

Jesus ben Pandira, the historical Christ

The Evidence

The Christos is the *glorified* individuality, *i.e.*, Manas-Taijas, or the Higher Manas with the glory of Buddhi upon it, whereas Jesus is the perishable personality of the Lower Manas.

— Helena Petrovna Blavatsky¹

Contents

Jesus was the Highest Adept of his epoch. But the real founder of Christianity was Paul, not Jesus.	2
The mystery of Jesus is hidden in the paronomasia of Chrēstos and Christos. This is the first key.	3
Jesus was Chrēstos, a virtuous man in his trial of life and candidate to initiation. Not yet Christos, as he had not passed the third degree of initiation to become Eoptes. Chrēstos the neophyte, was admitted into the Christos condition at the end of his life, when Manas united with Buddhi. His temple is the awakened soul in the inner sanctuary of the human heart.	5
The Talmud and the Masters of Wisdom affirm that Jesus ben Pandira was the historical Christ who had lived a century earlier in the fourth year of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, King of Judea (106 to 76 BC).	7
A man may know of several great Initiates, and yet place his own ideal on a far higher pedestal than any of these. This is the last key.	9

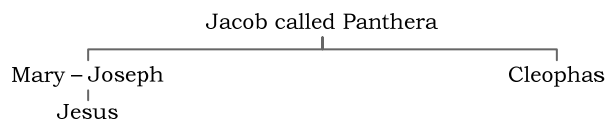
¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (COMMENTARY ON THE PISTIS SOPHIA) XIII p. 55; [on PS 127, note 1.]



Jesus was the Highest Adept of his epoch. But the real founder of Christianity was Paul, not Jesus.

WE leave it to every impartial mind to judge whether Jesus is not more honoured by the Theosophists, who see in him, or the ideal he embodies, a perfect adept (the highest of his epoch), a mortal being far above uninitiated humanity, than he is by the Christians who have created out of him an imperfect solar-god, a saviour and Avatara, no better, and in more than one detail lower, than some of the Avatars who preceded him. No Theosophist, of those who ever gave a thought to Christianity — for our “heathen” members, of course, do not care one snap of their finger whether Christ and Paul lived or not — ever denied the existence of the Apostle who is an historical personage. Some of us, a few learned Christian mystics among our British Theosophists included, deny but the *Gospel* Jesus — who is *not* an historical personage — “Zero” and *padris* notwithstanding — but believe in an *ideal* Christ. Others are inclined to see the real Jesus in the adept mentioned in the oldest Talmudic as well as some Christian books, and known as Jeshu ben-Panthera.² They say that while the best authoritative evidence to the existence of the Gospel Christ ever offered by the spasmodic and desperate efforts of the Church [362] to the crucial test of critical analysis, is of the weakest kind and fenced all *round* with difficulties, they find the solution of the problem in the testimony of the Jews and even of Irenaeus. They maintain that this Jeshu (or Jehoshua), was the son of a woman called Stada (*alias* Miriam) and of Panthera, a Roman soldier; that he lived from the year 120 to 70 B.C.;³ was a pupil of Rabbi Jehoshua ben-Perahiah, his grand uncle, with whom during the persecution of the Jews by Alexander Jannaeus (King of the Jews in 106 B.C.) he fled to Alexandria, where he was initiated into the Egyptian mysteries or magic,⁴ and that upon his return to Palestine, being charged with heresy and sorcery, he was tried, sentenced to death, and hung on the *tree of infamy* (Roman Cross) outside the city of Lüd or Lydda.⁵ This *historical* character (as historical as any other) *was* a great adept. As to Paul, no one, I know of, ever mistook him for an adept, and (since his history is pretty well known) least of all, our occultists. A simple tent-maker (not “a fierce soldier,” as “Zero” puts it), he became first a persecutor of the Nazarenes, then a convert and an enthusiast. It is Paul who is the real founder of Christianity, the Reformer of a little body, a nucleus formed from the Essenes, the Nabatheans, the Therapeutae, and other mystic brotherhoods (the Theosophical So-

² Epiphanius in his book against Heresies (fourth century) gives the genealogy of Jesus, as follows:



(See Mr. Gerald Massey’s “Jesus and the Records of his Time,” in the *April Spiritualist*, 1878.)

³ See Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, Bk. II, ch. xxii, 5. Irenaeus positively maintains that John (of the fourth Gospel) “conveyed himself the information,” and “all the Elders confirmed the statement” that “Jesus preached from his fortieth to his fiftieth year of age.”

⁴ See the *Gemara* of the Babylonian *Talmud*, treatises *Sanhedrin* (chap. xi, 107b) and *Sotah* (chap. ix, 47a).

⁵ See Babylonian *Gemara* to the *Mishna*, treatise *Shabbath*, 67-104.

