

Most Probably

Chapter Seventeen

The Riddle of the Mystery Disciple of The Last Supper

(Approx. 5,200 words)

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As One Door Closes Another Door Opens

'Time to move on.'

Our exploration assumes that the God story of the Old Testament is a parable and not literal truth. The Gospel story of the New Testament is also a parable and not literal truth. This means that there is no actual God, only an abstract proxy that gives a loud voice to our otherwise silent conscience. The Jesus character of the Gospel story never existed a real person and he too is a factor within an abstract model and a proxy of conscience killed and then resurrected again. These old stories have always been misunderstood by the lesser minded who want only a God and the belief that there is an afterlife waiting for them after they die.

To say that there is no God, no Jesus and no afterlife will be at odds with traditional Christian belief and will be rejected.

The Gospel prophecy of the Jesus character of "one is taken, and the other is left" comes to mind here in its proper context of meaning.

Whether religious or not, what most might agree with is that if something is said that is at first disagreeable, but it makes us think, then it is a good thing that we are made to think. If something is said that is immediately agreeable but does not make us think, then it is a bad thing that we are not made to think.

We all know that there is no gain without some loss, but if the gain is greater than the loss then it is justifiable to question beliefs that are based on old assumptions.

The God story only gives limited illumination, and the God model (The Secret Tree of Life) gives the greater enlightenment. But if the model is rejected and story belief is preferred, then the faithful always have that story to fall back on. To some it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, but others must be taught the righteousness of the Tree of Life in the form of parables.

Once understood, if the model is then rejected, but the righteousness of the story is adhered to by the faithful then the righteousness of the story will save them even though they do not understand. Therefore, blessed be they. But if in rejecting the model they also reject the meaning of the story, then in rejecting both, neither the story nor the model can save them.

If they fall on the stone they shall be broken, but if the stone falls on them, they shall be ground into powder. All of this is correct and true prophecy from the Bible.

Why is the Disciple 'Whom Jesus loved' Not Named by the Authors?

The authors of the Gospel of John introduce a mysterious disciple that they referred to only as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," but who is he and why is he not given a name? If ever there was a riddle that needs to be solved it would be this one because it can reveal a great deal about the nature of the Jesus story as a parable. It is one of the most important of all the Gospel riddles and is always overlooked by the 'unknowing' theologian who does not understand that the Gospel story is a parable. The verses to read are mainly in the last chapter of the Gospel of John and the reading is sometimes a little difficult such is the nature of riddles with secret message to conceal.

In the fictional story of the last supper, there is an anonymous character is leaning on the bosom of Jesus, and when ask of him and what should become of him, Jesus says cryptically "if I would that he should tarry till is come, what is that to you?" It is of course all down to individual interpretation as to how to identify this mystery character who seems to

jump around within the last verses of John. The relevant factors are that he is unnamed, so why? He is the disciple that Jesus loved, so why him above the others? And why must he tarry till Jesus comes if he was there with Jesus at the last supper? It is certainly a riddle worth exploring for the inquiring agnostic who is interested in ancient moral philosophy expressed as a parable.

All the characters in the last supper story are fictional for the purpose of having a symbolic meaning within the parable. The mystery disciple is great way that the authors use to create a character that is not limited by being named and can therefore move around within the narrative in such a way that he can be here, there, and everywhere, rather like a wild card in a pack of playing cards that can have different values extra to its normal one. In the story, the 'twelve' are all named and are therefore limited in the parts they play, but to have a mystery floating character who can move around within the story is a genius way creating an extra dimension from the perspective of the authors. A kind of narrator character who can play several roles at once without the reaction that a single character has.

The Candidates

In the exploration to find the identity of the mystery disciple we must read the John Gospel and evaluate as best we can.
Some of the relevant verses in John are...

13:23. "There was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of his disciples that Jesus loved."

19:26. Jesus is on the cross, he sees the mystery disciple, he turns to his and says, "my mother is your mother you are her son, you take her in."

20:2-8. The mystery disciple is first to discover that the tomb of Jesus is empty.

21:7. Jesus appears to disciples fishing; he tells the mystery disciple where to fish.

