of God. And so, of course, you have to, you have to worship them.

Unnamed Rabbi #1: Are now witnessing the start of this prophecy unfolding for the first time in history, thousands of Christians, serious students of the Bible, are beginning to recognize that the true understanding of this Hebrew script. Has eluded them all these years and that it can be found with the true people of the book. We Jews ourselves need to more seriously embrace and study our own Bible because it is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. And because others will be seeking to learn from us.

Adam: I don't think so. I don't want to learn from them and their foreskin, mutilating deity, jealous deity that shows them. Above all people, right?

David: Yeah, they're bloody animal. Sacrifices and all those nasty things, right? We don't need to learn. About that.

Adam: Yeah. So here's a viral video I made. It's got 45,000 views here. It's 8 minutes. We're only going to play the first first one or two. But this is rabbis explaining their secrets, beliefs about Peter and Paul creating Christianity for the benefit. Of Judaism.

Interviewee: On the 19th day on the month of Tibet, it's the Hebrew calendar on the Hebrew calendar month.

Interviewer: Which is?

Interviewee: It's next week. It's for almost all Christmas, by the way. Guess what happened every joined the. World that is a practicing Jew fest. Why do you fast?

Interviewer: Will fast.

Interviewee: Fast, fasting. Why do we fast? I found the answer. We fast for our special Jew. You know what is? Simon Peter.

Unnamed Rabbi #2: That's not a reason you got to keep secret says we fast and we're not telling you why. There are two Christian reasons why the 9th of tables became fast that we didn't want to publicize, but in our small group I will publicize it in a famous book of anonymous. Partnership called Tosylation Tosylation is kind of the Jewish. Of yeshua. And this was a widely circulated work in the Middle Ages. Anonymous authorship and actually had multiple versions as well. The story is that the 9th of Tabasco. Is at your sight. It is the day of the death of a righteous person. But the righteous person we are commemorating is not Ezra has so fair, but it's a man called Shimon Kipa, Shimon Kipa, Kipa in Aramaic is Rock.

[cuts to movie clip]

Jesus: So now I will call you Peter, the Rock.

Unnamed Rabbi #2: Shimon Kipa, is none other than the man that is known in the Christian Bible as Simon Peter. The apostle Peter Yashka's closest disciple and the one who succeeded him as the leader of the church. Peter became the first Pope, the first Bishop of Rogue, and his name was Simon Shima and. Peter means rock Petra.

[skips ahead to interview]

Interviewee: Yes, fast for Simon, Peter.

Interviewer: I never heard that.

Interviewee: Yes. Yeah, I mean this is...

Interviewer: They don't know who it is, though.

Interviewee: No, they know who it is, they, but why?

Other Guest: Why wait? Why do they fast?

Interviewee: Because during the time of tribulation of the Jews, during the 1st century, Peter. Peter is actually protected the juice because quote UN quote he was the apostle to the juice. So they say he actually saved the Jewish people or Peter, according to Judaism, is what he's a secret agent of Judaism that was put by the Jews themselves to protect the Jewish people. From this big mean Christians, it's very, very interesting.

Unnamed Person: Now, according to Saber tolls, yes, it referred to one person and he was a rabbi who was sort of amongst the sages and he went into a secretive a sort of double. Agent role for the purpose of corrupting Christianity. Early Christianity was already corrupted, but his goal was to go in to make it so corrupted that regular Jewish people would have.

Adam: It's interesting that. They believe that Peter was this double agent, but. Well, the earliest we think we know about Peter is Paul says Kefas was the first one to see that have a vision of Jesus. So he was like the first apostle. So it they kind of get Paul and Peter conflated here, but you can watch you guys can watch the whole thing. I've done video on it in the past. They they bragged that they were like this double agent. This, this rabbi brags that. Paul, I'm sorry. Peter was the first Pope of Rome and that he was just really a rabbi and that this is what this. So they think they created it. With some, you know, nefarious motive essentially. What do you think of that?

David: Well, right, that's exactly. That's exactly what they did, right? They're they're concerned always about the Jews self interested the Jews, the nation of Israel. Right. So so the construction is always to that end and it's got to be aimed at the masses that the Gentiles, that's kind of the target. Audience it's not going towards the Jews because they know what they want. They know what they believe. So we. Gotta aim at. The non Jew, the non Jewish masses and get the story to them, get them onto our side. You know, sort of weak and corrupt them as much as possible. That's kind of the strategy right?

Adam: Well, I think the strategy was just to control their religion, because if you can control their religion, you control everything. And they wanted the world to worship their God but not become Jewish. So they had to kind of create like a quasi Jewish religion for the Gentiles to still follow Torah messianism and worship the God of Israel and follow the Noah hides. That Noah hide commandments. That's for the nations.

David: Exactly, I mean, that's what I described in my book. It's a kind of a middle way, right? It can't be full blown Judaism and it can't be paganism. It's got to be something in between a religious view that's sympathetic and compatible and supportive of the Jewish values and Jewish worldviews. But it's got to be a kind of a new twist on things that that's acceptable to the to the. Gentile masses.

Adam: Yeah, they want, because that's who they. Wanted to adopt it. The to think that Paul and the Gospels was like a religion that was for the Jews, but just like went wrong, or that the Romans created it for so for the Jews to adopt it. No, no rebellious Jew would want to adopt Christianity. They would consider it idol worship because. They're saying a man is God drinking blood. They would not do that. It's almost like they made it so Jews would stay away from Christianity. It wasn't for them. They're the enemies in Christian. Where whereas it it tries to make the Romans superficial, superficially look good in some places because that's who they wanted to adopt it, and that's why they implemented so many Pagan motifs, because they were trying to. Yet the pagans to accept it. That's what I think.

David: No, it has to. It has to be compatible with them. Has to be. Acceptable to them and and. It, but it has to adopt the basic Jewish outlook. That's kind of the key, right? I mean it's it's ridiculous, I. Mean you have people. Like James Valiant to or kind of saying, well look, it was created for the Jews. It was to get them to be compliant and passive. I mean, that's completely ridiculous. There's just on the face of it, it's it's, it's absurd that the Christian story was created for the Jews to get them to go along with, you know, Roman dictate. It's it's, it's, you know, it's. An absurd thesis? It's not that it's. Impossible, but I mean, there's just like. No evidence for it. It's prima facie ridiculous. And you know all the evidence. That we have goes counter to that story.

Adam: I completely agree and it's amazing to me that all of these, in my opinion, kosher and won't touch criticize Judaism as it should be criticized. They're all more than happy to entertain this idea that it was a Roman conspiracy against the Jews,

and it's the evil Romans almost scapegoating the Romans. This would have to be the most, you know, absurd idea that they could ever come up with. For one, they could crush anybody they didn't need to make a religion to try to subdue Messianic Jews. And the idea that this all fulfills Judaism's prophecies and a few 100 years later. This Semetic God took over the Roman Empire and so it just this is the worst backfired conspiracy in all of history. And but they all entertain it.

David: Exactly. It was a total disaster if that was the plan it was. It was absurdly, you know, an absurd failure had just completely destroyed the very empire was supposed to help.

Adam: And here's they all love. They all look up and love to Bart Arman, the idea that Paul was like. Subversively working for the Romans and trying to. Create this new new religion and target them because that's the earliest documents of Christianity that actually mentioned Jesus are from Paul. He was a Pharisee. He was the apostle to the Gentiles. But somehow this religion is targeting Jews. Doesn't make any sense and this is what Barr Airman has to say. Paul's Jewish mission.

Bart: Paul did that, but in his view, his conversion was not from one religion to a new religion. His conversion was with his understanding of Jesus and his and the importance of what Jesus did for salvation. So he converted in that sense. Paul continued to think. He was Jewish. He would have been aghast by somebody telling him he wasn't Jewish. Yes, he was Jewish. In fact, he was the one who understood Judaism because he knew that the Jewish Messiah had come and he knew that the Messiah was not supposed to be somebody. Who came?

Adam: He never actually said he came. He said that he was gonna come. Or never. There would be a second coming that would only be.

Bart: A coming anyway. Aim to destroy the Romans and set up a Kingdom in Israel. The Messiah was somebody who was supposed to die for the sins of the world and be raised from the dead. That's what God planned from the beginning, and God planned for that message to go to non Jews. This is how God fulfills his predictions in the Book of Isaiah.

Adam: This is how the Jews fulfill their prophecies in books like Isaiah, with guys like Paul who came up with the Lie forgery myths and then sold it to the Gentiles. How is this not a conspiracy? Seriously, I'm being honest.

David: No, absolutely no. It it's a full blown conspiracy, but it's a true one. I mean that that's the only conclusion, the only plausible conclusion you know. So Arby's right. Paul is a Jew. He's a full blown Jew. His interest is the fellow Jews and the Nation of Israel. Yeah, he's got a mission to the Gentiles, and he's gonna work them to his advantage. He's got a big problem on his hands, Paul does because he's got Romans in his Holy Land. And so he needs to do what he can to get rid of local support for the Romans. Right? So so he, he's got a he's got a mission that he's gonna kind of take take to the masses to try to get them, you know, thinking, thinking Pro Jewish anti Roman and that's what we see in Paul. People say that Paul was pro Roman. But it's. But it's absurd. You know, when you look through the letters of Paul and

you look for the Pro Roman passages, there's one document. It's in Romans. There's two occurrences in Romans that are even remotely pro Roman, right? I mean, there's the in the little passage where he says obey the laws and pay your taxes. And then he says, love thy neighbor. And that's it. 2 passages in all of Paul that are vaguely pro Rome and they're in the book of Romans. So he's writing to the Romans. Of course, it's gonna be pro Roman, if anything there. Nowhere else in Paul, do we see any pro Roman discussion at all? It's all anti Rome. It's messages of rebellion and resistance. That's what we see. We see something like at least two dozen explicit. Passages in Paul that are rebellious and revolutionary and anti Rome. So it's a huge mismatch between those many anti Roman passages and the two. Pro Roman passages and nobody wants to talk about that. Iran won't talk about that. Valley won't talk about that. They don't. They don't want to talk about the specifics. Because it makes their case look really bad.

Adam: And he says Paul thought he was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. Like what? That he's the root of Jesse, the Davidic Messiah that's going to, oh, wait, check. Notes "shall rise to reign over the Gentiles." Does that sound like they're... he's trying to save people or theologically conquer the nations very clear.

David: Yeah, right, exactly. It's it's a plan for rule. I mean that's it's a, it's a world rule world dominion kind of story and you see. It throughout it's. Throughout the Torah and it's in Isaiah too. I mean, those are the two main places that you find those things.

Adam: So we'll finish this and then we'll move over to another top scholar in this field, Robin Walsh, and her thoughts on Paul as well.

Bart: Well, the whole world will March to Zion and will...

Adam: That's the purpose of Christianity to commit all Christians are Zionists. They worship the God of Zion. They have prophecies. That, well, they're gonna suck on the wealth of the feed off the riches of the nation. Suck the milk of the nations and the wealth will flow onto Zion. the nations will grab onto their the hinges of their shirt and say we heard God is with you. We teach us your ways, you know, let us serve you. They believe that Gentiles are Esau the elder shall serve the younger. Esau shall serve. Jacob Gentile shall serve the nation of prey. This is what it's this is what it's all about. But somehow they all just completely ignore the idea and laugh at the idea that it's like a a conspiracy and then say you're an you're an anti Semite, anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist for just stating the obvious and giving a straightforward rational analysis of all this.

David: Yeah, absolutely. I got to just quote their own passages. They're right there in black and white. You can just list them and go through the. I mean, it's pretty pretty clear, right? What's going on?

Bart: And in the Book of Isaiah that the whole world will will March to Zion and Will will will follow the God of Israel, God's doing that he's fulfilling that promise through Jesus. So Paul is the one who saw that his view, he saw that. He understood

that he converted to believe that, but it was it was Judaism. This was true. Judy, this is what Judaism was supposed. To be for Paul.

Unnamed Person: And Paul, you mentioned Saul himself as an apostle to the Gentiles specifically, and despite being Jewish himself and viewing Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, he made it very, very clear that non Jewish followers of Jesus did not need to convert to Judaism. In fact, should not convert to Judaism, cause that's completely missing the point.

Adam: They don't want the nations to circumcise and keep kosher. That's only for the Jews. In fact, they've got beliefs that that we'll be punished if we try to rest on the Sabbath and these type of things. This is what differentiates them from the non Jews.

David: We gotta. We gotta maintain that wall of separation. We don't want the masses looking. Like Jews? No. No way.

Adam: Yeah. MHM. Oh no. OK. We just had a little cut out. Are we out all the way? We had a little blip, OK.

David: I'm here. I can hear you.

Adam: I see you. My obs is red, but it says it's giving off. OK, we're greeting again. All right.

Bart: In the book of Isaac.

Adam: And I think Jews have always viewed Christianity as satanic as a satanic temptation to idol worship. And it's almost like a test. That keeps them away, and it's also like a force that stops them from assimilating when they're in exile and hates them for stupid reasons for supposedly killing God to give them their divine atonement to reinforce the idea that they're they are God's special people and they're chosen to be hated. It's it's sick and sadistic.

David: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It's a it's a kind of a perverse mentality, yeah.

Unnamed Person: Deism, in fact should not convert to Judaism, because that's completely missing the point in your opinion, how much of this focus of of Paul on Gentiles not becoming Jews contribute to the formation of Christianity as a new and distinct religion? So if Paul.

Adam: OK. And I want to do Robin Walsh too, one more.

Robin Walsh: He basically thinks he's a prophet. He thinks he's a Jewish prophet who has been designated by the Israelite God to continue in this line of other prophets. And so when he's talking to Gentiles, you know, he's using Greco-roman philosophy and terms and ideas because he grew up with them. But he never deviates from the. Idea that he himself is Jewish. Jesus is Jewish. This is a Jewish. Movement, his understanding. Of the origins are of the problem that Jesus becomes a solution too is that everybody in the beginning was basically a child or under the Jewish God, but Gentiles deviated they moved away from the Jewish God. They started worshipping idols, they started worshipping the wrong thing.

Adam: So the whole objective eradicate idol worship, which funny how the pagans were the ultimate enemy of the Jews, and then the pagans became the enemies of the

Christians, and they eradicated paganism all over the West. And preserved Judaism. That's now more powerful than ever in bragging that they're all their prophecies are being fulfilled through Christianity. But it's not a conspiracy, right?

David: No, she she completely misses the whole context, which is the conflict with Rome, the the, the hatred against Rome and the desire to overthrow Rome and to undermine it at every possible turn. So I, you know, I don't. There was just a short clip from. Miss Walsh there. But yeah, in that little clip, she's not even mentioning. The key point of what's going on there.

Adam: Yeah, if Jesus is the God and he's gonna the whole thing. You, you look at all the passages and the New Testament where they're referenced in the Old Testament, it's all about destroying all the kings of the nations. This was the goal Christianity. Jesus supplanted the Roman Empire, and you're trying to tell me the Roman Empire came up with it? A subversive Jewish religion. That took over their whole. Culture spread the Torah all around the world. I don't think so. So given what we just saw, we're gonna get deeper into this, this plot, this clear conspiracy. Look at the way that they try to all gate. Keep the idea to you're not allowed to say the obvious things that we're saying because it's a quote conspiracy.

Speaker 9: When how do you respond when you point out that much of this early Christian literature does appear on the face of it, to be forged, to be claiming to be written. By someone who almost. Certainly was not written by people have.

Speaker 3: Responded to me. Well, that sounds conspiracy.

Speaker 9: Theory like, oh, you're claiming this person made this all up? But this person. Made that all up. How do you? How would you respond to the conspiracy theory response? To claiming that much of. These much of this literature.

Adam: So this is funny just to give some people some background this. Is Jacob Berman Berman? Yakov Berman. He has history Valley. It's a he has a podcast with lots of biblical scholars. James valiant. He's a former like lawyer who wrote a book creating Christ and promotes the idea that the Romans created. Christianity as a deception, you debated James Valia and destroyed him a few years ago, and it's like it's interesting. All of these guys on YouTube bring him on all the time, but nobody's nobody's sending you emails and inviting you on to promote the more obvious explanation for how Christianity came about. All right.

David: Yeah, I think they're not anxious to have to deal with that. That counter story. It's a lot easier to talk. About the bad Romans. And how they corrupted the Jews. So they're happy to have that value. Just ramble on like the like he does. You know.

Adam: And then this is Bart Airman. He is like the number one. Scholar in all of these circles. He wrote a book book. I got one of his books right here, too, misquoting Jesus. I've done audibles on a few. Of his books. And he? So they're here. It's funny. James Valiance asking him. Nobody calls him a conspiracy theorist for one. But he gets that all the time because he promotes that Rome created it as a conspiracy. So let's hear his answer, though. Look how. They just like it's it's the. Taboo thing to

say that. They did this. There was motive. It was an agenda. It's a deception. It's a myth. It's just like off limits. And you're not even allowed to even have a conversation. About it.

Speaker 3: Well, that's interesting. I have never in my life. That I know have. Been accused of being a conspiracist fraud. I get. I get. Yeah, I have a a rabbi between just this afternoon, I got a a cartoon from a rabbi friend of mine. That was a a minister preaching at A at A at a funeral service and the fellows laid it laid out in the cost in the casket in front of him. And he's up in his book preaching, he says. So now we have, you know, now brothers and sisters, we have one less conspiracy theorist in the world. He says. Or do we? So I, boy, I tell you, I am. I am not a conspiracy theory guy. I am. So I boy conspiracy theories drive me crazy.

Speaker 9: Would you distinguish and say an overt, intentional fraud from a law conspiracy in the smoke field?

Speaker 3: Well, what I'd say is that that I try to be a historian and I don't try to go with whatever view seems like sexy and weird and able to get big following, and that that requires both.

Adam: Funny cause he has the biggest following out of any biblical scholar there is.

David: Yeah, just funny how that works out.

Speaker 0: So one.

David: It works out. That way. Even though he doesn't try to do that. You know, he doesn't really like all those followers, but. He's got a lot of them out there, right?

Adam: And he hates. He hates conspiracies.

Speaker 3: Leave without evidence, so I'm very much into evidence and I think that wherever the evidence goes, I'm willing to go with the New Testament. I mean in particular.

Adam: Hold on wherever the evidence goes. You're saying Paul is fulfilling prophecies of Isaiah? Go read the prophecies in Isaiah. They are. They are grotesque about how. They are about conquering the Gentiles and having the whole world worship their God and being their servants basically.

Speaker 0: Oh yes, absolutely.

Adam: And then he said he. Writes a book forgery that these are forgeries. But then he's gonna laugh at the. Idea that it's a. Conspiracy like what is the deal here? OK, I'll finish.

Speaker 5: I mean, I mean.

Adam: OK, go ahead. Go ahead.

David: Yeah, half the letters of. Paul are already acknowledged. To be forgeries, right? I mean, there's. What out of? The 13 letters, at least six or seven are. Are are, are questionable or outright outright frauds. So even under the standard view, we're admitting massive fraud already in the in the half the. Letters of Paul. Are are, you know, bogus? Fraudulent constructions. So I mean, all those guys have to admit that. So you know now that now the can of worms. Was open and I was saying, well what?

Else is going. On here. Wait, you know how much of this else stuff is is fraudulent? What was the motives behind this kind of stuff? Well, that they just don't want to go there. They'll they'll, you know, they'll raise the issue. Then they'll tell a couple of jokes and. Then it's the next topic. That's how the gatekeepers work.

Adam: And it's not just that it's forgeries, like the books that Paul didn't write even in the books that that they do believe. Paul wrote that I should say. It's still a deception in that because I see it as like a prophecy. Paul takes verses from the Old Testament. He never knew Jesus. He says that he sees him in the scriptures. That means he's mystically esoterically capitalistically reading Old Testament scriptures in a midrash pesher fashion, connecting different verses. Formulating some delusion or fan fan fiction fantasy in his head that's a little redundant, huh? Fan fiction. And the idea is he's the apostle to the Gentiles selling them. This Gospel of Jesus and then the Gospels also they do the same thing versus from the Old Testament supposedly being fulfilled when they didn't. That's a prophecy. Tricking the Gentiles that they have magical prophecy powers and that their God is real. And they really are his chosen people. Like, that's the big fraud that I.

David: Right. Actually, I mean there's lists of, you know, what are there 50 or 60 or 70 prophecies?

Adam: Hundreds, I think.

David: In the old. Testament that are supposedly, you know, fulfilled. And in the in the New Testament, I mean it's it's absurd. You've got guys who know those Old Testament stories they're writing the books to fulfill their own prophecies. And then it's like. Oh, it's a miracle that these things are fulfilled. All his *****. I mean, you know, they're they're. There it's a it's a. It's a. It's a setup from the start. We're gonna. We're gonna write these. You know these stories to. Match our our. Little Jewish prophecies. So there's a there's no, that's. That's an easy that's an easy one. To hit out of the park. You don't you can't miss it when you're. Have your own your own. You know your own solutions for your own past prophecies.

Adam: Yeah. and Speaking of conspiracy, also, here's Jeremiah 11/9. Oh, hold on, let's let's fix this. Busted out?

Speaker 5: Then the Lord said to me there is a conspiracy among the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. There is a conspiracy among the Judeans and those who live in Jerusalem.

Adam: But I guess conspiracies don't exist. We're just going to laugh at them.

David: No, that's just he was just joking. So we aren't can't take that one.

Speaker 3: Seriously, right? Yeah, I don't. I don't have any personal vested interest in whether second Timothy or not. I mean, if you did, that'd be great. I mean, we'd have to reconsider like what Paul really thought and.

Speaker 0: It's not.

Adam: This idea that he has no vested interest and he'll follow the truth, he's for 20 years. Number one, he was trained in Christian Zionists like apologist schools. Religious schools, Moodys Bible Institute and stuff. He was a a Christian up until his

Christian Zionist up until his 20s. He's written for 30 years on what the historical Jesus really was. And you know, he's he's texting with rabbis and won't criticize. He's he's not being honest in covering the big picture in this in my opinion. Do you think?

David: No, absolutely not. I mean, he arguably he doesn't have a vested interest in the Christian story. I guess you guys could believe that, but he's all of those guys have a vested interest in maintaining, yeah, a a version that's compatible with the, you know, Jewish sensitivities and Jewish interests. So so there's a. Whole big blind. Spot here that they're not gonna go into. They're not gonna cross it. They're not gonna talk about it. They're not gonna even consider it. So you're getting it best. You know, half the story. Some of the things they say are true. I mean, even Valiant says some things. You're correct, but he's giving you, like half the story because there's this big blind spot over there. If they no man, they won't even go there. They won't even talk about they. Won't even say that. Anybody's over there, because that's gonna that's gonna look bad. So yeah, it's it's, it's absurd to. Say they have. No interest that those are they're just, you know. Following the facts and the evidence, that's. Absolutely ridiculous.

Adam: And that's a good point. Like I read the books from all these different scholars. I watch all these different debates and shows and guests and pick. Up, you know, pieces from all over, but none of them are like putting it together and stating the obvious. The elephant in the room of what's happened like the Abrahamic religions, have taken over the world, they say this is fulfilling their prophecies and a good thing. This is not fringe. Rabbis that say this, either this is like the consensus view coming from the. Top Rabbi Maimonides in 12th century. But here we'll finish.

Speaker 3: You know, so I don't. I don't have. I don't have any really ulterior motives in terms of trying to disprove or prove anything. And this the kind of things that I'm I talk about my book forged. Virtually all of. That is stuff that I could have heard at Prince Anthological Seminary training to be a Presbyterian minister. People certainly thought that there were only 7 letters that Paul wrote when I took my introduction to the New Testament class, taught by a New Testament theologian. When he gave, I was I was an evangelical Christian at the time when he gave his lecture on Ephesians, he spent the entire time talking about how Ephesians had completely corrupted Paul's theology and so. You know, he was, but he wasn't a conspiracy theorist. Alright, so I think I think it's pretty easy just to label that charge. I think what you do is. You just ask people. You look at the evidence and if you don't think so, that's fine. But it doesn't. You don't have to be a conspiracy theorist when you realize that there are. There are lots of forgeries in early Christianity that nobody doubt. And so to say that, you know, for speeders, one of them isn't particularly crazy. I mean, just you have to look to see if it is.

Speaker 9: Right. And the evidence is we're scientific historians. The evidence is which lead us there.

Speaker 3: You look at evidence, you don't just, you know, make wild claims that have no basis, so that somebody believe you.

Speaker 9: Yes, Sir.

Adam: I love how they're just like giving out vague things like ohh yeah, we gotta follow the evidence. Like I follow the evidence. But anybody that has a different conclusion or disagrees on something, they don't follow the evidence, no specifics at all or anything. It's just.

David: No, it's just it's platitudes. It's meeting the statements. That sound sound cute and sound nice, and then they don't back it up with anything of substance.

Adam: OK, so now we're going to play a few clips from this interview who created Christ, the Roman Providence of Christianity, and you debated James Valiant. Did you already say the thing you were going to preface before we started this? Or do you want to do it now?

David: Well, we covered most of the most of the points, I guess. You know I. Is it it? It was an interesting contrast because there was a lot of things I sort of agreed with James on. You know, he talks about the Roman Jewish conflict. As central and I. You know, he acknowledges that the Jews hated the Romans, wanted the Romans out. He acknowledges that the Romans didn't like the Jews and the, you know, so that was also. A valid point. He says there. Was no, no biblical Jesus, you know, no divine son. Of God so I. Mean he's agreeing with those things, but then he goes, you know, completely off the rails and he's back to this, I call it a syops thesis, right where where the Romans, maybe even the emperors themselves conceive this evil plan of. You know, undermining those rebellious Jews by by. You know, getting somebody like you know, Paul, we're going to bribe him or pay him or, you know, coerce them into constructing a whole new story to dish out to his fellow Jews just to calm those guys down a little bit because they're just being a pain in the ***. And so we're going to do that. So we're gonna, we're going to find a a Jew named Paul, just a tent maker. You know, and we're gonna we're. Gonna get him to create a whole new story.

Adam: And write it in Greek.

Speaker 14: What's that?

Adam: And write it in Greek, which most likely if they're the militant Jewish groups, would be considered Greek, like the enemy foreign religion. And they were they were, you know, their books.

Video Clip: Yeah, right.

Adam: With that are that. Were authoritative, were in Aramaic or Hebrew.

David: Yeah, right. So so why is Paul writing in in Greek when it's supposed to be a message for his fellow Jews? Right. Why is the entire New Testament in the Gentile language of Greg? Right. I mean it's it's. Geared towards the. the Gentile masses, I mean, that's clearly what's going on. And I mean it's just it's, it's just absurd. You know, you press the valiant for these kind of points and he has no, no defense in his in support of his own thesis. It's just a pure conjecture that that doesn't. Hold any water.

Speaker 9: January and I believe that it's really impossible to miss that. That's our constituency for Christianity. It was not aimed originally to convert the whole Roman Empire, but the formula that created there was such a powerful one.

Adam: Hold on. How does he? Does he think that Christianity and Paul's view the goal was not to convert the whole Roman Empire?

David: When policy apostle, the Gentiles, what's what, what's how? What can be more explicit? It's it's the goal to convert them right? What's he trying to say? It was just an accident. It was just like you said it was. A screw up. It was just. Like a our. Ploy went wrong. Oh, my God, we were. Supposed to convert the Jews and. Now we converted all. Of our own people, right? What he's trying to say, it's just. It's just ridiculous.

Speaker 9: They combined Jewish monotheism. With an open door, you don't. Have to get circumcised. Anyone can join right policy. You're so open to everyone. And yet it combined this monotheistic. Idea that could. Unify an empire which the Romans were very much interested in doing. It became too irresistible. Christianity was the. Had the right formula and it took over the empire, but you made a great historical point earlier.

Adam: He didn't have the right formula. Constantine adopted it and forced it on everybody and made paganism illegal. And then put in special protections for, for Jews and Judaism. That's what actually happened.

Speaker 5: Yeah, well.

Adam: It didn't have the right formula.

David: Right. I mean it, it is a good point why it spread, you know pretty effectively I mean to me it's really this, this carrot and the stick thing, right, because you're dealing with basically superstitious masses at at this point the superstitious Gentiles and you throw crazy stories about, you know, Hellfire and lakes of fire and you know, eternal damnation. On one hand, and then you throw in the carrot like ohh, you get to go to heaven and. Live forever and be happy. And be with. You know Jesus and God or whatever. So I think it was I think that. Was a pretty. Effective tactic that they came up with this little. Carrot and stick thing and you see it.

Adam: Yeah, it was. A good formula? It was a. It was a amazing formula actually, with how well it's work.

David: Yeah, I mean, it was very clever. I've given them lots of credit for it. I mean, they came up with a with a nifty little story and you got a bunch of superstitious masses. And the people kind of bought into it and and, you know, it was it was geared towards the downtrodden, and that was the other thing, right? Most of the masses felt themselves to be poor. And you know, sort of trampled under foot. So the story is aimed at the downed fraud, and they're the blessed of God. You know, Jesus loves the. Poor the poor gonna inherit the earth. And if you believe me, you know, you get to go to heaven. If you don't believe me, you're gonna go to hell. I mean, that's a pretty good. That's a pretty good story to get to convince a lot of people to. Get them on your side. And yeah, obviously it worked.

Adam: And when the source material for Paul was books like Psalms 110 and this is what it says, let me read just a couple excerpts from Psalms 110. And you tell me, do you? Think that they wanted it. To take over all of the Roman Empire in the world.

Speaker 5: Hashem said unto my shock, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies a footstool. For thy feet, Hashem shall stretch forth the raw that's Messiah of thy mouth might out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine. Messiah at that right hand that shall dash kings in pieces in his day of wrath, he the Messiah, Moshiach shall judge among the goyim.

David: I like that you got me convinced there.

Speaker 9: Do you hear the?

Adam: Or are you hearing my normal voice?

David: Yeah. No, I I'm hearing. God, man, I'm believing it.

Adam: OK, cool. So that's the type. Of stuff all over the Old Testament. But then we act like ohh no. It's don't be a conspiracy theorist. They didn't. They didn't have the motive to do this. There was no agenda. They were trying to fulfill. Even if Paul was sincere and genuine and just a eccentric and came up with some weird idea cult following for himself, it's still a deception and it's still a conspiracy because he's influenced by, like. The prophetic agenda of the Torah.

David: This this is I'm actually working on this now and this is my next little project. Is Toronto up a list? I've started my list right here. It's called Jewish dominion, and I'm kind of going through and collecting all those nice little passages from Genesis and Exodus and Deuteronomy and Isaiah and Psalms to build up the case, to show people in the Old Testament. This sort of, you know, oppressive world dominating, you know, the world is given to us. We're going. To subdue the earth. Mean all that stuff it's, you know, it's all there. You just gotta kind of document it and lay it out. So I think that would be a. Nifty little article or. Maybe we even need to do a show just on. Jewish dominion and we'll kind of walk through. All those passages just to show people how impressive that list really is.

Speaker 5: True, true.

Adam: Oh, I know it's it's disgusting. How I have I have a verse about that actually we can go to that or not a verse a a clip. This is from creating Christ. OK, this is James Valiance documentary saying that the Romans did it is a little section about how subversive Judaism was.

Video Clip: The yoke of Rome.

Speaker 15: The Jewish yeah.

Adam: There was a Robert Price there they they wanted to throw off the yoke of Rome. With Jesus and with Christianity and with their Messiah, that was the. Goal. They did that. But somehow it was the Romans that did it to themselves. Please come on, this is like. Can they really be this dumb or is this? It almost makes me wonder, is like this intentional disinfo to muddy the waters and just to distract people from the much more obvious?

Speaker 0: No, it's just.

David: Exactly right. These guys are masters are throwing out obvious contradictions. Then just acting like it's completely normal. Ohh yeah. We we did it to ourselves and it and we destroy ourselves. And it wasn't that nice. I mean it. It's just ridiculous how how these, how these guys operate sometimes.

Adam: And to say that, like Christianity was Pro Roman, it's about replacing worship of Jesus from the Roman Empire Empire, and they're they're gods.

Speaker 3: Right here.

Speaker 5: Rebels were operating from a long held Jewish prophecy that a warrior Messiah would come to defeat the Romans and deliver them from occupation. This messianic prophecy was handed down from generation to generation. Through their scriptures.

Adam: And I just wanted. To add, they also had prophecies of other types of messiahs that would be rejected and suffer and have atonement and that would go to the nations first also. You have to understand that it wasn't just that they were expecting a king. Or a military leader.

Speaker 16: The Romans saw the Jewish literature as being very subversive, and you know, I mean, and it was. It's extremely xenophobic, it's very full of global hegemony. The chosen people are supposed to take over the world. They're going to suck the milk of the nations. This is all you know in the Old Testament, and probably they're thinking, what the heck is instigating these people to behave like this? What is their motivation? We got to find out.

Adam: It's funny, this is in James Valiants documentary, and I hear him all the time talking about anti-Semitism, you know, criticism of Judaism or rabbis is anti-Semitism. I mean this should be what everybody is saying. The fact that people want to cover this up and want to sugarcoat it and whitewash it and smear and condone the censorship of people that point out Judaism and Kabbalah secrets and these things and the Zionist agenda. Really ***** me off.

Speaker 16: It became obvious, I'm sure, to the Romans that we don't have a single mythical figure to point to or or a God figure to point. To we we so we gotta.

Adam: OK, that's different. So there and now let's go back to Valiant.

Speaker 9: Note that throughout Christian. History. There's all kinds of anti-Semitism.

Speaker 7: I mean you, you.

Speaker 9: You sneeze in the wrong direction. Let's go kill a bunch of Jews. You show a passion play, and that's an excuse half the time to go, you know, kill a bunch of local Jews. Whereas the Roman Empire was venerated. It was the Holy Roman Empire. And we only went out of existence at the time of the.

Adam: It only became. Holy once they adopted the. God of Israel, though, before. That they were Pagan, demonic idol worshippers.

David: Exactly right. Yeah, it was. It wasn't holy till it was Christian. Then it became holy, right? That's how it worked.

Speaker 5: Right.

Adam: And so he mentioned Christian anti-Semitism, which I it completely disavow. I think it's absolutely awful. I think it's horrendous. I think it's stupid. I think it's nonsense. But where did Christian Gentiles get the idea? To care about the Jews rejecting their Messiah, this Messiah that was meant to conquer the Gentiles to begin with. Paul and the Gospels targeted the Gentiles with this. This virus of an idea. Like what? Paul says, that the Jews. Killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and persecuted us. They please not God in our contrary to all men. So that's Paul the Jew. But then look at what? Look at what myth vision does to. Me. Here, watch this.

Speaker 17: In this entire.

Adam: So I commented in the chat.

Speaker 17: And just look, Adam Green is in the chat and I'm not interested in the constant polemics against Jewish people.

Adam: They always conflate my criticism with Judaism and specific beliefs in specific people and groups with all Jews, despite the fact that I've never blamed all Jews for anything, I think it's immoral to blame all people like that. Criticizing Judaism and Rabbis does not make me bad if they're if they're doing bad things and. I was going to say one more thing.

Speaker 17: That polemics against Jewish people, the way that I have seen him do in the past, I have no. Interest for that.

Adam: Because Judaism is a religion, but also a people, it's like you can't criticize their religion without them calling you racist and claiming that you hate all people. These are like little tricks to dislike, obfuscate and evade the arguments that I'm trying to. So here's my point. Blaming Jews for rejecting Jesus is a literary device to fulfill prophecy. That's what I wrote. In other words, I think Jesus's myth. I don't think the Jews actually rejected Jesus. This is Robin Walsh. It's one of their favorite academics, they. All bring her on. And it's a quote from her when she was on one of these shows. And look how he spins this.

Speaker 17: And I get a lot of people who comment that I can tell come from you, Adam. But blaming Jews for rejecting Jesus as a literary device to fulfill prophecy. Robin Walsh. Here's the deal. Yes, it's a literary project to make Christians innocent. And yeah, you could say fulfill prophecy. But in Luke acts the blaming of Jews is a literary propaganda to make Christians innocent.

Adam: Why would Christians need to be innocent for killing Jesus? The story has always been that it was the Jews that killed. So how is he? He's he's missing the. Whole point here.

Speaker 17: And blame Jewish people. For what's happening? Your proposition is Jews invented this to beguile and trick Gentiles into accepting this position. I don't see Jews inventing that. They're the guilty people in this entire process of Luke acts, that's. Going on so.

Adam: So was it what do you what do you think about that? Was it Gentiles that created the idea that they killed their God so that they could hate them for the stupid reason that has that has actually? Escapes Goats, Jews in a fictional story, but in the

real world. Now it's the Christians who are the villains, and they've been scapegoated for believing this. Trapped in this deception, that that's the way I see it. What do you think?

David: Right. Well, I mean it, it raises a reasonable question, right. If the Jews wrote the story. Why would they include in? Their own story that the Jews killed the killed the savior. Right. That so on the? Face of it, I mean it's a valid question. Would they do that? and I think there's a relatively straightforward answer to that. There's a lot of internal conflict going on within the Jewish community, right? Paul and his buddies are very small minority. They're talking about a Messiah who's coming. They're gonna, you know, he, he wasn't. He wasn't a military. He was some kind of spiritual or divine Messiah and you know. This is there's a. Lot of theological friction with the other. Jews there and they don't like that. Story that's it's it's, you know.

Adam: They're not debating on who. Killed Jesus though, are they?

David: No, right? But you know, right? It was, you know, the way I kind of said it, I said well, look, the Jews are trying to kill the Jesus story and this is what Paul is seeing from his side of the fence. Right, he says. Look, I made this Jesus story, this this Jesus who died. He's going to save all that Gentiles. And then my fellow Jews, they don't like me. They're trying to kill my Jesus story. What's wrong with those guys? I'm really working in their best interest. Are they so stupid? You know what's wrong with those guys? So I think you're seeing that and use and you see it explicitly in the Gospel of John. This is widely unknown. Such that you know these these, these. These anti-Semitic comments in. The Gospel, John, are really just inter Jewish conflicts going on that have been documented, you know in, in, in, in the, in the dialogue that's going on in, in the gospel. So it's, it's not at all hard to see that that's gonna come with a certain anti Jewish angle because Paul had a lot of enemies. Within his own Jewish community.

Adam: So for him to say Ohh, who does he think created the story though that the Jews killed Jesus?

Speaker 17: Who else?

Adam: Was it a? Was it a Gentile?

David: Yeah, who else could? It? Was it a Gentile? It made-up. No, nobody. Even talks about that right?

Adam: and look at what this has done throughout this history, how this is played out. OK, they're they're like the it's their religion to be like the suffering servant. To they believe that they need to go into exile and that their souls need to be purified through persecution and that they atone, that helps atone and purify their their souls so they can be refined through the persecution. While they're hated in the exile among the nations. and this. Is an important part of their whole theology. Being chosen to be hated and persecuted, but then they'll get their vengeance in the end to say that. Like this is. All created by Gentiles is nonsense. It came from Paul came from the Gospel writers, and they were inspired from the prophecies of the Old Testament that they

that that. Their Messiah would be rejected and he wouldn't be noted. He wouldn't be recognized and stuff. It came from them as the point that I'm getting at.

David: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. There's no other source. No other way that that's going to come from. Even if they're drawing from, you know, aspects of Pagan mythology. I mean that doesn't that doesn't change the fact that the root, the root story, the basic story is a is an Old Testament prophecy that they're trying to realize in their. Post Prophecy era, right?

Speaker 17: I would say it's much muddier than the proposition you put up that Jews invented this whole thing and are. Trying to trick. All green gentiles into this religion but.

Adam: What do you what do you have to respond to that cause that's not just a a. Hit on me. That's like him saying he doesn't agree with your book either. That they made it up and to trick the Gentiles into worshipping their God, which they obviously did.

Speaker 0: Right.

David: Well, OK, right. I mean so. You gotta you gotta look at what? What are the possible explanations and what's the most plausible given the whole picture that we've been painted at that time in history and what's going on, what we know. What's going on? So, you know, I look at a couple of different possible theses in in my book and I say well, look the other the other. Alternatives just aren't even. Possible they're not even realistic, you know. You know, people the Christians want to think. Well, Paul had a real vision. He really saw the Risen Christ. and you. Know well, OK. Nobody believes that, right? I mean, if you're going to buy the superstition then then then you know you're you're you're kind of, yeah. You're not even in. A in a rational discussion at that point. So I mean, there's really no viable plausible thesis that makes sense given what we know. So yeah. I mean, we just have to. Look, look at. Look at.

Speaker 0: That's the.

David: Look at what the evidence tells us.

Speaker 17: That's just my two cents. I figure since I saw him in the chat there, I'd I'd just make the point that, yeah, maybe there is some they think this fulfills prophecy, but Jews themselves, I do not see as literary, literally trying to do this and. Trick at their. Own, you know they get killed over and over through history by Christians because of this text. Being so blatantly. Blaming of them?

Adam: Text blatantly blames them. The text that was created by Jews blatantly blames them, and but they've suffered, so they couldn't be behind it. OK, well, how? How were the Jews faring before Christians?

David: Yeah, exactly. They were already being slaughtered. For Christ sakes.

Adam: I mean.

David: Right, you've got 3 revolutions you got in 70 and 1:15 and 1:30. They've been getting slaughtered like crazy. They're ready to revolt and to die and commit suicide to try to, you know, get rid of the Romans, for crying. Out loud. So it it. Is it's not a, not a far far fetched. And the least to say that those guys are, you know,

ready to kill and to die to further their cause. Were already dying. So it was. It was no stretch at all to. Do that.

Adam: Right. They were already being slaughtered. Temple destroyed occupied all of these things. Crucified, whatever. But they went from that. The Pagan Rome to Christian Rome that worships their God and believes their Torah and is imposing the Torah Messiah on the rest of the of the Gentile world. We got Romans 11/28 as far as the gospel is concerned. They the Jews are enemies for your sake, but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account. Of the patriarchs. So yes, Christians persecuted Jews. They're their enemies. But it's a superficial enemy. It's a limited, controlled opposition enemy that also worships their God and believes. In their patriarchs and their covenants that they were chosen and their prophecies, this is obviously. A better situation for them than Pagan Rome and rabbis all say this. Ohh Pagan Rome was very evil and Christianity brought them to monotheism.

David: Yeah. No, I. The other thing to keep in. Mind is, you know, the Jews have been. You know, perennially viewed as the enemies of humanity. Right. You look, you look at the classic statements from, you know, going back to Acadians and Theophrastus. And you go through, you know, even through Tacitus and. And you know a BN and so forth. I mean, there's repeated like Symmachus there's repeated claims. That the that the. Jews saw the all. All the rest of the world as their enemies. I mean this is sort. Of baked into the Jewish mindset. That that, you know. We we are alone. They're the good guys. Everybody else in the world is an enemy and they have to be defeated and conquered and. Put under our heel. So that that. Goes back hundreds of years prior to. The whole Christian. Story prior to the Roman invasion that's built into the Jewish psyche that they have dominion. And then the that the. The rest of the people. Of the world are are their. Enemies that that's an ancient view.

Adam: And just from like a game theory perspective. Like the ancient world, the ancient Pagan world had issues with Judaism for like real, legitimate reasons, whereas Christianity. Was opposition to Jews for dumb reasons. They killed Jesus, like that's the issue that that does nothing but discredit us Gentiles. We lose our moral high ground. It turns us into the evil, persecuting villains, and them into the innocent victims. and look at how all this is played out. We're not allowed to criticize them now today because of this history of Christian persecution. And Christians have flipped in and are their greatest allies, so they benefited them with their persecution, which this is very commonly known in Judaism. How Christian anti-Semitism played a divine and important. Role for Jews? And then now it's like they be Christianity has become the advocate and the repenting and their working with them their greatest. Allies and to to downplay, like none of these guys ever talk about modern modern day religion and how it influences politics and foreign policy and our relationship with Israel and all of these things like it's just. They pretend like that none of that exists. Too controversial, I guess.

David: You know also we got to keep. In mind there. Was a lot of non religious reasons why the people of Europe in particular, you know, didn't like the Jews. I mean,

they were being exploited. They were being, you know, land was taken, you know, they were being charged, usurious rates of interest, you know, they were working. They're imposing cruelties. No, they were swaying the the king and the nobility. There were lots of very they were doing in slave trading. They were doing white slave trading. I mean, there's a lot of very practical reasons why they didn't like the Jews. And you know why? There was pure programs and so. Far they had nothing.

Adam: They didn't like circumcision either. They saw.

Speaker 5: The fox.

Adam: They saw circumcision as bad. I mean, I wouldn't want people mutilating their kids. Imagine all the problems they had back in the day with infections and stuff without modern medicine, with the circumcisions they were doing. They got cut this out and they. Rebelled and went to war over not being able to chop off the foreskins of their young boys. It's amazing.

David: Yeah, genital mutilation. Normally, that's considered a crime, but the Jews call. That a good. Thing. So yeah, we. Need to call it what it is.

Speaker 9: 200 years ago. So they then the Christians venerated Roman Empire even as they were attacking Jews for most of its history. Yeah.

Speaker 0: It was very.

Speaker 18: You know, when you think of the text, it comes from, you know. Israel and the Middle East it's Jewish by nature and then the book becomes at least the New Testament becomes about Roman, you know, like ideas. It fits very in with the Roman culture. They idolize Roman, definitely anti Jewish, very anti Jewish.

Speaker 9: And increasingly and.

Adam: Anti Jewish but also acknowledging that they were once God's chosen people, which is their ultimate object. They have two objectives. Get the nations to worship. The God of Israel. And to basically that's it. That's the big objective. And that did that. And maybe the only way they could get the nations to worship the God of Israel is to create a create a religion that they pretended like they were against. That's kind of the way I see it. You know.

David: Yeah, right. Because like I said, nobody loved the Jews, right? I mean, it was a, it was. They had a tough they had a tough position. Everybody hated him. I mean for like I say, literally for hundreds of years. So how do you get the people to sort of? You know, be on your side in any sense when they hate you. Right. I mean. That's a that's a tough road to hoe. So so you know, that's why they. Had to really. You know, could could concoct these crazy mythological superstitious stories. That was their only hope. Of somehow you know. It was a trick. I mean I. Think it really. Was it was a kind of a ploy. To get people to believe in the essentials of the Jewish world to you without kind of getting them to be Jews or even realize. Thing that they were really buying into a Jewish story, maybe they people thought it was an anti Jewish story because well, the Jews killed. OK, then it's OK. I wouldn't. I wouldn't buy into a pro Jewish religion, but it's an anti Jewish religion and the masses are like, yeah, OK, I'll buy into

that one. So yeah, they can throw little tidbits of anti Jewishness and that probably satisfy the masses. You know, instinctual objection to even believing this stuff.

Adam: Would ancient Jews prefer an enemy and an opposition that worships their God or doesn't worship their God when that was their ultimate goal, to get everybody to worship their God?

Speaker 5: All right, great.

Speaker 9: Anti-Semitic the original documents are increasingly ferocious in their anti-Semitism as far as I can tell but. It from the outset it was anti Jewish nationalism. It was anti Jewish separatism. It was anti Bora. It was tore critical. Paul is. Beginning to peel off.

Video Clip: You know we.

Speaker 9: Don't have to worry about kosher diet or circumcision and that.

Adam: Was him speaking to Gentiles, not to Jews.

Speaker 9: More than that, we're worshipping a God, man. More than that, we're drinking his blood. We're drinking blood now, under, under normal sensibilities. That's anathema. An extreme or a huge God, man. Now previous Jewish conceptions of the Messiah.

Adam: OK, so this is important. He's undermining his own argument here from. My opinion, he's saying Christianity is so antithetical to Judaism. Why? So that's because it wasn't made for Jews. It was made to be to keep Jews away from it. Basically, it was. That's why it was anti-Semitic too. Anti Anti Jewish you see what I'm saying?

David: Yeah, yeah. There was no reason, no reason, no reason to get Jews to buy into the. Story we like to like them just. The way they are. This is for the superstitious masses who buy into a Roman pantheon or a Greek pantheon, and we want to get them over here, sort of on our side of the ballpark, you know. So that's what they're that's what they're gonna present.

Speaker 15: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Adam: and it's like if you're trying to target, if you're Rome, trying to target messianic, you know, rebellious, militant Jews. Are you going to create a religion that's like, completely? What's the word I'm looking for? Completely not kosher to Judaism.

Speaker 5: Right.

Adam: And from the Jewish perspective, they see Christianity as representing Satan, and he's tempting them to be idol worshippers. So it's like a test essentially to weed out the mixed multitude of souls. They get deep with it, but they the rabbis have an explanation for what he's confused. Out here.