[Consult in connection with this subject the following passages in H.P.B.’s writings: *Isis Unveiled*, II, 201-2; *Collected Writings*, VIII, 189, 380-82, 460-61. — *Compiler*.]



cieties of old Palestine) — and which was transformed over three centuries later, namely, under Constantine, into “Christians.” Paul’s visions from first to last point him out rather as a *medium* than an adept, since to make an adept requires years of study and preparation and a solemn initiation under some competent Hierophant.⁶

**The mystery of Jesus is hidden in the paronomasia of Chrēstos and Christos.
This is the first key.**

THE mystic meaning of the injunction, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except *ye eat the flesh* of the Son of man and *drink his blood*, ye have not life in yourselves” [John, vi, 53], can never be understood or appreciated at its true *occult* value, except by those who [182] hold some of the *seven keys*, and yet care little for St. Peter.⁷ These words, whether said by Jesus of Nazareth, or Jeshua Ben-Panthera, are the words of an INITIATE. They have to be interpreted with the help of *three* keys — one opening the *psychic* door, the second that of physiology, and the third that which unlocks the mystery of terrestrial being, by unveiling the inseparable blending of theogony with anthropology. It is for revealing a few of these truths, with the *sole view of saving intellectual mankind from the insanities of materialism and pessimism*, that mystics have often been denounced as the servants of Antichrist, even by those Christians who are most worthy, sincerely pious and respectable men.

The first key that one has to use to unravel the dark secrets involved in the mystic name of Christ, is the key which unlocked the door to the ancient mysteries of the primitive Aryans, Sabceans and Egyptians. The Gnosis supplanted by the Christian scheme was universal. It was the echo of the primordial wisdom-religion which had once been the heirloom of the whole of mankind; and, therefore, one may truly say that, in its purely [183] metaphysical aspect, the Spirit of Christ (the divine *logos*) was present in humanity from the beginning of it. The author of the *Clementine Homilies*⁸

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A WORD WITH “ZERO”) IV pp. 361-62; [“Zero” was a correspondent to *The Theosophist*.]

⁷ The existence of these *seven* keys is virtually admitted, owing to deep research in the Egyptological lore, by Mr. G. Massey again. While opposing the teachings of *Esoteric Buddhism* — unfortunately misunderstood by him in almost every respect — in his Lecture on “The Seven Souls of Man and their Culmination in Christ,” he writes (p. 21):

“ . . . this system of thought, this mode of representation, this septenary of powers, in various aspects, had been established in Egypt at least seven thousand years ago, as we learn from certain allusions to Atum [the god ‘in whom the fatherhood was individualised as the *begetter of an eternal soul*,’ the *seventh* principle of the Theosophists] found in the inscriptions lately discovered at Sakkarah. I say in various aspects *because the Gnosis of the Mysteries was at least sevenfold in its nature* — it was Elemental, Biological, Elementary (human), Stellar, Lunar, Solar, and Spiritual — and *nothing short of a grasp of the whole system can possibly enable us to discriminate the various parts, distinguish one from the other, and determine the which and the what, as we try to follow the symbolical Seven through their several phases of character.*”⁹

[Note 9 by Boris de Zirkoff, p. 221:] This and other Lectures of Gerald Massey are bound together in a volume available at the British Museum (Press Mark 4018.i.12, 1-9). The words within square brackets, and the italicizing of various portions of the present quotation, are H.P.B.’s own.

Massey’s lectures were all printed privately, and most of them bear the imprint: Villa Bordighiera, New Southgate, London, N.; they are very difficult to get in their original editions, as separate pamphlets. *Vide* Bio-Bibliogr., Index, s.v. MASSEY, for a comprehensive account of his life, and a list of his works and lectures.

⁸ [Note 10 by Boris de Zirkoff, pp. 221-22:] The Clementine or Pseudo-Clementine literature is a name generally given to certain writings which at one time or another have been attributed to Pope Clement I (88-97 A.D.), known also as Clemens Romanus, and who is supposed to have been the first of the Apostolic Fathers. He was regarded as a disciple of St. Peter. This authorship is very much in question.

Chief among these writings are: 1. The so-called Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. 2. Two Epistles on Virginity. 3. The *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, with which may be classed the Epistle of Clement to James. 4. The *Apostolic Constitutions*. 5. Five Epistles forming part of the forged *Decretals*.



is right; the mystery of Christos — now supposed to have been taught by Jesus of Nazareth — “was identical” with that which *from the first* had been communicated “to those who were worthy,” as quoted in another lecture.⁹ We may learn from the Gospel according to Luke, that the “worthy” were those who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Gnosis, and who were “accounted worthy” to attain that “resurrection from the dead” *in this life* . . . “those who knew that they could die no more, being equal to the angels as sons of God and sons of the Resurrection.” In other words, they were the great adepts of *whatever religion*; and the words apply to all those who, without being Initiates, strive and succeed, through personal efforts to *live the life* and to attain the naturally ensuing spiritual illumination in blending their personality — the “Son” — with the “Father,” their individual divine Spirit, *the God within* them. This “resurrection” can never be monopolized by the Christians, but is the spiritual birth-right of every human being endowed with soul and spirit, whatever his religion may be. Such individual is a *Christ-man*. On the other hand, those who choose to ignore the Christ (principle) within themselves, must die *unregenerate heathens* — baptism, sacraments, lip-prayers, and belief in dogmas notwithstanding.