21:20-23. The third time Jesus showed himself to the disciples, Peter asks Jesus outright, "who is this mystery disciple"? Jesus says, "what is it to you, let him tarry till I come." This saying went around that the mystery disciple should not die (by default of being faithful), but Jesus only said that he should wait till Jesus comes, and not that he should not die.

21:24. The wording suggests that the mystery disciple could be the author.

Well, the mystery disciple certainly gets around, he seems to be quite a character and to try to pin down his identity is a bit of a brain teaser. The way the description of his character is worded suggests that he could be any of the twelve disciples, or maybe Mary Magdalene, or John, the supposed author of the last of the Gospels. But the biggest question of all is why did the Gospel authors keep his name a secret, why not just name him?

If he is one of the twelve, the possible candidates are either Thomas the doubter, Peter the denier, or even Judas the betrayer. In each case, Jesus who was gifted by knowing all things would have been aware in advance of the failings of Thomas, Peter and Judas and was therefore forgiving them in advance of his death on the cross. But Judas can be ruled out

because he hanged himself and could not have been the disciple who found the tomb of Jesus empty. In one account, it was Mary Magdalene who was first on the scene at the empty tomb of Jesus, so maybe she is the mystery disciple. But if so, what was she doing on the fishing boat when the resurrected Jesus appeared to tell them where to cast their nets? But in any case, if the anonymous disciple was one of the twelve then why not just name him as such?

In John 21:23, there is a final mention of the mystery disciple in that he must tarry till Jesus comes, but why should any of twelve have had to wait

for till Jesus comes if they were there with him? If it was a reference to the supposed second coming of Jesus, then they would all have had to 'tarry' and not just one. There is a very strange cut off the narrative between 21:23 and 21:24 the latter suggesting that the author of the final gospel might have been writing himself into his own story by claiming to be the 'disciple whom Jesus loved.'

A magician might use a slight of hand trick to fool the observer and likewise the secret nature of the Gospel authors double narrative often uses suggestion and inference to guide the explorer away from finding the answer to a particular riddle. Is the author saying that he is the mystery disciple and witness to the words of Jesus, or is it a definite end to verse twenty-three and verse twenty-four is simply the author signing himself off at the end of his gospel? The truth is that we will never really know except to say that the confusion in the narrative is deliberately designed to throw us off finding a direct interpretation of meaning as to who the mystery disciple is. The nature of the riddle is that of using inference and suggestion to keep the identity of the thirteenth disciple a mystery except to those to whom it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of the secret God riddle.

The likelihood of thought is that is that all are equal in the word, and the reader of the story who goes on to be a follower of Jesus also becomes

the same as the authors by passing on what they have been taught by receiving the Gospel. As a riddle, the mystery disciple can therefore be the collective of the Gospel authors and the collective of all the readers who are inspired to become the followers of Jesus. Therefore, whatever verses we read that feature the mystery disciple, he could be any witness within the context of the meaning of the story who symbolises a real person that later contributed to the passing on of 'The Word' to others.

Over and beyond and all things considered, the fact is that if the mystery man was any of the twelve, or Mary Magdalene, or the author of the final gospel, then why not name him and be done with it? The value of any riddle is that it can say something that the wise can understand whilst keeping its secret from the gullible. It was imperative that the Jesus story was believed in as literal truth to get the sect of the early Christian church off the ground as a viable religion. The apparent promise of miracles of healing and an afterlife would have been real winners to get new converts of board. The success of getting Christianity started depended on the literal part of the double narrative of the Gospel story being taken to heart by the early followers of Jesus. Whilst only the very few among the followers would have understood 'the mysteries of the kingdom.'

The Secret Had to be Kept.

When reading the various narratives of the mystery disciple who was singled out as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' the factor of secrecy overrides all other names that we know of in the gospel of John. The identity of the mysterious 'thirteenth' follower of Jesus had to be kept a secret for a reason. The success of gaining new Jesus followers was dependent on the story being believed in as literal truth and the Jesus character seen as a real person. We know that the Gospel was written by a collective of anonymous authors and was made to read as though coming from the memories of four witnesses of the life of Jesus. But if Jesus was a

fictional character in a parable, then the four authors of the gospels must also have been fictional characters because it is not possible for four real people to have witnessed the life of a fictional person. After the initial conversion to Christianity, any follower who then became wise to the deeper interpretation of the story would have passed on their illumination to others who could also have understood. "Do not hide your light under a bushel" and "let your light shine before men" was the instruction of the authors.