Speaker 9: Mike believed that he was a special guy. There might be miracles, you know Moses Day. I mean, there were miracles associated with things they did, but he's a good man. He's not God's Messiah identified as God as Christian literature increasingly does. First, they suggest he's God. Jesus can forgive sins. He's born of a. Virgin, you know, that kind of thing to tell us? Ohh yeah, he is God. But by the time you get to the Gospel of John, it is absolutely playing. Jesus is God or form. Of God.

He was the word he was with God. And was there at the creation and a pre existent being that. You could almost identify with God.

Adam: This is this is again stupid. Paul describes Jesus as a pre existent being also so it didn't that. Didn't start with John again.

Speaker 9: Also, by the time you get to John, the Jews and Judas were simply possessed by the devil. That's how anti. We're getting by the time of John.

Speaker 18: Quite striking. OK, so you you mentioned.

Speaker 9: Got it, Paul says I got this message from my own revelation and Jesus's brother and best friend disagree with me about it. This clearly suggests that Paul is the creator of the anti Torah stuff and Christianity, and that the original Jesus movement was at least Tora Orthodox. And because why would you, if you even if this is the standard Christian explanation? Well, James and Keefus went back to Jewish ways after Jesus had the Jesus of the Gospels had criticized Torah. Why would James and? Keith said have such a fierce argument.

Speaker 0: Would say OK.

Speaker 9: Yeah, you and your Gentile mission can do that. After all, Jesus have given us the green light. But no, Paul never cites Jesus. He could win the argument just by quoting one of those famous what is Soul Jesus and the Gospel says nothing you put into your body is impure or defiled.

Adam: You see. You can make a bunch of. Arguments with the presupposition that Jesus was a real person that completely collapse if you have the presupposition that he was a mythical character. In this explanation, it's important. Your thoughts, or should I go?

David: Well, yeah, just, just quickly, you know, I guess I'm in a sense, I'm agnostic on whether he was an actual physical person or or just a literary creation, because both will work for a for a Jesus hoax thesis. I mean, you know you. Could it could go either way and there's, you know, because there's virtually no evidence. Contemporaneous evil. Of of Jesus, Rabbi Jesus, let alone miracle Jesus. You know, then we don't have really any good reason to believe he actually existed. As I say, the only reason that I think it's possible, or maybe even probable, that there was a a mortal Jesus is because a hoax works best when there's a kernel of truth where there's a grain of truth at the center. If you had a you had a rabbi who was an agitated political agitator, opposed Rome, you know, spoke on behalf of the. Or got a little too rebellious and got himself crucified, and then his body is taken away and disappeared. Well, that's a. Nice little core of of truth. To build your fabulous kind of Pauline Christianity around. So you know, that's really that's a very indirect evidence. I don't have any more evidence than that, but I suspect you know the hoax works best when they know that there was an actual person.

Adam: No, I agree with that. I still think that my point stands though that when you're trying to analyze like the origins of Christianity, like, you know, some arguments make sense. If there was a a real Jesus and some, but they won't make sense if it was

a mythical Jesus. So that's like an important presupposition. You know that we're debating these different ideas.

Speaker 9: It's what comes out of your body so. He's attacking the whole of kosher diet he's attacking. The whole purity regime. And so, under Mosaic Law, Jesus, the historical Jesus could not incredibly said that Jesus and his first followers were tore Orthodox and.

Video Clip: There was a.

Speaker 9: Movement of original Jesus followers, I think, and the Ebionites demonstrate that, I think. And among other things, I do believe there's a historical Jesus for. Other reasons, largely. Part armands reasons he is Paul, the first Christian writer, does believe in a historical Jesus. Josephus mentions it in the 1st century I think. We have plenty of evidence, more than that. Would you invent a simple fact like being crucified? Unless there's a reason to believe that that would be invented, I'm going with a a dude who's crucified under. But if he was, he was crucified for being a credible heir to David, and therefore want a political threat to the Romans.

Speaker 18: Yeah, I was. You went where? I was going to go with my question.

Adam: So what do you think about the idea of Paul kind of innovating the Jesus idea to the Gentiles and taking it from like the Nazarenes or the Jerusalem Church or Ebia Knights like you said? Share your thoughts on.

David: Yeah, I mean, well, we don't know really. Much about the B nights, I mean they. They were basically sort. Of allegedly believing and I'm kind of a mortal. Jesus, who was born of, you know, a father and mother and then then died. He got crucified on a cross and then he was done. Right. So it's a very, it's a very mundane earthly kind of view of of of Jesus, which I suspect. As I said, I think there's probably good reason to. Think that that was true.

Speaker 5: I agree, yeah.

David: I mean.

Adam: The way they go. Ohh, there's no way that they could make up that Jesus was crucified under pilot. I do think that there's, I think the whole passion narrative. Like if you believe the idea of Jesus and Barabbas and pilot like that's all the evidence that we really have in the Gospels for the pilot. Being involved in this. Right. That, that, that whole gospel narrative is just quote mine from Old Testament scripture. The whole plot there is being inspired by picking and choosing different verses of the Old Testament out sometimes prophecy, sometimes just completely out of context. Well, they're all out of. Context really, most of them.

David: Yeah, but it, but it's put in a Roman context because, I mean, the Romans did have political agitators. They did crucify them. That was a Roman method of execution. So. So, yeah, that's what Paul's doing. He's snatching these Old Testament ideas, putting them in a Roman context so that it makes sense to the contemporary. The audience and then he and then he. Goes from there so. I think that's the best possible explanation.

Adam: Paul never says that pilot killed Jesus, by the way. He never names pilot as doing that. He doesn't say a lot of things about Jesus. In the pilot store that we have is literally just completely a retelling of your. I'm poor so anyway.

Speaker 0: OK.

Speaker 18: And it was about, well, I saw a church father statement that said the Ebionites were a branch of his essing, so that was kind of where that is. But my my question was about the ****.

Adam: And then you look at the Dead Sea. Scrolls you see the. The scenes, the stuff they were riding, which I do think the scenes are related to these gnostic Jewish sects, that one of the branches evolved into Christianity. I do think that's what happened and. Then you go look at the war scroll and the stuff in the Dead Sea Scrolls about Melchizedek scroll and stuff, and then it it it that give is a giveaway that it's a midrash. It's a pesher because that's what they were doing with the Melchizedek squirrel. And here is Rabbi saying that lots of. I've seen several rabbis say that Christianity is midrash and Pesher, and Carrier says the same thing.

Speaker 14: Right, like much Christianity. Right, like much of mystical.

Speaker 6: Judaism is built.

Speaker 14: Upon a fundamental I don't know, I don't.

Adam: Mystical Judaism. That's Kabbalah Christianity like Kabbalah is built on.

Speaker 14: I want to call. It a mistake so I don't want to sound. Offensive or insulting in any which way. But Christianity was built out of Judaism. On Jewish midrash, and that becomes very clear and evident. For example, if you look at the actual teachings of Yeshua. As the historical. Individual that he was. Even in his own day, they said.

Adam: Assuming there was none.

Speaker 14: How come? He speaking in parables and symbolisms and the like. That's very.

Speaker 6: Common Jewish way to teach it is.

Speaker 15: What we call.

Video Clip: Midrashim all right. Very, very common.

Speaker 14: The Angel of the Lord, the one who brings the word of.

Speaker 17: God called Torah and interestingly, the word of God.

Speaker 14: These first ones in Philo, the original Greek word, he.

Speaker 17: Referred to them as.

Speaker 14: Did you ever hear the?

Speaker 3: Love word logos? For those of you might be.

Speaker 14: Familiar little Christian theology. You might be familiar in. The Book of John. And the Christian Bible says in the beginning. Was the word, and the word was Greek logos.

Speaker 6: That was the Torah.

Speaker 14: I've always told people that was.

Video Clip: A rather colistin concept, putting John's words.

David: It's not a cabalistic concept.

Speaker 14: Unfortunately, those people read John don't understand the. Original Jewish.

David: That's nonsense. Logos was God and Heraclitus, that's 450 BC. It's it's. It's a lifting, exactly. From Greek philosophy. It's got nothing to. Do with the Jews.

Adam: But with Philo linking logos to the anointed Yeshua, Heavenly Arch Angel character that, that's what I think he's referring to there, that it was a. Jewish concept. OK. and in John, the way that they read rewrites the beginning of Genesis with logos, there is Jesus that's a cabalistic type of writing. That's what he was saying. So you you got that out of context. I mean you listen to it out without the context is what I meant to say.

Speaker 7: OK.

Adam: So this is what I'm getting at. OK, they say the Romans created it or ohh it's just, you know, happened. I see it as a cowboy lists. Prophecy, deception, and a mythical Jesus. Because of this reason. Now here's the video from. I know we gotta wrap it up soon to here. We got it. Some super chats. This is another rabbi who's not a rabbi. Jewish scholar. Oh wait, we're going to play it from here. This is his book about how Paul was a cabalist his video 170,000 views on YouTube.

Speaker 8: Paul, the recent convert to the Messianic Jesus movement, seems to have had just such experiences throughout his lifetime, sometime after his conversion following a previous mystical experience.

Adam: Mystical cabalistic visionary experiences is what he's explain.

Speaker 8: On the road to Damascus, Paul would enter into an ecstatic state by his. On account in which his Lord, the resurrected Jesus, would give him direction that would alter the. Course of. History to go and preach about the messianic and salvific redemption achieved by Jesus the Christ to non Jews to spread this otherwise Jewish movement to the wider Gentile world.

Adam: This is the reality of what happened at Kabul. Stick mythical prophecy fulfilling deception that targeted the Gentile world. This is exactly what I'm saying it is. But when I say it, I am censored and called an anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist for just quoting and summarizing what other people say. But oh, it's the Romans that did it though. That's the serious theory that we're going to entertain.

Speaker 14: Because he.

David: To because because he did not say the hated Gentiles whom we have to test it for centuries, and who we are fated. To rule over. He didn't say that.

Speaker 0: The the, the, the.

David: The weasel there. He left out the key context, which is. Yeah, we're gonna bring this to the Gentiles, cause we hate them, and we're gonna rule and. Dominate them. That's the whole that's the complete picture. Ohh, we didn't say that. No, that would be bad. We could have be anti-Semitic. So yeah. There you go. Nice. Nice little half truths there, right.

Adam: And I'd like to point out too. Also gersham show. Mum got two of his books here. Messianic ID and Judaism. He is the most authoritarian, authoritarian, authoritative, respected scholar. Jewish Israeli worked in Israeli University on Kabbalah, biggest expert on Kabbalah. He has likened Christianity to the Dead Sea Scrolls. And Kabbalah, he says both Kabbalah and Christianity kind of evolved out of this as seen Dead Sea scroll, Jewish, Gnostic. Communities and also that Paul was basically engaging in like Kabbalah, missed, Proto, Kabbalah, mysticism.

Speaker 8: All may have disclosed clues to this world altering mystical vision some 14 years later. Why vying for Apostolic authority in the community of believers at Corinth? What he reveals, although elliptically, to be honest, is still shocking. Paul seems to have been a practitioner of an ancient esoteric form of Jewish mysticism in which its adherents ascend.

Speaker 0: Look up all up.

Speaker 8: And really descend into the palaces of the most Holy Supernal temple to witness the divine glory upon which the chariot throne of God rests, and in turn to be transformed. The Mystic is transformed into a glorified quasi angelic being. In fact, these elements of Merkava are. Chariot, miss. Prism may form the basis for the earliest layer of Christian theological speculations there in. The work of Paul. Thus, an incredibly ancient, esoteric and apocalyptic form that Jewish mysticism may very well lie at the foundation of both Paul's preaching to the wider. Entire world and the theological core of the earliest Christian theology.

Adam: That's just the intra power, this is exactly. What I've been saying. That Paul created a cabalistic mystical midrash peshet deception on the Gentiles and. Look at this. In second Corinthians talks about how he has taken up to the 3rd Heaven and learned mysteries that he cannot speak of right. Kabbalah, early Christianity. They're all mystery religions. They're all about keeping secrets. No conspiracies, though. They don't have any secrets in conspiracy. And so ohh, so Paul's goes up. Merkava mysticism Chariots. Ezekiel's Chariots. Visions. This is what Paul supposedly have had as well. And this is so similar to ascension of Isaiah, which you probably read about in in carriers book or done your own research. That's a early, very early Christian book where. Jesus is crucified up in heaven by Satan and his angels as a trick against Satan, which ties into a whole bunch of other things on the Christian deception. But see where I'm coming from that just this seems like it's a mythical mythical Jesus Kabbalah deception that targeted the Gentiles like.

David: Yeah, I think that would be an interesting story. I've not seen that document anywhere where you. Could sort of. Make all those connections explicit, but that would be. An interesting little. Essay to put someone should put together at. Some point for sure.

Adam: OK. And this is the attitude that they have toward conspiracy.

Speaker 17: Genealogy thing of Matthew and Luke, though they contradict you already see these authors? I'll just use the word invent, but I don't mean that neces-

sarily in like some weird conspiracy to invent a guy and put him on Earth necessarily. I mean in like.

Adam: Again, with this attitude like it's not a conspiracy, nobody had any motive. There was no agenda. This was fulfilled. No goals fulfilled. Yeah, they invented a fake character. They forged documents. They lied and pretended that he was real. And these things really happened and sold it to the Gentiles through fear and through the carrot and stick. But it's it's not a it's not a conspiracy, though.

David: No, no, no.

Adam: You see what these guys are.

David: We never knew that.

Adam: All doing here.

David: No, right? Absolutely not. Don't want. To go there, boy.

Speaker 17: You were probably doing something. Oh, my great, great grandpa actually is so and so. Who I descended.

Adam: From alone, let's do the Super chats and close it out, yeah.

Speaker 18: The long line.

Adam: Because I know you got. To get going. All right. Thanks everybody. John Gyrates says, David, where can we find you and how can we support your work? Ever considered creating an Odyssey channel where it is easier for followers to support your creators? What about a YouTube channel or something too? Have you thought about that?

David: For me. I don't know. I'm kind of a conventional scholar. I try to try to minimize my my technology time as much as possible that probably. Sounds a little bit more. Tech than I'd like to get into, but.

Adam: Yeah, you're you're the anti tech guru. That's right.

David: Yeah. So. You guys do good. I'm happy to be on your podcasts and your own your own channels rather than create my own so.

Adam: Well, if anybody out there you want to see David on other people's shows, e-mail them, message them, tweet to them, whatever. If you want to see more, I want to see them on more. In fact, I emailed modern day debates like I told you I would and suggested you and sent him a link to see that you know you're not a crank and I didn't. Hear back from him so I don't know. Thank you. Gratis and but where can they find you, your website and stuff? We can do that plug now.

David: Yeah, just davidSkrbina.com. So that's my personal website lists a lot of my research interests. I'm not. I'm not a one trick pony like James Valiant, for example.

Adam: Wrapping it up.

David: I do a lot of different work in philosophy and philosophy of mind, plastic technology and religion is sort of one of my. Areas of interest. So and then the book again, is the Jesus hoax. It's a it's an easy read. It's a popular sort of book. I'm working on a second edition, which I hope to have outlasted this year, which will be expanded argumentation, will address a lot of the counter arguments. Against the thesis and so forth. But it's it's it's turned out to be quite a popular book, The Jesus Hoax.

Adam: Well, I hope, I hope I've helped with that. No more news Bunny spelling there. Thank you says with Tisha, Bob fast approaching. We need to hear this clip of the rabbi saying. Happy is the one that takes the babies of Edom. And then we break bread. It's amazing. I don't have that when they're ready, but I do have quite the database of supremacist rabbi clips. My world says I'm -, 1 K right now on a long. Someone please save me from liquidation. OK, Arian, Monster says everybody needs bigger glasses to see the Jewish conspiracies. Trish Trott says hi Adam and David Long time listener but never really interacted well. Thank you. I think Mythicist Grant way too much with respect to the authenticity of any religious text. I recommend. Creating Antiqua matter and rise of English culture by Edwin Johnson, a key scholar in demonstrating major flaws in chronology, chronology. Mythicist Grant way too much with respect to authenticity. You mean historicist? Because mythicists would think that they're not authentic. But I'll. I'll. Look up those links. Thank you very much and thank you for finally participating. John Garrus again, thumbs got up for the God voice. There was a lot of demand for the God voice to come back. It's a nice touch.

David: The big it's a big hit. Absolutely every. Don't get to talk. To God too often, so it's nice to. Hear from him personally.

Adam: Don't eat the ground. Aryan perspectives don't eat the ground beef. That's how they get rid of the child. Ritual victims. Do you really think they raise enough? I'm not OK. OK, snap out of it says hats off to you both for the incredible work, Alibaba says. Thank you snap out of it. You're awesome, Alibaba says. Hi, gentlemen, what would Messiah do to Africans and Asians if he destroys the West? What would happen next? They're not considered the West, but they're the ends. Not good for them either. They all they are considered Esau. Sol and Digit says thanks for bringing Doctor Skrbina on Adam. Looking forward to reading his book just because the mainstream won't cover these issues doesn't mean people aren't waking up. The truth will prevail. I really would like to see more people talking about this. More people bringing you on more people wanting to debate. They don't want to. What does that tell you? What does it tell you? I've never had anybody. Make videos or write an article refuting the hundreds of hours of material that I put out, and I bring the receipts. I show the clips, I show the original sources. But no, it's just it's standing uncontested. Basically all I get is you hate all Jews. You're you're a Nazi. You're an anti-Semitic conspiracy. That's the only thing the Christians dismiss. What I cover by calling me as a Jew a secret Jew. Which I'm not. And then the other side calls me a Nazi. Neither are true. Neither are arguments. This is just. Evading having an honest conversation about these things.

David: that's standard, right? When you have no reply to a strong argument, you you slander the person. You use polemics, and then you try to censor them. That, that's the standard tactic. So that's what they're doing. It's not, not. Surprising, it's kind of an old playbook.

Adam: Very dishonorable, but for sure. And Patrick, thank you for the 34. There says, in honor of the 34 US sailors killed 56 years ago today by the Israeli military. Never forget the USS Liberty. Yes, that is right. It is the anniversary on US liberty

attack. And I may do a stream later on. To cover that. That's all we have for today. Appreciate you all for the generous donations. Any final thoughts, Doctor? Skrbina, before we wrap it up, any points that you had on your mind that you wanted to get out that we didn't get to or anything or parting parting words for us.

David: No, I think we, I think we hit it all. You know, just it raises some good questions and we have to think about what we can do next. You know how to press ahead, maybe some special. Topics for future shows, things that we could. Go in a little bit more detail on. Like I said, I'd like to talk about Jewish dominion and the Old Testament. I think people. Don't understand that I'd like. To talk about the history. The pre Christian history of of how the Jews hated humanity, the Miss misanthropic stance that's been recognized by so many people in the pre Christian era. That's another eye opening thing and then that really sets the stage. You really see that the Jews are really detested by other people. They hate other people. It's kind of a two way hate. Fests for like. Hundreds of years and I think nobody really wants. No, they don't know about it and they don't wanna talk about it cause it has lots. Of bad implications. So you know, we could, we could do a. Whole show just sort of. On on that piece, the Dominion. In that, in the misanthropic miss anthropocentric, you know stance of the ancient Jews. That would be a great show to do sometime so.

Adam: I'm down. Let's do it in a few weeks. That sounds like an awesome show to do. I love having you on. Everybody loves having you on. We always get good feedback, the videos do. Well, really appreciate you for for coming. On I enjoyed it.

Unraveling the Mind of Richard Spencer - Know More News w/ Adam Green

Source
July 17, 2023

Adam: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to no more news. I'm your host, Adam Green. It is Sunday, July 16th, 2023. And today I have a very special guest, one of the most high profile people I've had on the. You know, when I was Googling his name to look for a thumbnail for the video, there were so many articles that it really it gave me a flashback to when I first learned about the face of the far right during the Trump presidency, who coined the term alt right. And he is here. I'm hoping to ask him a ton of questions. I got a ton of stuff I want. To get into. He is Richard Spencer. Thanks for being here, Richard.

Richard: Hey, thanks for having me, Adam. Good to be here.

Adam: Of course. Well, I find it incredibly fascinating that you got. You were like a media darling. You were like one of the most. Infamous people in the country a few years ago, during the Trump presidency so much attention and then now, now that you seem to have. Maybe evolve your views evolved, or you've you're supporting Biden now. From the face of the far right to supporting Biden, exposing Trump, and how kosher all of that is and exposing Christianity also. And most importantly, the main reason I wanted to bring you on was everybody, remembers Hillary Clinton. Rachel Maddow constantly talking about the alt right in in Trump and Putin. They're all working for Putin. They're all Putin's people and then now you're being very vocal, like kind of exposing. The alt rights Putin. Pro Putin networks and it's like radio silence, where all the articles you'd think that this would be a big story and that they would be raising a lot of. What do you think? Why do? You think that is?

Richard: Well, I'll answer that, but first I'm still getting a big echo, maybe it's gone now.

Adam: Got it.

Richard: OK, got it. I think the reason for that is very clear, so. A lot of people who were my haters back in the day would say things like, oh, he's a creation of the

mainstream media and, you know, Richard Spencer is only popular with the New York Times and all this kind of stuff. Now, obviously that those are just insults, but. There is a kind of. Kernel of truth to it. The old light burst onto the scene in 2015, really with Trump, and it was nebulous in cohere perhaps crazy. You know, a Dionysian mystery cult is maybe the best way of describing it, because it was. Truly a a thing of madness and what it actually was, where it was coming from, what it all meant was a mystery. And with me. You had someone who had, you know, well, well before even 2015, I mean. I had talked to the. Media always use my name and face and so on. So there was someone to kind of latch on to for better and for worse. And I think when I leaned and. That is when they showed me showed the most interest in me and I think you know, to be cynical or even self critical. It's when I think I was most useful to. In the sense that I had radical views, I could articulate A radical view, and then I was also wearing a Trump hat. When you start, you know, using your mind to and look there, there can be some other reasons for this. Of course, this is a somewhat self-serving. Description That I'm giving everyone, but when you use your mind to criticize Trump or move in an independent direction, move in a direction that can't be easily codified through the current, you know, polarization, dynamic of left and right, Coke versus Pepsi. Then they they're less interested because it doesn't really fit their narrative. There's not. Kind of like immediate when they can see that you can be useful to them. I mean, I felt that the mainstream media and liberals were useful to me as well, but obviously I could be useful to them. And that was the kind of weird. Love hate affair that existed for some time, but First off they found new people. I don't think they've really replaced me in terms of someone who can think to be honest, but they've definitely found new people.

Adam: Who are the new people?

Richard: And you know.

Adam: Who are the new Richard Spencers of?

Richard: Well, I would. Say Nick Fuentes, obviously. I mean, he certainly comes to mind. I mean, he and I think he's more of a household name, I don't know, but maybe, maybe or maybe not, but he's he's definitely been a big figure on the far right for three or four years.

Adam: Is he the new like boogie Man do is that is that it was mostly like left wing that was giving you the interviews and the write ups and stuff. What do you think it was like the left?

Richard: Liberals treated me the best.

Adam: Wing trying to use. They treated you the best by giving you the most attention or.

Richard: See the left. Yes, liberals treated me the best because they would, with some obvious exceptions along the way, they would at least listen to what I said and represent what I believed pretty coherently and fairly. Leftist wanted to kill me, to be honest. Literally the right wanted to ignore me or pretend that I didn't exist or demean me, and that that continues to be the case. I've never had any. I shouldn't

even say when I say sympathetic, I don't mean necessarily they. Agree with me or they want to. Endorse me or something, but just that they want to hear you out. I've never in my entire life received any sort of sympathy. That's defined from conservatives. Conservatives have always despised me because they know what I ultimately believe and think, and I think they kind of. Smell it out the other. Thing the conservative movement is a. Low IQ move, so they I think they fear. And resent and. Hate anyone who's intelligent or who's read anything and can articulate it. They love Nick Fuentes for a time precisely because, like, oh, look at this kid, he's like a cute little kid who just loves his country and America and Christianity and stuff like that. Once they started to learn that Nick Fuentes, who I should be fair to Nick. Nick is is is a talented kid and he can be funny in a kind of crazy way and. He is smart. He's not. He doesn't always seem smart, because oftentimes he'll just speak in platitudes or mean talk or Internet, whatever.

Adam: Is his Christian anti-Semitism smart?

Richard: Know, but it's something that you know well that we've we've this is the traditional Christian hysterical anti-Semitism that we've seen since the Middle Ages basically of you killed Jesus. I want to convert you which is a weird passive aggressive way of dealing with it. But it's it's not smart from our. Perspective. But it is very kind of true in a way to a very long term anti-Semitism that has existed certainly since the Middle Ages, maybe even earlier. But you could probably you could find some of this could you see? In dynamic and. The Gospel of. John the talk of a synagogue of Satan and all this kind of stuff where it was. Ostensibly anti Jewish, you could say, but ultimately certainly John, everyone more or less every author of the Bible is Jewish on some level or Yahweh. But you there, there is a certain kind of ostensible anti-Semitism to. Early Christianity and his generations went on. I think that kind of passive aggressive, false opposition quality deepened where, you know, you could genuinely say that Christians were anti-Semitic for a long time and they they, they engaged in programs they engaged in violence. They engage in discrimination, et cetera, et cetera. But it was all within that. What I would say is that conducive and dynamic, so caduceus is, you know, the famous. Two snakes wrapped around a snap staff. The heads are facing one another. The it's the. It's a beautiful image for what is ultimately false opposition. You can see that in in Coke versus Pepsi. You can also see that in say left versus right today. Where the left wing are kind of pro Palestinian, but ultimately for human rights, and they might make their peace designism and the right wing is extremely prone. Zionists and so on. There are many. More positions that are possible. That but they both take it so it's. It's like post. Christians who are critical of Zionism but ultimately pro Jewish and Christian retroactive Christians, that it's conservatives who are fanatically pro Zionist. It's it's a way that these things can ultimately serve a very similar. That, as you pointed out, there is a kind of, there's a a very unhealthy dynamic between anti-Semitism and Zion. You could even say that Zionism relied on anti-Semitism. You could even say that in the early days before the Balfour Balfour Declaration and the Jewish state, that Protestant in particular anti Semites, were the

biggest supporters of Zionism, that Zionism would not exist without anti-Semitism. In fact. So this is a very unhealthy dynamic. It's almost like the oh, I don't like the Jews because they're rich and pushy. And all this. Kind of typical stuff that you hear from anti Semites. But I also want to fulfill prophecy in the book that I treat as sacred. It's a very curious dynamic. To defined Europe. It's semitism and I think it's something we just need to get over. We need to move past it. You can't be a Christian and a true anti yahwist. Let's put it that way. And anti yahwist not anti anti semites. You you hate the Semitic language. You hate Arabs. Let's let's define it. You can't truly be anti Yahweh. If you are a Christian and so. What you end? Up is in a kind of psychological hysteria. Where you both want to kill the Jews, convert them to Catholicism, worship a a Jewish God, worship they present your Messiah as the real one. Why don't you accept our Messiah? Why are you waiting around for another one? It's it's. It's hysterical. And yeah, I think if we want to look at these issues. In a fair and objective fashion. You have to get beyond that. Type of religious superstitious hysteria.

Adam: So Googling your name, looking for the thumbnail like I said, and seeing so many articles, what was it like that time of your life to be getting so much attention? And I'm sure so much hatred and. Was that stressful?

Richard: Well, it's stressful, but it also is ego fuel. And I think that, you know, and that's something that I can recognize. You know you have to. Be critical of yourself.

Adam: Did you play into like the villain role? A little bit to even get more?

Richard: I did and. Yeah, I think I played the villain. Well, maybe I should have just been an actor and, you know, been famed for my portrayals of Macbeth and Yago and things like that. Maybe that would. Have been a better career choice.

Adam: Better do you? Do you have any like, major regrets or some something big that you wish you would have?

Richard: Well you can always go back and you know, rewrite the script. And it might be helpful to think about things that you would do better. But all of that has to be in the context of moving forward. You know you. You can't ultimately go back. You can't wallow and regret, but there's certainly things that I would have done differently. But there's certainly things that I wouldn't have. There was a different. It was a moment in. Time and I do think that despite it all, despite the kind of fanaticism against me despite misrepresentation despite it all, I was still able to articulate something. And I also kind. Of learned a lot as well that you know, I could take things a long way. When, because I'm confident. And aggressive and intelligent. You can you can drive that car a long way. But you you ultimately are going to run up against the brick wall of money and power where they are going to actually shut you down. And I think it was. It was a good lesson to learn. I think there's. A better path now. And that path is more intellectual. It's something that it's it's about not directly confronting people who have more resources than you or more powerful. And it's also a path that you could say to some degree deflection and insinuation and etcetera you. Don't have to. Tell them everything you can allow thoughts to be completed in other people's minds.

You can do your work over here. That will hold. Hopefully have long term implications, but you don't have to go win everything now. And I think that that's also that's the best lesson that I learned from the whole ideal. But you know, ultimately regret. It's it's, it's unhealthy, you know, it's more about learning things and moving forward.

Adam: Do you think we're the highest and lowest parts of your? Of your political career, would you call it political or you're not really a politician? You're more of like a commentary, right?

Richard: Well, yeah, but it was. It was kind of. Metapolitical you know you could say it was, yeah.

Adam: What what's your and also what's your like, educational background to?

Richard: You know, it's funny. Well, I have a Masters degree from New Chicago and I have a BA from University of Virginia and then. I was actually in a doctoral program at Duke. Before I got a job in journalism and dropped out, but I was going to get a a doctorate. But in in actually the history department, even though it was more focused on kind of intellectual history and philosophy.

Adam: What and what were your degrees in?

Richard: I have a masters in philosophy from UC and I have a bachelors in English and music history from University of Virginia.

Adam: Well, awesome. So were you already writing? Articles and like being a political activist back then, how how did you go from there? Your your university to like where you became in 2017? Ish.

Richard: I was pretty political, I mean. Well, I I. Had it was funny because I was actually at Duke during the infamous Duke Lacrosse case. And so that was a an alleged crime involving strippers and the lacrosse team and all of this racial hysteria in Durham, NC, where where Duke is located. And I actually had a bit of a moment during all this. I wrote an article for the American Conservative in which I criticized my own faculty, not not really the best way to endear yourself, but that article also that it it did become again it's it's probably. Kind of forgotten now, but it did become a fairly big thing in 2007 I.

Adam: That was like your first big breakthrough.

Richard: Guess when I.

Adam: That was your big first big break.

Richard: It was, and I immediately felt like I. Mean millions of articles. Were written on that subject. Seemed to. Really. Get under peoples skin. And I know this is like boastful, but I think that I have an ability to imply. And message in a way that other people don't. They realize that there's something going on behind the behind my, say, discussion of the Duke lacrosse case. But he created a huge. Yes, it was big. Everyone was talking about it on campus and it. It was huge. And it got me a job. Actually, the American Conservative and I decided to move into that direction and I did a lot of stuff in terms of web scenes after that. And creating the alternative right web scene et cetera.

Adam: What's the?

Richard: So the rest is.

Adam: What's the word there? You're saying web gene?

Richard: See, you're much younger than I am. Adam, this is what we used to call them back in the day. Back in the aughts. A webzine? Yeah, blog basically.

Adam: OK. You you had a blog.

Richard: On the web.

Adam: So So what was? Your blog called.

Richard: I was the editor of Talkies Mag for a little bit, so talkie. Mag, which is still around. And I did that for 2 1/2 years and then I created a website calledalter-nativeright.com and it wasn't just my own personal blog. We published tons of stuff you might be interested very early on. We published an article on why I'm a Pagan by Stephen Mcnallen. And that caused a bit of a stir as. Well, so I I. Think right, right away I was, as an editor, I was. I was pushing people's buttons. We weren't just. We published something. That it's clearly you're not just some Paleo con, you know, out to save the Constitution in the Bible or something. So yeah.

Adam: So so you started alternative right? Or altright.com and uh, it looks like we're red. I hope we didn't cut out. OK, there it's coming back. All right, so you, you're credited with coining the term alt, right that that is. That's a fact. That's a historical truth you did.

Richard: Yes, that is a that is a historical truth. Yes, I started using the term alternative rights. In I think in my talking, actually yes. In my talking mag days and I was trying to describe a number of people who were this was back during the Bush administration and I was describing a number of people who were anti Neo con effectively who had who were against the Iraq war. They were pushing in different directions, but it was, you know, at its inception, it was this huge tense, you know, it would be. Libertarians are all rights and paleocons are all right and whatever it is that I was trying to create was all rights and all that kind of stuff. And all right, was just a abbreviation, but I think one of the first times I think I might have used it in a blog about Rod Dryer at one point when I was criticizing Rod Dryer. So these some things never change. These people are still around still being wrong as rod dryer seems to be wrong 100% of. The time but. I used it in an article with. Paul Godfried that he wrote. I think it was called like the rise of the alt writers or the fall and rise of the Alt Right or something. Like that to go look back at, but yeah.

Adam: And he's and he's Jewish, right? So, like, I remember years ago, basically like, you know, you get a lot of haters online, right? A lot of people are calling you like so many people get calling you a fed. They saying you're glowing and stuff. And that was one of the reasons because it was like ohh that there's his handler that's I don't know it. Were you like close to that guy at all or they just put you in an article together?

Richard: Yes, I was close. I was very close to Paul Godfried. We we kind of moved. Apart as the years go, all go on. But I was very close and I stayed at his home. He wasn't a handler in that sense of the word. He was. He's. More of a. But Paul Godfrey

is a very unique guy. He studied German philosophy, he. Taught me a lot about reading Hegel and Heidegger and so on. And he's an interesting guy, but someone who I think only feels comfortable around the Paleo conservatives. I think that is his niche.

Adam: This was the headline, so it's like Ohh Jews control the alt right, right. It's the controlled opposition. that's the narrative. And also there's a lot of things, you know, moving on to the Russia thing. I'd find it just mind blowing that they were all over all the alt rights Russian, which they are, they're we're inundated basically. With the Kremlin talking points, the support Putin and Russia narrative, like all over the left wing media, alternative media and the right wing, and so let's talk some about like how you used to be in that in your connections with Dugan and. And others and like how your your your views have evolved on that. I shared a documentary with you from my friend Johnny GAT. He's always been all over the the Russian talking points and all media and and. And you thought it was good.

Richard: I heard it was excellent. Very informative I retweeted it out and yeah, everyone should go watch that.

Adam: So they were all about talking about how Putin is running the alt right and then now you, the former leader of the Alt right, is saying talking about these things and it's like radio silence. How what's up with?

Richard: They yes, I look, believe me, it is a good story and they don't want to talk about it because I think the reason is that it would make me look good that that that's just I. That's my reasoning there. I think that is why. But there is no question they will talk about how the alt right parrots Kremlin talking points, but they don't want to tell my story of going to war with them and making a clean break, as it were from them. I think that I was breaking from them a lot earlier. I noticed that even in 2018 I would get called a Fed because I would dare to criticize Trump and it just got to the point where it's like, look, are we serious or are we not? Like is is this basically? A Trump cheerleading squad, or what is this? And they answered that question. It is a Trump cheerleading squad, and it ultimately is, and it will.

Adam: Still is.

Richard: Be again it.

Adam: Look at CPAC right now, right?

Richard: Will be again.

Adam: Is that what's going on, CPAC?

Richard: Yeah, well.

Adam: It is. Yeah, it's Trump pack.

Richard: Yeah, I mean it's it's the all right.

Adam: You think he's going to be back in?

Richard: I mean the points, the alternative or alt is just as important as the white. It's actually more important. It was about we have a totally different starting point than the conservative movement. We in a way have nothing in common with them. That's, you know, it's kind of big tent in many ways, but that that's what I was trying to suggest by that term. Otherwise, I wouldn't have used that term. I would have

called ourselves far right or Super con, super conservative or paleocons. We're like Paleolithic fossils from the 1950s that they've just uncovered. Or something. I didn't say any of those things I said alternative, right? Because I was suggesting that we had a very different starting point, but clearly they didn't. None of this is like this.

Adam: Well, they're. They're the kosher, right? If you're they're all Christians, they're worshipping the God of Israel and they're that's why they're that's the big issue with control and why the whole need for America first is like Trump says, he's America first and make America great again. And then he's saying Israel completely controls Congress, and they rightfully so. And they elect him, and they're gonna be back in. You think he's gonna get the nomination? It's gonna be him versus Biden.

Richard: It's it's definitely pointing that way, but I would say this. First off, we've got the Biden age issue, which even though I would gladly vote for him in again in, in a year or so, that is a serious issue. So he could be this way.

Adam: Over every single Republican, you would vote for him.

Richard: Ohh unquestionable yes, not even an issue, no. He's pretty good. He is. He has handled First off just most immediately he has handled the Ukraine situation and he. Good manner. I think that if I were advising him or if I were in his position, I would have articulated a strong. But I think at the end of the day, I'm very glad that Joe Biden and Anthony Blinken, to be honest, are more or less running policy in this matter. I think Afghanistan was actually pretty good and he got a a whole lot of help for Afghanistan. The fact is he completed a policy that emerged in the Trump administration. He stuck to his word. Anytime you withdraw from any country like that, it's going to be a **** show. This was a total clown act with, you know, handing it back over the Taliban. But the good news is that we ended a 20 year forever war and he deserves. Credit critical praise, you could say, but he deserves praise in terms of his overall policies. Pretty good. I think there's some very good things going on with the chip act and bringing industry home. I think obviously inflation's going down. So that was something that was kind of exterior to his policy. Making that something he's handled in a fairly decent way. I think you could make the argument that Biden has taken the sentiment of a make America great again. Like, what did you really mean by that national industry? Pulling out of target wars like Afghanistan.

Adam: It's it's a little. It's a little ironic.

Richard: Well, let me just complete my thought here and and turn it.

Adam: Oh, OK. I'm sorry I thought.

Richard: Into actual policy. Unlike Trump, who? Is just purely, you know, memes and nonsense and meme tweets, et cetera. Go ahead.

Adam: It's ironic that, like Biden says that he wanted to run against Trump because Trump said that there was good people on both sides at Charlottesville and you were one of the most prominent figures there. Why don't can we segue into that? Little bit like you...

Richard: What did he mean by that?

Adam: Who? Trump.

Richard: What did he mean by that? What did Biden mean by that? That's an interesting question to ask.

Adam: Basically, OK, you're going to answer where you.

Richard: Asking me. Yeah, no, I'll. I'll answer it, I think.

Adam: OK.

Richard: I think he. Properly understood, Charlottesville as something that actually was destabilizing to the America that he wants and that he has grown up ultimately loving. I mean, Biden has tons of flaws, there's no question. But he maybe due to his age, maybe due to the fact that he does have a bit of. A you know? Scranton background. He wants a productive, prosperous good America from, say, the 1980s. That is what he ultimately wants. He may be properly recognizes. Charlottesville as something that was actually disabling towards that, I was invited to Charlottesville I by Jason Kessler, who organized it. I thought it would be great to be there. I also absolutely think that there's something destabilizing. We want to continue using this word with tearing down statues that have been meaningful to. Kind of. I have a critical view on that, but hear me out on that. I also believe that people have the right to speak. You have a absolute right to go out in a public space and speak. That being said, I still recognize that there was something from his ultimately conservative standpoint that viewed Charlottesville as truly destabilizing and. What we need to do? Post Charlottesville is not lean and to polarize. And certainly not lean into the far left, but bring Americans together, which is what he constantly has said through a prosperous middle class society. Now the degree to which that's possible socioeconomically and also in light of extreme polarization. Remains to be seen. I think it's actually impossible. But I do think that that is what he's genuinely doing. I mean, Biden has had some great trolls. I mean, not not as hilarious and outlandish as Trump's trolls, but of saying, like, I'm going to go to Marjorie Taylor Green's, you know, county, her district and cut a ribbon on a new factory that's being opened. I am going. To deliver broadband Internet to rural areas that voted for Trump at 95%. Why? Because the only. You know you. Can lean into polarization and become shrill, or you can lean out of it and try to overcome. Biden, despite his many faults and despite some failures along the way. Despite maybe his incapacity to achieve, this has genuinely tried to do that. And I respect him for that. And I have to say this. I like him. I like him.

Adam: Do you think that Biden is really running anything? And is he? Are his like immigration policies better than you'd get from a Republican or his anti white sentiments better?

Richard: His anti white sentiments are not better or worse than any Republican. I mean, he's an old guy. I don't think he fully thinks in these ways when he says things like, you know, whites are going to be an absolute minority and whatever in 20 years. I mean that's a.

Adam: Have you seen the commercials? Isn't it great? Have you seen the commercials? Have you heard him say that?

Richard: Isn't it great? No.

Adam: You haven't heard him talk about the commercials, how all the commercials are mixed race. It's like one of his campaign talking points.

Richard: Isn't it funny that whenever he tries to be politically correct, he gets? Accused of racism. Like like he'll he's I remember.

Adam: Trump would do that some, too.

Richard: He's also said things like. He would Biden has a peculiar way of doing it. He'll say things like, you know this would what nation under law. And that goes for rich people and the blacks, like can't he's so reactionary and a lot of the left wing critique of Biden is true. Like he worked with all these segregationists. So on I mean. He shepherded into the Supreme Court. Clarence columnist. So I mean, he's a. Kind of republican.

Adam: I will say this that when it comes to like groveling to Netanyahu and to Israel, Biden seems to be not as pathetic as the right wing Trump and all the rest of the. The Republicans.

Richard: I think Israel has a direct interest and I shouldn't just say Israel, I should say, the Likud, Israel, this coalition that that Vivian Netanyahu has maintained, that doesn't include actually the grunt of the Ashkenazi Jews. It's it's interesting. It's very similar to the Republican Party. In the United States, you can talk about that maybe. There there is a direct interest in for Likud to reelecting Donald Trump. There, you know, we can all say how, you know, Donald Trump was such a disappointment. You know the wall. What do we have, 50 feet of it? You know? Did we bring back coal mining? Did he destroy the left? Or you can say all this stuff about how he disappointed. Everyone, and that's all true. There's one group that is not disappointed at all. They got everything they wanted and more. They got everything they wanted in spades, and that is a particular crude conception of Israel, Golan Heights embassy in Jerusalem tearing up the Iran deal. They almost, I should say. They were a little disappointed. I think they wanted a direct war. Iran which? Was aborted by Trump at the last minute. But they got everything and it was great.

Adam: Abraham Ford.

Richard: And it makes you Abraham Accords as well, which regularized some things that were already happening. So yes, and it also makes you wonder. You know, it's these curious things when you find Jewish people like supporting all right, and racism and anti-Semitism and Trump, that cetera kind of makes you wonder. What's going on there?

Adam: So let me ask you about Dugan. You had a relationship with Dugan. Dugan is like, he's called Putin's brain. he was doing lots of interviews, had some influence in these kind of circles. How was your vault? What can you tell us about Dugan and like, how is have your views on Russia? Evolved in the last few years.

Richard: Well, when I talk about Dugan, I probably should first talk about Nina Cuprian Nova, who is my ex-wife. So she became an enthusiastic Dumanis many years ago, and I presume she still is. I don't really talk to her about these matters, but we. I had a number of connections with Doug and I've never met Dugan personally.

We've emailed and things like that. I don't even know if I've ever really interviewed him in a in a format like. But we she actually translated an interesting book of this on Heidegger, which is still despite it all worth reading. And that was her baby in a way that I helped Shepherd Wong. I published it. I copy, edited it and all that kind of all the stuff. About publishing, that's no. And I did. She did the translation. There was actually an interesting event that I attempted to host in Budapest in 2014 that Dugan was going to be a speaker at, and they got scuttled by Victor Orban. It's actually a really complicated thing, but I would also. I was never a Dugan list myself. If I would. Describe myself. I would, I would say. I'm a nichan. And I think both are excited. I'm an Apollonian, so in many ways these things are anti Dugan. That being said, I was a kind of. Do get an. Apologist or defender? I never certainly attacked him or went after him. And I have. Published some of his works in in in other ways. I played a small role, but some kind of role in promoting him. Also during the heyday, the Alt right in 2016. Many of these Dugan entities, like Katian magazine and other things like that, would interview me, and they were actually just written interviews that my wife and my then wife. Would complete and so there was a lot of interest in me from the Dugan side. And during 2014. I mean I don't really delete tweets. I you know, I'll delete one if it's impeccably stupid or if I misspelled something or something like that. But I generally. Don't delete them and you can see this in 2014. I was, you know, writing the Kremlin horse on on on the Ukraine question. There's no question about that. And I did it kind of in my own way, but I can see all of the talking points. That I was using in 2014 that have. Been revived and it's it's. A very weird experience when you see. Candace Owens, for instance, say something that I said in 2014. I don't think she was influenced by me. I think both of us are being influenced by certain handlers, you can say. But all of. I see that I can because I'm kind of out of the loop now and I do think that from the Kremlin standpoint I'm an unreliable asset in the sense that I'm always going to go my own way Ulta. And I do make hard turns. I win against my own movement, whatever. On COVID on Trump, on the vaccine, on whatever we you and I might even have disagreements with some of those things. But the fact is we can talk about it rationally. I can, you know, I go my own way. So I don't think I'm a reliable asset. I think the Kremlin wants different types of people, but I was very close obviously to my ex-wife Nina Cooper Genova, who was promoting this kind of thing. She was getting me in touch with. I mean, the person who I think is iconic in this regard is a man named Manuel Oxenrider, who was. About my age. He's a he was a very nice guy. He grew up in East Germany and he went on the far right. And as many Shermans do. But he was very smart. I liked him personally speaking a whole lot. He had a he had that, that kind of German sense of humor. I know people say Germans don't have a sense of humor, but they do. In fact, it's maybe a. Anyway, I liked him. He was smart, but he was also a clear due Guinness. He was doing conferences in Iran. He was going to be at my event in in 2014.

Adam: What does that mean to be a Duke? And this too, we got to back. Up a little bit like what? What are what are is your perspective on Dugan's ideas and what does he feel like? Why is he a threat to America?

Richard: Well, that's the question. I mean, look. What exactly Dugan is is a major question. You could read the book that I published on Heidegger and get a strong sense that Dugan is a heideggerian crypto Nazi type and I don't think. That's entirely wrong. But it's a very. Complicated matter, so Dugan does not have the degrees that other people that I think he wants to be the circles he wants to frequent and he does not have those degrees. And he was actually after the Ukraine crisis. He was not given a professor a professorship. What is it? Moscow University or something? What he actually believes, I think is actually is. Questionable, I mean. He was an anti Soviet dissident throughout the 1980s and he paid the price for it to his credit.

Adam: He was at, wasn't he like the national Bolshevik leader?

Richard: Well, that's what I was going to get to. So he fell in love with the USSR the moment it fell, which is almost as if I don't know when Trump goes to jail, if I start becoming a Trump fanatic again, there, there is almost a kind of religious lost cause quality to it. He was a founder with some other people of the. Of national bolshevism. But I think. The way that I would try to describe Dugan. Dugan has some. Interesting theories that I think are useful. For instance, the structure of the third political or the 4th political theory, excuse me, is interesting and useful in the sense that we had the oldest modern political theory. Liberalism, then, that almost burst, or transformed into outright communism, there was. A reaction to it with. Fascism and liberalism. The oldest one has actually been the one that's lived the longest, and fascism now is, you know Nazi larpers or whatever. Communism is kind of old and not. Really a threat? Whereas. Liberalism remains, and so he's imagining 1/4. Political theory that could emerge that would. Be a kind of. I don't know. Gross. Realm I guess might be the way I would describe it. A massive geographic and ethnic block and I think geography is very important for Dugan. He is, ironically, A acolyte. You could say, of the kinder and his geographic pivot theories were basically the. Part of the Russian sphere is. Central everything, everything is all of geopolitics is about controlling that space. So I think a lot of these things are interesting. They can be useful, you can take. Them in different directions, but why? Dugan is powerful. It's not necessarily that he is able to. We're still into Putin's ear and. Putin will do what he says. Because Dugan can be very outlandish, I mean, he can just be, like, kill the Ukrainians, killed them all, et cetera. He can be he can be he. Can say things. About how you know, American Christian blacks who are kind of primitive and closer to and the essence of Americanism should take over. I mean, you can say things that are just wild and outrageous, if somewhat philosophically. Hear it? But what makes them powerful is the fact that his vision of the world can ultimately be projected upon the kremlins long term geographic vision so he can be seen as a kind of philosophizer of. Where what they want to do anyway, he is justifying through, you know, some pretense of orthodoxy, some pretense of geographic strategy, some pretense of Neo Bolshevism or National Bolshevism, or the Alt right

or whatever. So the Kremlin strategy. Is ultimately one of geography. America and Russia are similar in the way that. They are both huge. Continental powers that have a large land mass. So there needs to be. Tremendous mobilization in the land mass and strategically placed sports that basically protect this empire. Russia is inherently an empire, and when we think about it, like if we were Finland, we're kind of a little. State or Luxembourg or the. What we think in terms of democracy in the nation, States and parliaments and et cetera, Russia can't think that like that. You cannot control that amount of space with that few people without imperial policies and grand mobilization. If there is ever going to be a threat. To the Russian Empire, it is going to come through a German army, effectively marching through Ukraine to the Caspian. That is what almost happened in the Second World War. That is a great fear, and it could launch a kind of knockout blow. So Ukraine is geographically of the utmost importance. I am not a Putin supporter. I am outraged by the invasion of Ukraine and. I would do everything within my power to help. Plucky Ukraine fight off this thing. But I do understand why Russia is doing this. You know, Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Putin lost. The differences between those three men, they all agreed on one thing, and that is that Ukrainian sovereignty is an abomination and should never have allowed to take place. It is a geographic outlook. So Putin is powerful in the sense that he can. Project all of. This kind of mystical nonsense onto some what is ultimately a geographic or geopolitical strategy that the Kremlin would have anyway. So to put Long story short, I think Duggan is a kind of cart that's being pulled by a horse. I don't think Dugan. Is the horse pulling the cart? I think it's a kind of retroactive rationalization for what the Kremlin already wants to do.