In order to follow this explanation, the reader must bear in mind the real archaic meaning of the paronomasia involved in the two terms *Chrēstos* and *Christos*. The former means certainly more than merely “a good,” an “excellent man,” while the latter was never applied to any one living man, but to every Initiate at the moment of *his second birth and resurrection*.¹⁰ He who finds Christos within himself and recognises the latter as his only “way,” becomes a follower and an *Apostle of Christ*, though he may have never been baptised, nor even have met a “Christian,” still less call himself one.¹¹

The Clementine literature throws light upon a very obscure phase of Christian development, that of Judeo-Christianity. Especial prominence was given to the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* by the Tübingen School which considered them of primary importance for the history of the first stage of Christianity. The Greek original of these two Scriptures has been lost, but can be placed by conjecture somewhere about the beginning of the 3rd century. We have only a Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia (b. ca. 345 A.D. — d. 410 A.D.) a rather unreliable character as far as scholarship is concerned. These works are generally admitted to have emanated from the Ebionitic party of the early Church, once the purest form of primitive Christianity. They are most likely based on older Petrine writings, such as the *Preaching of Peter* (*Κύρηγμα Πέτρου*) and the *Travels of Peter* (*Περίοδοι Πέτρου*). The judaistic and ebionitic character of the lost originals can be inferred from the existing 3rd and 4th century orthodox versions.

The *Homilies* purport to contain letters from Peter and Clement to James of Jerusalem and some twenty sermons preached by Peter while Clement was travelling with him. The *Recognitions* use similar material in another setting. They contain discussions between Peter and Simon the Magician — who may have been St. Paul himself — regarding the identity of the true Mosaic and Christian religions. They show a very decided animus against Paul who is denounced as an impostor.

⁹ “Gnostic and Historic Christianity.”

[Note 11 by Boris de Zirkoff, p. 222:] This Lecture of Gerald Massey is also contained in the bound volume of Lectures mentioned in Note 9 [p. 221]: This and other Lectures of Gerald Massey are bound together in a volume available at the British Museum (Press Mark 4018.i.12, 1-9). The words within square brackets, and the italicizing of various portions of the present quotation, are H.P.B.’s own.

Massey’s lectures were all printed privately, and most of them bear the imprint: Villa Bordighiera, New Southgate, London, N.; they are very difficult to get in their original editions, as separate pamphlets. *Vide* Bio-Bibliogr., Index, s.v. MASSEY, for a comprehensive account of his life, and a list of his works and lectures.

¹⁰ “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (*John* iii, 5). Here the birth *from above*, the spiritual birth, is meant, achieved at the supreme and last initiation.

¹¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS – I) VIII, pp. 181-84



Jesus was Chrēstos, a virtuous man in his trial of life and candidate to initiation. Not yet Christos, as he had not passed the third degree of initiation to become Epoptes. Chrēstos the neophyte, was admitted into the Christos condition at the end of his life, when Manas united with Buddhi.¹² His temple is the awakened soul in the inner sanctuary of the human heart.

THUS Jesus, whether of Nazareth or Lüd,¹³ was a Chrēstos, as undeniably as that he never was entitled to the appellation of *Christos*, during his life-time and before his last trial. It may have been as Higgins thinks, who surmises that “the first name of Jesus may have been χρείζος, the second χρηζός, and the third χριζός. The word χρείζος was used before the H [cap. *eta*] was in use in the language.”¹⁴ But Rev.

¹² Cf. “The chief object of our struggles and *initiations* is to achieve this union while yet on this earth. Those who will be successful have nothing to fear during the fifth, sixth and seventh rounds. But this is a mystery.” *Mahatma Letter* 13 (44) p. 77; 3rd Combined ed. [Note to students: see *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XIV (SOME REASONS FOR SECRECY) pp. 48-49 and (THE OBJECTS OF THE MYSTERIES) pp. 276-77, for comments on Ecstasy, Epopteia, and Theophania.]