The Gospel story of Jesus is contrived as a double narrative that appeals to the lesser minded whilst hiding the deeper message within. Carefully written from the memories of four witnesses who waited some thirty or forty years (some theologians say even longer) before putting pen to paper. This long wait to publish the life and times of Jesus means that things would have been set so far in the past for new converts to check for authenticity of the story. Jesus would have lived and died a few decades before and having waited so long to write their accounts of their supposed witness, the four gospel authors would themselves have been in their seventies or eighties and most likely to be dead and so their witnessed could not have been checked. A new convert would probably have been illiterate and would have had the Gospel read to them in the temples and churches. With no proper record history available to be checked against the Jesus story, all there was to get the new Christian religion up and running was the Gospel story of Jesus. Set so far in the past for illiterate converts to check and in times of great superstition, somehow Christianity got started based on the belief that the uncheckable Jesus character was a real person who lived, then died, and was resurrected again.

It is all in the dark and murky past now and we will never know the details of how the Gospel authors got their genius of a story-parable started as a religion, we do know that for three hundred years or so, the early Christians were cruelly persecuted by the Jewish churches and the Romans who had their own gods. History does tell us though that the Romans eventually hijacked Christianity to make it their own religion

which is still around to this day but of course, the deeper truth so carefully hidden within the Jesus story is still a mystery to the Christian believer. That they should not die but be saved from spiritual death by default of being faithful to 'The Word' as spoken by the Jesus character might be lost on them as to the deeper meaning. But even so, if the Christian is genuinely faithful to teaching of Jesus, then they are the collective of the anonymous, unnamed thirteenth disciple that Jesus loved. Of course, they must tarry till the deeper truth of the Jesus parable comes that they might be enlightened by the truth of the real resurrection of the inner God of their conscience.

Fits All Criteria

After reading all verses that relate to 'the disciple whom Jesus loved, the obvious factor in the riddle is that of anonymity in that he could not be named by the authors. The reading of these verses is difficult and a bit like the small print in a legal contract drawn up by a lawyer and in the same way the devil in the detail. We are not supposed to know who the mystery disciple is because to understand would throw doubt on the story of Jesus as being literal truth to get the early Christian church started it was important that all new converts believed initially that Jesus was a real person who die and then came back to life again. This is the bread-and-butter belief that enabled the Christian faith to become established. After converts began to be better known to those who were given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, those that were considered worthy to be taught the secret knowledge would be enlightened privately. The less perceptive of course had to be taught in parables.

Our exploration supposes that the God story must be a parable and likewise the Gospel story of Jesus. All parables are fictional narratives with a secret meaning and there are those gifted enough to be able to understand, but most cannot, and any secret message remains lost to them. We can assume that the Jesus story was written by a collective of

anonymous authors who were philosophers trying to express the concept of the death and recovery of conscience. However, they were up against illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition. Therefore, it is reasonable for us in our more enlightened age to understand the idea of a secret message hidden inside a story that sounds ridiculous to us but would have been better received in darker times.

It is very probable that the Jesus story was written by the collective of its authors to hide their deeper message inside. The events within the story were carefully set just enough in the past to be beyond the memories of new converts, and with no recorded history to check coupled with mostly illiterate people a new religion was born. If this is so, then none of the converts of the early Christian church ever actually met Jesus or any of the supposed twelve disciples. By the time the Gospel was written and ready to be preached, all its fictional characters would likely have passed away and could not have been contacted, and the events described too far in the past to be check for validity.

The Christian faith was most probably formed on the strength of the Gospel story alone. Illiteracy meant the that the Gospel would have been read to believers in the temples, and it would have grown bigger by the word of mouth of converts trying to spread the word to others. It is with this perception of those darker and very murky times that we can find the likely identity of the mysterious thirteenth disciple present at the last supper story. There never were twelve apostles to spread the word, instead it would have been the collective of the converts themselves inspired only by the Gospel story who functioned as foot soldiers who would have travelled far and wide to teach the Jesus story to others.