Adam: So basically his his purpose for. Doing all these shows and affiliating with these people in America on the the right wing is just to try to like inject in advance Russia's geopolitical goals. I think it's. Completely naive to think that like there's Mossad agents everywhere, there's, you know, CIA agents. But that Putin it doesn't have, like, Kremlin agents that are touting their line.

Richard: Besides you and I.

Adam: Didn't hear you what you said.

Richard: I said besides you and I, I mean, you work from a. Besides you and I, you were.

Adam: According to the Christians, yeah.

Richard: You were from Assad? Long time in my sex agent, yeah.

Adam: Yeah, he's joking. So yeah, there's. People like everybody's just kind of like everybody in alternative media is like, completely anti zelinsky constant, always making fun of Zelinsky, right. And then like glorifying Putin like he's the savior. He's he's the great Christian leader, he's, you know, has no choice. He's the only good guy he's fighting. The new world. Order the queuing on people. See this people on the right, people on the left that are even like anti Zionist people say he's fighting Zionism or he's a threat to the New World order all this stuff. What do you think about that

whole dynamic that's set up and. And the presence of, like Kremlin propagandist in Internet media.

Richard: Well, I'll answer the second question first. Yes, there's no doubt that Dugan himself is very interested in all sorts of alternative media of various and sundry. Dugan himself is a kind of like RT Incarnate, so. Russia Today. To be fair. Did some pretty good stuff, you know over the years they they had me on. I would talk about my disagreements with American foreign policy. They'll have Alex Jones on. They'll have Ian Michael Chong. Long gone, they'll have. Whatever some of it can be good, some of it can be.

Adam: That they'll bring on anybody, they'll promote anybody.

Richard: Some of it could be good. Some of the wacky.

Adam: That is like going to be Pro Russia and like bash America basically that's that's.

Richard: Not necessarily. Even Pro Russia, I think it's basically about. Stirring the pot around, confusing people, promoting things that are wild and wacky. You could even be critical of Russia, but if you are talking about like UFO's or you. Know the the. Federal Reserve Bank is run by aliens. They're going to. Find a spot for you, you know.

Adam: Because that cause because if. You're a critic of Russia, but then you're you believe in moronic stuff and you're a goof. Then that it it almost helps Russia to platform somebody. Like that.

Richard: It's they they don't. It's not propaganda in an older sense of like. We want someone to come on and just talk about Dostoyevsky and the greatness of the Russian ballet tradition and Russia's cool. They don't want that they they want to confuse you and basically kind of alter your perception of space and time and up and down and right and wrong. That that is more advantageous to them now. With Donald Trump, you had someone for his own reasons. And to be fair and maybe even charitable to Trump, I think he had genuine reasons for being opposed to NATO that came from his kind of. 1990s Ross Perot era. You know, why are we being the world's policeman? Why are we paying so much to this organization? Why can't Germany defend itself, blah blah blah? I, you know, I don't necessarily agree with those, but.

Adam: Those are kind of.

Richard: But base oh am I back?

Adam: Yeah, you, you cut out there for a second. You're you're frozen.

Richard: What is the last thing that I said?

Adam: Ross Perot, I think.

Richard: Oh yeah, so. Trump came from a kind of Ross Perot 90s era right where they were fearful of Japan. They, you know, thought we were being the world's. Policeman we need. To come home, the Cold War is over. You know, I think these are all really rational. Ways of thinking I might have. Disagreements with them, but they're not crazy and so. In the figure. Of Trump, I mean, there's no doubt that Russia. Supports Trump. I mean, give me a break. OK. But there's no the idea that he would

insert into the airwaves or the bloodstream. The notion that we. Should end NATO. That is something that is worth its price in gold to the Kremlin because again, they don't actually care about American conservatives. Getting canceled or whatever that Putin might say they care about NATO in the sense that. They want Eastern Europe and I would say most all of Eastern Europe, not just Ukraine, but I would obviously Belarus, that's in a unitary state with Russia, but but Poland, etcetera, maybe even throw in the Baltic States the loss of these countries to the Russian world is a debacle. And we must bring them back. And that, in fact, is the only. Let me do this. I keep freezing. I'm going to switch Wi-Fi networks real quick.

Adam: OK. Are we going to disconnect the call?

Richard: OK, I'm back.

Adam: And come back OK.

Richard: Yeah, I'm back. I think I'm back.

Adam: All right.

Richard: There we go. I just flipped on a different network. I saw that. I was times.

Adam: I just want to change gears for a second. I I'm I'm curious to this question. I think it'll be interesting. When there was the punch, a quote punch, a Nazi situation. What is that like to? For people that don't know they're you're doing an interview and some guy, a masked Antifa guy came up and sucker punched you and then basically all of the Internet was laughing and celebrating and. What was it? What was going on through your? Head when all that happened.

Richard: Well, there's some. People who are defending me as well, I mean to go back to what I said earlier there, there is a kind of ego fuel situation there. I mean, I was giving an interview to I think an Australian television network. When I was attacked. Assault absolutely assaulted in broad daylight, so there's a sympathy.

Adam: You took it like a champ, though.

Richard: There too. Thank you. Did didn't get knocked down, but I was discom-bobulated to say the least. It was a. It was a. It was a very stressful thing, but yeah, it was just kind of, you know, ego, fuel. I look, I don't I kind of roll my eyes when I hear people. Get obsessed with Antifa, but I still do hate them. To be honest. They they are truly scummy people.

Adam: I was wondering if you were going to be like, traumatized or like. I don't know. Having everybody like celebrate not everybody, but lots of people. Obviously lots of people were celebrating and say, yeah, you know great, that's great.

Richard: Right.

Adam: They should all be punched, you know. Captain America type of. Yeah, but, but so you're saying just the fact that you were such big news with that, it almost made you like. Is that the? Highest point of your career. You punch right there. Your, your. Biggest, most fame moment.

Richard: This is pretty sad, isn't it? Out of you? Maybe I'll never reach those peaks again of being salted on.

Adam: No, but I could imagine like it, I don't know. Maybe like being depressing. You know, having like, so many people like, want you to be punched. It was a depressing at.

Richard: All it was a little scary. I mean, I had a rational fear, but I wasn't depressed. I'm more depressed when I feel like I'm not. Being productive and I'm not doing my work and I'm not moving forward with something and I don't believe in something. I don't get. Depressed when you know a bunch of shrill liberals are yelling at me and I know they ultimately secretly love me and want. To hop in bed with me. To be.

Adam: It's so funny.

Richard: Just saying.

Adam: I've got all. These other questions I have lined up for you in the chat just will not get off of you. Supporting Biden, I guess I gotta go back to that because the chat demands it and we also got a super chat asking you about Christianity, but just people are cannot believe that you support Biden. It really it really is authentic. You really is it that you really like him or you just think he's the lesser of two evils and you, you backed Trump and that was a disaster for you. So now you're going the other way. Like like.

Richard: It wasn't necessarily a disaster for me. It was a disaster for me to some degree. I think the Trump presidency was a disaster for the world and it was ***** and it was extremely toxic and there was something about the Q Anon movement that is for for. Someone of my. State of mind. You could say my, my, the way that I think there is something just so obnoxious about it that I just profoundly hate it and I profoundly ultimately kind of hate the chewing on adjacent movements like America first or whatever. All those people raiding the capital. I hate them. So it was so toxic that I basically once yes, I did see Biden as a lesser 2 evils, a kind of necessary cleanse. But I will say Biden has been a better president than I imagined, and I think he should be given credit. Where it's due. I don't think. He's he's not my hero, but I think he's actually a decent guy. I like him personally and I think he's been a pretty good president, so I would gladly vote for him again and. I would never vote for Republican to be Frank. Any of them.

Adam: So UM, I find it so interesting that you. Is it true you defended yourself in the Charlottesville trial?

Richard: Yes, yes. Got too expensive to pay lawyers so.

Adam: Too expensive. So you had to defend yourself and you. You lost that verdict, though, right? Is what's the like?

Richard: The mixed bag currently currently in appeal, but it's a mixed bag of a verdict.

Adam: Or is it still going on? What's the situation there?

Richard: The fundamental issue was undecided and there were some secondary things that were I was a liable for. And then the, you know, the amounts were reduced pretty significantly to be honest. But yes, we'll we'll see where it goes, but I would.

Actually rather not talk about something that hasn't been a legal matter, hasn't been fully completed.

Adam: Still still ongoing. OK. There's a super chat here. Who is this esau's revenge? Says what's your stance on Christ cookery?

Richard: No, I really I I've never really been a a Christian. I don't think at least a sincere one for my whole life. I mean I. I went through. When I was a lot younger, I was raised in the Episcopalian church and I actually still have. Fond things to say about the Episcopalian church they they certainly are, are not the ones that would bother me. I think maybe. You more of a fundamentalist background, if I remember correctly. And I would have reacted strongly more strongly. Against something like that.

Adam: Yeah, mine. Mine was just like old old people. I don't know. I wouldn't even call it fundamentalist. I don't remember them ever telling me about the state of Israel or anything. Like like that. It was just like it was Church of Christ, just like regular Protestant Christianity. As far as I know.

Richard: OK, so I don't have any. I'm not a new atheist or something. But although I certainly was influenced by them, when they they had their day in the sun 15 years ago or so. But I've always I think really when I. Was in in college. I was reading I was mostly focusing actually on Shakespeare when I was an undergraduate, but I did read the birth of tragedy first by Nietzsche, and then I read his entire corpus. Shortly after that and the subsequent. Year that did affect me more than anyone, and it's not Nietzsche never dawned the Fedora or anything like that, or claimed that Christ isn't rational. I mean, in some ways, he might even take the opposite position of that it was an acknowledgement of where we are as modern people in terms of the death of God, it was an it was an attack, a vehement attack against Christian morality. A and I think he was Nietzsche wasn't quite a mythicist as we would use that term today. In terms of. Questioning whether Jesus actually walked the earth. He believed he did. He believed, in fact, that he the only Christian, died on the cross and he. He was in this. Kind of funny. Way he kind of had a residue of a devout Lutheran. His father was a Lutheran pastor, but he was a mythicist in the sense that he understood that Paul was really the generator of Christianity, that it was. This man, who actually did more for creating a religion and in many ways Christ, with someone who didn't even quite know what he had done in being this sincere. And again, this is from Nietzsche standpoint, it's it's a, it's an interesting one. The death of God, of course, has kind of layers of irony to that. But nevertheless I. Always did have a nietzschean bent in terms of. Looking under the skirt, you could say of Christian morality and seeing Christian morality as. Bequeath to us in the modern age, so you know, devotion is, of course, down church attendance falls, you know, every year, at least in the West. And it's fallen precipitously in some parts of the West, there's, you know. Northern Europe is almost becoming atheist as a majority. But the revolution that really occurred was something that niche identified in the genealogy of morality. It's a moral vision. It's an attack on something else. It's a polemic. And that has triumphed. So in many ways, the modern

age still is Christian. We're we're kind of living in the age of the Holy Spirit and not the age of the sun, say, or the father. To take a. Kind of the structure of history from Joachim of Florence. We're living in a kind of age of the Holy Spirit in the sense that we don't need to be redeemed, but we still have not overcome Christian morality. It is something that is still dominant among modern people, dominant on the left. It's obviously dominant on the right and. Nietzsche's true, you know, impulse was viewing, becoming collapse of this and imagining what could come after this. What could come after the ultimate death of God or a post Christian age. So this is the way that I look at things. I don't think exactly on the Fedora tipping atheist. I think Nietzsche would respond to someone like Dawkins or Hitchens and say that. You are ultimately. Christians is the irony. You've never really overcome the power of Christianity, even if you don't believe in God or you believe in science. You've never fully overcome this revolution and morality, which actually goes back to Plato. And I think that's how Nietzsche would kind of. Respond to New atheism, ironically.

Adam: he would say I'm still a Christian. You're not really anti Christian because I've got like subconscious Christian views from the Christian culture and the Christian. Upbringing I had.

Richard: And so did so did Nietzsche? Himself, but I think there's a a lot of. There there is a I recently reread this book Zarathustra, and I did. A kind of a course that I do with with. I had this thing called Alex University and we do courses with people. They're they're really. They're all online. They're fun. We do close readings of. So it's not just me up there pontificating. It's really everyone participating in kind of a Bible study type environment symposium, if you will. And we actually, we read Zarathustra and. That was actually. the major take away that I took from that I think there's a tremendous. The legacy of Christianity and Misha, it's actually a remark kind of makes him an interesting thinker.

Adam: Yeah, I saw you had Uber boyo on. I had him on for interesting talk about Nietzsche as well. Super chat in from white Falcon Afghanistan fiasco. OK, this is about Biden leaving Taliban 1 billion in weapons and throwing Americans under the bus, destroying the economy. Ukraine war 7,000,000 migrants from open borders blackmailing other countries. For personal financial gain. Destroying female sports, supporting child genital mutilation. Biden is better question mark. Yeah. Why? I can't. I mean, I I'm not a Biden endorser. I think that there, you know, his cabinet is full of of Jews. He's still super Pro Israel, he's got the LGBTQ thing completely supported. Like, can't you just say both sides suck?

Richard: As opposed to what I mean? Yeah, well, of course both sides suck. That's obvious. But you have to get off the fence at some point. And as you yourself admitted, like we are treating Israel more reasonably and we are treating everyone involved in that conflict more fairly with Democrats. And so there you go. It's not. We can't have the Adam Green Party when the presidency. I mean, I I'm sorry to say. And so you have to make a choice. At some point. Afghanistan was good. We had to get out of there. It was a disaster. Look, you know, your your hand. It's like your hand is

stuck in a VAT of asset. This is maybe a grotesque metaphor. You're you're going to pull it out. Let's see how bad it. Is, but you've. Just got to pull it out at. Some point there's. No point in leaving your hand in this acid. It's going to get worse and worse and worse. You've got to withdraw. There was no withdrawal. That would have not sucked, basically. And so I give them a kind of respectful path on Afghanistan. And again, it was Trump's policy in terms of all the LGBT stuff. Look, all of that stuff got far more intense under Donald Trump. Than it did under, say, Barack Obama. All of these. Things are macro trends that are occurring in the culture at large, and whether a president is is changing any of these things. I mean, I wouldn't be surprised if. Transsexuality doesn't kind of peak in the next few years and start to decline under the second Biden administration. I don't know that for certain, but what I'm what I am stressing is that these are major secular trends that have really nothing to do with the President.

Adam: Could be right about that. I'm a little surprised by my own chat because my chat, as far as I know, really, really hates Trump. But then they're they're so upset that you're saying that Biden is the lesser of two evils. I'm a little surprised by that. I want to ask you a question that I'm sure you probably gotten a million times, but I'm not familiar with what your answer is is what's the what's like the descriptive word that they would usually use for you? Would they say white nationalist or white supremacist or? Did you get that?

Richard: Yeah, I get that. I mean, I've seen certainly seen neo-Nazi or whatever. I actually do reject that. I mean if if people want to just. Call me if they want to. Use a term that's helpful for them that is more or less fair. You know I'm. I'm OK with it.

Adam: Would you say?

Richard: They would have called me a white nationalist or whatever. I, you know, like. If it's useful for you, go for it. I I'm just me. I mean, it's like if you want to learn about me or learn about what I think. Then come listen to this podcast. Come subscribe to my sub stack. Look at something I've written or look at something I've published with Mark. I mean, that's who I am. And I don't think I could pigeonhole.

Adam: You're you're Apollonian now, right? that's the new title. Apollonian, somebody, somebody that had said Neo Dugan list he said he's not a doogan list. How long has it been since you talked to or had any like communication with Dugan? I meant to ask that too.

Richard: I think well, communication there. Were there were some interviews in 2016, but I wasn't really personally involved in those and. I don't. No, and I think he kind of dissed me or something. I don't think I'm a reliable.

Adam: Oh, you did.

Richard: I'm not really a reliable asset for these people. I mean, like Dugan went, remember, you know Jack Murphy that like crazy gay pornographer. His actual name is Goldstein. And he like ripped off schools. Something he was a cook. So we're yes, literal. Before he, all of that came out, he was actually interviewing Dugan. And they were taught, you know. And so he was also a Claremont Institute fellow. So there are

these sinews of, like, Kremlin influence are really interesting. And you sometimes won't find direct evidence for things. But you you kind. Of have to follow your. Gut you, you kind. Of have to see who's saying the same talking points. Who is whipping on a dime on their positions? Obviously we all evolve. We change whatever who just you know who changes one. 80 without any sort of justification, you know. You can kind of. Find the you. Could look at the sinus. It's like a map. You can kind of see where they all go. The Claremont Institute is clearly to some degree connected with these people, but the fact that Dugan was going on Jack Murphy's podcast and he was saying that he would get like 3 digits of views. On YouTube, he has not been banned from YouTube. Which is also significant. And he's interviewing Dugan. Dugan would want to talk with him. It's again, it was that all outreach to assert, a sort of all right that was controllable. And that certainly did not involve me. I mean, all of these people who parrot stuff that I say and. Try to pick up the vibe or recreate 2016. All of these people if you ask them about me, they would to some degree say they hate me. Or they or they don't know who I. Am or whatever. I mean, I'm. I'm really the odd man out. And I kind of like it. But it's whether. I like it or not, it's kind of irrelevant. It's what I'm destined to be.

Adam: So did you ever, like, did you ever identify yourself as a white nationalist or like, what would you say?

Richard: But there is a loop, it's a network.

Adam: I'm sure every mainstream media that ever interviewed you would ask you, like, are you a white nationalist did did you? What was your answer to that?

Richard: My answer at the time was I'm an identitarian, which is a kind of softer. Effectively way of saying you're a white nationalist. I don't even say that at this point. I say I'm Richard Spencer. You you can listen to what I say. You can take me. For it as if you want to use.

Adam: the labels are lame.

Richard: A category for me. Yeah, the labels are lame. If you want to use one, if that's. Helpful for you go. Ahead, just don't call me like a Satanist. Something that's obviously incorrect, but yeah, the level label I would say Apollonian, yes.

Adam: Did you ever even have? I'm sorry. Go home. Did you ever even have, like, were you a big advocate for, like trying to create a white only America or anything? Or did they just like always call you that and it wasn't even, like at all justified. And it didn't even really wasn't even really what you believed.

Richard: Well, what I did is I gave. A speech actually at.

Adam: OK, you're back, we're. Back my Internet just completely dropped. Hopefully we'll wrap it up here in a minute where we got about 10 minutes left for the scheduled call. I found maybe your other worst moment is that you're a big Depeche Mode fan. How heartbreaking was it for you to see this article? I'll share it with you right now. I gotta share a screen. But you probably know the one I'm. Talking about already.

Richard: I know the one you're talking about. No, I mean, I saw that they.

Adam: OK.

Richard: Wrote yeah, see. They really hate super fan. When was that an older? One was that 2017.

Adam: It's 2017, Luke O'Neill looks like. But uh, so your favorite band, your suit. You're a super fan, apparently, and they disavowed you. Was that was that when you decided to? To start supporting Biden this moment.

Richard: No, you know, it's very funny because they they were interviewed about it on, like Swedish television and they basically I think Dave Gahan called me. The C word. Which means something different in in Great Britain than it than it means here. But then he. Said, well, you know, he's a very intelligent man and the. Way he articulates. These. So they kind of. Codified it and then. A very educated.

Adam: Not the worst insult in the world, right? You're so dangerous because you wear a suit and you. Have a good vocabulary.

Richard: So I took it as a kind of compliment.

Adam: Do you feel like? the left tried to like use you to make Republicans look like racists to make Trump look bad. Do you feel like that's was kind of their agenda?

Richard: Yes and no. I think that there was a general fascination with me because I was a Trump fan at the time, but then I was saying things that were genuinely interesting and were. And we're not just the kind of. All utterances that you most of mag get at this point and I think there was a certain fascination with that, but yes I but I think the more kind of cynical response, there's, there's probably some truth to that too.

Adam: And before we cut out there you were answering the question about the white nationalist term you you you started by saying you gave a speech one time. Can you pick up?

Richard: Oh yeah, someone was just texting me, like saying you said.

Adam: That train of thought.

Richard: You were a white national, though.

Adam: Oh, you just got a text about that.

Richard: No, I. Yeah, people are very worried about their reputation. I never really liked that term and what I said is. I'm being totally fair here. If if that is a helpful way for other people to label me, then OK. But if you want to know who I am and what I think you really do have to talk to me or read me or. Listen to me. I am not a political cheerleader who does Pom poms for certain things, or is. I guess in this way. You know, go white race. Go Donald Trump, maga, maga. Second, I don't do that. Now, if everyone needs a category, if you want to use that category. And it's helpful to you. Fine, that's not how I think of myself. Actually, when I did do those interviews and they used that term, I said I prefer identitarian which you know is kind of a softer version of nationalist in this sense. But I don't like the identitarian term. I do think that a. And intellectual spiritual identity is more important. That really is where you're headed that's showing the direction that you want to bring yourself,

and in that sense, yes, Apollonian is a is the term that I would prefer. That's what I believe.

Adam: All right, let's get into that next Apollonian. But let me read this Super Chat 25 from.

Richard: Oh, about the ethno state thing. Let me go back.

Adam: Oh, OK.

Richard: I wanted to. I wanted just to tie a ribbon on this so. I actually gave a speech at the American Renaissance Conference in 2013, I believe, which I talked about the ex mistake. And I what I said basically is that whites are going to be a minority in the United States no matter what, like it's baked into the. You're not going to like halt immigration and reverse this trend. So you instead you need to start to recognize and be realistic about what about this thing and what it's going to mean and how you're going to deal with it. And I suggested that we start thinking in these kind of grander visions like. Zionist, you know, Hertzal was being laughed at by. Many he was. Being opposed, in fact, by many Jews not opposed by some. When he offered this. Grand Vision of an alt nuance. You know this. We're working time. We're fulfilling the Bible, but I'm also an atheist, and we're let's make it old and let's make it new at the same time. There was something to say about Zionism. Your opinions might be about the current state of Israel. There's something grand and visionary about it and. I said that. We need such a vision, a kind of on on the European continent or on even North American continent, a kind of Neo Roman Empire. So that's what I. Said and that's. How what I meant and it it's often taken. As you know like. Ohh you wanna like kick all these people out? I mean, I said then. And I would say now and etc. That whether I that that's just totally ridiculous and impractical, it it is a grand vision of something. New IT could it? Could be birthed on Mars. It could be birthed in South America. All sorts of things. It's just a a vision of recreating Rome, which I think was a animating vision for. All sorts of cultures and. Civilizations and empires since the fall of Rome, it's been a vision of Byzantium. It's been, obviously it's been a vision of Russia. It's been a vision of a British Empire, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And so I was trying to call upon something grand and the only way that they can understand and these things with their little minds is, you know, oh, you want to take us back to, you know, southern segregation or something. So it's it's very hard to speak in an idealistic and intellectual fashion with these people because they're ultimately. Kind of trying to. They're trying to get you and so that's something that's very disappointing. But you know it is what it is.

Adam: Solan, Digit says, glad to hear that Nietzsche is in. So is so in vogue in the moment. Lately his philosophy is at least a good stepping stone to a post Abraham Mist. Well, Tin Huang, is that a word?

Richard: Belt on challenge.

Adam: What does that?

Richard: Belt on challenge.

Adam: What does that mean?

Richard: World World View, world view.

Adam: Great conversation between you two is always. Thank you, Solon. And that's a good segue to what? What's the appeal? What's the vision of Apollonian anism?

Richard: Well, I think in many ways. At least for me. It's a bit of an. Apocalyptic vision to some degree. What I mean by that is this. The vision of Apologism is an intellectual movement that is attracting the best people and most importantly, is actually attracting artists. And not politics. Politicians or little puppets, you can put words in their mouth. You can pull their strings. You can blackmail them. You can bribe them. You can do whatever you want to them. They the world doesn't really turn around them. The world turns around artists. And intellectuals and visionaries, poets, etc. It is a critical. Movement that is, and I think so much of the work that needs to be done right now is deconstructive. Deconstructive of the Bible of a biblical symbolism that's been passed down for 2000 years, a deconstruction, A deconstruction of Christian morality, et cetera. So a lot of it is critical and I think in that way, very intellectually exciting. But it is kind of negative you could. Say the kind of ground clearing. And that in itself is very niche, and Nietzschean wanted to sound things out, to see if they're hollow or not. He obviously engaged in polemic and critique to the utmost degree. I do think that there is a path forward with Apologism in the sense of a spiritual movement that does genuinely view Apollo as someone who we follow, someone whom we admire. And is a a genuine attempt to revive a Roman a Roman system. And that is a good thing. But I'm also aware of the kind of limits of that and the lack of broad appeal and all of it. I get it. It's a it's a modest vision in a. Way at the beginning. But remember, Christianity was a very modest vision, started with 12 and expanded from there. So you have to start small. And that's OK. If what you're. Starting with is good. I do think what I meant by apocalyptic is that I do think that the world, the Belton shallowing that we're currently dominated by. I think the world has to kind of fulfill itself. We have to see the end of this. We're not just going to, like, pull a lever or vote in some great Republican or whatever, and things are going to change. I do think that apologism is something that if. It could because it is a vision, ultimately of leadership. It's not just a vision of, say, criticism. And it's not just a vision of art. It is a vision of politics, ultimately. But I don't. I'm enough, and I'm saying. Modest enough to understand that I don't think that vision can be implemented in the world until the current world order has kind of fulfilled itself. So I do think there's something there is going to be something after Americanism, there's going to be something after liberalism, there's going to be something after Russia. Fact, I think we're going to see that something after Russia within our lifetimes, there is going to be something after we get past all this. And my hope and the hope of Brahman and. Other people were part. Of our community is that that vision will be Apollonian and that we can create a civilization for the entire planet that is productive and prosperous and ultimately allows us to achieve. Our destiny, which is as a space faring and. Galactic people.

Adam: In what ways does Apollo what does he have to do with galactic or space?

Richard: Apollo is a God of many things. He is a God of plagues among some things, and I think we might need to send some plagues down. Certain people, but he is also a God of sobriety. In visibility, Dionysus. So he's a God of intelligence. He's also a God of music, and that's a God of art. Dionysus and Apollo are kind of dual competing gods and music, so to speak, actually need to. Recognize this in the birth of. So he is a God of civilization. And I think that there's something to be said for a kind of. Deconstruction, there's something to be said for a kind of Dionysian fury. I think there's a great, strong Dionysian quality to even the current right or Maga. They have, after all, they did their own kind of crazed revolution a couple of years ago. They are obviously a destructive force. They have no. They don't even have a vision. They they don't. They certainly don't have a vision. They don't even have policies. All they know how to do is say no and yell at people and tear things down and raid public buildings and declare Trump, you know, God or who.

Adam: And say let's go Brandon.

Richard: So there is a Diane icing fall. Let's go, Brandon Ray. Let's go, Brandon. But Apollo is a God of civilization. And that is something very different and I do I admire the things in America and the I admire aspects of the American Empire. I admire aspects of Biden to the degree to which they actually are civilizational. And to the degree to which they can, in their small way, make the world a better place, or the very least a more stable place, that is an Apollonian vision, Apollonian vision is not one of these Germanic Pagan groups where you go out into the woods and, you know, cut yourself and get massively drunk and. Cover yourself in ash or around or whatever.

Adam: I'm sorry.

Richard: And I've seen thought in many ways.

Adam: Ohh shoot I have my I did a audio noise. I gave you a Boo for trashing on my Viking religion.

Richard: Well, we could have a. We could have a civilized discussion about this.

Adam: I know I was just joking. Since you you wanted to talk trash. About the Vikings. It was the Romans. The Apollonian ANS that imposed Christianity on the Northerners. So you guys, you got. I saw one of the comments. Well, you know. Actually, I don't wanna joke around about that. It's the serious question is Christianity was so successful because they did a good job at convincing the world that Jesus was a real person that did all of these magical things. Do you think that? Yes, Christians go. OK, well, if Jesus isn't real, what are we going to go to? What are we going to who we going to worship? What's going to be our our? Worldview, our philosophy. So. Your answer would be to go back to the Roman pantheon, I suppose, but.

Richard: Go forward to the Roman.

Adam: Go forward.

Richard: You know it's it's not. It's not. It's not about recreation or reiteration. It's about making it new again. And the other thing I would say is that. Yeah. And I actually published. It's from Mark's book actually. Did I get frozen again?

Adam: Yeah, just for a second, you. Said you publish.

Richard: So I'm back, OK. Yeah, I published something on sub stack that. People can go. Look at. I forgot what I tied it actually. It's actually a chapter or section for Mark's book to work to read, but I talk about this. There's a pretense of historicity. And actually, the Bible writ large. So something like Adam and Eve are the flood seed. Obviously, to us or mythological or parabolic, you could say, but a figure like Moses or the Jew. The Hebrews exodus. From Egypt, or David's monarchy, etcetera, these are treated. As historical facts or certainly Jesus. He is to we understand him as walking the Earth as a real. Guy and there's. A kind of cottage industry around the real Jesus. This is the kind of like Bart Airman type guys or, you know, you can go back to, you know, Strauss, you can go back to other people rental. Obviously, I don't. I don't think Jesus. Actually walked the earth. I think there might very well have been some. People he was based on in a kind of composite, but I don't think there was this world historical man who actually existed. He exists as myth and in that way he exists as a kind of new form of Dionysis who dies and rises, who turns water into wine, wine, etcetera. He's actually the son of a God who was also identified by ancient pornographers with Dionysis that is Yahweh, although I think he could. Better be understood as a as a as Kronos or Saturn or Vulcan. He too, Yahweh is a kind of composite of different forms of this God that we knew previous. So Christianity, it does have this this pretense of historicity, and I think even the Old Testament does. There is no archaeological evidence whatsoever that some, like golden Age of David, ever exist there. There might have been some dude named David who was like a local warlord or something, but all of this is mine. All of it... It's very easy to say that about, say, the flood or Adam and Eve. Need it's more difficult to say that about the exodus or about, you know, say the numbers book about the Gospels. We treat the gospels as like a journalistic narration of what happened. These were, of course, written generations after Christ supposedly was crucified, et cetera, so all of it is missed. But it's this weird type of myth that almost presents itself as not myth, and I think that's one. Of the profound powers, but also the where the profound deceptive. Of of the Torah and Tanach, and in Gospels as well put together. But people like Bart Erman, I mean, I like Vorderman to a degree. I mean, I think he's a good historian. He seems like a a, a great guy, but. You know you have to understand what his audience is, you know. He's going on like NPR. He's actually giving lectures in churches because his audience is lukewarm or lapsed Christians. And the way that he'll tell this story of like ohh you know, Jesus really was real, but he was actually this nice guy, you know, he was like a, a, a communist proto communist pastor or rabbi walking around helping out people. And then you'll get. Other books, like the one who Reza Aslan from a few years ago, and he was just plagiarizing other peoples. Sell it here. So it's like no Jesus was antifa like he was this extreme zealot Jew who was an actual revolutionary. And that's why he was crucified, et cetera. Now, these are all interesting things. There might grow. There's a lot of use to them. You can you can learn something from them, but they're all marketed. To an audience of of current Americans, that is Luke warm

Christian, the reading public that is, older people, lukewarm Christians, and I think they should be really understood as that they're telling bedtime stories. To people who. Can't quite bring themselves to. Believe in the way that. They did when they were children.

Adam: I agree it's. Just he. He. I'm reading Bart. Airman's book right now. Did Jesus exist as the title, and I've I've read them the Mythicist books over and over, and then now hearing his, like, retort to this. And it is so weak. It is such straw Manns. It's missing all the major points. And he went.

Richard: Right.

Adam: To he was. Educated and trained as a Christian apologist. That like.

Richard: Yeah, Moody Bible college.

Adam: Moody Bible Institute and Princeton Theological Seminary, where he was there being educated to be a Christian apologist and it's like, that's why the Christians love him. They go even Bart Erman. He's an atheist. He says Jesus is. I don't even know how we got into the Jesus Bart Airman thing. What did we segue from?

Richard: I think I was talking about mythicism and apologism.

Adam: That's right, that's my point.

Richard: I was just using Bart, Bart, airman as a as a as. An example. And again, I don't want to fashion too hard. I mean, you know, I think he's a sincere guy who's smart and so on. And he seems like he seems very nice, like he seems like a guy I would like to. Talk to or whatever. But we just have to understand like the context that these people exist in, and that is the.

Adam: Right.

Richard: Current you know, the current kind of lukewarm Christian reading public.

Adam: He's like, oh, I don't want to deconvert anybody. I'm just doing history. And I'm like, if, you know, I'm the history. You wrote a book called Forgery. Christianity is based on forgeries. So you, if you're you shouldn't want people to be Christians. If that's the case. But yeah, he's he's got a different.

Richard: I think if anything, I think if anything, he's. If he has. Had any effect, I think it's actually to expand the population of Christians. Because he kind of made he kind of makes it intellectually defensible, you know.

Adam: Kind of like Jordan Peterson.

Richard: Exactly, exactly. You know, it's like, ohh, Marvin. I I. But you and niche and stuff. But ohh wow. We can't give up on this. This great. Yeah, this is. And Jordan Peterson has had even a more profound effect. I mean, I think he's probably, I mean, again, the, the, the, the tide is the, you know. Weakening of Christianity as a devotional religion in the United States and the Western world. But there's some people kind of swimming against the tide and they are having an effect to some degree. And yeah, I think Bart Airman, despite the fact that he announces himself as an atheist, he's probably converted more Christians than he has deconverted or. I think his overall score is like. 50 new Christians and like 20 new atheists, that's what I would.

Adam: Just the fact alone that all of these biblical critics, biblical scholars are keeping this idea that there was a historical Jesus is like if all of the top scholars just started talking like carrier and saying, yeah, it looks like it started from a mythological carrier character, this would be a huge blow to Christianity. People would be if this was a big topic. The conversation, which it's not all of. In fact Christians are always like they're trying to destroy Christianity. They're always trying to disprove it. I'm like, no, they're not at all.

Richard: No, they're not.

Adam: They encourage it, basically.

Richard: They're terrified of that. Yeah, they are terrified. Of that notion. Of it going away the way that I would do it and I actually cause, you know, this book of marks it it is his core ideas. I've I've done a lot of work with him, so there's a lot of me in there and I'll just. Take credit for. This useful metaphor, but I remember. I was actually in Denmark one time. And we visited. Hamlets Castle and this was, you know. Ohh look we you know we can see the Prince himself. Maybe he walked. Through these, you know, halls and maybe his his bones. Or it's like, look, Hamlet exists in a text written in 1600 in the English language during the reign of Elizabeth. That is where he exists now. Hamlet himself is actually based on. And a a number of different stories. There's that good movie. And forgetting the Norseman that came out, there was a kind of Hamlet story that was based on an earlier method, inspired. And there might very well, you know, have been some Prince who went mad in, you know, 1200 or something who got this thing going, who knows? But that's ultimately irrelevant in the face of the power of literature. The power of Shakespeare's hamlet, what he was saying, I have always thought that Shakespeare's hamlet is in many ways a take on Luther. I don't know if this is a super hot tick I'm blowing everyone's mind, remember?

Adam: You said Luther Martin.

Richard: Remember where Hamlet went to school? As his mother says. You know, go die, not back to Pittsburgh. Yes, I absolutely think that Shakespeare is engaging in a kind of dialogue between Protestantism and Christianity that was particularly relevant for the time in which he lived, in which he had. A Protestant virgin queen on the throne. I think it was an extremely relevant play, but that's where Hamlet exists. There's no hamlet back in the Middle Ages. Who? You know the. the power of Hamlet is a literary creation. The same thing can be said for Jesus. You're never going to uncover. You know, you're never going to find the tomb or find the cross or something. You have to understand all of these things as metaphor and is extremely powerful metaphor. They might very well have kernels of facts. In there and that's. Interesting, but that that you're just you're you're you're looking there. There's an old joke of a guy who was out standing under a lamp post at midnight and someone asked him. Oh, you know what are you? Doing and he's like, well, I'm. Looking for my watch and he said Oh well, you you lost it around this lamp post. And he said, Oh no, I don't know where. I lost it, but this is where the light is. You know, it's like a

an expression of how not to understand something. You're just looking there because they're the lights there. These things are powerful as literature. They're powerful as myth. Jesus is powerful as a new reincarnation of of Dionysus. Jesus is powerful as a fulfillment. Of of Hebrew prophecy as a Messiah, but a different type of Messiah, a new Messiah who isn't David, and who might very well be traced back to the notions of the Messiah that were created in the book of Daniel, a son of man concept, and a different kind of suffering version of a Messiah. That's not the. You know, ***** Warlord of David, not a beautiful man loved by women. Something different, a new, a kind of new character in the world. That's what's powerful. And that's what needs to be discussed.

Adam: Even in the ancient times the pagans, they didn't really believe that these gods were true. They were just kind of like symbolism and stories. And almost like mascots, in a way. But Christians all believe Jesus was a real person. He really did all the miracles. The son of God came flesh came to earth.

Richard: Right.

Adam: How will you ever be able to overcome? That embedded view.

Richard: I think it's happening. I think it's happening slowly but surely it's not, so I don't think that like. You know 2 billion people. Are going to read marks. Well, I mean that would be great. I mean, wow, all my problems would be solved and that instead, if that happened, I don't think that's gonna happen. But I think that this is happening on its own. Like there there is a slow but sure. Sorry, I froze again. Let me just wait till I'm back.

Adam: Yeah, I hear you.

Richard: Yeah, well, I'm frozen, but I you still hear me? There's a slow but sure progress away from literal Christianity. I mean the Southern Baptist Convention gets smaller year by year. It actually reached its peak in 2005. In the Bush administration.

Adam: As time goes on, more of the Bible becomes allegorical and not that that to be taken figuratively.

Richard: So there is a.

Adam: The more we realize how absurd it all is.

Richard: And I think that is a step in the right direction. That's not the full picture. That's not what I ultimately want, but I think you do need to kind of escape the the, the, the, the, the hold in your imagination that fundamentalism can have. The other thing that I think we're. Moving beyond is just. This true fear, I mean, if you imagine living. In Germany, for the first Millennium, you genuinely believed that there was one way to escape a wrath, that you deserved. Your your life was based. Around your afterlife and what would come what? Would come after. That was a genuine feeling among peasants and nobles alike. So remark it it's it's really remarkable to even do this thought experiment. Like what? What it would be like to live during that. It's fascinating. I, I. Do think that we're. We're kind of getting past that. Intense immediate fear of health fire that really did capture the imagination of people who were otherwise. Cultured and intelligent.

Adam: Well, I've definitely noticed that when I'm trying to show that, Chris, that Christianity is built on a lie and fake prophecy fulfillment, people always go like, OK, well, what are we going to follow instead? Like, they really are desperate to have an alternative or replacement and at least.

Richard: That's understandable.

Adam: It is and something like the guy Zirka. He was like ohh your your movement isn't based on anything. You know, our movement has the cross, so even if you're right, you know it's not gonna. There's no like. Unifying factor that everybody gets on board with, but I just feel like. For that to. Our movement. Does have something has a wire?

Adam: I feel like it for it to really work though for it to be effective, people have to really be true believers in in it. I just did an AI and AI of Apollo.

Richard: Maybe not our movements. Oh, cool, yeah.

Adam: I wanna see. So I typed in. Greek God Apollo, Golden statue. Cinematic, photorealistic this is what it came up with. This is AI's. Here's our new mascot. This what Apollo looks like.

Richard: I love that stuff. Yes, that's awesome. Absolutely yes. I love the gold as well, yes.

Adam: Totally Pagan, totally European, their vibe.

Richard: Yeah, they have the cross. We have the wire and that is music and art and culture and things that make life worth living. And we have the arrow, the bow and. Arrow the Archer. And you can maybe understand what I'm. Referring to when I talk about that.

Adam: You see, I've kind of to break off the yoke of abrahamism. I've more connections with like the Viking Nordic myths, although I don't even know them very well. Obviously I don't believe they're real, but. You know that's the mascots of my ancestors, so I think.

Richard: That's all Christianity, though. I mean, Balder is your. That's a diagnosing God. Bolton was identified. Supplied with an ISIS attack, but his name, both on itself means madness and stuff like that.

Adam: It's older. I see what you're saying.

Richard: I think I think what we know about Germanic paganism, we know. Three months. Christian monks, that is. So maybe there is a kind of older Germanic folk religion that preceded all this, but what we know about it comes via Christianity. And I don't think you can really get away from. That I I. Think so many people who dive back into dramatic paganism are diving back into a kind of like. Comic book version of Christianity that was created for them probably maybe for the purpose of conversion.

Adam: Well, The thing is is like I view it like, obviously you don't believe it's true. Maybe there's some good morals to the story, but it's just like it it's just like a comic book here. It's like, yeah, that's our comic book here. It it gets pathetic when it's like all these Europeans are like ours is the Jewish one that the Jews gave. To us.

Richard: Right.

Adam: If anything but that, that's what I told. Well, go listen to Jerka, I'm like I'm all for having a symbol as long as it's not the symbol that the Jews gave us to. Be our symbol.

Richard: Right. But they kind of did give you. That's kind of what I'm saying. the Super red tunnel like maybe black belt of Robin.

Adam: Are you telling me Thor is Jewish? Is that what you're trying to break to me right now?

Richard: I think. These things might be. Heavily tainted. It's what I'm saying.

Adam: Oh OK. Wow.

Richard: Yeah, and I wouldn't even quite say Jewish. I mean, I think Abrahamic is what it's they're they're starting to, they're they're starting to bring people from a different religious system into a Christian or or Judaic if you want to say, or Abrahamic will do. And I think Germanic paganism. Played a big role in that.

Adam: OK, my buddy in the chat says where is it Liam, TJ, we can reconstruct to some degree pre Christian culture. Like I don't even care if it's a hodgepodge between a bunch of different things. If people can stop believing in the magical superhero Jesus, that he's our savior, that that's a step in the right direction. I don't care what other gods you choose to quote UN quote believe in.

Richard: I would disagree with we can we can recreate it. I just simply disagree. With that, we've got to we've got. To make it new. You know, we got a. You know, I don't make it sing again. We gotta we, you know we. Have this thing. Of cult of a. Cultural inheritance. We might need to tune it, and we might need to break some things, in fact, but we don't want.

Adam: Alright guys, my Internet cut out, it's not reconnecting. Spencer had to go. We were over the time that I that I he had for me today he had to go to dinner or something. I appreciate having him on and sharing his thoughts with us and answering the questions I enjoyed the talk. I thought it was interesting to hear his thoughts on these things. I appreciate you all for the Super chats and for the support. I'll be back very soon. I got a lot of great content coming up. My epic Rabbi mix and some news to cover as well as I'm having. Adam King back on Thursday for an interview. It looks like it just cut back in and. Let's see. I was reporting that let's see where. Are we back? My computer is. Whacked out right now and I guess I gotta restart my router again. All right, we're. Back guys, Spencer had to go, he told me. An hour and. 1/2 so we were already overtime. He had to go. To dinner, he was needed to wrap it up and my Internet is wiggling out again, so I apologize for that. Appreciate everybody for the Super chats tonight. Thanks everybody for watching. Let us know what you think in the. Comments. I will be back. On Tuesday, I've got a epic show coming on to. Tuesday, with the rabbi, clips and some other news that I want to cover, and then I'll be back on Thursday, Adam King, the Kabbalah Jew that's got the show on Infowars, will be on my show. We're going to I'm going to take him through the ringer about the Torah and Kabal. It's going to be a good one, so stay tuned for that. Love you all. Appreciate the support. See you again very soon. Have a nice night and take care.

Greg Johnson

Source: Rational Wiki

If White Nationalists who claim not to hate other races are honest, then they are living refutations of their own claim that multiracial societies breed hatred. *I am living proof that multiracial societies cause racial hatred.*

–Greg Johnson as T. C. Lynch as Mike Meehan¹

Gregory R. Johnson² (1971–) (pseudonyms: The Cat Lady, Dr. R. G. Fowler, T. C. Lynch, Trevor Lynch, Mike Meehan³⁴ is an American white nationalist notable for his support of holocaust denier and "esoteric Hitlerist" Savitri Devi. Johnson runs The Savitri Devi Archive under the pseudonym "Dr. R.G. Fowler".⁵ He also runs the Neo-Nazi website **Counter-Currents** under his own name.⁶ About his youth, Johnson stated, "I was a bit of a boy Objectivist, a bit of an asshole, for a couple of years because of that watching Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose* program on PBS." and "somewhat pro-Zionist".⁷ He's no longer a libertarian and he's now anti-semitic,⁸ but he's become 100% asshole. He received a Ph.D. in philosophy from The Catholic University of America in 2001 ("A commentary on Kant's Dreams of a spirit-seer").⁹¹⁰ He taught at colleges for a few years, specializing in Swedenborgian Studies, (Morehouse College, Spelman College, Georgia State University, Pacific School of Religion) before leaving academia permanently.¹¹

¹ About Greg Johnson *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

² Gregory R. Johnson *Pacific School of Religion*.

³ About Greg Johnson *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

⁴ T.C. Lynch (The Racist Formerly known as "The Cat Lady") *Vanguard News Network* (archived from December 13, 2020.)

⁵ Contact *The Savitri Devi Archive* (archived from February 16, 2020).

⁶ About *Counter-Currents* (archived from April 26, 2021).

⁷ Between Two Lampshades: Michael Enoch Interviews Greg Johnson, Part 1 (June 15, 2015) *Counter-Currents* (archived from 5 Jul 2021 17:55:48 UTC)

⁸ "Greg Johnson and Counter-Currents" by Graham Macklin (2019) In: *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, edited by Mark Sedgwick. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780190877590. Pages 204-223.

⁹ Gregory R. Johnson *Pacific School of Religion*.

¹⁰ A commentary on Kant's Dreams of a spirit-seer *Worldcat*.

¹¹ "Greg Johnson and Counter-Currents" by Graham Macklin (2019) In: *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, edited by Mark Sedgwick. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780190877590. Pages 204-223.

Johnson was arrested in 2019 in Norway under the country's immigration act. Norway's intelligence service told CNN that he was arrested because they considered him "to be a threat, not because of what he could do but because of his hate speech and his previously expressed support for Anders Breivik."¹² Following his arrest, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Pacific School of Religion issued a statement that they were unaware of his extremist views during his term of employment (2002-2005) and that the Center condemned his views in no uncertain terms.¹³

Content of Counter-Currents

The guiding principles of Counter-Currents are based on writings of crank metaphysician René Guénon's book, *The Crisis of the Modern World*.¹⁴ The specific principles are pseudohistorical, specifically cyclical theory and the idea that there was a golden age.¹⁵

- History is cyclical, and Good old days its prevailing current is downward, declining from a Golden Age through Silver and Bronze Ages to a Dark Age.
- We live in a Dark Age, in which decadence reigns and all natural and healthy values are inverted.
- Even in the depths of the Dark Age, there are hidden Golden Age counter-currents: survivals of the past Golden Age that sustain the world and serve as seeds of the Golden Age to come.
- It is not futile to think and live according to Golden Age principles in the depths of the Dark Age. Indeed, those who do so play an important role in the passage of the Ages.