¹³ Or Lydda. Reference is made here to the Rabbinical tradition in the Babylonian *Gemara*, called *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, about Jesus being the son of one named Pandira, and having lived a century earlier than the era called Christian, namely, during the reign of the Jewish king Alexander Jannaeus and his wife Salome, who reigned from the year 106 to 79 B.C. Accused by the Jews of having learned the magic art in Egypt, and of having stolen from the Holy of Holies the Incommunicable Name, Jehoshua (Jesus) was put to death by the Sanhedrin at Lüd. He was stoned and then crucified on a tree, on the eve of Passover. The narrative is ascribed to the Talmudistic authors of *Sotah* and *Sanhedrin*, p. 19, *Book of Jechiel*. See *Isis Unveiled*, II, 201; Arnobius [*Adv. Gentes*, I, 43]; ²⁴ Éliphas Lévi's *La Science des Esprits* [pp. 23-40], and “The Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ,” a lecture by G. Massey.

[Note 24 by Boris de Zirkoff, p. 224:] The passages of the *Talmud* to which allusion is made are to be found in the treatises known as *Sotah* (chap. ix, 47a) and *Sanhedrin* (chap. xi, 107b). The complete existing evidence on this controversial subject has been fully discussed by G.R.S. Mead in his valuable work, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* (London and Benares: Theos. Publ. Society, 1903).

Éliphas Lévi, writing in *La Science des Esprits* (ed., of 1909, Paris, Félix Alcan, p. 37), speaks of a book which he calls the *Disputation of Rabbi Jechiel*. This is the *Disputacio R. Jechielis cum quodam Nicolao*, which is the second volume of a work by Johann Christoph Wagenseil (1633-1708) entitled: *Tela ignea Satanae* (Aldorf Noricorum, 1681. 4to.). It is a very rare work which can be consulted in the British Museum. The same work contains also the Hebrew text of the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* (see Bibliogr. of Oriental Works, for further data).

Jehiel Ben Joseph of Paris, tosafist and controversialist, was born at Meaux towards the end of the twelfth century. His French name was Sir Vives. In rabbinical literature he is variously designated as Jehiel of Paris, Jehiel the Holy, Jehiel the Pious, and Jehiel the Elder. He was one of the most distinguished disciples of Judah Sir Leon, whom he succeeded in 1224 as head of the Talmudistic School of Paris. This School was attended under him by upward of 300 disciples, among whom were well-known rabbis of the thirteenth century. Jehiel was held in great esteem even by non-Jews, and was favorably received at court. He was forced into many controversies with Christians, the main disputation having been the one he had to sustain, together with several other rabbis, on June 25-27, 1240, in the presence of Saint Louis and the court, against the Jewish apostate Nicholas Donin. The latter denounced the *Talmud* as containing blasphemies against Christianity. In spite of Jehiel's great courage and dignity, this disputation resulted in the condemnation of the *Talmud*, after which the state of the Jews in France grew worse, and Jehiel was forced to leave with his son for Palestine, where he died in 1286. He was the author of several tosafot on various Talmudistic treatises. The passage from Arnobius *Adversus Gentes*, I, 43, runs as follows (See *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VI, p. 425):

“My opponent will perhaps meet me with many other slanderous and childish charges which are commonly urged. Jesus was a Magian [*magus*]; He affected all these things by secret arts. From the shrines of the Egyptians He stole the names of angels of might, and the religious system of a remote country. . . .”

¹⁴ [Note 25 by Boris de Zirkoff, pp. 224-26:] Speaking of the celebrated acrostic embodying the pronouncement of the Erythraean Sibyl, Godfrey Higgins writes as follows (*Anacalypsis*, I, 568):

“ . . . It will not be denied that this is among the very earliest of the records of Jesus Christ, whether it be a forgery or not, and it is very important, as it proves to every Greek scholar that the name of Christ does not necessarily come from the Greek word χριω to *anoint*, but may come from the word χρηζός *benignus, mistis*; for it is here written in the manner which was common in very ancient times, but in the later times disused, when the *ει* became changed into the *η* — as in *σωτεια*, which became *σωτηρια*. [See Payne Knight's *History of the Greek Alphabet*, p. 105.] Thus χρείζος became χρηζός. The *η* constantly changed into the *ι*, but I believe seldom or ever did the *ι* change into the *η*. This I say with diffidence, not professing to be learned enough in the Greek language to give a decided opinion on so nice a point, or to say that in all the Greek writers the change never occurs. However, no Greek scholar will deny that it *may* as readily have changed from the *ει* to the *η* as to the *ι*, and that any



R. Taylor (in his answer to Pye Smith, p. 113) is quoted saying “The complimentary epithet CHRĒST . . . signified nothing more than a good man.”^{15, 16}

word which was written in ancient times with the *ei*, like *σωτῆρα*, may have changed, like it, into *σωτηρία*.

“The first name of Jesus may have been *χρειζός*, the second *χρηζός*, and the third *χριζός*. The word *χρειζός* was used before the H was in use in the language.”