As the Gospel story was being written, the authors would have known that once finished and the preaching began, it would have to be the newly converted followers of Jesus who themselves would have to teach and spread the word. With no Jesus and no twelve apostles, and only the Gospel itself, it is highly likely that the authors wrote into the last gospel the character of the thirteenth disciple who Jesus loved as a way of

inferring the importance of the very real followers of the teachings of Jesus who would then go on to help establish the religion. It is therefore likely that all characters in the Jesus story were fictional except the anonymous mystery disciple who was real in the sense of him being an acknowledgement of all future converts and followers who alone would help to spread the word.

We can sum up with the assumption that the Gospel authors thinking ahead of how their story had to be told created a mystery disciple character to symbolise all future followers of Jesus who would go on to spread the word in dangerous times of great persecution. Despite very real threat to themselves, they soldiered on and over time, the early Christian church was formed through their sacrifice. It is likely that the anonymous disciple whom Jesus loved is the collective of all the martyrs who suffered and died for The Word of God as spoken by the Jesus character. Jesus loved them because they loved him enough to die for him.

It is a very clever idea for the authors of any fictional story to create a mystery character who symbolises the actual reader who is so inspired that they go on to preach the enlightenment they have received to others. It looks as though the thirteenth disciple present in the verses in essence of being the reader, is the collective all who call themselves Christians and go on to spread the word. All followers of Jesus are witnesses to the events and words within the story of the Gospel by default of believing in them. Each time the mystery disciple appears in the verses, it is symbolic of the reader and the follower playing a part and being witness. To identify the thirteenth disciple as being symbolically all Christians and therefore witnesses of the Jesus character fits very well with all the criteria of the component parts of the riddle. He cannot be named because he is unknown even though he has many names. His real purpose must be kept secret or else the 'spell' of the Gospel is broken too soon before an age of better understanding arrives. And before the secret Gospel message can be told, the mystery disciple must tarry till the deeper truth can be told.

“Let Him Tarry Till I Come”

‘The failed faithful must wait for the God model.’

It was by the hard work and sacrifice of Christians throughout all the very dark ages of the past that the Christian church was established and has continued to this day. It must be said though that although there really were genuinely good people who did suffer terribly to spread the faith, the same cannot be said for all in the present-day Christian church. If the salt has lost its savor with, what shall it be salted? And if the deeper values of the teachings of the Jesus character are no longer emphasised, then once the message is lost then the Christian faith has no purpose. It is no good just to believe ‘that,’ unless a religious belief changes us from within to become better people, it has lost its meaning and is of no value.

The double narrative of the God story and the Gospel story means that they are parables. Without the meaning of the parable being understood the story has little value. Just like an envelope has a purpose carrying the letter inside, if the envelope is empty then it has no purpose. The first coming of the Jesus character is the first reading of the story. If interpreted the enlightenment is limited, but if read a second time as a parable, then the deeper message can be understood, and the enlightenment is much greater.

Although there may be genuinely good people among those of the Christian faith, the deeper message is yet to be fully understood. They have kept the story but are unaware of the secret message preserved inside. The second read of the Gospel story as a parable is yet to be realised, but when it is then the second, and much more abstract Jesus will come. Until then the Christian of whatever deepness of faith and understanding, must tarry till the deeper truth of the God-spell as an abstract philosophical conundrum comes.

Is the God Story a Con?

We have had a good go at trying to solve the riddle of the mystery disciple 'whom Jesus loved,' and have considered the possibilities. Any of the terms and phrases that the Gospel story uses that involve a mystery must be a riddle that has an answer that brings us closer to understanding the secret model hid inside the story.

To clarify our findings, the mysterious, unnamed thirteenth disciple at the last supper 'whom Jesus loved' is likely a recognition of the efforts of all the real disciples and followers of Jesus (the Christians) who labored long and hard to spread the Gospel word to others. The Jesus story is fiction, there never was an actual Jesus or twelve disciples. As a parable it has a deeper message for those who are perceptive enough to become aware of it. The mystery disciple is the very real collective of all who followed Jesus whether they understood the story as a parable or not. Even so, wise to the secret message or unwise, the Gospel authors reasoning was that the receiver of the Jesus story is just as good as the authors because they were all as one with each other at one with the word. As the recipient and follower of the Gospel they would have become equal witnesses to the authors themselves as the 'The word' was spread abroad and taught it to others.