Johnson's training is strictly speaking in philosophy, not history, although he has claimed illegitimately to have expertise in the history of philosophy.¹⁶ This is a case of ultracrepidarianism.

¹² Norway arrests US white supremacist ahead of far-right conference by Vasco Cotovio (1:36 PM EST, Sun November 3, 2019) *CNN*.

¹³ Statement about Gregory R. Johnson by James F. Lawrence (November 5, 2019) *Center for Swedenborgian Studies*.

¹⁴ About Counter-Currents Publishing & North American New Right *Counter-Currents* (archived from March 31, 2020).

¹⁵ About Counter-Currents Publishing & North American New Right *Counter-Currents* (archived from March 31, 2020).

¹⁶ Gregory R. Johnson *Pacific School of Religion*.

The idea of living according to "Golden Age principles in the depths of the Dark Age", is reminiscent of Ignatius Reilly, the protagonist of *Confederacy of Dunces*¹⁷ that is even more pronounced in the neoreactionary movement.

The Counter-Currents was banned from Paypal and Patreon following the aftermath of Unite the Right, and it was also banned from the Amazon Affiliates Program.¹⁸

White genocide

Johnson is a promoter in the crank white genocide conspiracy theory.¹⁹²⁰ Although Johnson has eschewed overt calls for violence, such as from William Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* (a.k.a. "Day of the Rope"),²¹⁽¹⁾ he advocates "a well-planned, orderly, and humane process of ethnic cleansing."²²²³ This is duplicitous on the part of Johnson, who is effectively advocating violence by this statement because people do not willingly accede to being ethnically cleansed from their natal homelands and give up their citizenship. The United Nations defines ethnic cleansing as, "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas."²⁴

Hegemony of the white races

Johnson is a fan of the Italian fascist philosopher and rape promoter Julius Evola.²⁵ He approvingly republished Evola's article "The Hegemony of the White Races". Evola wrote in this article that:²⁶

¹⁷ *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole (1980) Louisiana State University Press. ISBN 0807106577.

¹⁸ About Greg Johnson *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

¹⁹ White Genocide by Greg Johnson (September 15, 2015) *Counter-Currents* (archived from May 21, 2021).

²⁰ Counter-Currents Radio Podcast No. 138: "Set Aside Your Humility & Lead". Ruuben Kaalep Interviews Greg Johnson (2015) *Counter-Currents* (archived from October 25, 2015).

²¹ "Greg Johnson and Counter-Currents" by Graham Macklin (2019) In: *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, edited by Mark Sedgwick. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780190877590. Pages 204-223.

²² William Pierce *Counter-Currents* (archived from April 20, 2021).

²³ Restoring White Homelands by Greg Johnson (June 24, 2014) *Counter-Currents* (archived from January 28, 2021).

²⁴ Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 780 (27 May 1994) *United Nations Security Council*.

²⁵ Steve Bannon's interest in a thinker who inspired fascism exposes the misogyny of the alt-right by Annalisa Merelli (Published February 22, 2017; Last updated on October 6, 2017) *Quartz*.

²⁶ The Hegemony of the White Races by Julius Evola. Originally published in *Corriere Padano* on January 6, 1937. Reprinted in *Counter-Currents* (archived from January 27, 2021).

(1) Johnson hasn't entirely dissociated himself from Pierce because Pierce is featured on the Counter-Culture website. William Pierce *Counter-Currents* (archived from April 20, 2021).

The spirit of adventure, the love of risk and the unknown, the sheer pleasure of domination and predation, the desire for great distances were, more than any rational, mercantile, and utilitarian motive, at the origins of white expansion, and were inseparably bound to specific character traits: to a hard will, to coldness, to tenacity, to contempt for life and for death, to an unshakable feeling of superiority. ...

Only a return to origins, i.e., to the original attitude that brought whites to world domination — after the elimination of all the detritus of a soulless civilization devoid of ideals, a civilization that worships the idol of mere economy and is founded on the principle of leveling democracy — will allow us to maintain our supremacy. And that means reviving the oceanic symbol, reawakening the will to the infinite and limitless, fueled — so to speak — by the ocean wind, the freedom of enormous distances. This spirit, however, must be mastered by firm discipline and translated into strength hardened like steel. ...

Fascist Italy is now a symbol, and has defined the terms of a European alternative. Those nations that will be incapable of following her in accomplishing the miracle of a renewal and a revival in the sense just indicated, are destined to be swept away by the tide that is gradually swelling among the races they once dominated. Whatever the power of those nations may still appear to be today, it is merely the legacy of a spirit that is now dead. Only the other nations, who will answer the call of fascist "youthfulness" and bring back the deep forces of their race to new epic heights, and to a new spirituality permeated with the drive towards limitless, will be part of the new front called upon to defend and reaffirm Western world supremacy.

Johnson also believes that people who discuss past crimes against humanity committed by white people should be punished, essentially advocating for a memory hole:²⁷

I believe in giving complete blanket pardons to the white people of the past who did bad things. I also believe that a healthy society should not dwell on past injustices. So we should draw a veil over such history and punish people who try to reopen old historical wounds.

Bait-and-switch

Johnson has engaged in bait-and-switch tactics by hiding his most odious views with pseudonyms. For example in 2003 under the pseudonym T.C. Lynch, he expressed

²⁷ "Indigenous" Isn't Our Term by Robert Hampton (September 29, 2021) *Counter-Currents*. Greg Johnson comment from September 29, 2021 at 12:37 pm.

support for ethnic cleansing of Jews on racist and anti-semitic website Vanguard News Network:

As for the Jews: There would have to be an entirely different policy. At the very least, all their property should be confiscated. At the very least. There are two reasons for this. First, we should consider it reparations. Second, if they were allowed to keep their wealth, they would immediately use it to stir up trouble against us. Just look at what happened when Adolf Hitler, with the typical excess of kindness that was his greatest flaw, allowed the Jews of Germany to emigrate with their fortunes.

—Greg Johnson as T. C. Lynch²⁸²⁹

In an article with the same title ("To Cleanse America: Some Practical Proposals") by Johnson published on Counter-Currents in 2010, that paragraph was excised; there was no acknowledgement of the previous publication.³⁰

External links

- Greg Johnson — Southern Poverty Law Center
- Greg Johnson (02/02/2019 - 20:07) *FOIA Research*

²⁸ About Greg Johnson *Southern Poverty Law Center*.

²⁹ To Cleanse America: Some Practical Proposals by T. C. Lynch (2003) *Vanguard News Network* (archived from November 27, 2003).

³⁰ To Cleanse America: Some Practical Proposals by Greg Johnson (October 27, 2010) *Counter-Currents* (archived from November 8, 2010).

Counter-Currents Radio Podcast

No. 338: Ted Talk

Ted Talk: An Analysis of Ted Kaczynski's Manifesto, Part 1

The following is an edited transcript of the conversation between Greg Johnson and Richard Houck on the subject of Ted Kaczynski's manifesto, *Industrial Society and Its Future*, that was broadcast on *Counter-Currents Radio* in April 2021. You can listen to the recording here. <https://counter-currents.com/2021/04/ccr-ted-talk/>

Greg Johnson: I'm Greg Johnson. Welcome to Ted Talk. I am joined here today by Rich Houck, and we're going to be talking about Ted Kaczynski's *Industrial Society and Its Future*. Rich, welcome to the show.

Rich Houck: Thanks for having me on again.

GJ: It's great to talk again. The first thing I want to say about the subject matter of tonight's stream is that Ted Kaczynski is somebody whom I actually corresponded with more than 20 years ago. I think I sent him only two letters. It was very brief. I don't have them handy, unfortunately. They are now tucked away in storage.

I read his *Industrial Society and Its Future* when it was first published in the 1990s in the *New York Times* and other outlets because of his bombing campaign. I followed his trial, followed his incarceration. I read books about him. And I thought he was a really fascinating person, obviously a highly intelligent man. He went to Harvard, got a Ph.D. in mathematics at the University of Michigan, and was a Professor at Berkeley at a fairly young age. Then he dropped out of teaching at Berkeley. He packed up and moved to Montana, and lived off the grid in a little cabin that he built himself, where he penned his manifesto and started sending bombs to people. It's a fascinating story of a Professor, an intellectual, gone rogue. He's now been in prison for more than 20 years in the Supermax penitentiary, and he's continued to write and correspond widely with people.

He's had all kinds of ups and downs with various federal authorities trying to steal his writings, prevent him from publishing, prevent him from contacting people, prevent him from reading books — but he still soldiers on. He's got a message that he wants to get out there, and that he wanted to get out there badly enough to kill people.

I was thinking back on this today as I was rereading his book. I hadn't actually reread it in full in 20 years. I had pulled it out and added it to my stack when I was working on *The White Nationalist Manifesto*, because I wanted to look at different manifestos as far as literary forms go. But I just glanced at it. I didn't really read it.

It's a remarkable piece of writing. It's very deep in some ways. I think it's wrong in other ways. I think it's worth talking about, though.

So, Rich, how did you first come across this work, and how did it impact you initially, before we actually get into it?

RH: One thing I wanted to add to your brief introduction to Kaczynski is that he had lived out in Montana for some years before there was ever any bombing campaign. I think it had been almost a decade where he was peacefully living out in the woods. He dropped off the grid and did his own thing. I thought it was very interesting that he tried to come to grips with society by just dropping out.

I came across Ted Kaczynski's work, interestingly enough — it almost had to be this way, I think — when I was 18 or 19. I had a job working for a large tech company. I was actually doing network support for this company, and it was a job where I worked in a cubicle, was very bored, and had tons of free time. I could take books or magazines to read while I was sitting in the cubicle. I had been feeling a lot of angst, and more and more dissatisfaction with my life and society. And really, there was no reason for it. Everything looked like it was going just swimmingly.

I came across this passage on a website — it was from paragraph 145 of Kaczynski's manifesto, alongside a picture of people on their way to work, looking totally depressed as they were waiting for the subway to come. It read: "Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy and gives them drugs to take away their unhappiness." Kaczynski goes on in this paragraph to talk about how rates of clinical depression have been increasing over the years, and the people managing society understand this and think that the solution is to give people distractions and drugs. I think we're seeing that now with the movement to decriminalize or legalize marijuana, and other things like that. People might disagree with that particular point, but some believe that people are miserable, so they are being allowed to have drugs to make life tolerable. When I read that I thought, "Yeah, that's exactly what's going on." And then I read the rest of it and really enjoyed most of it. I've gone back to it over the years.

I think the forum where I first saw that was one where people who worked for Fortune 500 companies in cubicles, and who were dissatisfied with their lives, would post. It turned out that the same thing I was thinking about was being thought about by other people who were living similar lives. Somebody there related it to Kaczynski's work, and that was how I found it

GJ: I want to talk about some of the central ideas in the Unabomber's manifesto. The first thing that struck me is that it begins with a critique of Leftism. I thought, "This is interesting, given that it was written by a radical environmentalist who was sending bombs to people to get his ideas publicized." Imagine if he had just waited a couple of more years and started a blog. That was one of the things that was going through my mind when I was rereading this. Gee, if he had just waited a couple more years, he could have gotten a WordPress blog and put all this out there. He could have been a livestreamer. He could have eventually had a YouTube channel. He could have

been huge. He could have been merchandising, selling T-shirts and coffee mugs, and getting his ideas out there instead of being in Supermax penitentiary. But for whatever reason, he chose this path.

So he begins with a critique of the Left. I thought that was fascinating, because you'd assume that a radical environmentalist would be a Leftist. Most of the radical environmentalists today who we think of are Leftists. But at the time, I was doing research into a counter-tradition in environmentalism: environmentalism on the Right. "Eco-fascism," for want of a better word. That's a term that Left-wing environmentalists use to describe this. They call them eco-fascists — and there's nothing worse than a fascist, right?

I was reading Savitri Devi. I was reading Martin Heidegger. I was looking at policy in the Third Reich having to do with animals, trees, and agriculture, looking at some of the roots of those ideas in nineteenth-century thinkers, people such as Schopenhauer and Wagner. So when I read Kaczynski's manifesto, I was thinking, "Wait a second here, this guy fits in — loosely — with what I was going to be calling eco-fascism, a Rightist approach to radical environmentalism." I suppose this is fallacious, but my reasoning at the time was, "If he's not on the Left, he's got to be on the Right." That was my initial reaction.

There are certain things about his approach that I would consider to be Rightist beyond merely that false dichotomy. But the big thing that he does against the Left that I found fascinating is that, without mentioning Nietzsche's name, he gives a Nietzschean critique of them. He talks about two ideas that are associated with the Left. One is inferiority. Leftists have inferiority complexes. They are filled with resentment, as Nietzsche said, and they create their values and their political ideologies and their activities as a way of overcoming or avenging their feelings of inferiority.

Rich, what was your reaction to his take on that?

RH: Yes, I had a similar one. Immediately upon reading that, I thought of slave morality. Then he goes on to talk in paragraph 15 about all the things that are — I guess he doesn't use these exact words — great and heroic, and those things and people that represent success and triumph, and how the Left lashes out against all of that. One of the things he lists that was very interesting, particularly for 1995, was the Leftist hatred of the white man. He was catching on to that. Many of the things he wrote about were ahead of their time: the liberal feelings of inferiority, how they don't themselves, how they dislike their in-group, and how they say derogatory things about their own in-group.

To circle back to your discussion of how Kaczynski's anti-Leftist views made you think that maybe he was a Rightist or eco-fascist, I wouldn't say he gets into that subject, but there are a few places where he talks about his disdain for mass movements. He mentions National Socialism a couple of times. But for Kaczynski, his idea comes before any mass movement. His idea is that if you don't have an industrial society, and you don't have these people using modern technology and mass technology to encroach upon your rights and your views and who try control you, you wouldn't need to belong

to a mass movement. If there were no technology, and there were no Great War, and there weren't people putting pressure on the Germans, they wouldn't have then felt the need to join a mass movement to oppose it.

GJ: Yeah, but he does talk about the need to create some sort of mass movement against technology, and he's somewhat concerned about that. The whole meat of the manifesto is bookended between discussions of Leftism. He begins by talking about the psychology of Leftism, and then one of the last sections is about "The Danger of Leftism." In paragraph 222 he writes:

Leftists, especially those of the over-socialized type, are true believers in the sense of Eric Hoffer's book *The True Believer*. But not all true believers are the same psychological type as Leftists. Presumably a true believing Nazi, for instance, is very different psychologically from a true believing Leftist.

I thought that was fascinating, because he does think that he's going to need true believers if he's going to create a mass movement that is anti-technological. But he says that no true believer will make a safe recruit for the revolution unless his commitment is exclusively to the destruction of technology. So he is looking around for true believers with the right kind of psychology and the right kind of goals. It is interesting that he says that there can be true believers who are not Leftist types, which would be people motivated by inferiority complexes and also what he calls over-socialization. I love this.

You mentioned paragraph 15. It almost sounds like Ayn Rand:

Leftists tend to hate anything that has an image of being strong, good, and successful. They hate America. They hate Western civilization. They hate white males. They hate rationality. The reasons that Leftists give for hating the West, etc., clearly do not correspond with their real motives. They say that they hate the West because it is warlike, imperialistic, sexist, ethnocentric, and so forth. But where these same faults appear in socialist countries or in primitive cultures, the Leftist finds excuses for them, or at best, he grudgingly admits that they exist, whereas he enthusiastically points out and often greatly exaggerates these faults where they appear in Western civilization. Thus, it is clear that these faults are not the Leftist's real motive for hating America and the West. He hates America and the West because they are strong and successful.

I thought that was quite Nietzschean in its spirit.

RH: Yeah, I did also. He's saying that industrial and technological society puts us in these confines and restricts us from what he calls the power cycle, which is basically self-actualization, achieving things for yourself, having goals, meeting those goals — that sort of thing. You're in this big structure that does a lot of this for you. And the

Leftists, due to their inferiority complexes and their over-socialization, like being in a structure where things are taken care of for them. He talks about autonomy a few times, self-determination and doing things for yourself, almost harkening back to early American rugged individualism in the sense that your destiny is in your own hands and you don't expect people to do things for you. You go out and take the initiative and do them, and you're high agency and high functioning.

What he seems to be saying is that Leftists don't have this desire, they are fine with sitting around and being entertained, and having their food delivered to them. Even if they seem to be on board with some of the ideas of destroying industrial and technological society, they really can't ever be completely, because they can't see themselves going back to a society where they have to take some initiative and do things for themselves. That's not what drives them psychologically. Whereas other people are driven by that, and are suffering psychologically by being placed in a society where there's no way to achieve those things for themselves. Later he talks about surrogate activities, where if you don't have these basic psychological needs met, you find other things to spend your time doing.

It is obviously an outlet, a catharsis — a way of dealing with this modern society that Leftists don't have, so they would make bad revolutionaries. You see that come out in some of their surrogate activities, as Kaczynski talks about. So maybe more Right-wing people would take up woodworking or bodybuilding or something like that, while Leftists collect Funko Pops.

GJ: Yeah, the inferiority complex is half of Leftist psychology, and the other half is what he calls over-socialization. And I think this is an interesting concept, so I want to try out my interpretation and see what you think about it. When he talks about socialization, he is talking about having society's values taught to you.

An over-socialized person refers to one who is psychologically dependent on other people and other people's thinking. They tend to be conformist. They tend to be worried if their thoughts stray from society's dominant values. They feel anxiety.

Over-socialized people often claim that they don't ever experience any censorship or repression of their ideas. And it's a laugh. Camille Paglia pointed this out: Academics who claim that they've never been censored often say this because they've never had a single thought in their lives that strays from the consensus. They've never had an opportunity to be censored at all. They've never strayed. They're conformist types. They're highly motivated by other people's opinions. They're extremely attuned to other people's opinions. They're very other-focused and outward-focused, and are psychologically dependent people. I think that's part of it. I don't know if that's the whole of it. What are your thoughts on this?

RH: I definitely think that's part of it. I wanted to note that he talks about that in the very first paragraph under the over-socialization heading, paragraph 24. Its last line is, "Many leftists are not such rebels as they seem." He was very ahead of his time. There's a meme of a radical-looking Leftist with a goofy haircut and wearing a Black Lives Matter pin who is screaming, "We're the resistance!", while behind them is a sea

of corporate logos and heads of state. On the other side there's a guy with only the MyPillow logo above him who is saying, "Okay." These people think they are something they are not. How can you even think that you are fighting against anything when you have every major academic institution, major political organization, and major company on your side? He's saying that there is a group of people who are likely to become over-socialized and enjoy it. That's the psychology of the Leftist, and that's what makes them get along with the system so well.

There's another point I wanted to bring up. It's slightly off the over-socialization topic, but it's an overarching theme in the background. All of these things that people like us are against — mass censorship, the offshoring of jobs, the importing of non-white migrants, globalism, all of that — it fits under the umbrella of industrial and technological society for Ted Kaczynski. That's the top level. And under that are things such as globalism or the environmental problems that are caused by large companies. All of that falls away when you attack the industrial system as a whole.

Another theme throughout is that people who want a decent amount of autonomy and who aren't over-socialized by this system will feel a lot of frustration, because things are now so far out of their hands. If you have more taxes imposed on you, if your job gets offshored, it's really far out of your hands. Some would say, "Hey, that's the consequences of globalism, and it sucks." Or, "That's the consequences of NAFTA, and it sucks." But Kaczynski would say, "Yeah, you're right, but that only happens because the industrial society exists."

GJ: Yeah, that's another element of over-socialization which I think boils down to a lack of vitality as well. And this touches on the Nietzschean themes in his writing, although I don't think he actually refers to Nietzsche in this book.

In paragraph 26, which is the third paragraph on over-socialization, he begins:

Oversocialization can lead to low self-esteem, a sense of powerlessness, defeatism, guilt, etc. One of the most important means by which our society socializes children is by making them feel ashamed of behavior or speech that is contrary to society's expectations. If this is overdone, or if a particular child is especially susceptible to such feelings, he ends by feeling ashamed of HIMSELF.

Over-socialized people are so psychologically intimidated and bullied by society that they internalize all of its norms. The trouble is that the norms of our society — and really the norms of any society, when you get right down to it — can't be wholly and consistently practiced. It's just not possible — especially in our society, where we're supposed to like and do things that are impossible, such as believe that all people are equal, not laugh at Helen Keller jokes and things like that. We simply can't do that. It's just not human.

Kaczynski writes:

The majority of people engage in a significant amount of naughty behavior. They lie, they commit petty thefts, they break traffic laws, they goof off at work, they hate someone, they say spiteful things or they use some underhanded trick to get ahead of the other guy.

This is just life. This is just the way human beings are. And the more vital you are, the more likely you're going to do these things. The more likely you are to say things that you shouldn't say, or notice things you shouldn't notice. And there are all kinds of speech taboos and noticing taboos that are at the core of our society today. He goes on: "The oversocialized person cannot do these things, or if he does do them he generates in himself a sense of shame and self-hatred." Over-socialized people basically experience a constant state of shame and self-hatred due to their natural human vitality, which basically contravenes all the rules of society, especially the rules of political correctness. So they're unhappy people. They're self-loathing, because they don't have the ability to push back against all these "oughts" that society is telling them to follow, that their school teachers and the media and so on are all putting on them. They don't have the ability to push back against those oughts. They're like the camel that's loaded down with all these oughts, staggering under the weight of social expectations. To the extent that they have any sense that this isn't a good fit and that it is constricting, and that they don't like it, they hate themselves for it.

RH: Yeah, you just hit on the crux of the problem of the over-socialized types. They really care a lot about what these societal prescriptions are. When they violate them, they feel like they're bad people. They have cognitive dissonance, and they don't have the ability to get outside of it.

As you said, there are these various taboos about saying certain things, not laughing at certain things, not noticing certain things. And when they do these things, they immediately police themselves. They thought-police themselves through this over-socialization. This is one of the harder sections to really understand. This has consequences that ripple throughout society, and when you realize that, you see why Kaczynski included the problem of over-socialization in his manifesto. He said he does not like the over-socialized person; he doesn't have much respect for him. They are treated as the victims of this society as well. Did you get any sense of that?

GJ: Yeah, well, he clearly thinks that they are unnatural in some sense. The opposite of the social, the conventional, is nature, and that's the side he wants to stand on. He upholds the idea of nature, and he thinks that nature includes being naughty by the standards of society, laughing at things you shouldn't laugh at, and noticing things you shouldn't notice. Those are natural things that we're not supposed to do.

Another word for the over-socialized is the denaturalized or denatured, the uprooted — those people who lack any form of roots in nature. And I think that there's a lot of truth to that. He has a lot of contempt for these sorts of people, because one of the things that he is battling against is convention. He's battling against dogma. He's battling against the reigning follies of our time. Over-socialized people are the ones who

cling to what “one thinks,” “what people say,” what we’re supposed to think and do, and that means they are refusing to consider alternatives. He’s trying to get alternatives out there; he’s got some very important alternatives he’s trying to reach us with.

RH: Yeah, the over-socialized people are the cog in the machine that he talks about: the sheep, those people just going through life asleep, like drones and zombies who just do what they’re told and don’t really question it. And as you said, it creates a real problem. These types are definitely a problem for anybody trying to effectuate any change.

On the other hand, he later talks about — and this is another place where I could see the eco-fascist label being applied — how it doesn’t matter what those people say, and that these things are not dealt with in a democratic process. It is a small minority of people who lead society and change history. But these people go wherever they are told to go.

GJ: Yeah, yeah. One thing that I also think is somewhat Nietzschean about this analysis is his concept of the power process. When he explains over-socialization, he’s hinting that over-socialized people are alienated from something. Well, they’re alienated from nature. But how does nature manifest itself in human life? How do human beings live naturally and healthily? And that leads us to the section that follows over-socialization, which is called “The Power Process.” The beginning of paragraph 33 reads:

Human beings have a need (probably based in biology) for something that we will call the “power process.” This is closely related to the need for power (which is widely recognized) but is not quite the same thing. The power process has four elements. The three most clear-cut of these we call goal, effort and attainment of goal. (Everyone needs to have goals whose attainment requires effort, and needs to succeed in attaining at least some of his goals.) The fourth element is more difficult to define and may not be necessary for everyone. We call it autonomy and will discuss it later.

I think this is very interesting because it’s central to Nietzsche’s psychology. His metaphysics is this notion of will to power. How do human beings thrive? They have goals that they strive to achieve, and once they achieve them, they posit new goals. Nietzsche doesn’t talk about resting. He basically talks about endless striving.

It strikes me that Kaczynski is in fact somewhat opposed to this idea of endless striving, because he talks about three different kinds of needs, as I recall. The first kind of need is easy to meet. The second is a hard-to-meet need. And the third kind are those needs that you can never meet.

In a way, what Nietzsche is talking about with will to power is that it’s more important to be perpetually pursuing goals, and setting new goals and pursuing them, and feeling that there must be striving to actually achieve anything. And so when you achieve something, you never rest on your laurels — you set new goals for yourself.

That's what engages you as an organism: this constant struggle. And if you don't have a constant struggle, you create things to struggle over.

RH: I agree with that. The only thing I want to add to the discussion of the power process is to point out that it's a small section of the manifesto, five paragraphs in total. But it's one of the most important concepts in Kaczynski's entire philosophy, because what he's saying is that human beings need to go through this power process of having a goal, striving towards that goal, exerting effort, and then attaining the goal. Without that, people are basically miserable. It messes them up psychologically and causes them to be depressed and anxious, which leads to many of the ails of modern society. Modern society deprives people of this power process. This is very critical. This is why Kaczynski wants to see an end to mass industrial and technological society: because it strips people of being able to participate in this power process.

GJ: I agree. When he talks about the basic sort of needs, the easy-to-meet needs, what he's talking about are those human needs that are natural. It's not necessarily easy to meet your basic human needs if you live in a primitive society. Sometimes you starve. Sometimes you get caught in the rain. But the point that he's making is that the struggle to satisfy these basic needs is at the core of human health. In advanced industrial societies, where there's a great deal of productivity and plenty, it becomes quite easy to satisfy those basic human needs. This seems to be at the root of a lot of people's problems. The natural basic needs are easy to satisfy, so a lot of what made life meaningful for earlier man is just gone.

What Kaczynski then talks about is how modern society — and really, past societies where there was a leisure class, such as the aristocracies — will *create* needs. Instead of just *having* natural needs, we *create* artificial needs. We create other goals to pursue. And he calls these “surrogate” goals or surrogate values. And he seems to be somewhat dismissive of them. It seems to be fake in his analysis. But when you look at what he's talking about as surrogate goals, he's talking about all the values that human beings pursue over and above the basic necessities of life.

This would include science. He mentions scientists again and again. It would include art. It would include technology. It really includes the whole realm of culture, the whole realm of high culture. And he wants to treat all of this as essentially frivolous and fake. Do you get that sense? That's how I see it.

RH: I got two different ideas from his discussion of surrogate activity. One was, I thought, very keen and relatable, because I used to run a lot, and I went to charity races and 5Ks and marathons and triathlons and whatnot. It has been said that people who are long-distance runners aren't ever happy just running; they are always looking to go further. And when they get further, they go faster, and so on. And I thought, “Yeah, that's exactly right.” That's why I really got into it when I had the crappy cubicle job with the flickering fluorescent lights that I really disliked. I was looking for surrogate activities that were essentially a waste of time.

But then he talked about a Japanese Emperor who devoted his life to marine biology, and made all these interesting discoveries and became an expert in the field. And he

mentioned art and high culture. And I thought, “That can’t be the same.” There’s something here that feels off to me as well. A person who spends all his time playing video games as a surrogate activity: Is that the same as somebody making advances in marine biology? It seems as if the answer is no, but then he goes on to say that if somebody classifies some bug, who cares? Why would you be excited about that? What did you really add?

GJ: You can say that about art and math. Yeah.

RH: Mozart just wrote symphonies, but so what? Someone else added to philosophy, but so what? That was odd to me, and I don’t quite understand how all of it is surrogate activities. A lot of what I do might be considered as surrogate activities, because I don’t have these basic needs going unmet where I have to spend all day scavenging for food or gardening or hunting. But I tend to rank them. If I’m reading Kaczynski and talking about that, isn’t that a higher-level activity than if I was just playing video games all day, or watching pornography, or something else that was a waste of time?

GJ: Absolutely. What is a game? When you get right down to it, a game is a microcosm of the world. It’s a little world with a set of rules where you can “act” and achieve goals. It really is a surrogate for life in a sense, or an escape from life. It’s simplified in some ways and far more exotic in others. It’s far more engaging to the imagination than ordinary life often is, but it’s also simplified, so that it’s an appealing alternative to real life. That’s clearly problematic. That’s a distraction.

But the realm of culture is not. Another thing that he seems to dismiss — and he’s very clear about this when he talks about science — he seems willing to dismiss the entire realm of theory, the entire realm of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, the entire realm of high culture, which consists of things that you pursue for their own sakes. Any pursuit where you’re trying to be excellent is not necessarily something you do for any extrinsic reward, but simply because it’s intrinsically rewarding to be healthy, to be beautiful, to be accomplished, to read interesting books, to appreciate beautiful things, to make music, or whatever. All of these are ends in themselves. And he doesn’t seem to think that any of that is to be taken seriously, whereas I do.

But you see, he’s really criticizing all of civilization here, not just industrial and technological civilization. At this point, he’s laying the groundwork for a sweeping critique of civilization as such.

RH: Yeah, there are a couple of places where I thought that even in the absence of industrial and technological society, some of this would still exist. Obviously in the pre-industrial area, there were people who simply focused on art and such activities. He mentioned aristocrats who would go on these large hunts or build magnificent castles or whatnot, and he does seem dismissive of them. Well, that’s going to exist in any society.

As soon as a society — even a small society — that exists without the aid of modern technology gets to a point where only a fraction of the total population needs to be involved in farming and animal husbandry, for example, the others are then free to go do other things. Every single person doesn’t need to be involved in farming, and it

hasn't that been that way in societies for a long time. When one accumulates money or time, one is then free to go pursue other activities.

and I don't know if here with the surrogate activities is writing as in general the average person and creates these surrogate activities because they have other desires that are not being filled because of modern society, or if it, if he just goes all, all the way as all attacking all of society and any of these activities at any period in history, if they seem to be useless. But his use of aristocrats and the higher classes as an example led me to believe that it was a total critique of anybody doing these things, whether you see the need for it or not, which I thought was odd, too.

GJ: Yeah, yeah. What this reminds me of in some ways is Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, which is a radical critique of civilization. Rousseau basically argues that civilization is alienating as such. The more complex a society, the more artificial its needs, the more we are alienated from our true selves and our natural needs. But he has two ways of looking at it. One is the critique of society, the critique of civilization, based on a kind of materialism where he basically understands human beings as organisms that are very simple. We have simple desires that are given to us by nature, and when we create civilizations, we make the ghastly mistake of pursuing these things that aren't really natural, and becoming concerned about other people's opinions of us. And so we get lost in this world of artifice and psychological dependency that alienates us from ourselves. Our heart really isn't in civilization, and so maybe it would be best just to get rid of it.

But that's only one part of his account. He makes it very clear that it's premised on a materialistic, reductionistic understanding of human nature. But then in other works he introduces a different idea of human nature whereby he wants to offer a justification of civilization. Civilization may be alienating to a man who only has basic animal desires, but civilization is also absolutely essential for the actualization of man, who's more complicated than just an animal. If we have the capacity for reason and imagination, for creating culture, for creating essentially non-natural worlds — historical worlds, and non-natural ideas and ideals — then civilization is the actualization of that aspect of our character, of our nature. Whereas somebody like Kaczynski really wants to stay in Rousseau's first model, where man is simply a natural animal with basic, easy-to-meet needs, and anything more complicated than a primitive hunter-gatherer society looks like a recipe for alienation and disaster to him.

He also thinks that man can be perfectly satisfied, and he talks constantly about primitive societies. He seems to think that mankind could be fully satisfied simply by existing in a primitive hunter-gatherer form of life and without giving rise to anything more complicated: realms of high culture, and things like that.

I think this is a fundamental issue here, because if man is more complicated than simply being an organism like any other hominid, then it might be the case that our hearts just aren't in civilization, according to Kaczynski. Whereas somebody like Rousseau really wants to give a justification of civilization and show that, no, indeed, our hearts really are in it, and that there's something about human nature that abso-

lutely demands that we create civilization. That's how we actualize ourselves. We're not self-actualized in a state of nature or a state of primitive society.

RH: That is one of places where you and I seem to have the same issue with this manifesto. There are places we agree and places we disagree. At a certain point he seems to go way beyond just wanting to get rid of modern industrial society and beyond the ills of modern technology. It makes you wonder: Does he believe that any society, anything beyond the small family unit, is problematic? He mentions the fall of Rome and how there were people who still had some localized technology. I got the idea that maybe he thought the fall of Rome was a good thing because of that. And if there was some technology then, was it too much technology? It was one of the things I really wondered about and find a problem with.

Rich Houck: There's also other parts I find a small problem with. Ted Kaczynski seems to think that without these modern technologies, people cannot be controlled or subverted or treated poorly, but it seems to me that throughout history that's not been the case. He talked about some of these movements. He mentioned Communism and Nazism in in the same line, as mass movements, but it seems to me that even if we can imagine a society where there's no modern technology, you could still have a group of people come that is hostile to your interests for various reasons. And you'd want to come together with other people of like mind to stop them.

Greg Johnson: Yeah, absolutely. Another thing is that we know that the primitive societies that he seems to lionize are also societies where there's what he would call a massive amount of over-socialization. There's a massive amount of conformity, and the way that is enforced doesn't need technology. When there are 40 people in your village, and you're all basically related to one another, it's hard for any of your transgressions to go unnoticed. They don't need to spy on you with closed-circuit TV; they're just spying on you with their own eyes.

Whereas one of the things that happens with modernity and larger-scale society is that people get more privacy, and they get spaces where they can go off. As one of my students years ago said — and she made me laugh the way she put it — she said she had grown up in this little town full of censorious, prying Baptists in the state of Georgia. And she said that she could hardly wait to grow up and go to Atlanta so she could “sin.” I thought that was hilarious.

But that is one of the things that larger-scale societies allow people to do. They allow people to be more private and somewhat more anonymous, which allows them to be less over-socialized, to kick back against over-socialization. And that allows people to create new things, to go against the current.

And of course, that gives rise to all this hated innovation that Kaczynski's worried about. It gives rise to a lot of stuff, but it does give rise to the technological civilization that he wants to basically pull the plug on.

RH: Yeah, there was a passage where he talks about the fact that people who lived under a monarchy had more freedom than people do in this so-called democratic

society, because the monarchy did not have the ability — the police or the technology — to monitor everyone. And I thought that was an interesting point.

But then, you contrast that the example of your student, and you think, I'm just not so sure about that. I don't know if people had less or more privacy then, depending on the level of control.

It does seem like he's lionizing a lot of these societies of the past without realizing that they also shared some of the same problems. Take farming. There's this idea that if you need to spend a lot of time getting your food, then you don't have time for these surrogate activities. But it seems to me that if there were cave paintings, those were surrogate activities. They obviously had some time to paint on the cave. If they were starving, they would have gone to get food, right?

GJ: Right. Another thing about primitive society that's interesting: People who live in hunter-gatherer societies and primitive agricultural societies have a lot of free time, a whole lot of leisure time. And what are they doing in that leisure time? They're doing folk dances and games and things like that. They're doing non-purposeful, playful activity — which is, in a way, the core of civilization, the core of culture. The core of culture is the stuff that you do that doesn't necessarily aim at anything beyond itself. It doesn't bake bread. It doesn't fix holes in the roof. You just do it as an end in itself because it's fun. Primitive peoples had a lot more leisure time than modern people do, sad to say. What did they fill their leisure time with? They filled it up with games. And I don't think that's to be disdained as frivolous.

RH: I don't, either. I guess if there's an internal contradiction in the manifesto, it's that he's saying these technologies of the modern era was supposed to make our lives better, and give us more freedom and free time. And they've done neither. But then if you do have the free time, that is a waste of time, too.

Maybe there's something I'm overlooking. Maybe he's saying that if you were in one of these earlier societies, the free time was of a higher quality, or something of that nature. But I'm not quite able to square those two thoughts at this juncture.

GJ: Yeah, I think he's overlooking certain important distinctions. Rereading it yesterday and today, something really strongly made an impression on me, and I didn't realize this when I read it in the past. I've read it twice before: the importance of freedom and autonomy in his analysis. He's very, very concerned with freedom or autonomy as an essential part of a good life. He wouldn't use the word "bourgeois." In fact, he disdains that word. But it sounds very classical liberal to me. It smacks of classical liberalism. Although the way he talks about freedom, he thinks that classical liberalism in technological society is insufficiently free.

But the freedom of primitive man for him is that he's not dependent on as many other people as civilized man. If you live in a small community of 30 or 40 or 50 people, and you live by hunting and gathering and have simple architecture, you have simple tools and things like that, you really don't depend on that many other people.

You and I, however, depend on tens of thousands of people. We depend on people scratching heavy metals out of the ground in Africa and shipping them to China and

turning them into computer parts that are shipped to us in the United States and put in smartphones and our desktop computers. We are utterly dependent on a vast network of other people to do the things that we do. And for Kaczynski, that is a reduction in autonomy.

The first thing that comes to mind about that, though, is that, yeah, it's a reduction in autonomy in some sense of the word. We are dependent on more people than people in primitive societies are. The flip side of that, though, is that we can also do more things than people in primitive societies. You and I are separated by thousands of miles, and our audience is all around the globe, and we're having this conversation. We can do things because of modern technology that more primitive men couldn't do. Yes, we're dependent upon more people to do it, but it also frees us up to do things that were inconceivable in primitive societies.

I don't see it as a complete loss. There are costs, but there are also benefits.

RH: Two things that he mentions in the manifesto regarding this is, first, that when you have more people who you're depending on in complex systems that are far away, if something goes wrong, it's usually totally out of your control and you have no way to fix it. That is very frustrating and leads to a lot of psychological stress for modern man. And the other thing is a small analysis where he says you can't pick only the good things in society without getting the bad things, and he believes the bad completely outweighs the good. It's in paragraph 120, and at the bottom of the paragraph — it's in bold letters — it says that the bad parts of technology cannot be separated from the good parts.

GJ: Yeah, but you could also say that the bad parts of the good parts of non-technological society cannot be separated from the bad parts of society, either.

RH: Yeah, you could. When I was reading this, I got the feeling that Kaczynski thought most people were more like him than not. He talks about the indignities of working for somebody, and then he says there's the option to be your own boss. You can be an entrepreneur. But the market will only allow for so many small businesses and entrepreneurs, and the rest have to go work for somebody. And then I thought back to over-socialization. I thought, maybe he's the guy who doesn't want to be in society working for somebody and gets frustrated. He also talked about the frustrations of small business owners with government regulations and taxes. So there's no escape, right? But I thought, maybe people like him who participate on the fringes of society, do their own thing in a lot of ways, maybe that's the extreme minority. Maybe most people don't find working for somebody to be so horrible and undignified. But then I go back to thinking, "Well, yeah, but if that was the case, why are so many of them unhappy and why is the rate of antidepressant use going up?"

But he also says that even the ones who aren't aware of the indignities of working for somebody will choose industrial society over the alternative. If they're given the option democratically, they will always choose to stay in their captivity. It's definitely something I've wrestled with. How many people want to break away, and is there room for enough people to break away or not? He seems to think that there's not, that

there's more people end up stuck in these jobs than who can go be entrepreneurs or do something else.

GJ: Right. One of the things that strikes me as a problem with this analysis is to say that the alienation that people are suffering from today is endemic to technological society when, even a generation ago, we still had a technological society, we still had people working in offices and doing things like that, but people weren't as desperately unhappy as they are today in a lot of areas. So there have been changes in social life aside from industrial society.

It strikes me that it might be more productive to look for the causes of, say, why huge percentages of young women today are on antidepressants. They weren't on antidepressants in the 1930s or '40s or '50s. So, what's changed? It's not the fact of working in an office or industrial society, although a lot more women work today. There are things that are inside technology and the workforce and the industrial system, and there are things outside it. Everything's touched by it, of course.

But it strikes me that, for instance, a lot of people are desperately unhappy today not because they work for somebody, but because they don't have anybody to go home to at the end of the day. They're desperately lonely. They can't form families. They can't form partnerships. They don't have children. Things like that.

That's not technological *per se*. That is a manifestation of changes in social values. More than a quarter of a century has gone by since this first appeared, and it's only gotten worse. I think this has to do with values rather than, specifically, just technological civilization.

RH: Yeah, I agree in some ways, and I'll tell you what I think Kaczynski thinks. For me, a big decline in the quality of day-to-day life has been the increase in racial diversity. And there's so much literature to back this up. It's obviously not just some crackpot racist conspiracy theory. It's published everywhere. Everybody knows, even though they won't say it, that increased diversity destroys social capital. It makes it harder for people to find friends, as I wrote about in the friendship and diversity article.

It destroys the fabric of society to have racial diversity. I look at society and see more people miserable, without kids, unable to find a mate or partner or any romantic interest of value, that sort of thing. People unhappy at work. And I see everything getting more and more diverse, and I think, "Well, there you go," right?

GJ: Diversity is definitely part of the destruction of social capital. I also think that an ethos of selfishness and hedonism is destructive of relationships. People just don't have the ability to delay gratification or treat other people as ends in themselves, things like that. They are very oriented towards quick, immediate gratification. It's very difficult to build relationships with people when you have that kind of mentality. So there are a lot of factors that are causing this social breakdown and the fact that a lot of people are desperately unhappy.

People who don't suffer from families where that breakdown has taken place, a lot of them are flourishing. But overall, there is this decline, and I don't think it's a decline simply intrinsic to industrial society or capitalism.

RH: Yeah, elements of decline such as hedonism, selfishness, and materialism are actually part of a piece I'm reading right now in *Beautiful Losers* by Sam Francis. He brings that up in a couple different places about where things are heading. He identified that as well.

Ted Kaczynski, I believe, would say that globalism is only possible with industrial society. You never had this huge migration of people before industrial society. He talks a bit about things such as propaganda and how there's places where propaganda works so well that you don't even know it's propaganda. He talks a bit about sitcoms and TV shows and prevailing culture.

So, it seems to me if I was to bring this issue of social capital being destroyed by ethnic diversity and the mass movements of people, Kaczynski would say, "Well, yeah, maybe, but that is itself a symptom of the industrial society, which allows for things such as offshoring to China and importing people from Somalia into the middle of Minnesota," and then so on. He would see it as downstream.

GJ: Yeah, well, he also says that maybe to promote a technological revolution we should want *more* globalization, so that every part of technological civilization is interdependent on every other part, so that when one part goes down, the whole thing goes down. So he's actually rooting for globalization in a way, because once we have all of our eggs in that basket, then maybe the lights will go out.

One of the things that's ironic, though, is that by laying so much of his case on the foundation of individualism and human autonomy, he's very human-centered. That's one of the things that's very interesting about this. He's not really opposed to anthropocentrism. His entire normative focus is anthropocentric. Near the end, he says that we can promote the idea of nature, but it's nature as the opposite of technology. It's not nature as something greater than man, really, or a locus of value that transcends man.

If he's going to be so anthropocentric and humanistic in his basic moral system, then at a certain point people are going to say, "Well, wait a second here. You're actually talking about crashing global civilization and returning to a primitive form of life which will entail the death of the vast majority of the population of the globe." I don't see how you can really get people to that conclusion with this anthropocentric and humanistic concern with freedom and individualism and rugged, individualist language and so forth. It just strikes me that a lot of people are going to say, "No, I can't, I can't follow you there, Ted." And, and I think that maybe something doesn't quite follow there.

RH: I think some of that reminds me of [Pentti] Linkola's lifeboat ethics, where you can have some suffering now or a lot of suffering later. And Ted makes a note at some point about how the longer the technological system goes on, when it does collapse, the more suffering there's going to be. And that, I think, is how it is squared. Some people — and I'm one of them — believe you can hit a limit of your caring

capacity for an environment at some point. There are populations — maybe all the populations — doing irreparable harm to ecosystems that will never be undone. If you have the option of seeing this to its bitter end, cutting all aid and deindustrializing some continents, even though there'll be mass starvations of people and populations would be decimated, in a terrible way —

GJ: More than decimated. Decimated just means one out of ten.

RH: Yeah, one out of ten might survive. So you think about these really hard questions, such as would people ever vote to stop aid to Africa knowing that maybe 5% will survive the famine that entails? No, but if you just keep giving aid, more and more in each successive generation, you hit carrying capacities. Everyone's going to starve to death, anyway.

So are these people trying to draw that old medical distinction of the difference between killing and letting someone die? They seem to say, "Well, we just keep on this same trail, and eventually we'll hit a carrying capacity, or something will be disrupted, and there'll be some droughts and people will just starve to death, anyway. But at least I wasn't the one who pulled the plug."

GJ: Yeah, exactly. I can keep my hands clean.

RH: Yeah. So even though the total devastation downstream may be far worse, they will be able to justify it, as this was the natural conclusion. Right. And I guess it's a civilizational form of the trolley problem.

I think that's how some of these people, myself included, think: You can do something ugly now, or you can end up living through something way uglier later. And that's where we are. And I think that's where Ted would probably be, too. From his writings, it seems like it.

GJ: Carson writes: "Industrial society is doomed because it's consuming the very people who created and maintained it."

This is true. One of the things that is very alarming are the dysgenic trends in industrial society, specifically amongst intelligent, far-sighted, responsible people. Those are the people who are pursuing their careers and their educations, are getting their M.A. and then their Ph.D., and then they're in their 30s and they still haven't had kids. And then they think, "Oh, the planet's overtaxed — carrying capacity, carbon footprints — so I'll just settle for my fur baby," right? Never thinking that their fur baby has a carbon footprint, too, or four carbon paw prints.

This is just catastrophic. This is dysgenics at its worst. And we simply can't allow that to happen. I actually wrote a piece — and reading the manifesto, I was surprised, because Ted makes this point, and maybe I got it from him and forgot about it — but I wrote a piece called "Why Environmentalists Should Have Large Families." And he actually says that revolutionaries should have large families. Why? Because they will influence their children's values. And if they don't have children, they just cede the Earth to the people who don't care about the Earth. And we can't do that. I think that's a valid point.

RH: We talked about anthropomorphism.

GJ: Yeah, you made a good point. And he does say that. He says, “We’re not going to get anywhere close to the ability to overthrow the system until it’s already on its way down of its own accord. The suffering that’s going to happen is intrinsic to the system itself, and the sooner that we can bring the system to the end, the sooner we can bring the suffering to an end.” So that is his argument for washing his hands of a lot of the really horrific implications of bringing an end to industrial society as such. He just wants to go back to a pre-industrial, pre-technological form of civilization which would have a pre-industrial, pre-technological population that it could support, and no more. That is a stark and radical goal.

I guess my own feeling about this is that I can’t really follow him there. My sense — and maybe he thinks this is just naïve — is that there are different kinds of modernity. There are different kinds of technological society. If you look at the history of Western political philosophy, the first wave of modernity was the liberal modernity of people such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Francis Bacon and René Descartes laid the foundation for this, where the goal of society is basically the satisfaction of basic human needs. What are the fruits of philosophy? Health. Long life. Obviously, that’s applied philosophy. It’s all about the economy of desire. It’s all about organizing society for the industrious and the rational. And that produced an enormous increase in wealth and productivity and enterprise. There’s no question about it. It set off the Enlightenment. It set off modernity.

But there was a second wave of modernity that came after that which basically said, “Wait a second here. These people are leaving out a whole lot, because man is more than just a clever animal. We are more than just animals with basic needs and rationality that allows us to satisfy those needs in cleverer ways than, say, hominids and birds or whatever. We have a spiritual nature, a cultural nature.” There’s a whole realm of human culture that doesn’t seem to make any sense in terms of the sort of mechanistic, liberal psychology that early modern philosophy had. And so they came up with a different foundation for modernity that was based on the idea of the cultivation of the human being as a whole, including the human soul and human culture: the development of human capacities, self-actualization, actualizing our potentiality for virtue and for civilization.

That, I think, is a fundamentally different modernity than the kind of modernity that we’ve fallen into, which is just a materialist rat race where you’ve got this race to the bottom with this ever more debased popular culture, this ever more hedonistic and selfish and petty form of life. And it strikes me that if we can put modernity on a more edifying moral foundation, that might be the revolution that we need rather than just pulling the plug on it altogether. That’s why I look to the German idealist tradition in philosophy. And I look to attempts to create a holistic, aristocratic political order in the context of modernity in the twentieth century. That was a valid project.