It should be noted that Higgins spells the words *Chreistos* and *Chrēstos*, as well as *Christos*, with the archaic letter *sigmatau* in the middle of these words, standing for the sound *st*. He has the following to say on the subject of this letter and its later changes (*op. cit.*, I, 580-81):

“If we turn to Scapula we shall find that *χρηζις* and *χρησις* have precisely the same signification, and are convertible terms. In short, it is evident that they are used indiscriminately for one another. It is not to be supposed that in the very early times, perhaps before the invention of letters, when the names of places first took their rise, the same strictness in the pronunciation, or at first, after the invention of letters, the same strictness in the writing of them, took place, as was observed by the Greeks when they became, in regard to their language, the most fastidious people in the world. It has been shown that the Tau in the ancient languages was constantly written by a cross. For reasons which will appear hereafter, I think the root of the *χρης* has been ΤΡΣ-ΧΡΣ. It was the constant practice of the Greeks to soften the harsh sounds of their language. Thus Pelasgos became Pelagos, Casmillos Camillos, Nesta Nessa, Cristos Crissos; where a strong consonant comes after the *σ*, it is often dropped. *Αγνωτος* became *ignotus*, the island of *χρηζός*, *χρητός*, the country of Crestonia had its capital Crisa and its port *Crysos*. . . .

“ . . . With the Chaldeans the Sigma and Tau were convertible, as in Tur and Sur, and in Assyria called Aturia, as Dion Cassius has observed. I suspect it was from the indiscriminate use of these two letters that at last the *sigmatau* arose. The S was not only in Chaldaic and Syriac, but also in Greek so frequently changed into the T, that Lucian composed a dialogue upon it. In the Latin language, in old manuscripts, the c and the t are often written indiscriminately; as, for instance, *initiale* with a c. From this, I think, came the French *ç*, which is really in figure nothing but the *sigmatau* of the Greeks. But though I have met with an assertion that the sigma and the *sigmatau* were used indiscriminately by the early Greeks, I rather believe the change was from *χρηζός* to *χρησός*, and *χριζός* to *χρισός*, conformably to the practice of softening. . . . The sigma has something very particular about it, it is neither a mute, liquid, nor aspirate; therefore it has been called *solitarium*. It partakes something of the sound of the *Theta*. . . . This, I think, in part accounts for the indiscriminate use of the Sigma and the Tau, and the rise of the *sigmatau*.”

¹⁵ [Note 2 by Boris de Zirkoff, pp. 217-18:] This refers to G. Higgins’ *Anacalypsis*, I, 568, where he quotes the Rev. Robert Taylor (1784–1844). The full title of Taylor’s work is: *Syntagma of the evidences of the Christian religion: Being a vindication of the Manifesto of the Christian evidence society, against the assaults of the Christian instruction society, through their deputy, J.P.S., commonly reported to be Dr. John Pye Smith . . . London: Printed for the author, 1828. Reprinted by W. Dugdale [no date]. It is a small book of some 128 pages. The entire passage, as quoted by Higgins, is:*

“The complimentary epithet CHRĒST (from which by what is called the Ioticism, or change of the long E into I, a term of respect grew into one of worship), signified nothing more than a good man. Clemens Alexandrinus, in the second century, found a serious argument on this paronomasia, that (Lib. III, Cap. Xvii, p. 53, et circa — Psal. 55, D) all who believed in ChrĒst (*i.e.*, in a good man) both are, and are called, *ChrĒstians*, that is, *good men*.” (*Stromata*, Lib. II.)

The word “Christian” occurs three times in the New Testament, namely, in *Acts*, xi, 26; xxvi, 28; and *1 Peter*, iv, 16. Its spelling differs, however, in the three most ancient MSS. known, as appears in the following table:

	“Received text” (modern)	Codex Alexandrinus	Codex Vaticanus	Codex Sinaiticus
<i>Acts</i> , xi, 26	<i>χριστιανούς</i>	<i>χριστιανους</i>	<i>χρεισιανους</i>	<i>χρησιανους*</i>
<i>Acts</i> , xxvi, 28	<i>χριστιανόν</i>	<i>χριστιανον</i>	<i>χρεισιανον</i>	<i>χρησιανον</i>
<i>1 Peter</i> , iv, 16	<i>χριστιανός</i>	<i>χριστιανος</i>	<i>χρεισιανος</i>	<i>χρησιανος</i>

*(corrected text)

¹⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS – II) VIII, p. 189; [see *ibid.* pp. 184ff for in-depth analysis of the terms.]