The 'tarry till I come,' probably means that the secret Gospel message could not be expressed openly and therefore only privately to those few who could understand. Those who could not understand would have had to wait until they could, and even those who were wise enough to understand would even have to 'tarry' until a future age arrives that would allow the model to be retrieved from the story.

On this understanding 'tarry till I come' means the when the age of mindfulness comes that would acknowledge the model and accept it to be expressed openly without fear of a powerful church that would persecute those they might see as heretics. It was not just a question of

being wise or unwise to the secret knowledge, but when times would allow for it to be fully understood and spoken of freely.

Finally, we must acknowledge the suggestion that the element of the Gospel story that infers to the lesser minded that there is an actual afterlife, is a big con. All we can say is that all Bible interpretation is in the mindful eye of the beholder, and the more perceptive will sense the deeper meaning. To trick the believer into being a righteous follower of Jesus by suggesting an afterlife as a reward is the same as getting an unmindful child to swallow a beneficial but bitter pill by sugar coating it to appear to be a reward.

The question! is the Gospel story of the Jesus character a big con? The answer is that it is a malign deception then the answer is yes, but it is for the good of the individual believer then no. At any time, the unwise Jesus follower wishes to look through and beyond the Gospel story to discover the secret message hidden inside, then they are free to do so. At the end of all considerations, it is in the mindful eye of all beholders whether it is a desirable thing to become wise.

As unwise monkeys we look in the mirror and see our reflection but mistake it for another monkey. As wise monkeys we see our reflection and quickly work out that it is ourselves we see. The Gospel story is really a parable and a mirror that reflects us back onto ourselves (what else can it be?), and its subliminal message tells us that we have killed our conscience by neglect and abandonment. The resurrection is therefore that of our inner conscience and the Jesus 'Son of Man' character symbolises the offering of such so that we can recover what we have lost. It really is a simple adjustment of mind, either we are among the many called to the story believing that there is a God 'out there' or else we are among the few who can see it as a parable intelligently designed to enable us to see ourselves reflected in it. The God we see in the story is not there he is just an image of the inner God of our conscience.

And so, is the God story a great con? Well, it depends on what we want to get out of it. As a literally interpreted story with characters who are now dead, how can it enlighten us to who and what we are? But as a philosophical parable about the death of our conscience and the subsequent moral wilderness, it can tell us a great deal about where we go wrong in our lives. Most importantly, it can bring the story characters to life again as they act out their parts to show us what we need to do to recover what was lost. It really is all down to the choice of how we wish to interpret these old stories from the ancient world. The one certain thing to be aware of is that self-delusion can be a very destructive thing and sometimes religion can be the stuff that madness is made of.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

At the end of our exploration of the mysteriously and deliberately unnamed thirteenth disciple 'whom Jesus loved' we could connect our findings with the meaning of the parable of the workers in the vineyard in that those who have labored long and hard within the Christian church to 'keep the faith' will be disgruntled at the newcomers who come along at the time of the revealing of the secret Gospel message. They, the faithful, have been loyal to the story unaware of its deeper meaning as a philosopher's abstract model. The late comers at the time of the revealing who are attracted to the God story's more enlightening message will receive the same reward as the mystery disciple, but the faithful will be disappointed that there is no afterlife waiting for them after they have passed away.

Trying to get inside the heads of the Gospel authors to understand the riddles they set for us to solve might give our minds a bit of a battering. All we have is the story itself and to solve the riddles we must convert the literal story into its deeper abstract meaning. The gentlest way for our poor battered minds to understand the riddle of the mystery disciple is to

see him as every Christian who has followed Jesus throughout all the centuries who have all been witnesses of what they see. Whether it is just the story or the deeper secret message they see, what they reveal they reveal, and what they hold back, they hold back each according to their depth of perception. We can understand that deeper knowledge had to be kept secret for the sake of its survival and preservation until more tolerant times allow for it revealing. The question though is how long shall it be before the deeper truth can be extracted from the story and openly expressed? The answer the authors give us is in the form of another riddle. The prophet Daniel 12:12-13 said, "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." The next riddle we shall explore is the riddle of 'Time, Times, and the Dividing of Time.'

End of Chapter Seventeen.

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