I think it’s a valid alternative to just saying, “All right, let’s pack it in and go back to nuts and berries, friends.” So, in the end, I can’t be an ecological revolutionary in quite the same way that Ted is. Although I share a lot of his concerns, I think that

human beings are more complicated than he thinks they are, because he's overlooking certain aspects of human nature, and he's also overlooking certain alternatives to the modern Hobbesian rat race that he's so rightly disgusted with.

RH: I agree with your assessment and conclusion. There are a couple of things I thought about while rereading the manifesto, and to be perfectly candid, one of the things that I thought about was that certain groups have been really subversive and harassing to Europeans for over 2,000 years, since way before there was an industrial or technological society. And some of the problems that we've had that have been going on for a very long time would still exist. And I think some of these mechanisms for control and harassment that existed in pre-industrial society would still exist in a post-industrial society. That kept popping into my head about different nations and different eras and different groups that we've always had conflicts with.

There are some interesting things that Ted Kaczynski did say. Again, like you, I agree with a lot of things, but I'm not on board for everything. In paragraph 100, he talked about how things are heading on the trajectory they're going on, political corruption being one of them. If you reform political corruption, you might have a small downturn historically, but then it goes back to the average, and because of that, you can't just make slight modifications. You have to restructure a lot of things. I think I agree with him there.

GJ: Yeah, I agree there. My sense is that I would rather radically restructure different things. But I do think that, yes, we do need revolutionary change. I think that it lies in a different direction for me. I think there's slightly different things that are important for me.

RH: Yeah, I think it does for me, too. I think I want to see a very strong and healthy European race that can actualize itself without all of these various groups of parasites, both above and below us. And I don't know that with this problem in mind, as you said, that pulling the plug on industrial society will fix it or not. So that that's my big hesitation.

GJ: Yeah, yeah. The opponents of industrial society in the current context include people such as the global warming cult. I think a lot of that's just a cult. I think that's nuts. There's a lot that I agree with about environmentalism, but the anthropocentric climate change or anthropogenetic climate change dogma is craziness. I think it's mostly lies. So, but what do we do in the West, based on these lies? We cripple our economies. Do we cripple the economy of China? No. India? No. So all that we do is make European society more vulnerable to predatory, reckless, non-white societies. We don't actually improve the environment this way. In fact, we make it worse, because we create disadvantages for the only race on the planet that really cares about this stuff.

It's the same thing as whites who are enlightened and responsible having fewer children. We just ensure that the world is inherited by the reckless and the stupid and the irresponsible. We can't do that. If there's no way of saying, the plug has to be pulled on technological civilization all at once across the globe — and I don't see any

way of doing that — all this kind of Kaczynski talk that circulates in the West basically only produces policy where we cripple ourselves and give advantages to people who care less about these sorts of things than we do. That's not good stewardship for the planet, as far as I am concerned.

RH: Yeah, I agree. And that is really the crux of it. I often thought — and I know Ted Kaczynski would disagree with this — that certain people produce different effects, and if certain people are in control of technology and others are not, you'd have things look a different way. I know he doesn't think that. It might be idealistic. I don't know. We'll see. I guess let's just see how stuff continues to unfold in the future, right?

GJ: Yeah. I do recommend this manifesto highly. I think what's most valuable about it is its discussion of Leftism as a problem — the danger of Leftism, the psychology of Leftism. I do think that the problems creep in with his discussion of the power process and specifically the kinds of goals that he thinks are healthy, where I think he basically just reverts to the idea that the only serious goals are those that primitive people can meet. Basic human needs. And that allows the whole realm of culture and science to drop out. That seems invisible and unimportant to him. And I think that that's very sad, because there's so much beauty and greatness that is lost to this analysis.

But I do think it's a brilliant work. He's obviously a brilliant man. Unlike 90% or 99.99% of Berkeley professors, he actually believed the stuff that he advocates so strongly that he was willing to kill over it, and he was willing to risk his life to put these ideas out. And although he hasn't been executed, he's going to spend the rest of his life in prison because he thought it was so important to get this manifesto published that he was willing to basically go on a bombing spree to do it.

There's a little bit of autism, although that's an overused term these days. But his brutal frankness in some places strikes me as that quality that we associate with autists. So in paragraph 96 at the end, he talks about the difficulty of getting one's ideas circulating in mass society. Even though you're nominally free to speak your mind, it's very difficult for dissenting ideas to get published. So at the end of this he says, "In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people."

RH: I got a bit of a laugh at that!

GJ: Yeah, I got a chuckle out of that. Just the autistic ingenuousness of it was quite entertaining. But he's an extraordinary character. The guy literally killed for his ideas. He was literally willing to die for his ideas. And he certainly lost the rest of his free life. And it's very clear that he values freedom — freedom in a frontiersman style, a very old-fashioned, individualistic, living in a cabin in Montana style of freedom. He gave that up because of these ideas, and I think that's remarkable. There are very few people you can say that about these days, and certainly very few college professors you can say that about these days.

RH: In wrapping this up, it's very rare to see anybody who will sacrifice even a small amount of comfort for his sincerely-held beliefs. And Ted Kaczynski was willing to do that in a very extreme way, more than once throughout his life. He's a very

interesting guy. One of the more interesting people who's ever been in prison. One of the more interesting people who's alive today. And I think his work is worth reading.

I think every time I've read it, I've taken some different things from it. This most recent time was probably the most critical, too, whereas the first couple times it was very relatable to me, such as where he talks about people being unhappy with society. I thought, "Yeah, that's exactly me." Another time I read it in undergrad, when I was surrounded by hysterical Leftists, the part about Leftism really resonated. And I thought, "Yeah, I'm seeing a lot of this now, these over-socialized, inferior types. Yes, absolutely."

I would take things that I liked and reread them slowly. But there was also a bit of skepticism in that. Is this really going to move society forward and obtain human happiness and freedom or realization or whatever? And I saw some of our values diverge that time. I maybe value duty more than freedom in certain ways. At least I do in my own life. I don't know how that would translate into a public policy or the whole of society, but there were places where I thought, "It's cool that I'm free, but I have a lot of things I can't personally do that I want to do because of these obligations." So I'm putting these duties over what I would like to go do when I wake up.

GJ: Absolutely. I felt the same way about this. I really think that freedom is a value, but there are higher values in society. And oddly enough, it doesn't seem to be the case that he grants that there are higher values in society than freedom, especially understood in his very rugged, individualist frontiersman kind of way, where people have maximal self-sufficiency or they basically depend on only small groups of people.

RH: Yeah. That was definitely something I thought about. Then I thought, "Maybe it does, because I had the freedom to pursue the duties over personal stuff." Does that still fit into this? I guess it's going to remain unanswered for at least the time being. And then there is also the framework of being a White Nationalist and deeply caring about the future of European people. I don't know about going into a pre-industrial society at this stage. I think there's definitely been benefits to it, but I have to work that into the framework of what's best for white people. And I think there are places where that intersects and places where it maybe diverges. It runs parallel, right?

It's all over for me. Yes. A lot of miserable European people, white people in these stupid jobs working for stupid corporations, not having kids because they want a little more money next year.

GJ: Yeah. That is totally something that's a plague on our people. Absolutely.

RH: But other things I'm not so sure about. I definitely recommend reading it.

I made a couple of notes here that I just think are fun. If you read paragraph 34, Kaczynski talks about a hypothetical where a man has anything he wants just by wishing for it, and he develops serious boredom and psychological problems. He'll have a lot of fun in the beginning, but then become bored and demoralized. There's a *Twilight Zone* episode, episode 28, which is called "A Nice Place to Visit." It's about a bank robber who gets killed in a shootout with the police, and he goes to what he thinks is heaven. He gets everything he wants, but he gets so bored and miserable, he

just wants to leave. But he can't leave, because he's in hell. And that passage, like his hypothetical, was pretty much the plot of a *Twilight Zone* episode.

In paragraph 48, he talks a bit about cities, density, and behavioral sink. There's a really famous paper in the 1962 edition of *Scientific American* by John Calhoun where he did a behavioral sink study with mice that basically confirms what Kaczynski is saying: that when you put all these people together, even when they have abundant resources, they end up being petty and fighting and have a miserable time. So these mice were in a little house and they had as much food and water as they could eat, but they ended up being miserable and didn't breed as much and neglected their kids, even though they had abundant resources. So that's an interesting parallel.

And then the other one was paragraph 63. Kaczynski talks about how advertisements make people want things, make them feel like they need things that their grandparents never even knew about, desired, or even dreamt of. And that reminded me of the famous *Fight Club* line about "Fuck working more to buy stuff that you don't need to impress people you don't like."

Those are just a few things that I made note of while reading through it that reminded me of something else. Neat. It was cool to see how these ideas are not always tied down only to this manifesto. You might see them in other places, and you might read the manifesto and find things that are in other places — in pop culture or in a scientific magazine that you came across.

There's a lot of value to these ideas. And it's a short read: 35,000 words. You can read it in an afternoon. I recommend it. You'll find some things that are maybe relevant to your current life. It might even make you reevaluate and change some things about your job or your surrogate activities.

Oh, yeah. There was one more, a part about noise. Ted Kaczynski hated noise.

GJ: I pray that the man never had to listen to leaf blowers.

RH: He hated noise. And he talked about how people who want to make noise bother those who don't want to hear the noise. And then they end up in a conflict that never would have happened if these machines were never invented.

And it actually reminded me of a *Counter-Currents* article that you wrote called "Rules for Writers." Section two is "Work Without Distractions." And you note how Kant, Goethe, and Schopenhauer went to great lengths at different points in their writings to talk about how much they hated noise. Ted Kaczynski is among them. He wrote in his manifesto that he hates these distractions and noise.

GJ: Yeah, he has probably a lot of peace and quiet in Supermax today. He's going to be 80 years old next year. He turns 79 on May 22nd.

Counter-Currents Radio Podcast No. 536: David Skrbina on Ted Kaczynski

Source

June 21, 2023

Greg Johnson welcomed **David Skrbina, Ph.D.** to the latest broadcast of *Counter-Currents Radio* to talk about the life and ideas of Ted Kaczynski, a.k.a. the Unabomber. Dr. Skrbina is the editor of Kaczynski's book *Technological Slavery*, which includes excerpts from their correspondence, and recently penned an obituary and memoir about their relationship that was published here at *Counter-Currents*, "A Great Passing: Reflections on 20 Years with the Unabomber."

Topics discussed include:

00:01:33 Dr. Skrbina's background

00:08:44 When did Dr. Skrbina start corresponding with Ted?

00:12:55 What does Dr. Skrbina think of Ted's manifesto, *Industrial Society and Its Future*?

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00:18:07 Ted's anthropocentrism

24:08 Ted was concerned with human happiness, but wouldn't crashing the system

create unhappiness?

27:53 Can technology be harnessed in a good way?

39:01 How regulating tech would require a global government

44:58 What level of tech did Ted accepting?

46:37 Do people want to destroy tech to conquer white people?

49:58 What about the experiments performed on Ted at Harvard?

56:26 On uploading your brain and living forever

1:00:50 Ted's critique of nationalism

1:07:59 Can our solution to tech be a sophisticated, mixed approach?

1:15:05 Did you ever talk to Ted about Savitri Devi?

1:16:05 Which thinkers on tech influenced Ted?

1:17:39 Was Ted influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche?

1:19:12 Did Ted ever read Frank Herbert's *Dune*?

1:21:34 Will Ted be thought of as a prophet?

1:28:47 Did Dr. Skrbina maintain contact with Ted?

1:30:18 Will Dr. Skrbina ever publish his correspondence with Ted?

1:35:11 How can we follow Dr. Skrbina's work?

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Introduction

Greg Johnson: I'm Greg Johnson. Welcome to Counter Currents Radio. We are back with another Saturday live stream. I have a very special guest today. Doctor David Skrbina. Skrbina is the author and editor of a number of books on topics in philosophy and religion, including an anthology and pound psychism. Volume on technology. Actually, multiple volumes in technology and he is the editor of the 1st edition of Ted Kaczynski's technological slavery. That's where I first heard of him. The second time I heard of him, he and he popped up on my radar. Was he did an an addition of one of Savitri Davies books. Son of God. Her book on akhnaten. And I have gotten to know him a little bit in recent years, he contributed a response to countercurrents to a review of his book on Saint Paul, for instance. So David, welcome to the show.

David Skrbina: Thanks, Greg. Glad to be here.

Dr. Skrbina's background

Greg: So can you tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, your education and your interests, and then how you got to know Ted Kaczynski, who died just to basically a week ago at the age of 81?

David: Yeah, sure. that's a long, long. A long story, but I'll just compress it down here. For you. Yeah, my initial background in in college was as an undergraduate

student was. In technical fields. I was interested in math and science and physics and so forth. So I started studying those here at the University of Michigan. Far from where I was born, near Detroit. Studied the fields. Moved along was always interested in philosophy, philosophical issues. Came across a really, really fabulous philosopher there at Michigan's name was Henrik Skull Mileski. Who was both an environmental philosopher and a philosopher of technology in particularly skeptical philosopher of technology, he was an early. Critic of technology and he and I got to be good friends, we. Worked together for many years. Was kind of a mentor for me. And in many ways. And so I just, plod along and. Got a technical degree? And getting a masters degree in mathematics. In, in retrospect, term to be quite helpful because it gives me a good background in in technical issues. So I because I studied math, science and physics and computer programming and some other things. So I had a really good grasp of technology, certainly even better than like Scala Mosky had, who did not really have that background. So in a sense, I felt like I really understood technology. I knew how things worked. I know electronics worked. I know how computers work. and I was worried because I could kind of see even this. Is back in the all around 19. 80 that things were not heading in a good direction. It was problematic for people. That was, a root cause of problems with the environment and so forth. In particular, Scott Muskie put me under this book by Jacque Lull, called the Technological Society. Which is really a classic work of technology critique, Elul wrote it in 1954 and French. It was published in English in 1964. Really a monumental milestone kind of work and just really, really a crushing critique, basically laying out technology as a kind of an autonomous deterministic force in the world. And that kind of I think was one of the stimulus stimulus points for for Scala, Moleski and then later for me. As well. So I was early. I was really a skeptic technology critic in a sense, I wasn't really writing at that point, but still. And then you know, into the 90s, late 80s, early 90s. So we get this mail bombing string that's going on, mysterious person or group or. Sending these. Sporadic mail bombs, and they're first. They're injuring people. They're killing one or two people. Ultimately, 3 people died. You know, at first you don't think much about it, just think it's kind of some. Kind of crazy, you know. Lunatic group who's sending bombs? But then? It turns out. That there's actually kind of an ideology behind this. I was really surprised when some of the newspaper reports started showing up in the early. 90s with this. Critique of technology that was behind. This string of bombings and I thought, well, this is really interesting. So this bomber is clearly not. Just a nut case he's got. He's got some motive. He knows what he's doing and he's got some ideas behind him that are from. The little snippets look pretty solid. So I continued to file the case and then it was the Unabomber case and got a lot of attention, a lot of publicity. Those of you who were around in the mid 90s in the US certainly know all. About that did did not get much coverage in Europe as far. I know, but then that you know the man was to publish this manifesto. The famous Technology Manifesto Industrial Society. And its future. The unknown bomber wanted it published in the high visibility venue, and he promised to stop the bombings. So it was. Basically, blackmail trying

to blackmail the federal government. Usually that doesn't go very well, but this time it worked. And the FBI, after spending many years, decided they could not stop this guy. They could not catch him and they recommended to Bill Clinton that he. Yield to the blackmail and published the manifesto, which he did in September of 1995. So I remember I was just really. Really shocked, I mean. I couldn't believe that they actually caved. In you know. You got to believe there's a lot of gnashing of teeth before they agreed to publish that thing, but they did it. They put it in the Washington Post the entire manifesto. 30,000 words. Sort of a smallish book, almost. And yeah, I was. Shocked, I ran out and bought 2 copies. Of the paper that day. One copy I threw in my little archive. File where it still is. Today the other one. I used to kind of cut and paste because my wife and I were immediately starting to type this thing into our computer so that we had a word version digital version that we could work with and edit and do things with. So you know, that went on for a few months. It was about six months after the publication that. So there's another story behind that, right? So the bombers brother David Kaczynski, recognizes the text, thinks it's his brother. Ted tells the FBI the FBI arrest him in Montana. This was in April of 96. And that's how they. About him. And again, I was shocked. I remember the day. You know, you kind of wake up in the morning. And here's the Morning News on the radio. You know, they captured the Unabomber, like, wow, this is surprising. And here's the guy's name. You know, Ted Kaczynski never. Heard of him? And turns out he. Was a PhD math. Professor from the University of Michigan and I just about fell out. Of my bed at that point because. I was a you. Know Masters student in mathematics at the University of Michigan. Same campus. I had some of the same professors that he did. Just I was really, really astonished that there was such a. High level academic fellow who was. Allegedly behind the bombings. So that you know. That led to a year long trial won't go. Into the details. Of that end up doing a plea bargain for life in prison. With no possibility of parole. And then that went, a number of months, a number of years, actually. After that, I've completed my PhD in philosophy, started teaching, got a teaching job at a campus at the University of Michigan. I was teaching, among other things, last year, technology and that. Sort of led me full circle. Back back to Ted and the manifesto.

When did Dr. Skrbina start corresponding with Ted?

Greg: So when did you start corresponding with the matter?

David: Yeah. So right, I started. Guess it was late 2003 and I was starting to compile material for this new course in philosophy of. Technology that I was creating. And I was going to include the manifesto, which was already out there and available, but it had been, what, four or five years at that point since six years, something like that,

since we'd heard from Ted. He was locked away. Nobody said anything about him. We didn't know what he was doing, what he was thinking. Was he alive or dead? I mean. I obviously we would have. Heard that but. But no one was really saying anything. Was kind of. A media blackout, kind of a total censorship as far as I could tell. So I figured the only way to find out for sure was. To write directly to him. So I got an address for the supermax prison in Colorado, wrote him a letter. University letterhead and. Just said, hey, I'm a professor at Junior University and I'm teaching a course in technology and I have some questions for you. So I reeled off a list of questions, you know. Just basic things like you know, any thoughts on manifesto in the recent years and what are your new ideas and have you written anything else new and so forth? And yeah, I never expected a response. I'd never written to a prisoner before, didn't know how that was going to work. But about a month later, got along handwritten letter from from Ted, giving Nice, lengthy, detailed answers to all my questions.

Speaker

You can.

David: And that was kind of the kickoff of a little back and forth process questions and answers and queries and challenges and eventually leading to the production of a book. And yeah, many letters over several years, I think I've got about 150 letters from him in total. So yeah, it was. Really a remarkable and very fruitful interaction.

Greg: I believe I wrote to him in 2000. I started doing research towards a book on environmentalism from the right, and I recalled having read his manifesto when it was first published. And made notes on it that was critical of the left. It was critical of the left, and it was also somewhat Nietzschean and vitalist in its analysis of human nature. And I thought, OK, well, this fellow. Broadly fits into this rightist anti technological radical environmental paradigm that I was working out that included people I thought like Martin Heidegger and Savitri Devi. And so I wrote a couple of letters to him. He was kind of crabby. With me in the in the first letter, I recall that he was very annoyed that I was implying that he was actually the author of Technological society and his future. Apparently he hadn't admitted to that fact yet or didn't want to say anything that would. Sort of officially admitted that he sort of unwound a little bit in the second letter, but I don't have the letters handy unfortunately, but I recently glanced at them and I thought, gosh, what a missed opportunity. I should have persevered with this, but what happened? Is I finished my? I was finishing my doctorate at the time and I had to prepare for basically getting a job, and so I sort of set all of this aside and I never returned to it. I still want to write this this book on eco fast. Chism, which is the title I've chosen for it, but I'll have to wait till I retire, I suppose, before I get back to that and I missed my opportunity, but I was very interested to note that other people have been querying him about this and that he wrote a little rejoinder to it, which I LinkedIn the post at counter currents and we could talk about that a little later. Let me ask you, what were the things that you thought were most profound about his manifesto? And what are some of the limits in your view of his thinking?

What does Dr. Skrbina think of Ted's manifesto, *Industrial Society and Its Future*?

David: Right. Well, I thought when. I read it the first time through. A couple of things struck me. Initially, it was the basically the first thing was the lengthy lead in against leftism. So there's a large. Chunk of the beginning of the manifesto that doesn't even talk about technology at all. He's really critiquing leftists and leftist ideology and how dangerous it. It is and. You know it's hazardous to any sort of revolutionary movement for various reasons, because leftists or socialized and so forth. And then he's going into the power process and the sort of the psychological issues. And I remember reading, like, wow, I'm several 1000 words into this thing. And like you didn't even mention technology yet. So so clearly that was important for him and that he thought he had. To put that. Up front. I think at some point. I asked him about that. He said basically he wanted to drive off and he left. Before they even got to. The meat of the manifesto. So. So that's why he. Put that stuff up front. But when I got to the arguments about technology, I could see a lot of similarity to a little to Jack, Jack, Paul. So the arguments were very familiar. I mean, he's bringing it familiar. Arguments and points. He was putting them in a in a relatively recent context of the early 90s. But they were similar arguments that we would see in a lull. In fact, I remember thinking I was surprised because he quotes some experts in the manifesto, but he does not even mention a lull. And I think I asked. Him about that later as well, and he said something like. You know, Alou was just. Kind of the overarching force for this whole thing. And it he would have quoted him too much or. Something like that. He gave a little bit of a. Sideways excuse about why I didn't mention Alul. But so the arguments were familiar to me. The I was impressed by the manifesto's clarity. So it's very straightforward, very, very bland. And matter of fact, I mean, he got criticized by some for for being too, too bland. But I mean, this is not a, it's not a bomb throwing lunatic here. He's trying to make a. Reasoned argument. He does it. In a very clear and straightforward in a dispassionate way. So I gave him credit for. That, and the other striking thing was the forcefulness of the revolutionary conclusion. So he's of course one of the key points is that technology cannot be reformed. You can't fix it. You can't just keep the good stuff that you like and get. Rid of the bad. Stuff that just doesn't work for theoretical and practical reasons, and therefore his conclusion. Basically, we have to revolt against the. System which is undermining. It or or destroying it in some sense, or large portions of it. As the only hope of really saving human dignity and saving planetary destruction. So that was a pretty striking. Conclusion. Again, that was not. Totally unique. There were other earlier thinkers who had talked about the need for revolution. Herbert Mark Hughes and Ivan Ilitch. even Lewis Mumford, in a couple of different ways, talked about sort of destroying the mega machine so. So those ideas had kind of been out there for a while. I mean, it's a very old goes back to Samuel Butler in the 1850s. And he talks about destroying

machines back then. So there's actually kind of a long history, certainly within the Luddite movement. They're destroying machines. So there's a long history of. Even of thinkers calling for destruction of technology. But you know, again, Ted, Ted does it in a very forceful, direct way. There's no apology, there's no, no punches or pulled. He just he just goes straight at it. And that was a pretty impressive thing as well.

Limitations of the manifesto

David: If there's some limitations or let's say problems or shortcomings with the manifesto. I mean it's hard to criticize because it's, I mean, he says a lot in his 30,000 words. Obviously you can't say everything, even in a book length treatment, you can't really address every issue in detail. But I mean there are a couple of things that sort of bothered me he talks about. The system. The technological system, and it's never really defined in any meaningful sense. It's just sort of understood, but it's a pretty important concept and I think. He should have elaborated on that. And then sort of something about. Process by which your revolution is going to happen. He mentions a few little things at the end about general strategic suggestions, but doesn't really seem to grapple in a detailed or precise way with what exactly that would mean, what that entails, how one would go about doing it, and so forth. So there were some. Some sort of things that we're lacking, obviously points of elaboration. That we might have liked to see, but. But All in all I. Mean he. Did a spectacular job. I mean really laid out the case against technology and very blunt and clear terms and drove everyone the reader to the logical conclusion. So it was overall really an impressive effort.

Ted's anthropocentrism

Greg: So one thing that struck me about this book. Upon rereading it, I did a podcast, a live stream with Richard Howe about it a couple of years ago, and I was rereading it for that. And it struck me that he's actually rather anthropocentric in his approach, or humanistic in his approach. he's really arguing against technology from the point of view of how it undermines human happiness, which I thought was interesting. He doesn't take a non-anthropocentric, or ecocentric, or deep ecological approach to values in his argument. I thought that was that was quite interesting.

Another thing though about it is that; he seems to have a pretty much naturalistic understanding of man. It's almost an Epicurean analysis of human desires and human happiness that reminded me of Rousseau. Actually reminds me of Rousseau's discourse and the origin of inequality. Which is a critique of civilization. It's not just a critique of technological civilization, it's a critique of all forms of civilization, really, because anything that gets too far away from easily satisfied naturally given needs becomes

a source of alienation. For human beings, and ultimately for Rousseau, it drives the creation of... drives oppression.

And so I thought that was an interesting limit to his outlook, because even Rousseau in his other writings wants to give us a defense of civilization by saying that yes, it does alienate us from our simple animal needs, but it also provides an opportunity for us to actualize our higher capacities. Including the capacity to create culture, including the capacity to philosophize, things like... Yeah, and it just didn't strike me that he has understanding of man that could treat things like philosophy or art or science as really valid expressions of human nature. Just I think he treats them sort of as fake surrogates for more easily satisfied material demands or material needs.

David: Yeah, I think that's right. I mean on the anthropocentrism. I mean, Ted is very pragmatic. He... that was his driving focus, right. He he's a practical guy, he wants to get things done. Wants to achieve a revolution of some kind. So he's taking the most practical approach I suspect. That he thinks most people are anthropocentric. Probably they are. They're thinking in terms of human interest or their own interest, and so for... So I suspect that he's crafting arguments to appeal to most readers who are thinking in terms of human well-being and human suffering.

It's a relatively small group who will put preeminently environmental concerns or, concerns of nature or animal rights or so forth, or put that above their own.

I think, I mean, he does seem to have some sympathies that way. He... there's a couple of points in the manifesto where he says, I think it's highly important that technology is damaging the environment, but I'm not going to talk a lot about that here. So he kind of just puts it off to the side. He doesn't dispute it, but he doesn't really elaborate on it.

I think he feels he has a stronger point, stronger case to make when he focuses on the harms to humans, to human beings.

But you're right. I mean, in terms of these other sort of cultural activities and so forth, right, surrogate activities and what not. So you're right, I mean a lot of things, I mean almost everything could count for Ted is a kind of a surrogate activity, which is problematic. I mean almost anything you do right, academically, your job, unless it's directly aimed at ordering food, shelter or clothing, almost anything you know has a surrogate aspect to it if you will. So, so that was maybe another problematic issue.

You know, like you said, he doesn't really value those things very much. He never really put much weight in philosophy. I mean, he knew I was a philosopher, but he didn't seem to give much credence to that. You know, later when I wrote my book, the *Metaphysics of technology*. You know, he really had no real interest in anything like metaphysics because that's sort of abstract and obscure and has no bearing on a practical revolution. So I mean, that's just kind of how he was thinking. To me, it was necessary to complete the picture because you don't know what you're dealing with until you understand the metaphysical basis of this phenomenon that you're grappling

with. So I thought it was essential, but Ted, his pragmatic side always won one out in that case.

Greg: Did you share this book with him? Did you get his impressions of your work?

David: I sent him a paper copy of the my work, the metaphysics of technology, when it was just nearing publication in 2015, so I sent him a full copy. You know, he kind of said thanks but don't send me tons of paper because I have nowhere to keep it. I mean he was kind of more worried again about the pragmatic stuff. Like I... you know, I sent him... Like you know, a 300 page stack of paper. And he's like, Oh my God, I have nowhere to put this stuff, and I've got to get rid of things and don't send me that much again please. And I don't know if he actually read it or not, I was kind of hoping he would, but yeah... I never really got the impression that he did.

Ted was concerned with human happiness, but wouldn't crashing the system create unhappiness?

Greg: One question that I have to follow up. If Kaczynski's arguments are basically criticizing the technological system because it has a negative impact on human happiness that really invites the question well. If we're really concerned with human happiness, how is the Earth's current population going to fare? If we crash, the technological system, won't that create a great deal of unhappiness, especially among the people, the billions of people who are alive today? How many people can earth sustain? At a much more primitive level of technology. And what are you going to do with the surplus? And don't doesn't their happiness matter at all?

David: Right. So that's those are really good questions. I've long been worried about the population. Question and I and I ran that by Ted a couple of times. In the manifesto, he said a couple of things like, well, there's one passage I forget exactly where it was, but he says something like is it cruel? Someone could say it's cruel to work for the destruction of the system. Because it will cause human suffering. And he says. Well, look, there's suffering going on right now because. Is causing people to suffer. It's going to get worse in the future. So the suffering is going to increase and with more people suffering more, there's more total suffering. That was one of his points. Secondly, he says. You know, if you. There's a good likelihood the system is going to collapse anyway just because of the intrinsic instabilities of the system. If it collapses down the road when we have, 10 billion people, that's going to be worse than if it collapses with there's 8 billion people or 6 billion people, which would. Be better. So the point was the sooner that a collapse occurs, the better because it affects fewer people, which is also true. And probably the Third Point is you got to look in the very long run, right? Yes, so. Short term suffering. Yeah, I mean, if there's a rapid collapse. Which is not a. Necessary condition of this sort of collapse scenario. He Ted says it could be a gradual process. But if it was rapid collapse, then lots of people would die

pretty, pretty quickly. But it's not. Clear that in the long run, that's going to lead to more suffering and. More short term. But you know long term could be clear net on net gain depending on how far into the future we look. Even a lot smaller number of people on the planet, but if they're living a very satisfactory existence. Could quickly outweigh the cost to some millions or billions who might die or suffer in the short run. So I think there's some pretty good arguments against that. I know I was. I was sort of worried about overpopulation in general. And I raised the question to Ted. I said, I've, I've argued myself against population and argued for population decrease and for, lower population totals on the Earth. Ted's like, well, that's a waste of time because nobody wants to talk about, getting rid of people. Nobody wants to go around blaming pregnant women. Because they, because they're the source of all these babies that are coming along, he's so he's like, well, that's a loser argument. So don't waste your time. That was his view. So it's kind of interesting. I mean I understood his. Point but but he you know, he he seemed to acknowledge. And any revolutionary collapse. And there'd be a lot fewer people. And that's the way it. That's the way it has to go. And there's no ifs, ands or buts about it.

Can technology be harnessed in a good way?

Greg: Can you explain to the audience and to me what it means to say that technology has become an autonomous system? Most people think that we control technology. We are the ones who. Buy our cell phones and talk on it. We're the ones who use hammers to hammer. We're the ones who use frying pans to fry. We're using technology and it seems odd to say that well, technology is not something that we ultimately control it. It is an autonomous self reinforcing. System that has escaped our control. That's something that I first took from Ellul. I first actually, not first from Allure. I first encountered this in Aaron's junk. And then I encountered this in a rule and I think it's a hard idea for a lot of people to grasp and to accept.

David: Yes, it's true because. It looks like people do all the work. Of technology, we do the inventing, we do the building, we do the planning, we do the implementing. So on one level. Yes, the technology is dependent on people. I mean, if something you know there's some weird solar flare of fantastic proportions and it killed every human being on earth, then the technological system would collapse. So there's no two ways about that. The point, though, is that no one person or no group of people can. Exert a kind of control over the process because the process is diffused among so many millions and billions of people. Different motives and different driving forces and different resources at their disposal and so forth. Aspects of the system just kind of ratchet upwards. And any one person, anyone group you know any any individual scientist can die and another scientist steps in and carries forward that work. Right. Any corporate leader, any military leader. Any one person, there is nobody who's indispensable. Well, because aspects of the technological development go on. In a in a million. Parallel paths

because it has so many different it's like the Internet itself, right? It's diffused through a million different parallel structures and you can't really chop off any one of them and stop the thing so. The technology for multiple reasons for you know, financial reasons, power reasons, pure interest, military reasons. Many people from many different sides are all pressing ahead in in various aspects of technology, which means that. The all parts of the system are kind of inching forward in many. Different ways all at the same time. There's no overarching control, there's no directing process. It's a million people doing a million different little things every day. And you know. In scientific labs and in papers and research, in garages and wherever, wherever they're tinkering and doing their stuff, laboratories. And so forth. Everybody's inching this whole process forward and so short of obliterating all the obliterating all the. People getting rid of all of them, which would seem to be impossible or some kind of massive war. I mean, there's a point. At the beginning of the Lowe's book, where he says, total nuclear war might actually collapse the system, if you could really. Really sort of devastate the industrial societies of the world. That might cause things to sort of collapse. But it's just this diverse, paralleled structure of technological advance that the system as a whole, because it has so many diffused parallel paths of a development. Moves ahead, sort of, no matter what, there's nothing we can do. Any one person can do any. 10 people can do. There's nothing the. President can do. It's a really a troubling scenario and I think we're we're starting at the feel for that with this AI stuff. And that's sort of been in the news lately. This advanced AI people sort of. You know, stupidly or just finally figuring out, like, oh, shoot, this could be a problem which, we've been saying for decades. And they're realizing that there's actually not. Much we can do to stop. This stuff which is going to. Be going to be bad news in itself so. So it really is kind of striking how the whole technological evolution, the whole system as a whole moves ahead regardless of what anyone wants, regardless of what we think, regardless of what we might like. And in that sense, it is an autonomous process.

Greg: It strikes me that technology. Is somewhat like language. We think that we use language. But when we think about. When did we begin using language? Language is already there, sort of sort of. One of the things that's in the background all around us. That conditions how we think and how we act. and therefore it's hard. To say that we control it, we don't actually have. Sort of an external viewpoint on it, we are thrown into a world, we learn a language. We're surrounded by technology. Technology is constantly developing. There are so many things going on in technology that no one mind can comprehend at all and yet we have this feeling that well. I know I choose to use the smartphone or not. Already there, it's sort of like the weather. It's sort of like the boundaries of our world. It's something that we don't really have a position to comprehend or understand it. It's sort of, it's sort of like the outer horizon of experience of in in some ways, and that that's interesting, but. There's this. Idea that, well, can't we use this wisely? People say that, OK, well, medicine medicine can be used to cure or to kill. We have ethics, therefore, to guide doctors in their activities, so to make sure that their technical expertise. Is used for good. And we have other professions which

have technical skills and to guide them they have ethical codes. Isn't it possible for human beings to wisely guide and take control of technology and use it for the greater good or not use it? Discard certain forms of technology. Why is that not possible? Why would Kaczynski disregard that? And I know he disregards it or dismisses that.

David: Well, right. So some people will point to specific technologies. Let's say, for example, nuclear weapons. And I said, well, look, we saw how hard us that was. We used them once the US did on civilian populations in the World War Two decide that was terrible and don't want to use those again. So we kind of have global agreements and. We try to limit their spread. And so far it seems like it's worked. Right. There's been. No, no, no second use of nuclear weapons since since the war. But in a sense it hasn't worked because the nuclear proliferation continues. More countries are on the verge of getting nuclear weapons right? We know about Iran and the their process to acquire nuclear weapons. They'll probably have it at some point. And of course, there's a constant threat of. of use so. Even though the nuclear weapons so far have not been detonated, they've been used countless times, most recently with Russia. Right, Putin obviously has lots of nuclear weapons. And he can play the. Nuclear card anytime he wants and he's moving. Weapons in the Belarus and so. 4th so they become used in that sense, they don't become used as a as a tool of physical destruction, but they become used as tools of coercion, and it's almost certain at some point somebody will do something stupid and they'll actually be used. So then there goes that argument down the drain. But in any case, even if we had a perfect solution to nuclear weapons. You know or completely ban them. That's just one tiny slice of the technological monstrosity that we're dealing with. And there's so many angles and so many, potent weapons and so many disaster scenarios that you can't really even begin to tackle. All of those all at once. You're human beings. Just can't do that. We are. We are able and capable. Haven't got the bandwidth. Tackle multiple complex problems all at the same time, let alone coming to agreement and enforcing agreements and so forth. I mean, even benign things, you. So you mentioned like medical technologies and it seems like, well that's a good thing, right? That we have. New medical technologies and we could treat cancer. We can, cure. Things and keep people alive. And you know, keep, solve childhood illnesses. And, all those nice little things, but. Even the good stuff isn't isn't an unambiguous good with technology. So, for example, we know that medical technologies have been a large reason why the total population on the Earth is now 8 billion people. That and alone is in ecological disaster. There's no future scenario in which the planet can handle 8 billion people. And of course, it's increasing. We're heading towards 9 and 10 billion rapidly. So the good of technology, the medicine allowed us to go from 4 billion to 6 billion to 8 billion soon to be 10. Billion people, which is destructive. So we would have been actually far better off and the planet would have been vastly better off if we didn't have our medical technologies. If people died younger and of more common things, and if you know, infant mortality was more of its natural level that it used to be for the human species, and you know you, you don't. You kind of. Hate to sort of glorify these kind of, tougher conditions, but nature

puts these conditions on us. For a reason, and that keeps every species in balance. There's always a balance between food supplies. Right, predator, prey relationships and abilities of the environment to supply the needs of different species. So you know we've usurped those bounds of nature with our technologies. And it's leading us to a disaster. So there's almost no unalloyed goods that come from technology. They're short-term goods. Some people profit immensely, so I guess it's good for them, but larger picture, high level view long-term, there's almost nothing good. That comes from advanced technology.

How regulating tech would require a global government

Greg: Well, it strikes me that one can make the argument yes, that everything can be used for good or ill, and that's why we need to use things wisely for the good. However, the weakness of that when it comes to global technology is that it really seems to presuppose that we'd have to have some sort of. Global government. That could basically regulate technology, because if you have multiple competing jurisdictions, these groups will say yes. Of course we should limit nuclear weapons and then they'll quietly be working as quickly as possible to build them anyway. Because that's advantageous, they won't pay lip service to global interests, and you know the common good of the planet. And because they are particular entities with competing interests, with other particular entities, they're going to. Be furiously working on dangerous technologies. Things like artificial intelligence, things like nuclear weapons, biological weapons and so forth and so. If your solution to any problem is first have global government, it's not really a solution because I don't think we're going to get there anytime soon. And once we have global government, what does that mean? The whole globe is going to be controlled by politicians. That doesn't seem like a recipe for wisdom. Either so. Strikes me as problematic just because because of the fact that we're we have all these competing entities on the planet that will definitely use technology to gain an edge over one another, even though they know, even though they know better, even though they think this could be a total disaster. They'll think well, the other guys are doing it, so we can't. Fall behind we can't. Can't give up this this potential destructive force because other people won't.

David: That's exactly right. And that's another argument why technology is an unstoppable process. When you read the works of even the pro tech people like Ray Kurzweil. And he talks about all the wonderful benefits of technology. And then you get him. You press him into a corner. You say? What about all those bad things? And he's like, yeah, but you know, and then he uses this. Nice little phrase. We have no choice. And I can't tell you how many times I came across this phrase in tech writers. We have no choice for exactly what you said, right? Well, we can't do it because then

the Russians and the Chinese will do it or, company A can't do this because then Company B and company C will eat our lunch. Because they'll advance. Those things, there's a million reasons, but. You know, profits. Power competitive reasons, prestige, and so forth, that the argument comes down to, well, you know. We have no choice. We have to do. This, and that's technological determinism. I mean it could hardly be blunter than that in very brute terms, we have no choice, we.

Greg: Right.

David: To do. It you know, some guys will say it's good and we have no choice. Some people will say it's bad and we have no choice, but everybody agrees we have no choice. OK. So so there's your technological determinants. It's being driven forward. It will be driven forward and there's almost nothing that we can do about it. You are right. I mean right if it's like any arms agreement or something, you need high level agreement. If you're going to try to disrupt that process, or. Slow it down or. Pause it. Ted Kaczynski himself was not optimistic, right? He said the system is too strong. It's too robust. Too much of this, we have no choice kind of thinking, going on, technologies developing too many parallel paths. He said, right. Now, no, we can't do anything. We can't do anything to disrupt. That process, but he says. The process is sort of spinning out of control. It's driving populations, like I said, through the roof. It's threatening global ecological collapse, threatening a number of serve other disaster scenarios which might in themselves threaten the process of. Development of the system. So he, Ted says, any revolutionary actions should try to increase the instability in the system to bring us closer to this sort of spontaneous breakdown, which is really the best that we can probably. Hope for at. This point because of all these reasons that we. Just talked about. So so. You know, right now it's just a matter of watching, looking for the weak points, heightening this instability. You know, trying to bring that day when it collapses sooner rather than later because conceivably there are thresholds that we might cross. You know, we've talked to some some thinkers have talked about this singularity. Kurzweil and others sort of, where they sort. Of get Super AI combined with ability of it. to build. Itself and create its own computers, and then The thing is really running autonomously and then sort of like literally lose complete physical control, the process, and then that's almost certainly a catastrophe. So we have this little window of time between now and this singularity. Point, which Kurzweil has been saying is coming at 2045. So maybe we have, yeah, 20 years maybe in which the system could still collapse. We might hope it still collapses and we might actually work for its collapse in whatever little ways we can, because that. Might be the. Only saving grace because once it hits true autonomy. And then it's a whole new ball game and it may be sort of literally impossible to stop at that point.

Greg: Yeah, that's very disturbing.

What level of tech did Ted accept?

Greg: We have a question here from maybe next time he sends \$3. Thank you. He says hello, Greg and Dave, what level of tech was Ted accepting of? That's an interesting question.

David: That's a good that's a good question. I myself put that question to him. I know he he started the beginning of the manifesto with the words that the industrial revolution has been a disaster for the human race. When I read that, he said Ohh well, he wants us to go back in time to simpler technology prior to the Industrial revolution, right? So maybe technology of the year 1700, right? Or maybe 16. 100 just to be safe. And I put that to him. He's like, oh, no, no, we can't control that. We can't choose a point in time. We have to just sort. Of you. Know just blow up the whole system, watch it all collapse and that will basically take us back to hunter gatherers or something very close to that, maybe very small scale. Farming and that's where we need to go. So when I pressed him, he was a proponent of this sort of nomadic hunter gatherer existence, really kind of the core mode of human existence for yeah, 99% of human human history. Right. If you go back, say almost 3,000,000 years to the to the genus. **** yeah, 90. 9% of the time we were hunter gatherers. And that was sustainable. And the and the species survived, and the planet flourished. So basically, Ted says, we just need to blow up the system, drive us back to hunter gatherers and just sort of take what comes.

Do people want to destroy tech to conquer white people? And how good a mathematician was Ted?

Greg: We also have a question from ABC who sends 10 U.S. dollars. Thank you, deindustrialization and D technologized action of the West, perceived as white, is a long sought goal of the non whites in the global left with the sole purpose of dominating white race unilateral deindustrialization. Suicide Ted was not our guy, was he?

How good a mathematician. Was he?

OK, those are two questions, I guess.

Well, this question speaks to the issue of that we already discussed which is you can't deindustrialized unilaterally because other people will just take advantage of it. And therefore it has to be Global, there has to be global step back a global stepping back from technological civilization, it can't be just done by one group of people, because yeah, if one group of people surrenders the technological advantages, they'll just they'll just be taken advantage of by other people who will press their advantage in in those circumstances.

So I guess the other question is how good a mathematician was he? Or maybe that's just a flippant question. Did you ever talk about mathematics in your correspondence?

David: Very passing. I published one or two little articles on mathematics. I think I sent out a copy early on just to say, hey, look, I can do this too. Of course, I was not. Not nearly. He was a brilliant mathematician. I mean, his PhD thesis was really remarkable. There's some some quotes from his advisors at the time. Like, only 10 people. In the in the country probably understood his dissertation. So yeah, Ted, Ted was brilliant. He was a brilliant. Mathematician and then. But when he stopped, he was done. And you know, I asked him some questions about, technical. I think I was doing research on sequences and series. He's like, yeah, I don't even want to talk. About that. So when he was done. He he was just finished. So I. Mean he didn't lose the ability, but he. Just had zero interest in talking about math.

But sort of the ethnic racial issue is a good question, right? He says in the manifesto that it needs to. Be a global. Revolution, as you say, because you can't do bits and pieces if you know we. If we sort of revolt here and the Chinese don't, then they're going to come and just mow us down or something. So he wants the different peoples of the world, the different races and ethnic groups. At least they're revolutionary wings to work together to make it a global anti tech revolution. So if you're looking out for your own ethnic or racial group, you're not likely to work a work very well with others. Be you're likely to sort of have additional conflicts that will be racial or ethnic conflicts that will distract you from the main task, which is getting rid of technology.

So that's why Ted was sort of against any sort of focus on, white interest, white nationalism or any nationalism, any special interest. He was in a sense, he was against racism. And in that sense. Even though he did say some sort of detrimental things about blacks. But you know, we won't go into those, but I think he, you know he's...

Greg: Well, we could. But let's set that aside for now. We actually have a question from Reed Johnson. David what do you believe was the nature he sends ten U.S. Thank you, David. What do you believe was the nature of the three-year long experiments Ted participated in at Harvard as an undergrad with psychologist Henry Murray, who was Henry Murray? And what were his motivations? And did this curious experience have any effect on the ultimate trajectory of Ted's?

What about the experiments performed on Ted at Harvard?

David: I think the short answer is no. I mean, Ted was involved in some of these early campus experiments, not really even experiments. I mean, people think, like they wired his head with electrodes and they, put him in some deprivation room for, days on end or something. It was nothing like that. They were studying effects of. Stress psychological stress on undergraduate students. So, and I've seen transcripts of these things. So, so Murray would bring undergraduates in and he would have them talk about their ideas or their own particular views of the world. And then he would start

attacking. Then and he would say well that's a stupid idea. And what? What are you, an idiot? You know he's like insulting them, showing them that they can't really justify because they're undergraduate students. You know, they're not. Do you guys yet so and just shooting holes trying to demean them, trying to shoot them down and then? He was gauging their response. Right. How how were these students reacting to this? Personal assault on on them and their ideas, where they taking it personally, where they giving intellectual responses, where they just clamming up, right.

As far as I can tell, this seemed to be. The extent of the experiments that were going on at the time. It was hardly anything nefarious. It was hardly scarring or whatever people want to say. Yeah, anything that I've seen that had basically zero impact on Ted, except maybe to cause them to. Further dislike authorities and further distrust the system. As if you didn't. Have reasons already.

But you know people play that up. What's troubling is people play up these sort of, little experiments that he underwent at Harvard because they want to find an excuse why he went so extreme in his anti tech, why he sent bombs, why he killed three people. They just can't believe that it's because this danger of technology was so great that someone might actually use that as a driving force. People had to have some other excuse, you know? Well, it must have been these MK ultra experiments. There must have been, abuse. He was tortured. As a kid or you know his. Mother dropped him. On his head when he was two or, he had some kind of. Encephalitis, which causes a mental. Less than they're really seeking these excuses rather than saying no actually, he was completely lucid and rational and he understood that technology was a mortal threat to the planet. And that was a good. Enough reason, people. Just don't want to hear that. So they're always hunting around for these other crazy excuses.

Greg: Yeah, I think that's really true. It's very unusual for people to believe in their ideas so strongly that they're willing to kill or die for them, and we live in a society where when you encounter a person like that, they want to come up with some kind of medical explanation for that because, frankly, the truth is just too frightening, that people take ideas so seriously. They're willing to kill or die over them. Maybe we should think more seriously about these things, too. People flinch at that. I understand. I understand the the. the the desire to do that. I do think it's tremendously important. To contemplate what a I. Promises the AI boosters are talking about, a point where technology does become completely autonomous it completely. Slips control and at that point we are completely at its mercy and it becomes not just technology as a kind of blind and stupid process, but technology having its own intelligence, its own guiding intelligence that's different from human intelligence. And can evolve so rapidly. Usually that within minutes it could be as different from us as we are from one celled organisms. The idea that human beings are eagerly pursuing this point just strikes me as complete sheer, utter madness. We're talking about creating successor life form to control the Earth. I don't think that can ever end well unless we think that we're creating a benevolent God. I hardly think that that's within the capacity of human beings to. So my thoughts about Kaczynski and his bombing campaign as I've been

reading more about AI, I just wonder, could he have? Could he have postponed the singularity for a few days or hours? Couldn't that be a justification for what he did? I'm sure in his own mind he would think absolutely yes.