The Talmud and the Masters of Wisdom affirm that Jesus ben Pandira was the historical Christ who had lived a century earlier in the fourth year of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, King of Judea (106 to 76 BC).¹⁷

THEREFORE, the time is still far distant when “all the people of the universe will form one flock under one shepherd.” Human nature will have to be completely modified before it occurs. We will have to attain the Seventh Race, according to the prophecy of the Book of *Dzyan*,¹⁸ because it is then that the “Christos” — designated by his various pagan names, as well as those of the Gnostics “heretics” — will reign in the soul of every individual, in the soul of all those who shall have first accepted the *Chrēst*¹⁹ — I do not say simply those who will have become *Christians*, which is quite another thing. For, let us proclaim it once for all, the word *Christ*, which means the *glorified*, the *triumphant*, and also the “anointed” (from the word *χρίω*, to anoint) cannot be applied to Jesus. Even according to the Gospels, *Jesus was never anointed*, either as High Priest, as King or as Prophet. “As a mortal,” remarks Nork, “he was anointed only once, by a woman, and not because he offered himself as king or High Priest, but, as he said himself, *for his burial*.” Jesus was a *Chrēstos*: *χρηστός ο Κύριος* (the Lord is good), as St. Peter said (1st *Epistle*, ii, 3), whether he actually lived during the Christian era or a century earlier, in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus and his wife Salome, at Lüd, as stated in the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*.^{20, 21}

¹⁷ The wicked tyrant of the *Talmud*, and the *real* Herod “whose persecution and murder of hundreds and thousands of Initiates led to the adoption of the Bible story.” Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 504 *fn.* & *fn* 11 above.

¹⁸ A Tibetan word, the Sanskrit *Jñāna*, occult wisdom, *knowledge*.

¹⁹ A word which is neither the *Krest* (cross) of the Slavs, nor the crucified “Christ” of the Latins. The Ray made manifest from that Centre of Life which is hidden from the eyes of Humanity for and in Eternity, the *Christos*, crucified as a body of flesh and bones!!!

²⁰ Having drawn to Madame Blavatsky’s attention that, according to certain scholars, this assertion is erroneous, she answered as follows:

“I say the scholars are either lying or talking nonsense. Our *Masters* affirm the statement. If the story of Jehoshua or Jesus Ben-Pandira is false, then the whole *Talmud*, the whole Jewish Canon is false. He was the disciple of Jehoshua Ben Perahiah, the fifth President of the Sanhedrin after Ezra who re-wrote the Bible. Compromised in the revolt of the Pharisees against Jannaeus in 105 B.C., he fled into Egypt carrying the young Jesus with him. This account is far truer than that of the New Testament which has no record in history.”

[Reference is here made to the tradition preserved in the *Gemara* of the Babylonian *Talmud*, namely in the treatises known as *Sotah* (chap. ix, 47a) and *Sanhedrin* (chap. xi, 107b). Consult in this connection H.P.B.’s article, “A Word with the Theosophists” (*The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, March 1883, pp. 143-45; re-published in Vol. IV, of the present Series); a footnote embodied in the 2nd installment of her essay, “The Esoteric Character of the Gospels”; and the valuable work of G.R.S. Mead, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* (London and Benares: Theos. Publ. Society, 1903), who has surveyed all available exoteric evidence on this subject.

The recent discovery of certain “Scrolls” in a cave around the Dead Sea go a long way towards confirming the tradition contained in the *Talmud*.

Mention should be made here of the fact that H.P.B.’s original French sentence is somewhat ambiguous; a literal translation of it makes it appear equally ambiguous in English. Therefore, to eliminate any possibility of confusion, it should be pointed out that it was Jehoshua (or Joshua) Ben Perahiah who was compromised in the revolt against Jannaeus, and fled to Egypt with the young Jehoshua Ben Pandira.

Gerald Massey, in a letter to the *Medium and Daybreak*, a London weekly, gives an account of his historical researches on this important subject, from which the following paragraphs are quoted in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, Suppl. to June, 1884, pp. 84-85:

“The Christian cult did not commence with our Canonical Gospels, nor with a personal founder supposed to be therein portrayed.

“The Jehoshua of the *Talmud* was undoubtedly an historical character. According to a tradition preserved in the *Toledoth Jehoshua*, he was related to Queen Salome, the wife and later widow of King Jannaeus, who reigned from the year 106 to 79 B.C. She is said to have tried to protect Jehoshua from his sacerdotal enemies, because she had been a witness of his wonderful works. One Jewish account asserts that this man, who is not to be named, was a disciple of Jehoshua ben-Perachia. It also says



