

Jefferson Bible - cont.

God's word when his word does not suit them (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18). Should people also attempt to remove the words of Jesus concerning divorce, hell, baptism, etc.? No! God's word cannot be eliminated, so don't even try (1 Peter 1:25).

In a letter to his close friend William, Jefferson clarified his religion this way: "it is not to be understood that I am with him [Jesus] in all his doctrines. I am a Materialist; he [Jesus] takes the side of Spiritualism; he preaches the efficacy of repentance toward forgiveness of sin; I require a counterpoise of good works to redeem it. Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him [Jesus] by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, of so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being."

In other words, Jefferson liked some things that Jesus said and did, but not all the things that he said and did. Friends, we must take all of what Jesus said and did as true, or nothing. There is no middle ground (Matthew 10:32-33; 12:30; 28:20; John 12:47-48). We must take all of what the Bible records as true, or nothing. There is no middle ground (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- Fill your empty stomach with food and fill your empty head with truth.
- Some people are like vinegar; the older they become the more sour they become.
- You have a right to express your opinion, but you don't have a right to expect everyone else to listen.
- As a person grows older and wiser, he talks less and says more.

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THE WARFIELD BULLETIN

February 17, 2019



For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Thomas Jefferson Bible

Did you know that Thomas Jefferson edited his own Bible to his own liking? It's true. The *Jefferson Bible*, or *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* as it is formally titled, was a book constructed by Thomas Jefferson in the latter years of his life by cutting and pasting numerous sections from the New Testament.

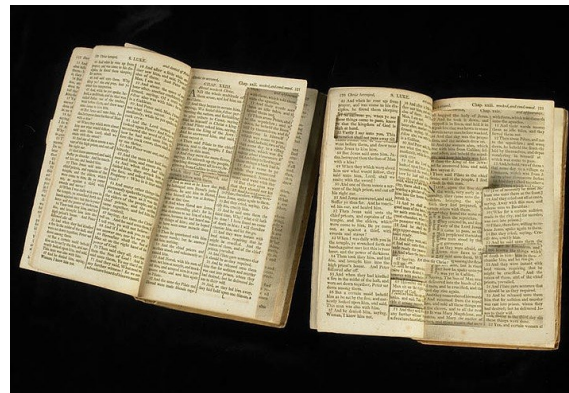
Jefferson's condensed composition is especially notable for its exclusion of all miracles of Jesus and most mentions of the supernatural, including sections of the four gospels which contain the resurrection and most other miracles, and passages indicating Jesus was divine.

Using a razor, Jefferson cut and pasted his arrangement of selected verses from the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in chronological order, mingling excerpts from one text to those of another in order to create a single narrative. Consistent with his naturalistic outlook and intent, most supernatural events were not included in Jefferson's heavily edited compilation. If necessary to exclude the miraculous, Jefferson would cut the text even in mid-verse. This is amazing!

Historian Edwin Scott Gaustad explains, "If a moral lesson was embedded in a miracle, the lesson survived in Jeffersonian scripture, but the miracle did not." *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* begins with an account of Jesus' birth without references to angels, genealogy, or

prophecy. Miracles, references to the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus, and Jesus' resurrection are also absent from Jefferson's collection.

Rejecting the resurrection of Jesus, Jefferson's work ends with these words: "Now, in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus. And rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed." These words correspond roughly to the ending of



John 19 in the Bible.

After completion of the *Life and Morals*, about 1820, Jefferson shared it with a number of friends, but he never allowed it to be published during his lifetime. The most complete form Jefferson produced was inherited by his grandson and published in 1895. Beginning in 1904 and continuing every other year until the 1950's, new members of Congress were given a copy of the Jefferson Bible. A private organization, the Libertarian Press, revived the prac-

tice in 1997. In January 2013, the American Humanist Association distributed a free copy to every member of Congress and President Barack Obama.

Jefferson did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. However, consider the eyewitness testimony for the resurrection. First, the unmistaken testimony of the witnesses: witnesses of the resurrected Jesus were offered evidence for the real Jesus (Luke 24:39; John 20:24-29). Second, the collaborating testimony of the witnesses: witnesses of the resurrected Jesus saw him on 12 different occasions, over a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3). Third, the sufficient testimony of the witnesses: over 500 witnesses saw the resurrected Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-7). Fourth, the diverse testimony of the witnesses: witnesses of the resurrected Jesus came from different backgrounds, different occasions, different times of the day, men and women, followers and opponents (Acts 7:55; 1 Corinthians 15:8). Fifth, the uniform testimony of the witnesses: witnesses of the resurrected Jesus all said the same thing (Acts 4:20). Sixth, the faith-building testimony of the witnesses: witnesses of the resurrected Jesus preached the resurrection (Acts 1:8; 2:32; Romans 10:9-10).

There are people today, who, like Jefferson, do not accept certain Bible truths so they simply cut up and remove what they do not want (see Jeremiah 36:23). People attempt to add to and take from