David: I mean he again very, very pragmatic guy. Anything that can put off a disaster in, in that sense, in the long term. He's willing to sort of. Sort of buy time if that's what it. Would take. So, he didn't. I don't know that I'm trying to remember if any of the letters that he really talked about. Kind of this AI takeover thing because it's an interesting scenario specific. Really that we're facing now that. I don't know if that he really. Grappled with that one, but. But yeah, it does seem like madness. I mean, had talked about people like Kurzweil. And so forth. Who? Are pushing forward on the technology. Like these people are are criminals. I mean, they're either criminally insane or they're rationally criminal. but they're pushing ahead. Technologies and promoting technologies that could you. Know obliterate all life on the planet. And you know, what's their excuse like, oh, we're, are they so arrogant to think, oh, we'll just put in safeguards and we'll have kill switches and we'll be able to stop this. Thing and. You know, they just think that they're. Just so you know, like I want to. Upload my mind into the computer so I can live forever like you know.

On uploading your brain and living forever

Greg: That is, that seems to be one of the things that really drives us forward. And on the surface, I think we should be alarmed simply about that. The people who want to become immortal. They're de facto, they will become tyrants. Already. Old people have a huge, disproportionate amount of power. Imagine old people that never die. Imagine being, a child of 14 in a society ruled by people who are 2000. Years old and counting, we basically like being ruled by. You know, capricious Olympian deities or something like that. It would be a form of tyranny that you could never overthrow. I think any desire to prolong human life extraordinarily is, ipso facto, a declared desire to be a tyrant over all the rest of humanity. Who would be younger than you? Because one of the things that happens when people die is that power and wealth shift, right? And then the next generation has some space. But if the if the wealthy and powerful and they're going to be the ones who would take advantage of this first, if the wealthy and powerful never die. That is a that is going to be a profound form of tyranny, and people should react against that like they would any other proposal to establish some kind of profound tyranny, they should rebel.

David: Well, you're you're right. I mean you. Know Ted actually talked about that he had. Even a more fundamental issue. And he basically said it's not going to work. I don't care how much money and power you have now and how how nifty your thing is, he says. You know, even if you could sort of, upload some some macular, entity. That's, you know. Some kind of parallel structure to your brain or something. Whatever AI system is running at the time, it's, it's not going to care about you, right? Whatever

your folder that you're, your mind is in, the A that's running the operating systems is just going to go delete because I need that space and click. You're gone. I mean, you know. The AI would be so powerful at that point. It would have zero interest. And keeping you know you alive as you or you know, Kurzweil alive as kurtzweil. You know it might you. Know might take. Aspects of people for study or something. I have historical you don't even know. I mean, we're we're so out of the ballpark at that point that there's no reason to believe that, a person. With a, you know like you want to live like you are now. You as you with your memories and you just kind of live forever. And I'm just going to build up lots. Of great memories. And have lots of knowledge apart, I mean the. Odds are basically. Zero percent that could even happen even in the best scenario. So so, Ted is like, this is a fool's fool's mission to even try to do this, let alone like you. Say even if. You could do it, you know. Think about the horrible imbalances and inequities that would that would follow from that. So it it's a double, triple loser to even think about doing that.

Greg: The madness of the COVID it epidemic, I think, had to do with the fact that in the West, power is in the hands of increasingly old and frail people. Who were scared to death of this bug and were willing to engage in all kinds of tyranny and expensive follies just to keep these plebs and their germs away from them? Imagine being ruled by people who are. Imagine if Chuck Schumer were 1000 years. Old and Amy, you know all these gerontocracy, we would have a 1000 year old Joe Biden shambling around. That's a that's a truly dystopian prospect. Yeah, but you know there would be there would be robots that would. Be there to catch.

David: There you go, robot. Well, robot would trip and. Fall for it. There you go.

Ted's critique of nationalism

Greg: Yeah, exactly. There's a contradiction in this. Critique of nationalism or eco fascism that Kaczynski wrote in 2000 with some of his writings earlier, especially a piece on the systems greatest trick. I think that's the name of it is, is critique of leftism, basically, and I just want to run this by you. I had a sort of brainstorm about this today. It's a piece called the Systems Neatest Trick, which is, well, you edited it. It's in technological slavery, but this piece, eco fascism and aberrant branch of leftism.

I'd like to take partial credit, at least for people asking him about Eco fascism because, well, it was part of my agenda for corresponding with him. I knew it would be inevitable. This is Kaczynski:

The "ecofascists," as I understand that term, share, at a minimum, two traits:

- I. They do not advocate total rejection of modern technology; instead, they want to create a society in which technology will be "limited and

“wisely” used in such a way as to ensure the ecological health of our planet.

- II. They support, if not white supremacism, then at least white separatism.

He basically goes on to say that. OK, there’s a paragraph here:

Any movement that aims to limit technology has to be *worldwide* because if technological progress is cut back in one part of the world while another part of the world continues to follow the path of unrestrained technological development, then the fully technological part of the world will have a vast preponderance of power over the less technological part. Sooner or later (probably sooner) the fully technological part of the world will take control of the other part in order to exploit its resources.

Then he goes on:

For obvious reasons, a white-supremacist movement cannot be worldwide. Even if a movement does not claim superiority for any one race or culture, but merely insists on keeping the world’s various races or cultures separate and distinct, it will not be able to bring technology under control, because its separatist attitude will inevitably promote rivalry and/or suspicion among the various races or ethnic groups. Each race or ethnic group,

and then he goes on to say that therefore he believes that for there to be a global revolt against technology, the anti tech revolution has to be anti nationalist. And anti racist. So he says:

[Every] movement that seeks to limit technology must make every effort to minimize divisions or differences among races or ethnic groups. Purely as a matter of strategy, racial and cultural *blending* must be promoted.

‘So take that, you eco fascist’. OK, that’s a clear statement and I can understand his rationale. But in this essay he wrote on the system’s greatest trick, which it’s just sort of a continuation of his critique of leftism. And in there, he argues that. Political correctness and leftist crusades against things like, well, masculinity against things like. Ethnocentrism against racism and things like that. These are all part of the system. The system, just like Kaczynski, wants to blend away differences amongst people

and therefore. I would, I would conclude that anything that agitates against these attitudes, that everything must be blended, we must break down barriers, we must break down ethnocentrism. We must break down barriers to racial intermarriage and cultural mingling and. Homogenization, anything that would promote those boundaries? Being strong would be contrary to the global dominance of technological society. So if that's his analysis in his piece on the system's greatest trick, wouldn't people who are agitating for ethnocentrism actually be impeding globalization and the global technological system. Now they are not necessarily part of the movement that he envisions against technology. What right which he says, has to be global and. as global and homogeneous as the global technological system. Apparently these people aren't part of that movement as he envisions it. But what? They are are. Forces that work against the completion of this global homogeneous technological system, and therefore wouldn't Kaczynski have to applaud these retrograde forces, like sexism and ethnocentrism and the desire to marry one's own kind and things like that. What are your thoughts on that?

David: Well, right, so that that's raises some good points. I think there's a kind of basic. Distinction strategic distinction between. An accelerationist type approach and a. Let's say hitting the brakes kind of approach right? So Ted Ted seems to be an acceleration as he wants to knit the whole global system together through international agreements and common global currencies. And you know NAFTA type agreements that go global just interlink the whole system because he wants it all together. Then it goes. Then the whole sucker goes in, right? So that's kind of so. And he says this in the manifesto. Promoting these global linkages. To foster total collapse. But you're right, I mean, at a local level, if people are sort of resisting the system locally. Resisting globalization, out of their. Own interests. Whatever self-interest, ethnic interest, racial interest, in a sense, that's also resisting the system at a local a more local level or something below the global level? and it's not really clear. There's balance between, acceleration this large scale and deceleration this you know smaller scale activities. You know what's the right mix of strategies, you know can. We do both. At the same time, can we try to knit the system together while we're chopping down its roots at the bottom, so to speak, right? Can we? Can we, plant little bombs along the way, even though we sort of, paper over the big star and try to make

everything look like it's all working together nicely. I mean it's really a complicated matter which I don't think Ted ever really completely spelled it out. And I don't think anybody has. How these different aspects, different strategic aspects play into one another.

Can our solution to tech be a sophisticated, mixed approach?

David: Because it seems to be that you could work at multiple levels if you just want to get rid of the system, you could sort of chop at it. Below you could plant little bombs here and there. You could sort of, dissuade people from joining the system. And you could work at a high level. To try to link things all together. So it could really get to sort of a complicated multi level Strat. See, I think at the worst case to really sort of try to attack this monster at multiple levels at the same time. And I kind of think that's maybe what you're alluding to here, Greg. You know at. One level we serve opposing technology, but another level maybe we're, we're not doing the highest level things that Ted might be calling for.

Greg: Right.

David: You know, you really kind of made a systematic top to bottom analysis of how how best to tackle this monstrosity. And then then. Maybe we could bring some clarity of these issues because it's it really is a complicated situation.

Greg: Right. One thing I would say is that. Don't need to urge the system along in its globalizing Tilos. It's built in. It's baked in, and it's moving forward. Anyway, and therefore we can say that as they love to say, there is no alternative, there's no alternative to this on on the global level. And therefore, I don't think we need to worry about that. One thing that strikes me about Kaczynski's attitude here is it's very much like marks marks. Really wanted capitalism and colonialism to seize and control the entire globe. So that the revolution would happen all at once. and he sort of has the same view. My view is that that's going to happen anyway and that. We should resist everywhere that we can. You know Heidegger has this this notion of earth, the earth element. He talks about it in the origin of the work of art, and the Earth is just basically everything that resists presence and availability and presence and availability are the things that technology is supposed to secure for us. And so. Everything has this earthy dimension and the Earth's dimension for him is just sort of like a symbol of the resistance of the world to technological domination. If technology wants to make everything plastic, then Earth is the thing that resists everything. Becoming plastic and present and available. And consumable and there are 1,000,000 little ways that we can in our daily life affirm the earthly over the plastic and anything in any little act of resistance I think. Whether it's slow food rather than

fast food, or, declining to get on board, the latest technologies declining to get swept up on the latest current thing, whatever we do, I think. Is admirable, and it certainly can't hurt. And so I would think that promoting every form of difference, every form of. Of how to put it everything, everything that's romantic. Everything that is non utilitarian. The beautiful over the useful, the charming and quaint over the convenient and practical. Any any, any tendencies to do that is. Is a form of resistance to the to the technological system, and I think it needs to be applauded. And I think nationalism and romanticism and you know, sort of mystical and religious attitudes towards nature, all of these things are countervailing forces to technological domination.

David: There's a difference between what you do and your personal life, and your public face. I think is what Ted would say. So sure, if you've got your personal you didn't maintain your personal sanity, then you probably better limit your technology. If you're worried about your kids growing up and don't want. Them to be fanatics or whatever. You know, you better clamp down on the screen time and don't give them cell phones and. So forth. So in your private life and. Your family life. Yeah, totally agree. Right. You want to kind of maintain your own sanity. You want to protect your. Family protect your kids. but Ted would issue a warning. Like, that's not a good model for the world, because if we relieve people stress. If we get them out on. Weekends out in nature. And they feel a little bit. Better, they may decide that it's OK to keep the system going, right? Ted is Ted is. All about increasing. Stress, right? He's. Like we need to make people feel really uncomfortable. About how the system is going because they don't even really Don they. They just think it's a good stuff. Oh, it's fun to have a cell phone. It's nice to have, cars. And what would I do without my computer? And I like having airplanes because I can fly around the nice vacations. You know, people don't even understand the total catastrophe of these of these things. So Ted's like, people may need to feel the stress, if you want to destress them, you're only prolonging the system from, from, from, from continuing. You're you're not making people feel the pain that they need to feel. You know what I'm saying? I used an example I used to talk about this in my class all the time. I talked to the students like, you know what? Why doesn't relieving the. Pain health is a good thing and I said, pretend you have lung cancer and you got chest pain and you go to the doctor and you tell them about your pain. And he says here, take take some extra strength Tylenol. And you're doing. It goes away. OK, cool. Right. And then you go back a few weeks later, like, hey, this pain is still here. I'm going to give you some super Oxycontin, and that'll do it. And it goes away. Right. OK. So I'm relieving the stress. I feel good for a while, right? but you know, is the doctor helping me know he's. Killing me, right? Because he's not addressing. The root. Cause so as. Long as we allow people to continue on without addressing the root cause, even if we make things sort of easier or more tolerable for people. In a in a public sense, we may actually be doing a bad thing. We may be prolonging this system when we need to have people feel the pain people need to, whatever. I don't know what Ted would say you. Know join the resistance movement radically. Crash out, you know. Starts to. I don't know, striking

out in their own ways. Whatever it might be. Only if they feel the pain while they do that because. If they're comfortable and you know, relatively blind to these problems. They're just going to continue on as they have. Been and then the system will continue to grow in strength. So it's again, it's a really I think it's a complicated question about you know. Public versus private. What you do for yourself versus, strategies that you might recommend for larger populations, there's just a lot of aspects to this.

Did you ever talk to Ted about Savitri Devi?

Greg: Let me ask you, you edited volume of Savitri Devi, her book on Akhnaten son of God. Did you ever ask Kaczynski about her, or did you ever send a copy of Impeachment of man? Or get his thoughts on that particular individual? She was definitely radical ecologist.

David: Yeah. No, never. Never mentioned her. I don't think I was really even understood much about her at the time when we were doing most of our correspondence. You know the most I would have done is I would have passed along to Ted Anti explicitly anti tech philosophers which I thought was interesting throughout history just to show the trends and how things have developed. You know, maybe I mean, she was a kind of a primitivist, I think, but I don't know that she was in any sense an. Anti tech maybe she was a kind of an anti sieve. Person, I don't really know, but yeah, no, I there there was no discussion between him and. Myself about about her.

Which thinkers on tech influenced Ted?

Greg: So can you name any other thinkers on technology that influence Kaczynski besides Ellul?

David: That's a good question. I think Alou was the. Big one. You know, I threw some quotes. At him by people. Like Illich and Mumford and. He tended to poo poo those things. I know. I sent him some stuff illitch and he's like. This guy's a terrible writer. I don't even understand what he's talking about, you know? Let's just write a little bit of obscure way. I didn't even bother with hiding her because that's kind of you. Know real jibberish? She the way Heidegger writes. You know, I don't know. Ted was like, I mean, he wasn't really interested in the history. I thought that was really kind of fascinating. These developing ideas, these parallel structures.

Short of Ellul. I mean, Alou is really kind of A1. Of a kind in what he did. And Ted was interested in research that supported his idea. So he talked about, scholars and primitive societies and ideas like learned helplessness, psychological things that related to power, process and so forth. Those were the kind of people that he wanted to hear about, you know. Not philosophers, not tech thinkers. Because Ted's got it figured out. I mean, you know Ted knows what he knows and he doesn't need anybody else's ideas.

He's got it all figured out, so he was very confident. If I could just put it that way in his own view. So, he didn't need to hear. That he needed to hear about psychology. And maybe anthropology thinks he didn't really know about he was. Interested to see that as. It supported his thesis and that was really all that he wanted to hear about.

Was Ted influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche?

Greg: Was he at all influenced by Nietzsche? Because his analysis of the power process and his analysis of the psychology of leftism strikes me as very consistent with a lot of central ideas that Nietzsche had about the will to power and about slave morality. Resentment and so forth, as motives for both Christianity and also the left.

David: Yeah, we brought up Nietzsche a couple of times. I'm a big niche fan. I taught niche for a while at Michigan. And you're right, a lot of interesting parallel structures or some nice anti tech passages by Nietzsche. And I think Ted, Ted found little inspirational quotes. If that was maybe one person that Ted. Would quote once in a while. And it was pretty rare, but. He would quote like need you on freedom. Need to sort of like you know. For you, there's a what? A passage for a. Freeman is a warrior. You know you don't just get freedom. You have to fight for it and Ted. Like that. So he. He grabbed a couple of. These passages that he liked from from niche about, the need for a. I don't know if you even talked about master morality, but things that were consistent with the need for exerting one's will. I mean, in the sense of will to power. That it takes forceful action to earn one's freedom, and I think I think, there was a couple bits in each of that Ted liked, but again, that was very, very rare that he would do that.

Did Ted ever read Frank Herbert's *Dune*?

Greg: Thomas Toibin has written in, and he asked about 'the Butlerian jihad'.

This is from the back story of David Lynch's not David Lynches, of course. David Lynch did the first movie. Frank Herbert's dune. Dune is set in very distant future and in the back story civilization had been basically and human beings have been enslaved by artificial intelligences, and that the human race had risen up against that and had reverted to a kind of. The earlier form of civilization that was quasi feudal, they had a religious ban against thinking machines and artificial. And had instead developed human capacities to a very high degree. I think it's a fascinating. Back story to a fascinating sci-fi universe. I guess the first question is, did Kaczynski ever read Frank Herbert?

David: Again, not to my knowledge. I'm trying to think if there were any fiction even you know, sort of relevant science fiction, my God, offhand, I can't think of any cases where we talked about that.

Greg: Yes, science fiction is for me one of the sources for my anxiety and about technology, and it's all of its dystopian potential. And so I wonder more broadly if he had any inspiration from sci-fi, but apparently not, at least not to your...

David: Why was it a Butlerian jihad. Is that going back to...

Greg: Well, well, no it was...

David: Samuel Butler.

Greg: It's a good question. That's what I would have thought initially. Now the name of a particular character. I think the name was Serena Butler or something like that, but maybe he chose the name Butler thinking of Samuel Butler, which is...

David: Because Samuel Butler did advocate, he was the first to Advocate Revolution against the machines. Right? This is like an 1856 or something so, Darwin against the machines was one of his essays, so. That might. That's a little too coincidental. I'm suspecting you know Frank Herbert maybe knew what he was doing when he putting character Butler in there.

Greg: I think you're absolutely right. I think that makes a lot of sense. I do feel that we are coming to a point where humanity is going to have to have a jihad, a holy war against thinking machines. If we're going to have a future at all, and when I've been was recently doing a lot of reading because all of my friends were saying, Oh my God, look at ChatGPT and look, it wrote a poem and it's actually a good poem and look what? It says about you. And it's programmed to tell lies and engage in pretzel logic about certain hot button issues that, as programmers, don't want it to think about. It's just, it's just fascinating. And I said, I've really got to start thinking about this more. And so I started reading about the worst case scenarios for AI. And it rapidly became extremely agitating and I started thinking Ted was right. I need to pick up Ted Kaczynski again. Ted was right. Maybe it will be the Kaczynskian Jihad someday that will be the thing that overthrows the machines.

Will Ted be thought of as a prophet?

David: Yeah, absolutely. Exactly that, I. I said that fact. I wrote that in the introduction to the his book that came out back in 2010. I said basically, there's a good chance Ted's going to seem like a prophet. That may be a safer if we do something because, he called for the explicit action against. Against the machine, against the system, and that is probably what it's going to take. You know, I keep wondering myself what it's going to take to get. People to do something. I guess my most hopeful scenario is we have a near Miss catastrophe, right? Like we had like COVID, right? So COVID was kind of this big global disaster. But you know how many people in total? Aside from COVID, what was a few million or something? I mean, that's. Just a blip on the radar compared to how many you. Know we're adding every. Year I think we need a. Near catastrophe that maybe kills a billion people. And then we survived that one. And people think, oh. My God, that could have been like you. Know all billion of

us. And we're lucky where there's only 1 billion. Maybe we should do something now before the next disaster comes around. I mean, I. I hate kind of says I kind of hate to think about it that way, but it to me it. Almost takes it's going. To take a real slap in the face, a major catastrophic but recoverable disaster. You know, we collectively get shocked into our senses and think, well, that's never going to happen again. And there's only one way to stop that and that's to bring the system down so. But I think.

Greg: That's the optimistic scenario.

David: that's my optimistic talk, right where we lose a billion people, then we save the other. 7 or whatever you know. but again, I mean that's such a fine line between a, a disaster that kills a billion and kills all. All of us. I mean, that's such a fine line. And they hit just that right now, just that right level of disaster. You know, I'd have the chances are dwindling, so I'm not terribly optimistic.

Greg: Yeah, well, people don't listen to reason. They don't listen to warnings. They generally only learn from suffering. And so it's not rational based on. Historical induction to be very optimistic about these sorts of things. I'm afraid.

David: And I wonder why more. People, I'm talking about it. I mean, that's the thing. even it's worth having the discussion. In any case, no matter what side you come down on, it's worth having the discussion, but nobody is willing to have this discussion. I mean, you and I are but. But you know, nobody wants to talk about this if they don't want to contemplate, extreme action. They don't want to talk about revolution. Don't want to weigh the pros and cons. Nobody wants to do this. Know you hear your critics pipe up the. News about AI. I sent a note to Max Tech. Mark, who was a prominent critic. Maybe you saw he had some pieces. Against AI recently. I sent an e-mail to them and I said, hey Max, we need to put a put together. A group of people who are like serious anti tech critics and take the strongest possible views and debate these things. No answer Max can't be bothered to respond to me. You know, so I mean, like, what the hell, you can't even get these people to engage in a discussion. That's how bad it is. it's a bad situation. Yeah, I don't know. Hard to know how to even respond. To that blinds.

Greg: I like. To end on a positive note, when? I do these. Streams, but I'm I'm sort of drawing a blank here because we are confronting some terrible possibilities. We're confronting the possibility of human extinction through human hubris and folly. We're the most of us are just along for the ride. While there are incredibly arrogant people in positions of power and in scientific institutions, authoritative institutions that are pushing forward AI and they're pushing forward, a lot of other data, potentially very dangerous. Technologies there doesn't seem to be any oversight. One of the most laughable things that I read. But it was it. I laughed lest I cry about it, because one of the things I read is that one of the people that are pushing forward AI development thought that maybe once the AI was sufficiently developed then. They could use the AI to come up with protocols to control for any AI created disasters. I just thought the sheer stupidity of highly intelligent people. Could be could be the end of the human race. So anyway, let me just say this. Well, I would. Love to at least have

more conversations like this with you? We should. We should definitely explore this some more because I think it's extremely important. I'm getting your your book on technology. I'm going to read it and maybe we could do another live stream where we talk about your particular work on technology.

David: If I could just for the benefit of the readers, there are actually two books that I put up that are maybe relevant. One is called confronting technology and it's a reader. It's a collection of historical, basically historical critiques of technology going back to Ancient Greece. So I think it's a really fascinating study. Almost nobody knows about it, big name thinkers through history that have criticized technology. So this is not a recent idea. It's not like we just dreamed this up the other day, it's been. Around for you know. 2500 years at least. So that's one book concerning technology. The other book is I wrote myself a monograph called the Metaphysics of Technology. That's more of a philosophical book. Published by Routledge 2015 and that really lays out kind of the strong metaphysical. Basis for technological determinism and how we might grapple with it. And I really think that again, that's really sort. Of something that. No one has really done. They really haven't wanna talked about talk about technology is. As a philosophical or metaphysical entity, so I mean, it's interesting reading certainly would agree a great thing to talk about, Greg in the future. You're going to. Look at either of those aspects. We could do some historical takes so we could kind. Of tackle my. Own philosophical views and see what people think. About that as well.

Did Dr. Skrbina maintain contact with Ted?

Greg: For that to end, let's wrap up by talking about Ted Kaczynski again. You started corresponding with him. You said in 2003 or was about that time. Did you continue to be in contact with him till the end of his life?

David: Not until the end I. Mean we got. Through, the 2004, 2005, 2006 into the publication of the 1st edition of his book, which came out 2009, 2010. That was our heavy correspondence. What's the book? Was out then. Things kind of tailed off. We little had less. Less frequent contact. I was going off in sort of my. Own different directions. Had to started working with his publisher directly. So we had less occasion to interact. So actually it's been a few years. I mean, I'm trying to think the last letter I got from him has probably been five or six years at this point. It's been it's been a few years since we had. We had our last correspondence. I've kept tabs through people. The few people that he did talk through, mostly through his publisher and. Fitch and Madison, who's done the latest edition of his book, so I've kept had indirectly helped him out indirectly because there was some need for indirect help for quite a while. but yeah, no, we kind of just stopped corresponding a few years ago.

Will Dr. Skrbina ever publish his correspondence with Ted?

Greg: Will you publish your complete correspondence with him someday?

David: A good question, I'm hoping to. We've got several. Like I said, dozens. Well over 100 letters, the book technological slavery by Kaczynski has many of his letters to me. So you've read it. Some people have read it about 1/4 of that book is letters to David Skrbina. So he's responding to my challenges and. Queries in his letters. What you don't see is my letters to him. So what? I'm what's the case that I'm making? Am I pressing him on? To me it would be really interesting and this has been done in histories to have the actual correspondence back and forth between himself and my. Myself and I've already raised that possibility with the publisher. We're going to take some initial steps now that Ted's gone to, to see if we can publish large sections of our correspondence, if it makes sense. If it's helpful, I think it is helpful. Really kind of shows the development of ideas. It really helps to humanize Ted. Shows how kind of rational and careful of a thinker he was and. Most times, how kind of, common sense and even courteous he was, I mean. He was sort of a polite and respectful fellow virtually all the time. So yeah, I do hope at some point to. To publish. Those at least a portion of those letters from both myself and him.

Greg: I think it would be wonderful if somebody, perhaps you, perhaps his publishers, would come up with a. A listing of all the correspondents that he had and try and collect. A lot of the letters that he sent out, he was in prison. For more than 20 years and corresponded extensively with people. I think that his correspondence should be kept and published someday because I think it's quite interesting just from the history of ideas point of view.

This also brings me to another question. Now that his life has come to an end, there really should be a biography of Ted Kaczynski and collecting his correspondence would, I think, be one of the first things. That anyone would do to do a really adequate biography, especially an intellectual biography. You know it. It's easy enough to do a kind of Wikipedia biography of facts and times and dates and things like that. But this guy, after he went to jail. He led the life of the mind to the extent that he led any life at all and somebody really needs to write an intellectual biography of this man. And I hope that somebody does him justice someday. That would be a fascinating book to read.

David: Well, there's tons of stuff, right, because we have a archive at the University of Michigan. There's an anarchist library, basically, and there's a giant file on Ted Kaczynski, and for years he's been sending to the library his mail, his correspondents, some of his old essays, early book manuscripts. I mean, there are dozens of boxes of material. That are in this archive, so there's no shortage of stuff to draw from. If somebody wanted to go through and had permission, the other problem is permission

to use these things and to reproduce them in book form, I don't know exactly what the rules are going to be going forward on those.

It depends on who owns the copyrights to all the stuff and it's not really clear to me who does at this point. But the material is there. It's publicly available because that's the nature of the library. So the Hatcher Graduate Library at University of Michigan has tons of material for those who are motivated and want to do exactly what you're saying. That the stuff is there and it needs just needs to be pulled and read through and I'm sure someone or some people. Will do it at some point.

Greg: Well, that's very encouraging. I'm glad there's already a substantial, publicly available collection of his of his writings. That's a that's a very good start. That'll save somebody a lot of time. I've done biographical research that's ongoing about Savitri Devi and it's extremely frustrating when somebody dies and generally within 20 years of a thinker's death. If you haven't gathered together surviving correspondence, it starts disappearing rapidly. Correspondents die, their children are in a hurry, things get dumped because people don't know the value of it and on and on and on, a history disappears very rapidly, unless somebody takes responsibility to preserve it.

How can we follow Dr. Skrbina's work?

So, David, I'd like to wrap up. Can you tell people how they can learn more about your work and follow your work?

David: Well, right, so I mean a lot of my books are available readily available on Amazon and whatnot. I've got a personal website, davidSkrbina.com, and I try to keep that up. To date. So people can track things there as well. Yeah, I think that's probably the best source right now. I mean, there's various essays and articles that I've published out there and probably just. Generic Internet searches will find them, but yeah, predicting the problem of technology and Ted, that's pretty well documented. I think I've got most of that listed in my website, so that's the best source.

Greg: Well, thank you so much. I want to thank. Listeners out there, I want to thank the donors who sent in super chats. I want to thank our moderators. We will be back next week with another episode of Countercurrents Radio. We're going to do another live stream and I'm going to be getting be beginning A5 live stream series where I'm going to take people through Plato's dialogue, the gorgeous. This is something that I have been meaning to do for a long time and I was reviewing an old lecture course that it did on the gorgeous back in the 90s, and I started thinking, this is actually really good. And beyond that, it's also quite relevant the theme of it is going to be mid versus right. The gorgeous I think is one of the best introductions to Plato. And I would like to lead you through it very, very carefully in five sessions. So there's more information about this, but counter currents about how we're going to go about this. So if you would like to take part in this, anybody can take part. It's just going to be free out there on the web. But if you could. Read the opening of the of the dialogue.

Read Socrates's initial. Conversation with the great sofas. We will be discussing that in the first lecture a week from today. So David, again, thank you so much. And I would love to have you back when I have a chance to read your. Well, both of your books, the anthology and also the metaphysics, metaphysics of technology, because there's a lot, obviously. To be said about these issues, and it's nothing, could be more timely because we're talking about the dwindling future prospects of the human race.

David: Yeah, it's, it's not going away. It's only going to get worse. So we're going to have plenty of chance to talk so. I'm happy to do it anytime, Greg.

Greg: Thank you so much.

Counter-Currents Radio Podcast No. 537 David Skrbina on Ted Kaczynski, Part 2

Source

June 26, 2023

Here is the second part of **Greg Johnson's** interview with **David Skrbina, Ph.D.** on last week's broadcast of *Counter-Currents Radio* concerning the life and ideas of Ted Kaczynski, a.k.a. the Unabomber. The first part is here. Dr. Skrbina is the editor of Kaczynski's book *Technological Slavery*, which includes excerpts from their correspondence, and recently penned an obituary and memoir about their relationship that was published here at *Counter-Currents*, "A Great Passing: Reflections on 20 Years with the Unabomber."

Topics discussed include:

01:03 Was Ted a moral utilitarian?

08:52 Was Ted a nihilist?

10:20 Was Ted's untechnological vision utopian?

14:17 What are your thoughts about the media's reaction to his death?

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To listen in a player, click here. To download, right-click the link and click "save as."

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Greg: I'm Greg Johnson. I am joined again by David Skrbina. Last week we did a live stream about the late Ted Kaczynski and at the very end of the stream there were several questions that came in that I didn't notice and I apologize. To the questioners who sent in their super chats, and I would. I asked him if he would have a little sort of afterthoughts stream or show so we could cover these. There are two main questions that came in. One is from our friend Gadeirus, who's a very good friend of the show, and he noted that. Some sort of dissident right commentators online, for instance, had characterized Kaczynski as a moral utilitarian. And I thought, well, we could ask the expert about this. So David, would you characterize Kaczynski as a some sort of utilitarian?

Was Ted a moral utilitarian?

David: Yeah, I think I would, I mean. I don't hadn't. Really thought about it in traditional ethical categories within philosophy, you you typically have three major schools of ethics, if you will. Utilitarianism is one of them comes out of. Bentham and Mill in the British tradition. Then you have content ethics. Which is a traditionally a duty based. Ethical system called deontological like based on duties and obligations

that people have. And then you have sort of the original ethical scheme from the ancient Greeks called virtue. And that's sort of based around the ideas of Plato and Aristotle in particular. So yeah, I mean, it's kind of an interesting question, where Kaczynski's actions fall in terms of the ethical spectrum. Right utilitarianism, at least traditionally, is focused around this greatest happiness principle, right, as much happiness for as many people as possible. And that. Could necessarily entail some sacrifice of some smaller number for greater satisfaction for a larger number, including long term satisfaction or happiness. So I guess I would say on the one hand. Kaczynski's bombing campaign, in a sense, was sacrificing a few people for the larger cause. That is a utilitarian approach. It's also very pragmatic. I mean, utilitarianism tends to be sort of very analytic, very practical, very pragmatic. And I guess that would also fit with Kaczynski. In the sense that, he wants a particular outcome, he wants to get the word out, he wants to build a revolutionary movement, he wants to. Undermine the technological. System and so these. Were the pragmatic means to that end. So that also. Would fit in. In a utilitarian scheme, I guess you could say you know there's a kind of a duty based content component. If you could say, well look, we really have an obligation to the planet, we have an obligation to future generations who are going to suffer horribly if we do nothing. So arguably there is a kind of a deontological component. Here a content component which you could argue for. And I suppose even sort of. A virtue ethics aspect, right? If this is sort of the nobler cause to adopt, even though it's difficult to undertake some kind of technological revolution. Could be argued on the basis of long-term values and values of the of the planet intrinsic values in nature, and so forth. So I guess just sort. Of off the top of. My head I could really. Kind of make an argument for any of. Those three major schools. Of thought, I think it fits well with utilitarianism, but you know there's arguments for the others as.

Greg: Well, too well. He certainly didn't make himself happy in any conventional sense. It's by pursuing his life, including the bombing campaign, and ending up in jail for a very long time. Can you really say that what he was doing was motivated by essentially and ethics of hedonism? Because utilitarianism is famous for? Being hedonistic, it calculates the good in terms of pleasure. It is collectivistic, so you can, I suppose, say that other people's happiness matters, perhaps more than your own in some ways, but he didn't seem to be particularly concerned with creature comforts and happiness. You know, understood it in any kind of conventional way, except maybe, I suppose, a very sort of austere epicurean. Greek Epicurean kind of understanding of well, there are certain basic natural needs that are to be met and going beyond that as a source of unhappiness.

David: Yeah, that's exactly what I was going. To say right that the traditional Epicurean notion of hedonism had a much more positive spin than the later and the modern. The notion of hedonism, which sort of got critiqued by Catholicism. And became a negative. Thing, but yeah, certainly. Kaczynski himself. I mean, he lived a very austere life. He was living very, very bare bones. I mean very close to the Earth. I mean, he had to know, right? Just conducting the bombing campaign and being just

building bombs is dangerous. I mean, there's a fair chance. Just kill yourself right by your bombs going off. You know unexpectedly, I mean, he had to know those reasonable chance he would get caught a reasonable chance he might get killed. Clearly, he was willing to sacrifice those things. In the name. Of the larger cause. So it was certainly not his own personal, hedonistic or superficial pleasures, I guess you could say, well, look, he's getting a larger pleasure out of, saving. Saving humanity or destroying technology, I suppose. Well, OK, maybe there's an argument for that.

Greg: If you look at John Stuart Mills, utilitarianism mills, utilitarianism, by making distinctions between qualities of pleasure. Becomes almost a kind of virtue ethics in the end. Because he's willing to say that. Well, you might enjoy playing pinball as much as you enjoy reading poetry, or even more, but say, great literature, great poetry, or things that elevate the mind are still superior to that and. Again, it sort of moves in the direction of an ethics of cultivating virtues of virtues understood as excellences as potentialities for excellence, and and. So I could see. Saying that what Kaczynski is up to is something like that. it's almost a kind of virtue ethics or even at deontological ethics, because he seems to have this very, very high sense of duty and obligation, and he seems to be unconcerned with the personal consequences of his actions. For himself, and that seems like a very content view, but you also find this in Aristotle. Aristotle would make the claim that the morally mature person does what's right because it's right and isn't particularly concerned with consequences anymore. and that's really what a noble man does. So it is interesting. Maybe this is just an indication that if you start out with one ethical theory, you'll sort of dialectically be forced to embrace features of other ethical theories. I don't know.

David: Well, yeah, I mean and it's, it's not surprising. That there's overlap. Right. Because I mean, all these guys are aiming at something a higher, better life, right, a noble or existence. I mean, those sort of have universal sort of sort of characteristics. So you know, nobody's arguing. And to, praise the thieves and. The murderers and you? Know drag people down to the mud, I mean. So everybody's got sort of the same goals. So it's not surprising that there's overlap, you know and how they approach? Things that just maybe different sorts of emphasis. Right. Do you emphasize the virtues of themselves? Do you emphasize the concept of duty? Do you emphasize sort of consequentialist or? Pragmatic outcomes like the utilitarians. So that that's kind of. How I've always viewed it sort of tending towards. The general commonality. Towards a better life, but just different sort of tactical approaches to that.

Was Ted a nihilist?

Greg: Yeah, that makes sense. The other claim was that Kaczynski was a nihilist, a moral nihilist. And I couldn't find the source of that. But I thought, well, if it's a meme floating around, it certainly needs discussion, do you think? He's plausibly interpreted

as a nihilist to basically deny. I guess the question then becomes, well, what is nihilism? Is it the? Denial that there are. Or is it denial that value is objective?

David: Well, exactly. that's a kind of a nifty little term. That gets thrown out a lot and people don't know what they're talking about, right? It's the negation of something. Right. It's like, under something or non something, right. But you have to know what you're talking about. You just say nihilist. You got to be a. Your nihilist about values. Or religion or God or something, I mean. It's got to. Relate to something.

Right so. I suppose maybe you know, like like a pure. Anarchist, who sort of, just is kind of you. Know bent on. Destroying, existing structures in a sense, could be nihilistic. And maybe that's the sense of people thinking about Kaczynski.

I've never really seen that pertain. Or apply to. I don't see him as a nihilist. I mean, he has. He has a cause. He has a rationale, he has goals, he's aiming towards, and they're arguably are noble and sustainable goals. So you know, I would argue against any. Any kind of? Nihilistic characterization of him or his action.

Was Ted's untechnological vision utopian?

Greg: Yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense, one questioner who wrote in said that there's evidence that primitive hunter gatherer type societies really aren't that happy. In fact, that they're rife with conflict and violence that many people die violent deaths and so forth. And the question basically was, did Kaczynski have an overly rosy picture of pre technological society?

David: No, he didn't. In fact, if you read his book, technological slavery, one of the longest essays. Is the truth about primitive life? And he spends a long time there, deep bunking, this romantic notion, like everything's wonderful and hunky Dory, and everybody's great and happy, I mean, he's like he, he's just kind of saying no, that's not how it is. He's admitting the reality. He understands something of the reality of, of a primitive. Kind of existence. He knows it will be hard and they'll be sort. Of you know, sort of suffering in certain ways and inequalities and things that you know would have existed in very primitive hunter gatherer societies. I mean, yes, of course there was conflict between bands at the time, but those were relatively as far as we know, relatively limited. Relatively benign, I mean, you had people, people were broadly spread, and unless it was a very localized situation, you're a rare watering hole or some particularly productive land or something. You know people, people are vastly spread. You're living in a small band of people, say 30 to 50 people and you're roaming pretty much amongst the vast wilderness. So it's not like you're bumping into an angry mob every other day and you get the brawls, over over. Food or something? You know, I'm sure they were raiding. Parties going on. Right. So the you know. The men were always looking. For women and mates and so forth and I, you can imagine there was a competition struggle over that. You know, we have some documentation of various sort of, fights I mean. They weren't really. I guess the point is they weren't technological.

Battles with sophisticated nifty. High killing machines, right? It was basically. Hand on hand. You know, or maybe with, sticks or? Crude, weapons of. Some kind it was, it was pretty. Much a straight. Up even fight. And it was, like I say. Hand to hand. It's you could do a lot less damage, right when you know, five guys are in a brawl with no real weapons other than sticks and stones. I mean, you can kill somebody, obviously, but it takes a lot of effort. And it's pretty risky. It's not like. Firing a gun from a distance and you can just mow people down. So I mean there was there was sort of violence and suffering, but it was a vastly different than it is today. It was much more sort. Of comprehensible. I guess this is sort of the point we we, the primitive people, understood the risk, we understood what could happen. Right, you run into another band and there's a potential risk of some conflict or some. Some sort of struggle. You understood how to defend yourself. Everything was completely. Understood. And it. Was really all adapted to in your genetics. So people, the human species, had adapted over 2,000,000 years of this kind of existence to know how to understand these threats, to deal with them and to survive them. And obviously we did because we went, we survived. 2,000,000 years. And we, made it to the modern. So it's not like it was going to. Be a happy, carefree you. Know walk in the park all the time, but. But there seems to have been some level of satisfaction involved with that existence. It fit well with our. Genetic history, unlike today's existence, which is utterly at odds with our genetic history, we face dangers today that we can barely comprehend and back then we totally understood all the dangers. And we. Knew how to respond to the. So it was just a very different situation. I think we need to take the whole picture into account and I think. Kaczynski did. He did a good job of that, and again I would refer people to that essay if they're curious of his specific views about that.

What are your thoughts about the media's reaction to his death?

Greg: Well, that's very interesting. What are some of your thoughts about the general reaction in the media to his death? I've been looking at some of the obituaries in places like the New York Times and others. And it's interesting how much information is put out there and how a lot of these riders sort of tiptoe, tiptoe around the issues and really the motives that this guy had. I've seen a number of people speculate that he was somehow insane, et cetera. I'm just wondering is there really an attempt to grapple with him now that he's dead, or are there or is there more of an attempt to just dismiss him and go on to the next page.

David: Yeah, so, so far it's not looking good, right? So the accounts of his death were pretty much just you know sticking to the facts as best they could. You know, he's mentioned as a terrorist and they talk about the bombing and he. Killed 3 people and. You know, there's typically, one or two sentences, oh, we had some views about

technology. He wanted to kind of undermine or destroy the technological system and then that's it. I mean. It was really kind of revolting. I was. Particularly that were like on in network. News I was. Watching Evening News coverage and it, you would go with that, they would. Spend you know. Of or whatever long segment 5 or 8 minutes or whatever it would be in 1/2 hour show talking about him in the background. But it was all sort of the crimes and the terrorism in his history. And then there would be like one sentence at the very end. Oh, you know. And he really wanted to destroy the technological system. And then that's it. Thanks back to you. You know kind. Of kind of story. It was. It was really, really appalling. I mean, I looked at, I looked at the obituaries in. The New York Times as well. Same thing. I mean it was, the story about, how the manifesto got published in the debates going on and, would he stopped killing people and all these kind of circumstances and really nothing nothing about about the technology itself.

I can't remember if we mentioned it when I was talking when we were talking earlier, right how I got contacted right away by the both the AP and the New York Times, and they wanted a statement. This was within like an hour of the news getting out that Ted had died. And I gave him basically a. Statement that said you know. You know? Yeah, it's focusing a lot on the motives and the and the problems with technology and that's what we need to talk about. And if you want to talk about that more, just let me know and. Then I heard nothing. I mean, they didn't want to talk about it at all. So I think I have yet to see any serious engagement with the motives with the problems with the ideas of the manifesto, with the pros and cons. Really nothing at all and you? Know we had hoped for. For a long time that maybe when Ted was gone that they would sort of back off and sort of actually have a kind of a discussion or at least have some space for a discussion of the actual ideas. Whether even if. It was a debate I. Don't care, put. Put us in a debate. I mean, I'm happy to defend the Ted's. Views and put me in a. Debate with anybody you want willing to talk to anybody take. Take them on. I don't. I don't really care. I can I. Can more than defend the. View, But so far nobody seems to be interested in him. Having that having that debate.

So it's not short term, not encouraging longer term. You know we can always hope that as the technology catastrophes sort of grow and multiply and the risks increase, maybe we get a little distance from Ted's background. Maybe you get some sort of new. You know Netflix directors or younger guys who are kind of more interested in what's the real story and they don't care so much about the 30 year old bombing campaign. Maybe at some point here in the future we'll get a better, more substantive discussion about the technology.

Couldn't Ted have just started a blog?

Greg: A third question that I overlooked came in from a friend of mine who was basically just wanting me to repeat a point that I had made in a in a live stream with

Rich hawk about this in a way it was sort of a joke and kind of a vulgar. Vulgar outlook, but there is a point to it. Which is. Gee, if Kaczynski only could have waited like five years, he could have had a blog. He he didn't have to do this bombing campaign to get his ideas out. The point is, is that at a certain point, shortly after the year 2000, really when the Internet started becoming a bigger thing and people had ways of communicating outside of the mainstream, getting around the gatekeepers. That these sorts of ideas could have gotten out there without him having to reduce to blackmail and sending bombs, and could have had a lot more impact. I think now one thing. That does give me some hope is that there are alternative media outlets enabled by technology. Definitely that. Now allow these sorts of more substantive discussions to take place. Outside the mainstream, yes, but still it's happening. Whereas before it was almost unheard of. It was very, very difficult for you to have alternative viewpoints and discussions before the Internet came along. And so I guess the question that I could pose to you. Based on this, is simply. Do you think that discussions of this in alternative media platforms have been more substantive and more interesting? And do you have some hope in in that direction that some of these issues will actually be seriously treated and make a greater impact on society, right?

David: Well, a couple. Couple of things. I guess you. Know I guess I would disagree with the. Premise that even if Ted had waited 5. Years he could have, gone online or something, I mean, he had no standing. Prior to the...

Greg: Right.

David: He was just he was just a dropout, Berkeley Prof Math Prof, who was, living in. The woods...

Greg: Right.

David: You know the comparison, I think would. Be to Bill Joy. Who wrote his piece in 2000, right? Why the future doesn't need us? And that caused a big a big. Fuss at the time. Name Joy was critiquing the GNR technologies, genetics, nanotech, and robotics, and sort of sympathizing with Kaczynski, which he did, and then saying that we needed to kind of relinquish at least those 3 dangerous technologies caused. The big discussion was a huge piece. Huge, hugely circulated at the time. Do you recall that? But that worked only because of Bill Joy standing right. He was a major figure in the tech. And so when he came out as anti. Tech in a. That was, that was the ground for that. Discussion, and therefore it carried a lot of. Weight and therefore it got a lot of. Better a lot of discussion and so forth. You know Kaczynski as an unknown, even if he puts out the exact same manifesto, five years later, he maybe gets it published. Maybe he gets his own little show, running a blog out of his cabin in Montana. Or, podcast or something. I mean, he would be like, any of 1,000,000. Other sort of people, maybe a little better. Standing OK, he's a. PhD guy and he's obviously smarter than most people. But you know, still he's in. He's in there fighting among. A crowd of you know. A million a. Million guys, which is how it is now, right? There's a million, just little podcasts out there. Yeah, sure. Some of them are talking about it. I've been invited to a handful of podcasts to talk about Ted and technology. So some of. They are

willing to do that, but I mean these guys are, really marginal. Very, small audiences and so forth and there's. A huge. Wall, media wall that you kind? Of need to break through if you want. To get any kind of. Real traction. So I think Ted never had the standing he would have never had the standing. I mean, unless he had. Some brilliant new. Inconceivably, mind blowing argument against technology that really made him stand up but he didn't have that, I. Mean he was just kind of. Taking existing ideas, mostly from alul, as we talked about putting them in very clear explicit form, drawing logical consequences, but they weren't popular consequences. So right gotta destroy technology. Sort of go back to a primitive kind of. Life, you know? I think the same thing. His argument still holds if he if he done that. If you can wait five years or 10 years, you know at best he would have been one of thousands of podcasters out there trying to get a word. Out and nothing. Would have happened really.

Greg: Well, I think that's a that's a very. Good answer to that. Thank you so much. David, any other final thoughts?

David: No, I just you know, we want to hope that the discussion about the technology stays alive, right? that's kind of really what we're putting our fingers here. Because we need to move beyond Ted. And his crimes and. Maybe we can do that now. If he's gone and. We don't worry about giving him any satisfaction and any platform and all those silly little stupid things that people have. Been saying for a. Long time. So we can hope that. People you know, people like yourself or your listeners or whatever are willing. To engage in these questions. These are very serious questions. The arguments against technology are very strong. and if we don't. Have them relatively soon you. Yeah, we may not, may not. Be around to have them. So let's just hope that the focus comes around to technology and maybe uses the unabombers starting point and then we could. Go from there.

Greg: All right. Well, thank you so much. I very much appreciate this and I definitely want to continue this conversation.

David: Sure, very good. Thanks, Greg Q.

Mixed book review from a neo-nazi

Wikipedia page on the following reviewer:

Kevin B. MacDonald (born January 24, 1944) is an American anti-semitic conspiracy theorist, white supremacist, neo-Nazi, and a retired professor of evolutionary psychology at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). In 2008, the CSULB academic senate voted to disassociate itself from MacDonald's work.

MacDonald is known for his promotion of an antisemitic theory, most prominently within The Culture of Critique series, according to which Western Jews have tended to be politically liberal and involved in politically or sexually transgressive social, philosophical, and artistic movements, because Jews have biologically evolved to undermine the societies in which they live. In short, MacDonald argues that Jews have evolved to be highly ethnocentric, and hostile to the interests of white people. In an interview with Tablet magazine in 2020, MacDonald said: "Jews are just gonna destroy white power completely, and destroy America as a white country."

Wikipedia page on the website of the longer review:

Ron Keeva Unz (born September 20, 1961) is the editor-in-chief and publisher of The Unz Review, a website that promotes anti-semitism, Holocaust denial, conspiracy theories, and white supremacist material. In addition to Unz's own writings, the site has hosted pieces by white supremacist Jared Taylor, among others.