Christos is the crown of glory of the suffering Chrēstos of the mysteries, as of the candidate to the final UNION, of whatever race and creed. To the true follower of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, it matters little, therefore, whether Jesus, as man and Chrēstos, lived during the era called Christian, or before, or never lived at all. The Adepts, who lived and died for humanity, have existed in many and all the ages, and many were the good and holy men in antiquity who bore the surname or title of Chrēstos before Jesus of Nazareth, otherwise Jesus (or Jehoshua) Ben Pandira was born.²² Therefore, one may be permitted to conclude, with good reason, that Jesus, or Jehoshua, was like Socrates, like Phocion, like Theodorus, and so many others surnamed *Chrēstos*, i.e., the “good, and excellent,” the gentle, and the holy Initiate, who showed the “way” to the Christos condition, and thus became himself “the Way” in the hearts of his enthusiastic admirers. The Christians, as all the “Hero-worshippers,” have tried to throw into the back-ground all the other Chrēstoi, who have appeared to them as rivals of *their* Man-God. But if the voice of the MYSTERIES has become silent for many ages in the West, if Eleusis, Memphis, Antium, Delphi, and Crēsa have long ago been made the tombs of a Science once as colossal in the West as it is yet in the East, there are successors now being prepared for them. We are in 1887 and the

he was born in the fourth year of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, notwithstanding the assertions of his followers that he was born in the reign of Herod. That is about a century earlier than the Christian era, which is supposed to have been dated from the birth of Christ. Jehoshua is described as being the son of Pandira and of Stada, the Strayed One.

“The Rabbi ben-Perachia is likewise an historical character. He had begun to teach in the year 154 B.C.; therefore he was not born later than 180 to 170 B.C. But it is also related that this Rabbi fled into Egypt during the Civil War in which the Pharisees revolted against King Alexander Jannaeus. This was about the year 105 B.C.; and as Jehoshua ben-Pandira accompanied the Rabbi as his pupil, he may have been born as early as 120 B.C. We learn from Tract *Shabbath*, of the Babylonian Gemara to the *Mishna*, that Jehoshua ben-Pandira was stoned to death as a wizard in the city of Lüd or Lydda, and was afterwards crucified by being hung upon the tree on the eve of the Passover. Another tradition records that Jehoshua was put to death during the reign of Salome, which ended in the year 71 B.C.

“Jehoshua is the sole historical Jesus known either to the Jews or the Christians. For, Epiphanius in the fourth century actually traces the pedigree of his Jesus the Christ to Pandira, who was the father of that Jehoshua who lived and died at least a century too soon to be the Christ of our Canonical Gospels. This shifts the historic basis altogether; it antedates the human history by a century and destroys the historic character of the Gospels, together with that of any other Jesus than Jehoshua ben-Pandira whom both Jews and Christians agree to identify as the sole human personality. The traditions further show that Jehoshua was a Nazarene in reality, and not because he was born at Nazareth, which never could have constituted any one a Nazarene!

“Now the *Book Abodazura* contains a comment on the Apostle James, in which it describes him as ‘a follower of Jehoshua the Nazarene,’ whom I have shown to be that ‘other Jesus,’ who was not the Jesus or Christ of Paul. Here then opens the great rift between an historical Jehoshua, the magician, preacher, and the mythological Jesus of the Canonical Gospels; a rift that has never been bottomed, and over which I have attempted to throw a bridge.”

Consult the Bio-Bibliographical Index, s.v. JOSHUA BEN PERAHIAH. — *Compiler.*]

²¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (NOTE ON ABBÉ ROCA’S “ESOTERICISM OF CHRISTIAN DOGMA”) VIII pp. 379-80

²² Several classics bear testimony to this fact. Lucian (*Iupp. Conf.*, 16) says Φωκίων ο χρηστός, and Φωκίων ο επικλην (λεγόμενος, surnamed) χρηστός.⁴⁸ In *Phaedrus*, 266e, it is written, “you mean Theodorus the Chrēstos.” Τον χρηστόν λέγεις Θεόδωρον. Plutarch shows the same; and Χρηστός — Chrēstos, is the proper name (see the word in *Thesaur.* Steph.)⁴⁹ of an orator and disciple of Herodes Atticus.

[Note 48 by Boris de Zirkoff, p. 231:] The first expression is from Lucian’s work entitled *Zeus eleghomenos* (Latin, *Iuppiter Confutatus*), Zeus Cross-Examined, a dialogue between Zeus and a Cynic.

The second expression has not been positively identified.