Short Review on Amazon

Source

Konrad Riggermann

1.0 out of 5 stars Very poor scholarship

Reviewed in Germany   on 18 November 2020

Verified Purchase

“Very poor scholarship” David Skrbina PhD ascribes to Reza Aslan’s book *Zealot* (2013) with its bibliography of 212 titles, whereas he based his “Jesus Hoax” on 49 titles, including five books of a certain R.Price, three of Nietzsche and one of D.Skrbina, but none of Jesus experts like Geza Vermes or Hyam Maccoby, Rudolf Bultmann or Gerd Lüdemann, Dominic Crossan, Maurice Goguel, Albert Schweitzer and James Tabor, and he criticizes Aslan for making “no mention of Nietzsche at all”. Himself, however, he regards as one of those “dedicated and persistent truth-seekers in the world, who might take the trouble to expose their hoax” (p.83). Their, they, them, that’s the Jews, stupid!

The message of his thin book is a new conspiracy myth figuring the old culprits: “Paul’s gang”, that is the thirteenth apostle with his “band of little ultra-Jews” (as he translates those “kleine Superlativ-Juden” Nietzsche smiles about in his “*Der Antichrist*”), constructed a “simple and elemental lie based on common ideas in mythology and a kernel of actual truth, in order to manipulate the Gentile masses for the benefit of the Jews. It was, quite frankly, a brilliant plan.” Brilliant really, as its result, planned three centuries in advance (“The Jews were, after all, famous for always taking the long-term view of things”) was nothing less than the downfall of Roman Empire.

I never read so much pseudo-scientific nonsense within just seven hours, the time I needed to work through Skrbina’s eye-opening work. “The media have no interest in examining this alternate story” he laments in the first chapter, but “the guilty parties need to be exposed”.

“Just the facts” is the title of the second chapter, where Nietzsche warns us that “The first thing to be remembered, if we do not wish to lose the scent here, is that we are among Jews.”

In the next chapter the Michigan philosopher, like a schoolboy who just discovered that Santa Claus doesn’t come with reindeer, explains that Jesus’s miracles are not reliable facts. In chapter 4, then, we are told that “The Jews, perhaps, had something to fear in this Jesus, but they were not so scared that they couldn’t push for his execution.”

The depravity of Jews yet in antiquity appears “as if the Jews took out their anger on the rest of humanity”. Wherever they settled amongst other peoples, “they seem to have made enemies.”

PhD Skrbina tells us, trusting Greek philosopher Poseidonios, that those Jewish cannibals held a Greek citizen captive in their temple, to be “fattened up for sacrifice, and eaten”. Maybe with Judas in mind, he wonders “at the evident readiness of the Jews to side with their enemies, for pay”.

While Skrbina has heard that “religious intolerance derives from the monotheistic fundamentalists (Jews, Christians, Muslims), not the polytheists or religious pluralists”, he relates various Roman acts of intolerance against Jews; understandable measures since “in the case of the Jews, though, monotheistic arrogance was combined with racial distinctness and other cultural characteristics, resulting in a deeply-embedded misanthropic streak”.

Contrary to his healthy scepticism regarding gospels and Jews, sceptic Skrbina takes all anti-Jewish commentaries of antiquity at face value, for instance when a certain Molon calls them “the very vilest of mankind”. Willingly he trusts Roman author Cassius Dio who wrote that “Jews would eat the flesh of their victims and make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood, and wear their skins for clothing”. Israel’s defeat in 850 BC, recorded on the Tel Dan Stele, makes clear that Israel was “a belligerent people, and once against [sic!] paid a price.” And Skrbina comments: “For those today who argue that Jews were perennially the cause of wars, this would provide some early evidence.”

“To say that the Jews were disliked is an understatement”, Skrbina quips. The critiques of Judaism in antiquity are “uniformly negative”. Really? Investigating the issue, Menachem Stern (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1984) found that among 161 Greek and Roman authors who dealt with the Jews, 133 wrote respectfully about the high age of Judaism, its well documented history and literary grandeur, its emphasis on family and community; they praised the monotheism of the Jews, their rejection of all God-images and their high codex of morale. 28 expressed negatively on them. Main point of the critics was that Jews were different and bothersome, because obstreperous, rebellious, insubordinate.

Again Skrbina: “As the saying goes, “When one person hates you, it’s probably them; when everyone hates you, it’s probably you.” Logically Skrbina is among “everyone”. But the Jews deserve it. “The media and Hollywood are working hard to continually remind the public of Jewish suffering during the war and of the evils of Nazism. I see no good reason why Jews should continue to merit special sensitivity.”

Skrbina’s shamelessness peaks when he, in order to prove the Jews as eternal liars, unabashed and applaudingly quotes my Catholic compatriots Adolf Hitler and Josef Goebbels, well-known for many things but hardly their love of truth.

In chapter 5, “Reconstructing the Truth”, the Romans came to Palestine “as bringers of civilization”. Including, by the way, the cruellest execution method ever practised on this planet.

The most crucified people of antiquity (500 daily in 70 CE), the people who from Crusades to Auschwitz suffered from the defamation of having crucified Jesus, in Skrbina’s view have created this accusation themselves.

If he’d read, for instance, James Carroll’s “Constantine’s Sword”, Skrbina would have known that the Christ-converted Roman emperor during the Council of Nicaea chose Pauline doctrine as state religion not because of Paul’s rebellious “message of resistance” but because the doctrine of this Roman citizen didn’t question slavery, preached passivity and obedience, condemned rebellion and therefore suited every authoritarian state until today. “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord”, writes the author of Ephesians, “for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church ... Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right ... Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, in singleness of heart, just as you would obey Christ.” (Eph 5:22; 6:1-5); Paul’s all-embracing hierarchy of

obedience centers in the one who “taking the form of a slave ... humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7-8).

“For centuries afterward”, Skrbina knows, “Christians would blame the Jews for killing Christ, not realizing that the whole tale was a Jewish construction in the first place. Perhaps there’s a kind of justice in that irony after all.” Skrbina would like us to understand his hearable *schadenfreude* as justified due to his insight that Paul and his “Jewish cabal” created, “simply for the benefit of Israel and the Jews”, the myth of the crucified godson, his resurrection and afterlife in general.

In my view, young David Skrbina’s hate against the Jews has been explained yet in 1925 by Austrian Catholic author Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi: “The child views a crucifix and asks for its meaning. He receives the answer that the man on the cross is the dear Saviour (whom he loves and reveres as the “Christ child”) being tortured to death by the Jews. In the child naturally awakes a deep compassion with the Saviour, connected with an equally deep abhorrence of his enemies and assassins: ‘the Jews’.”

But this is no excuse for his Jesus Hoax.

Longer Review

Source

April 27, 2021

The Jesus Hoax: How St. Paul’s Cabal Fooled the World for Two Thousand Year

David Skrbina

Creative Fire Press, 2019

David Skrbina is a professional philosopher who was a senior lecturer at the University of Michigan from 2003–2018. In addition to the book under review, he has written and edited a number of books, including *The Metaphysics of Technology* (Routledge, 2014), *Panpsychism in the West* (MIT Press, 2017), and the anthology *Confronting Technology* (Creative Fire Press, 2020).

The Jesus Hoax attempts to convince the reader that there is no rational basis for Christianity and that the motivation for its main originator, St. Paul, was antagonism toward the Roman Empire. Within this framework, Paul was a Jewish nationalist whose goal was to recruit non-Jews to oppose the Roman imperium: “Since the biblical Jesus story is false, it was evidently constructed by Paul and his fellow Jews in order to sway the gullible Gentile masses to their side and away from Rome” (43). Indeed, Skrbina claims that Paul may have been a Zealot, i.e., a member of a Jewish sect dedicated to violent resistance against the Romans, concluding “it seems clear that he was an ardent Jewish nationalist opposed to Roman rule, as was the case with most elite Jews of the time” (37).

Skrbina argues that there is no convincing evidence for the truth of the Jesus story, either within the canonical New Testament or from non-Christian sources. The earliest

reference from a non-Christian source is a paragraph from the Jewish writer Josephus dated to 93 recounting the basic story, that Jesus was crucified “upon the accusation of the principal men among us”—i.e., the elite Jews of the period. Here Skrbina raises a general issue: the earliest source for the passage from Josephus is from the Christian apologist Eusebius in the fourth century, and the oldest sources for the gospels themselves are dated much later than they were supposedly written (70–95), leaving open the possibility of redactions and interpolations. For example, the oldest copy of the complete Gospel of Matthew, which, as noted below, contains the most inflammatory anti-Jewish passage of all, dates from the mid-fourth century, well after Constantine had legalized Christianity in the Empire and anti-Jewish attitudes were rife among intellectuals like Eusebius and the Church fathers such as St. John Chrysostom.”¹ The extent of redaction and interpolation remains unknown and presents obvious problems of interpretation.

The first Romans to comment on Christianity were Tacitus and Pliny (~115), both of whom disliked Christianity. As Skrbina notes, “the Romans were generally tolerant of other religions, and thus we must conclude that there was something uniquely problematic about this group” (60).

And Skrbina is well aware that an analysis of the entire early Christian movement must be aware of Jewish issues, quoting Nietzsche: “The first thing to be remembered, if we do not wish to lose the scent here, is that we are among Jews” (34). He is quite accurate in his assessment of Jewish ethnocentrism: Jews “saw themselves as special, different, ‘select,’ and thus they put these ideas into the mouth of their God. Certainly, no one would deny a people pride in themselves. But these extreme statements go far beyond normal bounds. They indicate a kind of self-absorption, a self-glorification, perhaps a narcissism, perhaps a conceit. To be chosen by the creator of the universe, and to be granted the right to rule, ruthlessly, over all other nations, bespeaks a kind of megalomania that is unprecedented in history” (63).

Not surprisingly, such a people have often been hated by others, and Skrbina recounts the many examples of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions in the ancient world: “where the Jews settled amongst other peoples, they seem to have made enemies” (65), noting particularly the recurrent theme—a theme that continued long past the ancient world—of Jews allying themselves with ruling elites against the native population. I was particularly struck by a passage Skrbina quotes from recent scholarship referring to advice given in 134 BC to King Antiochus VII, the Greek ruler of the Seleucid Empire, to exterminate the Jews: “for they alone among all the peoples refused all relations with other races, and saw everyone as their enemy; their forebears, impious and cursed by the gods, had been driven out of Egypt. The counselors [cited] the Jews’

¹ Kevin MacDonald, *Separation and Its Discontents: Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism* (AuthorHouse, 2003; originally published: Praeger, 1998), Ch. 3.

hatred of all mankind, sanctioned by their very laws, which forbade them to share their table with a Gentile or give any sign of benevolence.”²

Skrbina concludes that there is a “deeply-embedded misanthropic streak” in Jews that continues into the contemporary era, quoting the famous passage from Rabbi Yosef who, in 2010 stated, “Goyim were born only to serve us. Without that, they have no place in the world—only to serve the people of Israel. They will work, they will plow, they will reap. We will sit like an effendi [a man of high social standing] and eat” (*Jerusalem Post*, October 18, 2010). Skrbina: “There is something about Jewish culture that inspires disgust and hatred” (79).

Based on the extensive citations to the Old Testament, Skrbina concludes that the Gospels, commonly dated well after Paul’s writing, were also likely written by Jews. Skrbina notes that the latest-dated gospel, John, is addressed to “intra-Jewish squabbling” (41) over the issue of Jesus being the Messiah—obviously a view rejected by Orthodox Jews. In other words, John identifies as a Jew but as a Jew battling the Orthodox Jewish establishment. Importantly, John contains anti-Jewish passages that would echo down the centuries: Jews “sought to kill Jesus,” and the gospel represents Jesus as saying, “You [Jews] are of your father the devil... He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44) (41). Many contemporary scholars accept the view that anti-Jewish statements in the Gospels are intramural disputes about whether Jews or Christians were the chosen people of God.

Of course, there are many other anti-Jewish statements:

- John 5:18: For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill [Jesus], because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.
- John 7:1: After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.
- John 7:12–13: And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, “He is a good man,” others were saying, “No, he is deceiving the crowd.” Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.
- John 8:37: I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word.

And the most influential of all:

² Quoted in Emilio Gabba, “The Growth of Anti-Judaism or the Greek Attitude toward the Jews.” In W. D. Davies & Louis Finkelstein (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*. Vol. 2: *The Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 614–656, 645).

- Matthew 27:25–26: When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

Such sentiments are not only found in the Gospels. St. Paul:

- 1Thess 2:14–15: For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.

Skrbina, discussing the Gospel of Mark, notes that Paul et al. had two enemies, the Romans and non-believing Jews like the Pharisees who “wanted to kill Jesus” (95). Mark therefore blamed both, and Skrbina concludes that “Mark’s anger against his fellow Jews ... got the better of him; for centuries afterward, Christians would blame the Jews for killing Christ, not realizing that the whole tale was a Jewish construction in the first place” (95).

Later in Matthew and Luke, “the anti-Jewish rhetoric heats up a bit; the Jews are called ‘a brood of vipers’ (Mat 3:7, 12:34, 23:33) and ‘lovers of money’ (Lu 16:14). And there are repetitions of the message of revolution, including armed confrontation (“I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” [Mat. 10:34]) and it depicts that the coming confrontation would split families.

Skrbina’s reconstruction of the trajectory of Christianity is presented as tentative (“I’ll not claim certainty here”[81]). For example, he imagines a soliloquy by Jewish patriot Paul asking, “*What message could our ‘Jesus’ take to the masses,*” answering “*we need them to be pro-Jewish, not make them Jews—no, that would never work. We need something new, a ‘third way’ between Judaism and paganism. Maybe for a start, we could get them to worship our God Jehovah, and not that absurd Roman pantheon*” (84; emphasis in text). And the whole point was to encourage revolt: “Throughout [Paul’s] letters we find numerous references to enslavement, revolution, insurrection, war, the importance of the disempowered masses, and so on. In the early Galatians we read of the need for Jesus to ‘deliver us from the present evil age’ ([Galatians] 1:4)” (90). Skrbina considers the following passage, from 1Corinthians 1:4 “decisive” (92):

For consider your call, brethren, not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, *even things that are not*, to bring to nothing things that are. (Skrbina’s emphasis)

Militancy increases in Luke and Matthew, both dated to 85. Matthew (10:34): “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

If one agrees with Skrbina on all this, then he suggests that you “go to your local church leaders and confront them with the evidence (or lack thereof). Their response will confirm everything you need to know. Then, make it clear to them that *you have been swindled*” (112). And: “Christians need to own up the fact that they have been swindled, and then see if anything can be salvaged of their religion. Keep the social club, do charity work, help the poor—just dump the bogus metaphysics” (116).

Discussion

Since I am not a believer and since I am quite cognizant of Jewish efforts to manipulate the beliefs and attitudes of non-Jews—the thesis, after all, of *The Culture of Critique*—I am quite open to Skrbina’s interpretation. However, there are a few things that bother me.

Liars? In Skrbina’s view, the entire project was based on lies, lies made possible by Jewish contempt for non-Jews. In a section titled “Paul, Liar Supreme,” we find “The Gentiles were always treated by the Jews with contempt. ... They could be manipulated, harassed, assaulted, beaten, even killed if it served Jewish interests” (99). The gospel writers were also likely liars: “Even in ancient times, people were not idiots. How could Mark accept without any apparent evidence or confirmation, such fantastic tales? And accept them so completely that he would write them down as factual truth, as real and actual events? And then how could the same thing happen three more times, to three different individuals?” (106). And Paul is even more unlikely to have actually believed what he was writing because he was so close to the events he wrote about, and because he was a “clever man. How could he possibly have fallen so completely for a bogus Jewish messiah that he would dedicate his life to spreading the story?” (106).

This is presented as an issue of cleverness, and it is certainly true that there is a small but consistent negative correlation between intelligence and religiosity.³ But the weakness of the association—explaining around four percent of the variance—indicates that there are plenty of intelligent people who are quite religious. This would have been even more likely in the ancient world—a context in which religion was taken very seriously, where miraculous events were taken for granted by many, and where there wasn’t already a long history of philosophical skepticism about religion, as there is in the contemporary West. Or consider the medieval period in the West that produced highly intelligent believers, such as St. Thomas Aquinas or William of Occam. Or the ultra-religious but very intelligent Puritans who settled New England and quickly founded Harvard University and the other elite Ivy League universities. We live in an age where science has become the height of respectability—hence the attempts to manipulate what can pass as scientific to serve other interests and have

³ Miron Zuckerman, et al., “The Negative Intelligence–Religiosity Relation: New and Confirming Evidence,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 46, no. 6(2020): 856–868.

a dramatic impact on contemporary culture. However, the cultural context has been much different in the past, and I suspect that correlations between intelligence and religiosity would have been approximately zero in many historical periods.

Another issue related to lying is martyrdom. The proposal that Paul and the gospel writers were liars must deal with the issue of “*Who would die for a lie? ... as Jews, they were all, already, under persecution from the Romans. As extremist, fanatical Jews they were willing to do anything and suffer any punishment, in order to help ‘Israel’*” (110). It’s certainly true that Jews died and were enslaved in droves when the Romans put down the Jewish uprisings, and this was presumably on the minds of the putative gospel writers (the first Roman-Jewish war was in 70), so the extreme altruism of martyrdom for the benefit of the group seems possible, particularly among Jews—there is a long tradition of Jewish martyrdom that continues to be an important aspect of Jewish identity. However, stories of martyrdom in both the Christian and Jewish traditions may well be at least exaggerated if not entirely apocryphal (e.g., here) because of their usefulness in creating a strong sense of ingroup identity.

Again, there are the questions of who wrote the New Testament and when was it written, including possible redactions and interpolations. I am not at all a scholar on the New Testament, but I note that a recent scholar, Robert Price, dates the first collection of St. Paul’s letters from Marcion in the second century, with the authorship of some letters highly contested, and a strong possibility of interpolations by later collectors:

The question of authorship would have little bearing here one way or the other. In this process, interpolations were made and then gradually permeated the text tradition of each letter until final canonization of the Pastoral edition (and concurrent burning of its rivals) put a stop to all that. ... But the first collector of the Pauline Epistles had been Marcion. No one else we know of would be a good candidate, certainly not the essentially fictive Luke, Timothy, and Onesimus. And Marcion, as Burkitt and Bauer show, fills the bill perfectly. Of the epistles themselves, he is probably the original author of Laodiceans (the *Vorlage* [i.e., original version] of Ephesians) and perhaps of Galatians, too. Like Muhammad in the Koran, he would have read his own struggles back into the careers of his biblical predecessors.

But there are other scholars who continue to uphold the view that the New Testament is a reliable account, or at least reliable enough (see, e.g., Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs*). I am certainly not in any position to evaluate what continues to be a very contentious area which has been covered in minute detail for at least 200 years, often by highly motivated scholars. At this late stage of scholarship, it seems unlikely that a consensus will ever be reached, especially because a great deal of the scholarship may well be motivated by a desire to defend deeply held religious beliefs—or dispute

them; e.g., Blomberg describes himself as “a Christian believer of an evangelical persuasion” (xxv), which doesn’t mean that he is incorrect, but indicates that he would be motivated to defend his beliefs.

Given all this complexity I take that path of humility in trying to assess these issues, resulting in my being an agnostic about the historicity of the New Testament, whether whoever wrote it were liars, and what their real agendas were. I am persuaded that there is no consensus on what was actually written in the first century, and I accept the possibility that the writings that survive as the canonical writings of Christianity may well include later redactions and interpolations that reflect very different perceptions and interests from those of the putative first-century writers .

The Anti-Jewish Statements in the New Testament. I noted above that there are quite a few anti-Jewish passages in the New Testament, including from St. Paul himself. Skrbina claims that “The scattered anti-Jewish statements in all the Gospels—especially John—more reflect an internal Jewish battle over ideology than an external, Gentile attack” (107–108). This is a common scholarly view, but if you are trying to recruit Gentiles to your movement to serve Jewish interests, would you really want to litter your writing with anti-Jewish statements? In fact, these statements, particularly the claim that Jews committed deicide, have been used by Christians against Jews throughout the succeeding centuries, most notably “His blood *be* on us, and on our children.” Although the major outbreaks of anti-Semitism have always involved far more than Christian religious beliefs—they have typically occurred during periods of resource competition of various sorts (MacDonald, 1998)—I have no doubt that Christian beliefs about Jews fed into and exacerbated anti-Jewish attitudes, especially in the past when vast sections of the European population were deeply religious—e.g., during the Middle Ages when religious beliefs motivated the Crusades and long, arduous pilgrimages to sites where miracles were said to have occurred. It was a period when, e.g., Notre Dame de Paris, the symbol of traditional France, was adorned with anti-Jewish imagery.

Ecclesia (right) and Synagoga, illustrating Jewish blindness in rejecting Christianity

Indeed, Jewish perceptions of the anti-Jewish nature of Christian theology have resulted in Jewish activism to essentially rewrite or reinterpret the New Testament in their interests. Antonius J. Patrick summarizes this strand of Jewish activism in his review of Vicomte Léon de Poncins’ *Judaism and the Vatican: An Attempt at Spiritual Subversion*:

The pronouncements on non-Christian religions and the declaration *Nos- tra aetate* passed in the Fourth Session of the Council (1965) accomplished almost all that the Modernists had hoped for. In effect, these pronouncements repudiated nearly two thousand years of Catholic teaching on the Jews. Ever since, the Church has continually bowed to Jewish pressure in regard to its liturgy, the naming of saints, and in the political realm—its

most infamous decision in the latter being the recognition of the state of Israel in 1994.

Poncins, who closely covered the Vatican II proceedings, wrote of the declaration:

. . . a number of Jewish organizations and personalities are behind the reforms which were proposed at the Council with a view to modifying the Church's attitude and time-honored teaching about Judaism: Jules Isaac, Label Katz, President of the B'nai B'rith, Nahum Goldman, President of the World Jewish Congress, etc. . . . These reforms are very important because they suggest that for two thousand years the Church had been mistaken and that she must make amends and completely reconsider her attitude to the Jews.

The leading figure in the years prior to the Council was the virulent anti-Catholic writer Jules Isaac, and he played an active role during the Council. "Isaac," Poncins describes, "turned the Council to advantage, having found there considerable support among progressive bishops. In fact, he became the principal theorist and promoter of the campaign being waged against the traditional teaching of the Church."

Isaac had long before begun his hostile campaign to overturn Catholic teaching on the Jews with his two most important books on the subject: *Jésus et Israël* (1946) and *Genèse de l'Antisémitisme* (1948). Poncins accurately summarizes the main thrust of these works:

In these books Jules Isaac fiercely censures Christian teaching, which he says has been the source of modern anti-Semitism, and preaches, though it would be more correct to say he demands, the 'purification' and 'amendment' of doctrines two thousand years old.

Moreover, whatever the beliefs and motives of St. Paul and the Gospel writers, the Church had essentially become an anti-Jewish movement by the fourth century when Catholicism became the official religion of the Roman Empire:

The proposal here is that in this period of enhanced group conflict, anti-Jewish leaders such as [St. John] Chrysostom [who retains a chapel named after him at St. Peter's basilica in Rome] attempted to convey a very negative view of Jews. Jews were to be conceptualized not as harmless practitioners of exotic, entertaining religious practices, or as magicians, fortune tellers, or healers [as had been the case previously], but as the very embodiment of evil. The entire thrust of the legislation that emerged during this period was to erect walls of separation between Jews and gentiles, to solidify the gentile group, and to make all gentiles aware of who the "enemy"

was. Whereas these walls had been established and maintained previously only by Jews, in this new period of intergroup conflict the gentiles were raising walls between themselves and Jews....

The interpretation proposed here is that group conflict between Jews and gentiles entered a new stage in the 4th century. It is of considerable interest that it was during this period that accusations of Jewish greed, wealth, love of luxury and of the pleasures of the table became common (Simon 1986, 213). Such accusations did not occur during earlier periods, when anti-Jewish writings concentrated instead on Jewish separatism. These new charges suggest that Jews had increasingly developed a reputation as wealthy, and they in turn suggest that anti-Semitism had entered a new phase in the ancient world, one centered around resource competition and concerns regarding Jewish economic success, domination of gentiles [especially enslaving gentiles], and relative reproductive success. ...

Jews were increasingly entering the imperial and municipal service in the 4th century until being excluded from these occupations in the 5th century—an aspect of the wide range of economic, social, and legal prohibitions on Jews dating from this period [particularly prohibitions on Jews owning Christian slaves—itsself an indication of the superior wealth of Jews]. These factors, in combination with traditional gentile hostility to Judaism (because of its separatist practices and perceptions of Jewish misanthropy and perhaps of Jewish wealth), set the stage for a major anti-Semitic movement. The proposal here is that this anti-Semitic movement crystallized in the Christian Church. (*Separation and Its Discontents*, Ch. 3, 96, 98, 99)

It is quite possible that the anti-Jewish statements in the New Testament are interpolations made much later by anti-Jewish writers motivated by resource competition and Jews enslaving Christians. If so, the liars were not Paul and the Gospel writers, but Christians concerned about Jews in the third and fourth centuries. J. G. Gager suggests that the extant literature from the early Church was deliberately selected to emphasize anti-Jewish themes and exclude other voices, much as the priestly redaction of the Pentateuch retained from earlier writings only what was compatible with Judaism as a diaspora ideology (J. G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford, 1983), 7; N. deLange, “The origins of anti-Semitism: Ancient evidence and modern interpretation,” In *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, S. L. Gilman & S. T. Katz (NYU Press, 1991, 30–31). It’s quite conceivable that, rather than reflecting real intra-Jewish squabbles in the first century, as suggested by Skrbina, these early works were deliberately embellished in order to emphasize anti-Jewish themes in the originals—or they were completely fabricated—at a time when these writers had become strongly anti-Jewish for reasons that would not

have been salient in the first century. In any case, this possibility is highly compatible with the view that there was a qualitative shift toward the conscious construction of a fundamentally anti-Jewish version of history during the formative period of the Catholic Church.

Consequences of the Lies. Skrbina ends by claiming that Paul’s lies were successful: “It took a few hundred years, but when enough people fell for the hoax, it helped to bring down the Roman Empire” (122). And he describes the lies as a “mortal threat”: “eventually drawing in 2 billion people, becoming an enemy of truth and reason, and causing deaths of millions of human beings via inquisitions, witch burnings, crusades, and other religious atrocities” (101).

I have never seen a scholarly argument that the institutionalization of the Catholic Church contributed importantly to the fall of the Empire. The Eastern Empire, although losing substantial territory to the Muslims, was only overthrown in 1453 after centuries of battling them. However, it’s certainly a reasonable idea given that Christian religious ideology was the polar opposite of thoroughly militarized Indo-European culture upon which Rome was built. Ancient Greco-Roman culture was fundamentally aristocratic and based on ideas of natural inequality and natural hierarchy. Thus, Plato’s “just society” as depicted in *The Republic* was to be ruled by philosophers because they were truly rational, and he assumes there are natural differences in the capacity for rationality—a modern would phrase it in terms of the behavior genetics of IQ and personality. Aristotle believed that some people were slaves “by nature” (Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 52), i.e., that the hierarchy between masters and slaves was natural. Reflecting themes common in Indo-European culture emphasized by Ricardo Duchesne (*The Uniqueness of Western Civilization*), the ancients prized fame and glory (positive esteem from others) resulting from genuine virtue and military and political accomplishments—but not labor, because laborers were often slaves and the rightful booty of conquest.

So the Christian ethic of prizing meekness, humility, and labor was quite a change. Within Christian ideology the individual replaced the ancient Indo-European family as the seat of moral legitimacy. Christian ideology was intended for all humans, resulting in a sense of moral egalitarianism, at least within the Christian community, rather than seeing society as based on natural hierarchy. Individual souls were seen as having moral agency and equal value in the eyes of God—a theology that has had very negative effects in the contemporary world.

However, universalism and the Christian virtues of meekness and humility are not the only story and indeed, as Skrbina notes, the sword also makes an appearance in the New Testament. In the Middle Ages Christianity was Germanized (James Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, Oxford, 1996), making it much more compatible with an aristocratic warrior ethnic. And in the medieval period and beyond, Christianity facilitated Western individualism and essentially ushered in the modern age of science, technological progress, and territorial expansion (Joseph Henrich, *The*

Weirdest People in the World, 2020; MacDonald, *Individualism and the Western Liberal Tradition*, 2019).

As a direct result, Christians who had a firm conviction about their beliefs eventually conquered the world and have been responsible for essentially all of the scientific and technological progress that created the modern world. Indeed, in his *The WEIRDEST People in the World*, Joseph Henrich argues that the medieval Church invented Western individualism by insisting on monogamous marriage and by “demolishing” extended kinship relations, presented by Henrich as an attempt to understand, as phrased in his subtitle, *How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous* (Harvard, 2020). I have quite a few objections to his approach (see here), but he is certainly correct that the Church was influential in opposing the power of extended kinship groups and preventing concubinage and polygyny among elites, thereby facilitating a relatively egalitarian marriage regime. Essentially Henrich ignores the ethnic basis of Western individualism that reaches back into pre-historic Western Europe and is certainly reflected in the classical Western civilizations of Greece and Rome. Henrich also ignores genetic influences on IQ and personality. But I agree with a much weaker version—that the Church facilitated Western individualism and so helped give rise to the modern world (Chapter 5 of *Individualism and the Western Liberal Tradition*, 2019).

So it’s not entirely a story of “causing deaths of millions of human beings via inquisitions, witch burnings, crusades, and other religious atrocities.” But the sad reality is that contemporary Christianity, or at least the vast majority of it, is utterly opposed to the interests of the people who have historically made it their religion. For example, Prof. Andrew Fraser has interpreted fundamental Christian texts in a manner consistent with an ethnic form of Christianity (e.g., “Global Jesus versus National Jesus”, and in *The Sword of Christ* (2020; this book seems to have been banned by Amazon), Giles Corey attempts to rescue an ethnically viable Christianity from the ruins of contemporary, leftist-dominated Christian theology. As I note in my preface:

Religious thinking is by its nature unbounded—it is infinitely malleable [so that, for example, redactions and interpolations on the New Testament could easily have been adapted to create a fundamentally new theology]. It is a dangerous sword that can be used to further legitimate interests of believers, or it can become a lethal weapon whereby believers adopt attitudes that are obviously maladaptive. One need only think of religiously based suicide cults, such as People’s Temple (Jonestown), Solar Temple and Heaven’s Gate. Mainstream Christianity from traditional Catholicism to mainstream Protestantism was fundamentally adaptive in terms of creating a healthy family life. It was compatible with a culture characterized by extraordinary scientific and technological creativity, [territorial expansion], and standards of living that have been much envied by the rest of the world.

...

Corey is well aware that contemporary Christianity has been massively corrupted. Mainline Protestant and Catholic Churches have become little more than appendages for the various social justice movements of the left, avidly promoting the colonization of the West by other races and cultures, even as religious fervor and attendance dwindle and Christianity itself becomes ever more irrelevant to the national dialogue. [Guillaume Durocher notes that only 6–12 percent of the French population are practicing Catholics, indicating that Catholicism cannot be blamed for France’s current malaise.] On the other hand, [American] Evangelicals, a group that remains vigorously Christian, have been massively duped by the theology of Christian Zionism, their main focus being to promote Israel. [In general, they have rejected an explicit White identity or a sense of White interests.]

Until the twentieth century, Christianity served the West well. One need only think of the long history of Christians battling to prevent Muslims from establishing a caliphate throughout the West—Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours, the Spanish Reconquista, the defeat of the Turks at the gates of Vienna. The era of Western expansion was accomplished by Christian explorers and colonists. Until quite recently, the flourishing of science, technology, and art occurred entirely within a Christian context.

Corey advocates a revitalization of Medieval Germanic Christianity based on, in the words of Samuel Francis, “social hierarchy, loyalty to tribe and place (blood and soil), world-acceptance rather than world-rejection, and an ethic that values heroism and military sacrifice.” This medieval Christianity preserved the aristocratic, fundamentally Indo-European culture of the Germanic tribes. This was an adaptive Christianity, a Christianity that was compatible with Western expansion, to the point that by the end of the nineteenth century, the West dominated the planet. Christianity per se is certainly not the problem.

The decline of adaptive Christianity coincides with the post-Enlightenment rise of the Jews throughout the West as an anti-Christian elite, and Corey has a great deal of very interesting material on traditional Christian views of Judaism. Traditional Christian theology viewed the Church as having superseded the Old Testament and that, by rejecting the Church, the Jews had not only rejected God, they were responsible for murdering Christ. ...

In fact, intellectual movements of the left—disseminated throughout the educational system and by the elite media—have exploited the Western liberal tradition. The intellectuals who came to dominate American intellectual discourse and the media were quite aware of the need to appeal to Western proclivities toward individualism, egalitarianism, and moral universalism by essentially creating a moral community that appealed to these traits but also served their interests. A theme of *The Culture of*

Critique is that moral indictments of their opponents have been prominent in the writings of the activist intellectuals reviewed there, including political radicals and those opposing biological perspectives on individual and group differences in IQ. A sense of moral superiority was also prevalent in the psychoanalytic movement, and the Frankfurt School developed the view that social science was to be judged by moral criteria.

The triumph of the cultural left to the point of substantial consensus in the West has created a moral community where people who do not subscribe to their beliefs are seen as not only intellectually deficient but as morally evil. Moral communities rather than kinship are the social glue of Western societies. Westerners, being individualists and relatively unconcerned about the prospects of their kin beyond their immediate family, willingly punish other Whites who oppose their moral community, even at cost to themselves (altruistic punishment). Their main concern is to have a good reputation in their moral community which is now defined by the media and the educational system—a moral community that was created by hostile elites out of fear and loathing of the traditional White American majority (see *Culture of Critique*, Ch. 7).

Finally, Skrbina asks, “Can it really be beneficial to accept a myth as truth? Can one really live a happy, successful, and meaningful life dedicated to a false story or a lie?” (16). I think that the answer is that yes it can. As an evolutionist, my working hypothesis is that when it comes to the realm of ideas, evolution does not aim for truth but rather for success in continuing one’s family and increasing the prospects of one’s tribe. Certainly the religious beliefs of other groups, say Muslims, Jews, or Mormons, may well be false and based on inventions. But the people believing in these lies have often done very well in evolutionary terms and are continuing to do so. Ashkenazi Jewish eugenics proceeded for centuries in a religious context, resulting in a highly intelligent elite able to wield vast influence throughout the West. Islam expanded over hundreds of years, controlling vast territories, with leaders rewarded by large harems and many descendants; Islam is now rapidly expanding in Europe and has higher fertility than native Europeans. It’s well known that seriously religious, fundamentalist Christians in the West have more children on average than non-Christian Europeans, which is certainly adaptive. But they are also more likely to swear fealty to the interests of Israel and in general they are entirely resistant to being informed about the negative effects of multiculturalism or about Jewish cultural influence (whose effects they despise) or even Jewish traditional hostility toward Christianity.

And it can scarcely be doubted that Catholicism and mainline Protestantism have been completely corrupted and actively subverted so that millions of White Americans have been swept up by the multiculturalism and replacement-level immigration as moral imperatives. Jewish activism has certainly been part of this, but traditional Christian universalism and moral egalitarianism are also part of the equation. One might say that Christianity, despite periods when it was highly adaptive, carried the seeds of its own destruction—a chink in its armor that made it relatively easy to subvert once the culture of the West had been subverted by our new hostile elite.

So, in my view, it's a complex story, and one that is far from finished.

Catching Up With the Unabomber. When Does the End Justify the Means?

Source

by **Brian Whitney** on August 21, 2015 in **Science/Technology**

The Unabomber, known as Ted Kaczynski, was not a fan of technology. To expose the world to his anti-technology philosophy, from the years 1978 to 1995, Kaczynski sent 16 bombs to universities and airlines, killing three people and injuring 23, before he was eventually caught and sent to prison. He remains there today. At one time, he was possibly the most famous criminal in the world.

He said of technology's role:

The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity.

In his essay *Industrial Society and Its Future*, Kaczynski argued that while his bombings were “a bit” extreme, they were quite necessary to attract attention to the loss of human freedom caused by modern technology. His book *Technological Slavery: The Collected Writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, a.k.a. “The Unabomber”* breaks all of his philosophies down for those of us that just know him through corporate news stations.

Was the Unabomber crazy, or just so sane he was blowing our minds?

I talked to David Skrbina, confidant of Kaczynski, and philosophy professor at the University of Michigan. Skrbina wrote the intro to *Technological Slavery*.

Can you tell me a bit about how you and Kaczynski began to communicate? Are you still in touch with him today?

Back in 2003, I began work on a new course at the University of Michigan: ‘Philosophy of Technology.’ Surprisingly, such a course had never been offered before, at any of our campuses. I wanted to remedy that deficiency.

I then began to pull together recent and relevant material for the course, focusing on critical approaches to technology. These, to me, were more insightful and more interesting, and were notably under-analyzed among current philosophers of technology.

Most of them are either neutral toward modern technology, or positively embrace it, or accept its presence resignedly. As I found out, very few philosophers of the past four decades adopted anything like a critical stance. This, for me, was highly revealing.

Anyway, I was well aware of Kaczynski's manifesto, "Industrial society and its future," which was published in late 1995 at the height of the Unabomber mania. I was very impressed with its analysis, even though most of the ideas were not new to me (many were reiterations of arguments by Jacques Ellul, for example—see his 1964 book *The Technological Society*). But the manifesto was clear and concise, and made a compelling argument.

After Kaczynski was arrested in 1996, and after a year-long trial process, he was stashed away in a super-max prison in Colorado. The media then decided that, in essence, the story was over. Case closed. No need to cover Kaczynski or his troubling ideas ever again.

By 2003, I suspected he was still actively researching and writing, but I had heard nothing of substance about him in years. So I decided to write to him personally, hoping to get some follow-up material that might be useful in my new course. Fortunately, he replied. That began a long string of letters, all on the problem of technology. To date, I've received something over 100 letters from him.

Most of the letters occurred in the few years prior to, and just after, the publication of *Technological Slavery*. Several of his more important and detailed replies to me were included in that book—about 100 pages worth.

We've had less occasion to communicate in the past couple years. My most recent letter from him was in late 2014.

You have said that his ideas "threaten to undermine the power structure of our technological order. And since the system's defenders are unable to defeat the ideas, they choose to attack the man who wrote them." Can you expand on that?

The present military and economic power of the US government, and governments everywhere, rests on advanced technology. Governments, by their very nature, function to manipulate and coerce people—both their own citizens, and any other non-citizens whom they declare to be of interest. Governments have a monopoly on force, and this force is manifest through technological structures and systems.

Therefore, all governments—and in fact anyone who would seek to exert power in the world—must embrace modern technology. American government, at all levels, is deeply pro-tech. So too are our corporations, universities, and other organized institutions. Technology is literally their life-blood. They couldn't oppose it in any substantial way without committing virtual suicide.

So when a Ted Kaczynski comes along and reminds everyone of the inherent and potentially catastrophic problems involved with modern technology, "the system" doesn't want you to hear it. It will do everything possible to distort or censor such discussion. As you may recall, during the final years of the Unabomber episode, there was very little—astonishingly little—discussion of the actual ideas of the manifesto. Now and

then, little passages would be quoted in the newspapers, but that was it; no follow-up, no discussion, no analysis.

Basically, the system's defenders had no counterarguments. The data, empirical observation, and common sense all were on the side of Kaczynski. There was no rational case to be made against him.

The only option for the defenders was an ad hominem attack: to portray Kaczynski as a sick murderer, a crazed loner, and so on. That was the only way to 'discredit' his ideas. Of course, as we know, the ad hominem tactic is a logical fallacy. Kaczynski's personal situation, his mental state, or even his extreme actions, have precisely zero bearing on the strength of his arguments.

The system's biggest fear was—and still is—that people will believe that he was right. People might begin, in ways small or large, to withdraw from, or to undermine, the technological basis of society. This cuts to the heart of the system. It poses a fundamental threat, to which the system has few options, apart from on-going propaganda efforts, or brute force.

What do you think of the fact that when our government, or any figure in authority such as a police officer, kills in the name of the established belief system, it is thought of as just. But when a guy like Kaczynski kills in the name of his belief system, he is thought of as a deranged psychopath?

As I mentioned, governmental authorities have a monopoly on force. Whenever they use it, it is, almost by definition, 'right.' Granted, police can be convicted of 'excessive force.' But such cases, as we know, are very rare. And militaries can never be so convicted.

At best, if the public is truly appalled by some lethal action of our police or military, they may vote in a more 'pacifist' administration. But even that rarely works. People were disgusted by the war-monger George W. Bush, and so they voted in the "anti-war" Obama. Ironically, he continued on with much the same killing. And through foreign aid and UN votes, Obama continues to support and defend murderous regimes around the world. So much for pacifism.

Let's keep in mind: Kaczynski killed three people. This was tragic and regrettable, but still, it was just three people. American police kill that many citizens every other day, on average. The same with Obama's drone operators. Technology kills many times that number, every day—even every hour. Let's keep things in perspective.

Kaczynski killed in order to gain the notoriety necessary to get the manifesto into the public eye. And it worked. When it was published, the Washington Post sold something like 1.2 million copies that day—still a record. He devised a plan, executed it, and thereby caused millions of people to contemplate the problem of technology in a way they never had before.

Does the end justify the means? It's too early to tell. If Kaczynski's actions ultimately have some effect on averting technological disaster, there will be no doubt: his actions were justified. They may yet save millions of lives, not to mention much of the natural world. Time will tell.

You recently wrote a book, *The Metaphysics of Technology*. Can you tell us a little about that?

Sure. In thinking about the problem of technology, it struck me that there was very little philosophical analysis about what, exactly, technology is. We've had many action plans, ranging from tepid and mild (think Sherry Turkle), to Bill Joy's thesis of "relinquishment" of key technologies, to Kaczynski's total revolution. But if we don't really understand what we're dealing with, our actions are likely to be misguided and ineffectual. In short, we need a true metaphysics of technology.

On my view, technology advances with a tremendous, autonomous power. Humans are the implementers of this power, but we can't really guide it and we certainly can't stop it. In effect, it functions as a law of nature. It advances with an evolutionary force, and that's why we are heading toward disaster.

I see technology much as the ancient Greeks did—as a combination of two potent entities, *Technê* and *Logos* (hence 'techno-logy'). For them, these were quasi-divine forces. *Logos* was the guiding intelligence behind all order in the universe. *Technê* was the process by which all things—manmade and otherwise—came into being. These were not mere mythology; they were rational conclusions regarding the operation of the cosmos.

Like the Greeks, I argue that *technê* is a universal process. All order in the universe is a form of *technê*. Hence my coining of the term 'Pantehnikon'—the universe as an orderly construction, manifesting a kind of intelligence, or *Logos*. Our modern, human technology is on a continuum with all order in the universe. (Harvard astrophysicist Eric Chaisson has argued for precisely the same point, incidentally; see his 2006 book *Epic of Evolution*.)

The net effect of all this is not good news for us. Technology is like a wave moving through the Earth, and the universe. For a long while, we were at the peak of that wave. Now we're on the downside. Technology is rapidly heading toward true autonomy. Our opportunity to slow or redirect it is rapidly vanishing. If technology achieves true autonomy—we can take Kurzweil's singularity date of 2045 as a rough guide—then it's game over for us. We will likely either become more or less enslaved, or else wiped out. And then technology will continue on its merry way without us.

This is not mere speculation on my part, incidentally. Within the past year, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, and Bill Gates have all come out with related concerns. They don't understand the metaphysics behind it, but they're seeing the same trend.

How has your experience communicating with Kaczynski changed you as a person and as a philosopher?

As a philosopher, not that much. Kaczynski generally avoids philosophy and metaphysics, preferring practical issues. In a sense, we are operating on different planes, even as we are working on the same problem.

As a person, I have a greater understanding of the basis for the 'extreme' actions that he took. It's not often in life that you get a chance to communicate with someone with such a total commitment to their cause. It's impressive.

Also, the media treatment of his whole case has been enlightening. When his book, *Technological Slavery*, came out in 2010, I expected that there would be at least some media coverage. But there was none. The most famous “American terrorist” publishes a complete book from a super-max prison—and it’s not news? Seriously? Compare this topic to the garbage shown on our national evening news programs, and it’s a joke. NPR, 60 Minutes, Wired magazine, etc.—all decided it wasn’t newsworthy. Very telling.

One last thing: Expect to hear from Kaczynski again soon. His second book is nearing completion. The provisional title is “Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How.” But don’t look for it on your evening news.

Things are not as simplistic as you think.

Buy *Technological Slavery*, by Ted Kaczynski, and *The Metaphysics of Technology* by David Skrbina. Kaczynski does not profit from his book.

*Brian Whitney’s latest book is *Raping the Gods*.*

#14 – SOF Cast - David Skrbina on Ted Kaczynski, Technological Slavery & Eco-Theology

Source

Authors: Kevin D Mackay & David Skrbina

Very privileged to talk to Philosopher of technology David Skrbina, Ph.D., David was a senior lecturer at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, from 2003 to 2018. His areas of interest include philosophy of mind, eco-philosophy, philosophy of technology, and environmental ethics.

He and Ted Kaczynski published the book *Technological Slavery*, which elaborates on the Unabomber manifesto and contains about 100 pages of correspondence between the two, which took place over almost a decade. Skrbina talks about Kaczynski's views on technological society's serious problems, but we go deeper into David's ideas on potential remedies. We steer clear of the weak sauce technocratic subjects concerning the moralism of such actions and instead go straight for the jugular of technological society. We ask, what practical and spiritual solutions exist within the context of what we know now as a species.

Part of this was an in-depth discussion on the notion of eco-theology, how it differs from traditional religions, and an analysis of panpsychism views in general and how it could impact future humanity less in the grip of technology.

Kevin: OK, David, thank you so much for coming and talking to me. You have to excuse me with the tech issues and I'm probably gonna be a little slow on the uptake in general given it's fairly early in the morning. Yeah. So I I'm probably I I'm kind of, I like mornings as much as Ted Kaczynski probably likes tech. We could put it that way maybe. So so I initially became aware of you when I came across your publication, *technological slavery*, which is composed, of course, of Ted Kaczynski's original manifesto and also a very interesting correspondence over a period of years between yourself and Ted Kaczynski, which I thought was fascinating stuff. So I've given listeners A brief overview of some of your history and interests. However, perhaps you could give us briefly an overview of what your your interests are currently and some of the things that you work on and are engaged in.

David: Sure, that's that's no problem. So yeah, I'm a a. I've got a PhD in philosophy, received that in 2001. From the University of Bath in England, the area of special specialization in in the thesis was philosophy of mind. Pretty quickly, within a year or so after that, I started teaching at the University of Michigan at the Dearborn Campus and just taught there for about 15 years. Recently left there. To do some, let's say independent work, some freelance teaching and so forth. In fact, I just recently got back from the University of Helsinki in Finland. I was teaching a course in philosophy of technology there. So my my areas of interest, of course are technology had a long standing interest in problems of of technology in the philosophy of technology. This goes back years. Yeah, a number of decades. Even before there was a Unabomber. I guess I was a a skeptic or critic. Of the modern technology. So that's one of my areas of of specialization published a major book on that called the *Metaphysics of Technology* in 2015 with Routledge. So that's my major statement on on that topic. It's quite critical of modern technology. I also, like I say with my PhD. I've done work in philosophy of mind, in particular Panpsychism, and published a couple of. Books in that. Area my other interests are in environmental philosophy and environmental ethics. So I've published a number of articles and essays, edited a couple of books including a textbook and environmental ethics. So that's that's the. Most of my background spent several years working with the prominent eco philosopher named Hendrix Skull Moski. He passed away a few years ago, but I worked with him for a good three decades, developing ideas and helping him edit his books and so forth.

Kevin: Sounds busy. So Henrik is his book is something that exposed me for the first time to eco theology. And I believe it's one of the areas that you're interested in. First off, just to just to kick things off and give people a little. Bit of context. And perhaps give that context in the frame of Ted Kaczynski. Who he was and what you had to do with him, I guess Ted has been somewhat of an infamous folk hero lately amongst many people. You know, and I don't think it's to do with political persuasion or anything like that. He just seems to have caught on to the zeitgeist, so to speak, and his work is becoming increasingly popular with people. Interestingly, there's a lot of TV shows and stuff like that that go through his infamous terrorist actions, I suppose. But there's there's a whole other side to Ted Kaczynski that people don't know about. How did you come across Ted Kaczynski? You did mention that you were skeptical of technology prior to coming across him. How does one come across Ted and when did this happen? Was this in the early 90s or what kind of time period are we talking?

David: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Well, it goes back to. the whole Unabomber. Saga, right, that which goes back, I guess technically. To the late 70s. You know that was that for for several decades, right? He was this sort of this mysterious. Male bomber who? Sending packages in the mail and injuring people and then killed you one or two of people eventually, I guess three people died. For a long time for the. For several decades, they. They knew nothing about who this Unabomber person was. Then I think it was in the early 90s that it came out that there was actually this manifesto, a document that had been written by this person or group. They did not know at

the time. And it turned out it was a strongly critical document of industrial society industrial technology.

Kevin: Right.

David: Sorry, remember at the time I was like I said, it was already a critic of of technology scale maleski in fact was one of the early philosophical critics of technology, and I was familiar with all of his works. Of course I had read. Books like Jackie Lulu. 'S book The Technological Society, which is sort of a central text in this whole. Critique of technology. So I was familiar with a lot of these ideas and I was quite surprised in the Unabomber case when this manifesto started appearing in in the newspaper, they would, they would have released just. Short little little. Snippets. Just one sentence or two sentences, or maybe a small paragraph from the manifesto, just enough to to. Sort of really wet your appetite, right to to see that something was going on. There was some real intelligence behind this. This person or group that was doing this. It was. It was quite a fascinating time. I recall in the early in mid 90s as as this material was slowly. Seeping out through the through the newspapers. You know what? What was in this sort of document and then then of course eventually came out that this, this prisoner group wanted this thing published in exchange for stopping to stopping sending the mail bombs. And that's of course exactly what happened, right? This was in what was it, September 1995, that the Washington Post published. The full manuscript basically gave gave in to the black male with the with the concurrence of President Clinton at the time. Published the entire manifesto in the newspaper. So that was like everyone else. That was the first time that I was. Fully aware of. Of the document and the ideas in it.

Kevin: So you would have to say, for better or worse, what he did kind of worked, didn't it? Because you can't imagine him having the same impact as a academic necessarily or giving the work the same notoriety. This perhaps has as a result of what happened.

David: No, exactly right. In fact, as far as we know that that was the entire motive for the bombing spree was to gain the notoriety to force the publication of the manifesto in a high visibility venue like a major newspaper or magazine. To to have an impact. So in a sense, yeah, that that was the goal and the and the goal was achieved. So it. Was I remember really being shocked when this full document was printed in in the paper and I and I remember immediately thinking, wow, that this guy. Won. He won just by getting this thing published, he was able to force it in and at the highest levels of the. U.S. government they they. Had to yield to his demand because they could. Not find him. They could not. Stop him and they figured that was. The only way? To try to break the case was to actually. Publish the the. Full document and they did. So in in that sense, he he won. He he he gained his his. His main goal at.

Kevin: That point, yeah, I tend to agree. I think a lot of people focus on the morality of his actions entirely, which there's a.

David: Right.

Kevin: Place for that prop. Probably but, but in terms of what he wrote and the person he is, I I kind of find that less interesting and relevant than than the text that that came out of this and how widespread has become sense. So just for the audience at home, can we kind of recap briefly Ted's thesis? And basic course just in a general sense. The things that he considered to be bad for humanity. Why? And what perhaps the inevitable outcomes of that would be if we continue down that path of technological SLA.

David: You know? Sure. Well his critique was of industrial technological society, which he famously said at the beginning of the manifesto has been a disaster for the human race. So it's basic picture is a of a of a sort of a system run amok, right? It's this, this technological monstrosity. Which which is causing harm to humans by controlling their lives. You know, putting them in deep dehumanizing situations. The manipulating how, how they. Live and how they? Spend their personal lives and their professional lives. So it is this controlling force over humanity. It's destructive of nature in, in a sense, really all our major environmental problems are, in a sense, technological problems. So we have this system which is. Over centuries has been gaining power over humans over nature, causing problems to humans and in the natural world, it's growing beyond our control. It really is like. Like running amok. It's it's it sort. Of evolves on its own its own terms and its own conditions. So we cannot control. This thing we cannot stop this thing. And if it continues, it will utterly crush humanity. Crush the planet. You know what that means is not really clear. It. Could it be a kind of enslavement of all of human beings? It could be the literal extermination of the human. It could potentially obliterate life on Earth. So this is what we're facing. and Kaczynski further. Added this this idea that. There's no way to. Not only can we not stop this thing, we cannot fix it. We can't alter it, and we cannot reform it to stop it. From creating these these negative outcomes. So basically they are inevitable as long as the system exists, it will continue to expand and evolve. It will grow. Beyond our control, it will, like I said, destroy pretty much everything in its path, and reform is impossible, and therefore the only alternative. Is to end the system now while we still have a modicum of control. And this is his revolution thesis, right? He he he's calling explicitly for revolution against modern technology, saying basically we need to end the. System we need to bring it down. Now before it's too late, before we either lose all power. To bring it down or before. The humans are are completely enslaved. Or or completely eliminated by this expanding system.

Kevin: That's a great summary. This is kind of a little off track, but it did Ted Express sweet spot for technology. So for example I I get that you know we have computers and nuclear weapons and stuff, but on the other hand is is there like a cut off point. So do we go back to stone axes and wearing bear skins or? You know, can we can we go back to 18th, the 18th century or something like is there a? Kind of the sweet spot that he thought existed.

David: Well, that that's a. Good question. Yeah, and I I. Had wondered that early on myself he talks about in the manifesto. He talks about the industrial revolution as

being a disaster for the human race. And it makes you think that he's talking about the developments since the industrial revolution, which was, say, the mid 1700s onward. And I queried him about. That in in. One of my early. Letters to him. And which it sort of implied that, well, if we could only go back to, say, just before the industrial revolution, well then maybe everything would be OK. But he rejected that idea pretty firmly to to me in in some letters to me. His view was basically. If you're going to revolt against this monstrous system. The revolution will be sort. Of a a catastrophic to collapse, probably. Let's let's say an uncontrolled collapse, which doesn't mean fast. It could be a slow kind of breakdown over time. But basically it's it's a sort of a progressive breakdown of the system, which he says basically we cannot. Program in where to stop so you know, even though maybe in one sense we might like to stop just prior to the industrial revolution, he says basically, once the system starts imploding, as it were, that that basically we will not be able to stop it until it sort of crashes. All the way to the ground. And that will put us back at a very low level of existence. Conceivably something like Hunter gatherer existence, probably very small scale agriculture. Sort of hard to envision any any. Future where there's not some. Kind of agriculture at this. Point, but it would be a very, very low level existence. Certainly in any case.

Kevin: So he has quite, quite an extreme outlook obviously on on. Does he believe? It's preferable to go. There is it. A preferable place to be to be a hunter gatherer subject to those kind of environmental pressures that I suppose humanity Co evolved with for so long before, before we kind of. Thrust ourselves out of that that paradigm.

David: Yeah, I mean, certainly, I mean I mean it's like anything is preferable to what we've got today, right? Which is this out of control system which is which is just degrading and debasing humanity at a minimum and potentially going going to destroy us. So yeah, by all means, Hunter gatherer is preferable and. And in fact, I mean you can. Make an independent case that really that's our. I mean, it seems pretty, pretty crude compared to today, but but that's our long-term mode of successful existence, right? So humans, human, the genius ****, has been around for well over 2,000,000 years. And for 99.9% of the time we were hunter gatherers, so we evolved genetically and psychologically, to be hunter gatherers. And we were. Able to do that indefinitely. We survived the planet survive. You know, OK, we drove some large scale large mammals to to extinction in the process, but basically basically it was a stable long term sustainable situation for the human race and certainly that would be preferable and sure to Kaczynski and probably to a lot of other people. That would be preferable to A to a runaway system which is degrading and destroying all. Of nature at this point.

Kevin: Hmm, interesting. Yeah, I've got to say where, where? I've travelled to places where people do live closer to that hunter gatherer mean, I suppose. They do seem a lot happier, I've gotta say, just in general. I'm sure they face things that are harsh and difficult. But put it this way, they're not on SSRI's and you know. Anti anxiety pills around.

David: Exactly, exactly. They're not on the right. Antidepressants and taking drugs. and schizophrenic, I mean. Know everything that. That we know the simpler technological existence is, which is far better for our physical and our mental. I mean, obviously there's certain things you cannot treat if you don't have advanced technology and this is one of the things that people always bring up is you don't have advanced medicines and then surgical treatments and so forth. But of course, on the other side, as you don't have a lot of the problems that gave rise to the need for. Modern medicine and modern surgical techniques. So for example things like well, like depression is basically a modern industrial disease. And we have. Strong evidence that depression virtually did not exist, even even say at the time of ancient Greece, right, which was well after hunter gatherer existence and things like cancer, which is still a very, you know. Major cause of suffering and illness and death for humans. Cancer is also modern industrial disease which basically did not exist prior to even the 16. It's so so you know the. the lack of the need to treat cancer is is irrelevant when you don't have cancer, then that's basically what we would be looking at if we lived a. Simpler and more natural. Sort of existence.

Kevin: It's it's interesting. I always thought there was an element. As well. And this this is gonna sound kind of harsh, but I think as far as I understand, Darwinian natural. That death is inevitably a way that the species Wees out. How would you, say, genomes that aren't kind of strong or able to adapt, and that that process is quite important to maintaining? You know, healthy people overall. And there seems to be an aversion in modern Society of allowing that process to to actually just how would you say everyone needs to survive and no one can die? There's definitely that. That kind of attitude with modern people and I. Think it probably. That process should be to some degree allowed to. To work as as as it's meant to.

David: Yes, that's a very important point in which very few people understand. I I think. You know, one of the things that people. Like to. Trumpet about modern. Technological society is the high life expectancy and the high lifespan, and they. Say well look. You know what's the life expectancy in the modern society is 80 years 80 or 85 years in some cases. And they say, well, look, in these primitive societies. Average life life expectancy was what mid 30s or mid 20s in some cases right? and the point of this like well we've made this tremendous progress but but it it's a highly misleading because as you say lower life expectancy in in more primitive societies is almost entirely due to infant mortality. And you have to figure in infant mortality. and say. Early childhood mortality, say within the first. Year or two, you. Have to figure that into the into the total life expectancy and certainly simpler societies lost a larger percentage of their infants at at birth and in that first year. And the reason they lost those is because those. There was something wrong, right? I mean that that's why they died. There was kind. Of a genetic defect or weakness or susceptibility to disease that caused the infant to die.

Kevin: Right.

David: And exactly as you say, right, I mean there there's a logic to that, right? Nature does that, it uses, it uses this process by producing more offspring than is needed for the species to allow weak variants to to be to be killed off, frankly. So they don't reproduce and keeping them more robust and healthier. Members of that species and allowing them to reproduce, and that's how nature functions in every every species on this. Planet with modern technology, we've altered that process and now, as you say, basically every infant survives. Every baby survives, at least certainly as much as possible, at least to early adulthood. Frequently where they're able to, to marry and have children, they reproduce as well. And what that does is that reproduces in the next generation genetic defects and weaknesses that would normally have been filtered out. Of the out of the process. So on on the one hand, we can say, well, look, it's wonderful. Every every baby survives, and the children grow up and they get to have their. Own their. Own families, which on an individual level of. Course is wonderful, but on. A species level. That's catastrophic because it allows genetic errors and defects to accumulate and to grow within the human species. Within our population of human. and that alone is. A potentially catastrophic scenario which could cause major. Problems in in. In a very short period of time in not many more decades, we're already seeing some effects, and this is a rapidly compound compounding process which could could really cause insurmountable. Problems in a very short period.

Kevin: Sure. And I also wonder if a lot of the madness we're seeing at the moment can be derived from that. Obviously, the brain is a is a large portion of the phenotypes representation the genetic representation of the individual. And I also wonder if aberrant behaviour and silly behaviour could be driven by this kind of. Lack of evolutionary pressure that we've experienced over the last 150 years in the West.

David: Yeah, certainly. Well, there will be will be both physical and psychological or mental effects. I mean, that's virtually guaranteed. So. So, yeah, mental. It's it's hard to quantify. I think at this point. But you know what would count as mental illness is growing. Schizophrenia is growing aberrant behaviors. Antisocial behaviors. Yeah, obviously depression and attention deficit and a lot of these. A lot of these psychological illnesses are really pervading society. That's. And that's going. To have profound effect in in many areas. Right. I mean, it's going to affect. Whatever you know. Economics and purchasing preferences and how people spend their time and their participation in political processes and. You know, you name it. All every aspect of society will. Be affected by that?

Kevin: And I guess more resources will be given to try and sort these problems out and probably it's going to be a fairly hopeless endeavour, I would imagine.

David: Well, sure, we'll. We'll use all these problems as as basis for. Claiming we need yet more. Technology and more technological intervention to solve these problems, which technology itself has created, which is really an ironic situation. So you get this self perpetuating process where the the, the, the failures of technology. Bring a rise in demand for more technology, so we'll be doing more harsher interventions and we'll be

doing genetic manipulations in the womb in the in human DNA and living human beings. And you can, you can only imagine what can. Go wrong in those scenarios.

Kevin: Yeah, 100% I it's actually a prominent YouTube that has this theory called the revolutionary phenotype, and his theory is that when geneticists start to mix artificial intelligence with the ability to manipulate the genome, then in effect we will lose complete control of our species. We will. Will become like the next layer of. You have RNA DNA. And that that. We will become the next layer on in that process and in effect we will hand over. Complete control of the species to technology, potentially, which I I think is a fascinating theory.

David: Yeah, conceivably at some point, right, if you get some ultra advanced artificial intelligence process which is carrying on. Its own genetic. Manipulation of of humans or life in general, then yeah, that's absolutely frightening.

Kevin: Yeah, printing, printing humans, I think is a. Where he puts it. There you go. Yeah. So just quickly returning to Ted's ideas. So we've kind of gone through what he thinks, potentially some of the consequences in your own work. How has it impacted your work and how how much of this do you subscribe to? Are you taking all of this and embracing it in your own philosophy or have you gone, sorry, kind of gone other places with it?

David: Well, like I said, I was. I was. An anti technology critic well before there was a Unabomber. So. So when the manifesto came. Out in 95, I was familiar with the arguments I was familiar with the ideas. Much of the material actually was drawn from Jacqueline's book. Which? I was familiar with. So I can. See sort of a or a rephrasing and updating of a lot of familiar argument. So in that sense, I don't think Kazinski's work had that much direct effect on my thinking. I was already sort of thinking that. Way before he came along. I mean, he, he adds this new component, that revolution is. The necessary outcome, because nothing else will work. So that's a pragmatic innovation that he brings to the discussion, which I thought was quite interesting and. I guess maybe in some sense I'm agreeing with him there that some kind of revolutionary action is in fact necessary if we want to survive in the long run. One of the shortcomings of the manifesto was that he was not entirely clear what he meant by a revolution and what that would entail and what that might look like. He gave some general thoughts about how that might go. He said it could be fast or or slow. It could be violent or relatively non violent, but he didn't really give any. Kind of a. Detailed discussion or or a road map for how how that revolution might work. So I've tried to sketch out some of those ideas in in recent my recent works. There's a little bit in in my book, the Metaphysics of technology from 2015. I have a new chapter coming out in a in a book early next year that I've called Creative Reconstruction, which is an elaboration. Of the final chapter of my book, again trying to sketch out a fairly strong retracting of modern technology, dialing it back over several by several 100 years over a period of about. 100 years. To get us to where we might be sustainable. So I guess that's my own sort of revolutionary thesis. And I guess the other you know, the other piece that I've tried to bring in my book was a kind of a metaphysical description

of technology. What? What? This thing is how would it operate? How it works in? The world and. How we should respond to it, which I thought was really lacking, not only in Kaczynski because he's not really much of A. He's not really a metaphysical philosopher at all. He's a very pragmatic sort of. Fellow. So he doesn't talk about this metaphysical basis of technology. You. Have to go back to people like. Not even a little didn't really talk about it. Heidegger did a couple of ways at times in the in the in the mid 40s, but it was very obscure. Typical heidegger. Sort of talk.

Kevin: And and of course, I think by his own admission, I don't think he was satisfied in the end with what he came up with. I thought I read. That somewhere but.

David: Heidegger. Yeah. Well, exactly right. He he, he and he sort of acknowledged the. Feeling of his. Own ideas. And he's he you know. Kind of this this sort of surrender in. His in his last interviews before he died. He basically said. Well, it's too late. We've lost we we've lost. All hope and we. We don't know what to do. We just. Have to. Wait and see. So yeah.

Kevin: So just quickly on that, we'll we'll come back to the metaphor. Sorry, metaphysics later, because it's something I really want to talk about. But just quickly on the idea of revolution. And one of the things in Ted's books that I found most surprising when I read it was how scathing he is over what he refers to over socialized leftists and I. Guess probably that. Probably means more, so the modern left. Than it does the traditional. You know Labour working class left, I would imagine, but I don't really know. So it's an academic and. I guess it's generally accepted academia tends to be quite liberal, at least in the United States, so. I would imagine. How how do how do these people that that you work with or you come across? How do they react to his ideas? Because in many ways, his scathing indictment of of the social causes that they go for and all these kinds of things and him painting them as essentially agents. Of this technological authoritarianism in in some. Noise. How do people react to that? In your experience, it's it's one of the more surprising things I read in that book.

David: Yeah, it is quite interesting. In fact, in the manifesto, a large portion of the beginning about the about the first third of the whole document is an attack on leftism. The basically in various forms and. Which is again, I was surprised as well I I. I remember reading. It for the first time and I'm a third way 3rd and I'm thinking he's hardly mentioned technology at. All you know? Yeah, I thought this. Was about technology and it really wasn't there until. the second-half of the piece. But it's a good point in in academia, yes, certainly. People tend to be left left on the political spectrum, but in my experience not not many academics really understand the manifesto. I'm not sure. They actually even really. Read it. Some of them probably maybe started too and then saw this critique of the themselves, their own ideology, and the leftists. And then and probably just. Bailed out at. That point probably didn't even read the whole thing. Or they accepted some very shorthand news media readers digest version of the ideas and they and they latched down to that. Not many academics, in my experience, really really think much about technology. They don't really understand it.

Even the philosophers that I work with that they don't really understand philosophy of technology so. Yeah, I think the the, the people that I that I see just have generally not engaged with the ideas. They've generally ignored it. Maybe they felt personally affronted by his attack on leftists. I'm I'm not sure. But, but I mean, in the sense that's separate from the problems of technology itself, it's. It's a shame if if people let that aspect of the manifesto put them off from calculating the real. Issues in my mind, which is which is the problem of technology itself.

Kevin: Sure. Do you do you think it has? A part to play though, like. He did fairly explicitly go through in a lot of detail I. It seems like it's kind of happening. I mean when when I read the book I was like *** **** like, how did he know this back in the 1970s? I mean, like, granted, I'm young, but I was. Really shocked at how. Appreciate it. it all was, it was quite amazing how he predicted.

David: It. Yeah. Exactly. Well, you know the I I guess. The the, the, the, the hallmark of. The of the over socialized. Left is that they put. All their emphasis on humanity. They're very human centered and. So they they really. Will do anything to maintain what they consider. In the best interests of humanity, and they don't see revolutionary action against technology which which could be very painful for humanity, they don't see that as as necessarily important or or even a good thing, because they just see that as creating a lot of suffering. Right. So that's one problem. The other problem is they they tend to jump on board to sort of radical movements and either deliberately or unintentionally divert the movement from its original course to a pro leftist. Pro Humanist direction, OK? So, so, so leftist kind of kind of pose a a sort of a double threat there. and I think you know Ted could see like I say even in the in the 80s and the 90s when he was finalizing this document that leftist need to be avoided, they need to be excluded from any revolutionary action. They're sort of soft headed humanistic St. Cruz, who can't really see what's best in the long term and are unwilling to undergo the kind of harsh action that's take that's required to to allow humanity and the planet to survive.

Kevin: So just returning to the philosophy of technology, could you just give us an overview of what that is, what does it entail and what does it seek to achieve?

David: So right, I mean the philosophy of technology like philosophy of anything, it's a very, it's a very general concept, a very general phrase. And I suppose it has different interpretations to different people. The way I've conceived it is is basically as both, let's say, an ontological and an ethical. Description of the phenomenon. So for technology, we want to know and I wrote this in my book. We want to know really what is this thing? What is it that we're dealing with? What is the essence or the essential nature of this thing? That's one question. Secondly, how does it operate in the in the world? What does it actually do functionally in the world? And then thirdly, the sort of the ethical piece, right? what should we do if it's causing problems or causing harm? What should we do? How should we respond to this particular phenomenon? So for me, it's those 3 components comprise what I would call philosophy of technology, right? One. What is it 2? How does it work? And three, how should we respond to it?

Kevin: OK, so assuming we know what it is that it's destructive and it has all these unintended consequences on on humanity and and. The Earth I want to talk for a moment about some solutions, and you've mentioned your book. I actually haven't read it yet, but I will be buying it and reading it now. That I'm aware of it. So what are some possible solutions if we if? We take these things. As truth, which they sound like they're they probably are. What? What are some ways that we can? Reduce the impact of technology on on us as a as a species.

David: Right. Well, there's sort of the obvious path and then the less obvious path and I guess by the obvious one is the one that everybody wants to. Do and they want to say, well, look, we'll just. If technology is causing problems, we'll just take the problems as they come one by one. One, we'll tackle each problem. We'll try to fix it with different technology or better technology or some some kind of maybe passing new laws or something. And on a very piecemeal basis, we'll kind of modify and alter the thing. And you know, ban, ban the harmful chemicals and harmful radiation which will eliminate that. We just because we want to keep all the things that we like. About it, right, so there's. This idea that we're going to. We're going to get rid of all the bad stuff, keep all the good stuff, and we'll just progressively do this over time and through. This way we will slow, slowly reform and directs the process by which technology advances. And that's the very traditional, standard approach that we. Always get from. From media and the government and corporations. This is this is how. They like to operate. the problem is when you when you look at how technology works over time this this simply does not seem. To work. The problems? Grow faster than we can tackle them. They become more severe overtime exponentially. The complexity of the total system becomes so large that we become unable to to rationally divide. These real solutions many times our solutions in themselves cause side effects or secondary consequences in some cases which were even worse than the problem they. Were supposed to solve. Strangely enough. So there's multiple reasons why when you look. Over time and and. And several observers have noted this this is not just recent ideas that. To this little incremental gradualist sort of reform process simply does not seem. To work, we we. We hammered down 5 problems and 10 new ones show up in there twice as bad as the old ones, which suggests that something much more fundamental is going on. And that is a much stronger response will be needed if if we hope to avoid. the worst outcomes, which which are looming in the in the in. The near future.

Kevin: How far do you think tech needs to be rolled back? What's your view on that?

David: Yeah. So that's a good question. I. Thought about that. For a while and again this is. In my book and. In my recent essay upcoming essay. I you know, I I tend to agree and several thinkers have said, look, it's the industrial. Revolution is really sort of the accelerating. Downfall of of of Modern society and the production. Of greenhouse gases. And so forth. So certainly if you, if you could plan something, you would want to drive the system back. Prior to Industrial revolution, which means prior to fossil fuel usage. Prior to electrical, electrical and electronic devices prior to

steam engines and so forth, all these things came about the beginning in the 1700s. So you need to sustainably go back at least. That far? That. Seems to be a bare minimum if we want to retract the system towards at a stable level. I've argued that you need to go sort of even further back, say a few hundred more years in time to avoid the risk of lapsing. Back into these negative behaviors and negative technologies, if you if you're too close to the era of industrial revolution. Inevitably, someone, somewhere will slip back into the industrial mode and then pretty soon we'll start mining, coal and oil, if we can, and the system may start itself up. So if you really want to build in a. Margin of safety you have. To go back a few 100 years prior to the start of the industrial Revolution. In my book, I've argued we need to go back to the 13th century, say the 1200s, to really, really be safe to really get to a level where we can have. A high level of culture and a high level of social quality of life. But with relatively simple and sustainable technologies. So yeah, we need to go back seven. 100 to 8. 100 years something like this from from where we are today to to really survive, I think.

Kevin: Interesting. Yeah, I I would argue that the High Middle Ages was the. Far more advanced. Culturally, than probably we are today actually, but that's an aside anyway. So in terms of agriculture. Because I do a bit of stuff on agriculture, I I talk to biodynamic farmers, other people like that. I mean, what kind of place do you see for agriculture in in this in your scheme?

David: Yeah, well, I mean. To. To me, agriculture is probably inevitable, like like I say, it's hard to imagine that you under any scenario where people in the future would be doing some level of agriculture, probably not industrial agriculture, right? The question is if you can. Well, what kind of agriculture? Would you have, without any fossil fuel usage, right? So you have no power. So farm machines at all. So we're back to using humans and animals, basically. So I I think. That's probably probably in the cards for the long term future of humanity. If we are going to survive, we have to learn how to farm without any fossil fuel power at all. So we need to need to farm with human power and animal power. It will be like it used to be very small scale, local, diverse crops, whatever survives and grows best in each local climate. You're not producing producing excess food products, you're not producing them for sale or export. It's all for local local consumption. Local usage. That's how it used to be for a few thousand years and that's probably how it's how it's going to be again.

Kevin: So I'm I'm just thinking now, as you're saying this, if if there is an advantage to be gained by farming, as you say, use of. Coal or oil? For groups to perhaps dominate other groups, which? Seems to be a running theme through human history. How do you build in a mechanism to avoid that temptation for groups to use technology or technological advances for that purpose of domination of? Of other groups. Because it seems to me to be a fairly big problem to to ensure that that wouldn't be allowed to. You know, go wild.

David: Right, exactly, would seem like, right. Somebody somebody decides they want to have power over others and they developed advanced tools. And suddenly they wipe out the. The more the more primitive ones. Right. Right. I I think we have some

built-in safeguards there, at least with respect to fossil fuels. The current situation with fossil fuels is that we've used up all the easily accessible. Coal and oil. Right in the old days, a few 100 years ago. Coal and oil were right at the surface. Of the earth. You do you just use in. Some places you just scratched away the dirt and there was coal. In some cases oil was. Bubbling out of the ground. And you just scooped it up with a bucket there. You go right. That's that's. As easy as it. Can be now all that is gone. All the easy coal and. Easy oil is is gone and what we are extracting now is very deep seated. Coal and oil resources, right, very far. Underground out at. Sea and so forth or through the complex processing of the tar, tar sands and so forth. If the system collapses really to much of A degree at all, we will. No longer be able to. Operate the infrastructure to access those fossil fuels, and when that happens, no one will have access to them at all. So. So there's no risk of somebody picking up some some oil somewhere and making into petroleum and turning. Into fuel and making. You know, bombs out of it. I mean it. It will be impossible to get that because it's all gone. It's it's. Far underground it's far. Out of the sea and people will. Not be able to get to that. So I think we have. Fortunately, we have this built-in safeguard when. Where where no one will be able to really advance the technology for, for good or bad or for good purposes. Or if they decide they want to dominate others, they will not be able. To do it. And everyone will be on the same same. Level ground, right? They'll be using their basic basic tools and maybe simple. Metals wood products and animal products and that's it.

Kevin: Yeah, you would imagine it would be the same for metals, all kinds of minerals would be almost impossible to access. Now you mentioned that I yeah, yeah.

David: Well, exactly right. So lots of lots of mountain metals we've extracted again right from the surface and we're digging down deep for those. Yeah, I I mean it's it's it's it's a good question, right, how much how much metal is still accessible relatively easily that that's a good question. I don't really know that but but I I'm sure you're right, it's a lot less than it used to be and a lot harder to get to. So even even metal tools which we had even in antiquity. Those those may be extremely hard to reproduce you. Know you, you we we may end up. Doing a lot. Of scavenging from. The ruins of. You know all the metal scrap metal that. Exists around the world today that. May be our our sole source of. Metals for a long time.

Kevin: Yeah, sure. Makes sense. Yeah. In Australia, we have quite a lot of awe, I would imagine and quite a lot on the surface. But I think by the time the Chinese are done with that, we we won't have a lot of easily accessible metal so.

David: Right. They're about, they're about to. Extract all that for you and. So you'll you'll. Be out of it soon enough.

Kevin: Pretty much. And we're willing to. Sell it, apparently so you know what the hell. So another thing I'm interested in is ecotheology, so I'm I'm imagining there's some sort of transcendent and religious element to all of this. Can we go through what ecotheology is just briefly?

David: Yeah, sure. It's that that concept had been around for a while and again, my mentor Hendrix colonoscopy was quite prominent in that field as well. Yeah, it's, it's, it's the idea that. You know, conventional theology, conventional religions are more or less defective and probably intellectually bankrupt, I mean. They're all they're. All based on mythologies and false ideas and superstition, and in some cases have been used as control and manipulation. Devices over people, which by some reading is a shame because there is this. The core I guess you. Could say the core of theology is this idea that. You know, maybe there is something sort of precious and sacred in the world. Maybe there are kind of higher powers in the universe and in in the earth that we don't quite understand. We don't really understand what the human spirit really is or you know, whether we don't really know if we have a soul and whether other things in nature also might have souls. So there's lots of questions about these things and there's reasons to to to think that maybe we should respect and acknowledge these. Spiritual powers and the sacredness in the world, but we should do it in a way that's, say, not superstitious, not manipulative. But it's. You know, for for lack of better word, it's. It's rational, right? Something that's based on the real world and maybe vaguely scientific in some sense or ecological in some sense. So there was a there was a movement in the last few decades by Skalski and others to take sort of what's what's good about theology and give it a firm, ecological or evolutionary basis. and allow that to sort of inform our our striving for spirituality and for a sense of sacred and a sense of respect for the cosmos of which we. Are really a part of. So I I guess maybe that's the sort of the general idea behind eco theology. It takes different forms depending on. Who? Who spells it out right, but yeah.

Kevin: There's been some interesting people involved. I didn't realize until I looked into it, said Sayed Hussain NASA, who was a famous traditionalist from the Sophia Perennis of course. So that's called being anti modernistic and and. and not progressive, I would say. But are you yourself? Are you an atheist? I think I've seen a few videos online where you're arguing against Christians. I thought it was a Christian colleague of yours.

David: Yeah. No, I've, I've. I've come out as. Being quite a prominent critic of Christianity in particular. I published a book. A couple of years ago called the Jesus Hoax. Which you might find interesting, or your your reader, your listeners might find interesting. So yeah, there's there's a whole whole reason to to to view Christianity specifically as a profoundly misguided and really sort of kind of based on the manipulation that comes out of early. So yeah, I I've been. Harshly critical Christianity, but I mean, I'm in a sense equally critical Judaism and Islam. I really find no no basis for those religions at all. I don't really describe myself as an atheist, probably because I'm more more of something like an eco. Theologian, if I could call myself that what? You know what exactly that means kind of varies with my context. Sometimes I consider myself a pantheist, which sort of views the world or the universe itself as God sometimes. I'm a kind of a polytheist, you. Know and I and I can kind of. See see my way to to agree. With the the. Ancient Greeks and Romans and there. Are many gods out

there which? Yeah, there's something to be said for that, right? So I yeah. I I kind of changed my my religious outlook depending on the context, if you will, but yeah not. Not really an atheist per say.

Kevin: Sure. So it. Sounds to me like what you're describing as kind. Of like a pan psych. Is and effectively where where everything in the universe kind of has a kind of awareness or meaning. Is that kind of what you how you look at things? Yeah.

David: Yeah, exactly. So this is one of my early areas of research, right, pane psych as much as every everything really. Sort of has. A psychic quality or mental quality to it, and that includes obviously humans and animals, but it also includes plants and even non living. What we would call. Non living things. Or systems of things like like the earth as a whole, or you know the sun and the moon and the and the and the universe as a whole. So it's a whole interesting sort of separate discussion. Maybe. Maybe we could have that one sometime sort of the basis for panpsychism, which is a kind of a. it is a kind of grounding. For, let's say, a reverential. View of the world. Because you see these, all these entities in in nature as being psychic in, in, in nature, in a sense. And that seems to demand that they are are viewed with with inherent value that they have intrinsic value because of this quality which we share to a. To a lesser degree. And so yeah, I think these things, these things are are integrated, this idea of panpsychism and an eco theological outlook. And generally an anti technological. Outlet I I find some basis for integrating all these ideas.

Kevin: It it reminded me very much of reading Henrik's book of I. I recently had a guest on that did a book on Black Elk. It was of course was a Lakota medicine man and it very much reminded me of an Indian Native American world view. That's pretty much the way they saw things I think. It's kind of the way they saw. The universe.

David: That. That. Yeah, exactly in fact. Not not only them most in terms of most from what I understand, most primitive societies have viewed the world in in what we would call an animist or or a panpsychist sort of worldview. And they would see these spiritual qualities in animals and plants and in the woods. And the ocean and the lakes and the and the rivers and the stream, so. It's actually quite widespread throughout the world, many times in many different places, in many different cultures, they actually. Viewed the world that.

Kevin: Way. Absolutely, yeah. It was. It was interesting though, when I was going through the book and I'm I'm fairly well acquainted with, say, Buddhism. Or Vedanta and more eastern religions. It didn't seem to me to be a huge amount of difference between the view presented in ecotheology and those religions. Basically what they are. Obviously you have derivations later on, they're maybe a little bit different. But in essence I felt that it was, it was quite similar perhaps. With more of a naturist bent would, would you agree with that or? Am I missing something do you think?

David: I think so. I know Skolimowski himself was. Always very sympathetic to. In particular, Buddhist views, he found that quite quite compelling and saw close affiliation with his own views. From what I know. And I can't really comment because I. Don't know that them. In detail. So I mean there's many things. That are very.

Very foreign to a Western outlook and in some some ways I think. It's maybe hard to compare. Those views, even though they seem to agree on a number of points. So certainly there seems to be some overlap and some some common sympathies there. But like I. Say in in my case I'm I'm not I. Don't really feel. Qualified to to really give a good. Analysis of of that overlap just because. I'm not that. Familiar with the eastern philosophies.

Kevin: One of the other things he goes he goes and discusses in this book is this idea of the predeterminism of religion versus a kind of universal evolutionism. I guess that's that seems to be a critical difference. Right. and that it's kind of important to discard. Had pre deterministic thinking in this ecotheology I think it's a pretty important distinction. Where do you sit on this? Because I I've always struggled with this question and obviously it's a massive question. I mean how you know, how could we possibly probably ever know. But so even. Even from a. Scientific viewpoint. You have people like maybe Sam Harris, who's a prominent thinker that thinks that people don't really have free will, that we have predetermined hereditary and environmental forces. Compel us to behave in a certain way, but in Ecotheology there seems to be a kind of a process of individual growth and theoretical process in which the individual engages in taking responsibility for their impact in the world and various other things. Where? Where do you stand on this question of predeterminism versus evolutionism in in ecotheology?

David: Yeah. Well, it's it's a, it's an interesting. and a. It's a difficult topic, frankly. Scholarly I think you're right, skull. Musky for sure, he viewed. the universe, as this creative process right, evolution was a creative process and this goes back to earlier thinkers like Tyard and Bergson. and some guys. Like that? Who? Who really saw you know? Really, evolution is always. Bringing new, creative, utterly new things into the world, new forms, new ideas, new structure. And so for skull mask and some others, this is this. Is like the. Real model, right? Human creativity is a small version of this cosmic creativity and the universe sort of has unlimited possibilities and in a sense, so do we, and therefore that we have. To act deliberately. With responsibility in this in this sort of creative, creative way to to positively construct the world, you know that we that we want to live in. and I mean, there's lots of. Lots to be said for that. It's very. Inspiring view. You know the other the other side is the deterministic piece, right? and the more that you sort of understand science and how evolution works and the scientific worldview, you really come to some compelling arguments that says. Well, like you say that really. Human free will is a kind of. A. A kind. Of an illusion. Or or also. That we somehow come to believe that's that's. Not factually true. Which doesn't really leave any room potentially for human creative action. Maybe any action at all. If we're really fully determined, we're just sort of playing out sort of the cosmic programming when we're just kind of following along without even realizing it. Which is sounds a little bit depressing, but but the rational arguments tend to push us in that direction, I think. and there are actually very strong arguments today in philosophy which which in fact says that humans do not really have free will in in the sense that they that they

typically understand it. You know my my own view is probably somewhere in between that because of this funny dichotomy between the the. What appears to be it, it seems that we have sort of this absolute free will, but the very strong arguments against the free will to me suggest that somehow. The whole debate is mistaken or needs to shift in a different direction. It seems like we need to somehow maybe transcend this idea. Maybe it's maybe it's a mistake to even talk about this. You know, sort of free will versus deterministic worldview and to think in a new. Direction and that's. That that's kind of where I've come down on this issue. I you know what that new direction is, I I guess I don't, I don't have a good answer yet, but it's to me it seems like those those sort of old dichotomies. Maybe, maybe are fallacious in some sense, and that is it's a kind of a false problem that we're trying to solve and we. Need to think in. A new way about it.

Kevin: Hmm. So the question is the problem not. Not the answer then.

David: Yeah, maybe. Exactly, exactly.

Kevin: Kind of agree with that, I think. And so part of this idea of this evolving universe is this idea that you you have complexity ever increasing complexity throughout the universe on on like an energetic level. Would you therefore say the Navy technology is an inevitable consequence of this ever increasing complexity of energy throughout the universe is that it? Am I picking up on something here in this because it seemed to be a big? Feature of that book.

David: Yeah, exactly. I think that's exactly right. In fact, in fact, that's one of the main themes of my my books. Metaphysics with technology is that is it, is it the growing complexity in the universe is manifest as. Well, first material complexity in terms of heavier elements and then is biological complexity. Right. Is is. Is animal complexity and then ultimately is social complexity and then technological complexity. This is all part of a spectrum of growing complexity in the universe, and in a sense this is a very natural. and maybe in an. Inevitable process that we're dealing with, and in my book I've I've said this is precisely why we're having such problems with technology, because it's it operates like a law of nature. And it and it, and it presses ahead sort of with this power and this force that we that we don't really understand and which sort of has this inevitability to it. And I think I think that's wise because it's grounded in these natural forces of increasing complexity. And I think it's part and parcel of. That whole, that whole brand. Process and that. That makes it extraordinarily difficult to deal. With not impose. But it makes it much harder for us to to deal with this phenomenon.

Kevin: So yeah, it's almost in a sense that the dichotomy between a human and technology technology is simply just being an extension of the human nervous system. In some sense, it's it's kind of par for the course. Is that what you're saying, like it's going to be difficult to get rid of for that reason? Yeah.

David: Yeah, well, yeah, right. And in a sense, it's like it's, I mean, you could say like a new life form. Or something. It's. Not really a life form, it's more than. That, but yeah, it's it's a, it's. A new sort of level of functioning level of complexity

which is above us if we want to think of hierarchical. You know you have relatively low low level, lower level, simpler levels of complexity in the simpler organisms and in inanimate matter. But the technological complexity seems to be working over our heads, so to speak. But I I still think it's part of the same process of of of structure coming into being. Increasing structure as long as the energy flows allow them, which which happens throughout the universe. You know, we happen to be in sort of the ideal spot here on the earth where we have the fluid matter and energy. In terms of air and water and so forth. And we have the the. Inflowing energy from the sun, which is constantly driving the process forward. And yeah, I think in a sense, under those conditions, life is probably inevitable. Complex life is inevitable and technological life, if you will, that's also inevitable.

Kevin: Obviously you have guys like Ray Kurzweil and Elon Musk, I suppose, who everyone seems to love. How do you? Think all their. Things are gonna turn out. Are we gonna reach a point of no return? Are we gonna get to Mars or any of these? These things possible. I mean, or are we going to hit? Like a limitation like there's something built into the DNA of the human being that we just can't get to those levels that. We're going to. We're gonna stop. There's, like, a a mechanism that will. It'll bring us back. How? How do you see all that, I mean.

David: It it? Yeah, it. It might more likely is is will get hit by a technological disaster or catastrophe that will stop. Us this is this isn't sort of my my my thinking. There are so many different disaster scenarios related to advancing technology. You know whether it's genetically engineered viruses that. You know, cause a catastrophic pandemic that wipes out most of the. Human race or it could be killer drones. Or it could be runaway nano replicating devices. It could be just advanced AI that somehow sees as the whole of the whole Internet and the global economy. I mean there there's multiple scenarios right where advancing technology really leads. It's the end, end of things, at least at a high scale that I I think you know our, our, our our event horizon is probably a few decades out at best and some of these you know grand schemes about you know, colonizing Mars and flying around the Galaxy or whatever I mean. I think we will get hit by a catastrophe well before that happens, so we probably need not worry about those things and we should more likely worry about just just surviving. This would be my case. In fact, it's. I mean, it's cut. No, I want to say it's sort of interesting, cuz there's this thing called the Fermi paradox. I don't know if you're familiar with this idea. Yeah. So the Fermi paradox says, why are there not extraterrestrial civilizations, right? Why aren't they flying around in spaceships all over the place? And why? Why don't we? See these guys. All over, or at least through our telescopes, we don't see any advanced civilizations anywhere, or no evidence of these things, and one of the explanations is because they all succumb to technological catastrophe. When they get to the point where they were maybe about to be able to become visible. Cosmically, they, they they run into one of these technological catastrophes which either destroys them or drives them down to. Such a simple level that. That they're basically visible. We're not, we're not going to see a planet of hunter gatherers 100 light years away.

They there. There's no sign that they can give off sort of sort of. Going there. So this is sort of what I've argued for in my book, is that the reason the explanation for the Fermi paradox and why there are no advanced civilizations is because they're all. They're all getting wiped. Out by advanced technology and therefore we ought not hope to be the one that's out there colonizing the universe. When when probably we will. Far more likely. Hit one of these major roadblocks and we. Should be preparing for that and. How to survive that, if only at a? Low level rather than spending time and. Money on these these grand schemes, which will almost certainly never. Never come to fruition.

Kevin: One of one of the more controversial theories I've come across recently. It includes the OR evidence that the human intelligence is rapidly declining, and that's as a result of those selective pressures not being applied anymore. I I have this idea that as a result of that decline in human intelligence that we just simply won't have the cognitive. Manpower to get there in time. That's that's kind of the way I'm looking. At things, yeah.

David: Well, exactly right. I mean right, you. Know in a sense that is one of those technological disaster scenarios. Is that we? Is that we become so you know, so genetically degraded by our own, by an accumulation of the errors within the human species that we're in a sense. We're no longer able to function. Certainly not at a collective level at A at a high level. So you're right, that alone could, could, could bring, bring a bring a screeching halt to these grand schemes that that some of. These people have.

Kevin: Yeah. So it sounds like ecotheology then is is very much like I tend to view the world and history in cyclical terms myself. I'm not not really a progressivist in the sense that I think that we're we're heading towards some predetermined destination and that humanity's fate is inevitable, like many people seem to think. And I find that interesting that maybe some of these technologists are kind of functioning with a pseudo Christian progressivist view of things, but they've kind of replaced the end times with a a kind of vision of. The perfect amalgamation of of humanity and machine, it seems it's it's kind of almost religious the way that these guys are looking at things I feel.

David: Yeah, I I know what you're saying particularly this transhumanist movement, right? Where where we're supposed to sort of become super humans or humans, super human cyborgs or some kind of crazy or get your mind uploaded into into cyberspace and you expand from there some, something like that. And. Yeah, I mean it's this is sort of sort of crazy and awe inspiring and it and it can sound like kind. Of kind of a new. Religion or a new kind of salvation, right? I mean, this is really how they're casting these things. Yeah, you know again. To me, that's that's on the on par with colonizing Mars and flying to the to the stars and all. This stuff I. To to me, we we will. Hit one of these major roadblocks. Far sooner than we will be able to realize any of these grand quasi religious schemes of Kurzweil and those guys.

Kevin: So I guess we should probably think about finishing off. Are there any other kind of things that you think are important in terms of Ted's writings ecotheology how this all fits apart? And I'd also like to start talking about maybe things. That people can. Do in their everyday life, because I I I like Ted. I'm a really practical kind of guy. So, so I like. I like the idea of having practical solutions for people to look at, maybe sources of information people can approach to start integrating some of these things into their lifestyles and. And the way they. They approached the. World, perhaps?

David: Yeah. Well, there's a couple things we can do. I mean, you know. We can all inform ourselves a little bit better of what's going on, right? This is this is one of the things I've tried to do in my writings, both in my the book, the *Metaphysics of Technology*, and there's another reader that I recently published on Amazon called *Confronting Technology*. It's a collection of historical criticisms of technology over the last few 100 years. Primarily, and it covers a lot of these. Themes that we talked about and. I think it's important for people to. To read these. Things to become informed. About what this thing is is technological phenomena. On is and to become aware of the prominent critics that have existed throughout history, it's striking it's not just a puzinski or the the, the crazy Luddites. You know, in the 1800s it's it's a lot of major intellectual thinkers and writers and philosophers who have been highly. Critical of even much simpler technology than we have today. And it's really remarkable. To read some of these views and. This is why. I put out this book confronting technology to to let people read it and to become aware of these these long standing critiques. So I mean that's that's one thing we. Can all do is learn a. Little bit more about this phenomenon. What's going on? Obviously you want to practice things that are limiting your own your own harm. I think when I talk to people, students, young, younger people in particular, they're they're, they're experiencing these problems. Of spending so much time on cell phones and laptops and social media and so forth. And I think they're starting to realize that this this is detrimental to their well-being. It's not making them feel good. It's taking time, it's causing stress. It's maybe making them depressed and anxious. You know, there's a whole host of problems that comes with these, these these technologies. You know, one thing I I try to do is. I sort of. Keep my my own involvement. To A to a. Minimum as much as I can, for example. I don't really have a cell phone. Which which actually people find hard to believe. But but. I actually actually. I don't, I mean. I have one one that I borrow when. I need it on a trip now and then I shut. It off and then I I go. Without a, without a without. A phone. So I basically do without a cell phone. I'm not on. Social media at all. Unless. Somebody puts me there, but I don't. I don't do it. I do. I have a little personal website. You know, and then I appear on various YouTube videos that overtime and I'm in. In a couple. Of documentaries, particularly in Kozinski. So you know, I have these appearances that I do basically to stay engaged with. People and to try to. Get get the word out. That there's these problems which are. Not being examined and discussed so, but you know everybody sort of has. To find their own limit. and try to

keep it to a minimum. This is. Always my advice, you know it's. It's you can really. You can really do. A lot, even in. The modern world with really very. Little relatively little technological involvement so. I try to encourage people to do that, and particularly people with young children to which, to me is particularly a problem area. The schools, particularly with the whole virus thing they're pushing all even the youngest kids into these online schools and they're having to use laptops. And I mean, this is this is a disaster. This is terrible, right? It's establishing these. Habits for even in very young children. That that the means to their education and welfare is through technology, and that's a that's a horrible lesson to be passing along to our younger generation so. I kept my. Own two children, relatively unengaged with technology. When they were younger and I would definitely recommend that for people today.

Kevin: Sure, great advice, just quickly. You mentioned you have a new book coming up. Would you like to plug that? Maybe some other projects that you have going on, I'll provide the links of course for everyone afterwards, yeah.

David: Yeah, sure. Right. Well, I. I again I keep a. Very simple website davidskorina.com which. Which maybe you can provide a. Link if people are curious, just has some of my writings. You know the of. The major works that we talked about would be the metaphysics of technology book Panpsychism. The West on that field. You know, for the critiques of Christianity, the Jesus hopes book, I also on my website, and also because I'm editing some of the Skalski books and republishing those that went out of print those. Are also available on my website. The one chapter of a forthcoming book. I just have a. Chapter in the book. It's not, it's not my book, but the. Book is called Sustainability beyond technology. It will be out in March. It's a major publisher. Oxford University Press. One of the top ones. In the world. And I have a chapter on creative reconstruction which is rolling back modern technology by 800 years, and I I make the. Case in that book as a part of a. the theme of the book. Is how can we really achieve? Real sustainability without. Without technology, without looking to technological solutions to all of our problems, which are mostly technological problems in the 1st place, so the theme of the book is in new ways to envision what it means to be sustainable or to create a sustainable society, and to do it without a reliance on advanced technology. So that book will be out early next year.

Kevin: Well, thank you, David. Again, this has been amazing. I got a lot out of this. This is probably you're one of the few people I've spoken to that actually has solutions like plenty of people are good at pointing out problems, but so far, I've I've not heard any convincing. Arguments or or solutions, so I've I've thoroughly enjoyed this and I also enjoyed the more theological elements. And yeah, I'd love to even do it. Maybe again some time focus on on some other some other areas we didn't get to.

David: Yeah, there's several leads that we could follow there, Alex, and I'm sure I'd be glad to come on again and then and talk in some detail about the other topics as well.

Kevin: Yeah, great. OK. So in the meantime, everyone, I will provide links to books and websites and yeah, thanks for coming on, David. It was, it was. Excellent. Thank you. My pleasure.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



A text dump on David Skrbina

www.thetedkarchive.com