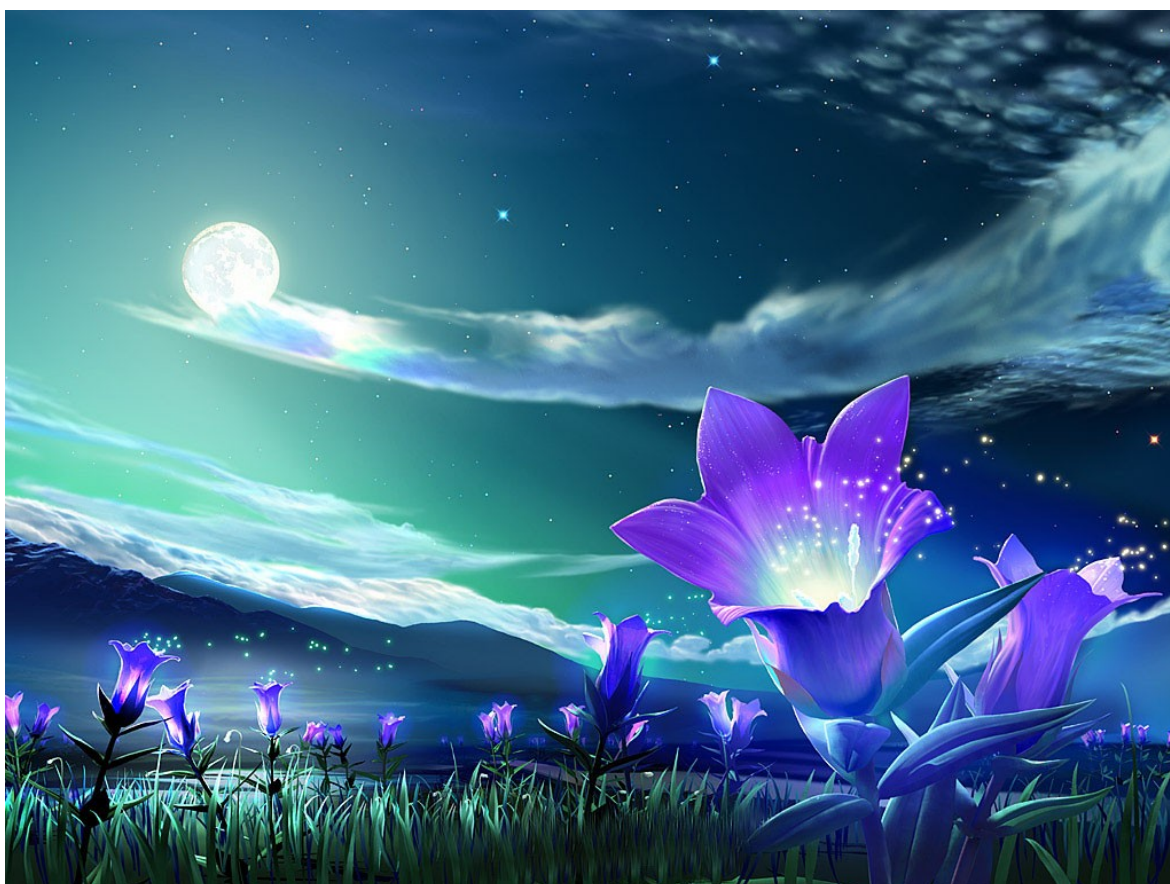
[Note 49 by Boris de Zirkoff, p. 231:] This reference stands for the *Thesaurus Graecae linguae* (Θησαυρός της Ελληνικής Γλώσσης), of Henricus Stephanus. 5 Vols. Geneva, 1572, fol. (British Museum: 680.g.1-4). This remarkable scholarly work was republished in London, 1816-26, fol. (Edited by A.J. Valpy), and also in Paris, where it was issued by A. Firmin Didot, 1831-65, in eight volumes. Stephanus was the pseudonym of Henri Estienne (1528-98, 2nd of the name), a most prolific French classical scholar who belonged to a family of scholars and printers that produced a large number of scholastic works on classical antiquity.



nineteenth century is close to its death. The twentieth century has strange developments in store for humanity, and may even be the last of its name.²³

A man may know of several great Initiates, and yet place his own ideal on a far higher pedestal than any of these. This is the last key.

THOUGH the terms *Christos* and *Chrēstos* are generic surnames, still, the personage so addressed (not by Paul, necessarily, but by any one), was a great Initiate and a “Son of God.” . . . Whether Paul knew of Jehoshua Ben Pandira (and he must have heard of him), or not, he could never have applied the surname used by him to Jesus or any other *historic* Christ. Otherwise his *Epistles* would not have been withheld and exiled as they were. . . . The two statements [by G. Massey], *viz.*, that Jesus or Jehoshua Ben Pandira, *whenever he lived*, was a great Initiate and the “Son of God” — just as Apollonius of Tyana was — and that Paul never meant either him or any other living Initiate, but a metaphysical *Christos* present in, and *personal* to, every mystic Gnostic as to every initiated Pagan — are not at all irreconcilable. A man may know of several great Initiates, and yet place his own ideal on a far higher pedestal than any of these.²⁴



²³ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (THE ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS – II) VIII, pp. 204-5

²⁴ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (A NOTE OF EXPLANATION) IX pp. 19-20; [commenting upon letter by G. Massey.]

