

The Jefferson Bible

presents thomas jefferson's personal version of the bible a document in which he edited and rearranged the books of the bible to distill the philosophy and teachings of jesus while removing all supernatural elements

the life and times of a uniquely american testament in his retirement thomas jefferson edited the new testament with a penknife and glue removing all mention of miracles and other supernatural events inspired by the ideals of the enlightenment jefferson hoped to reconcile christian tradition with reason by presenting jesus of nazareth as a great moral teacher not a divine one peter manseau tells the story of the jefferson bible exploring how each new generation has reimagined the book in its own image as readers grapple with both the legacy of the man who made it and the place of religion in american life

completed in 1820 and rediscovered by chance in the late nineteenth century after being lost for decades jefferson s cut and paste scripture has meant different things to different people some have held it up as evidence that america is a christian nation founded on the lessons of the gospels others see it as proof of the founders intent to root out the stubborn influence of faith manseau explains jefferson s personal religion and philosophy shedding light on the influences and ideas that inspired him to radically revise the gospels he situates the creation of the jefferson bible within the broader search for the historical jesus and examines the book s role in american religious disputes over the interpretation of scripture manseau describes the intrigue surrounding the loss and rediscovery of the jefferson bible and traces its remarkable reception history from its first planned printing in 1904 for members of congress to its persistent power to provoke and enlighten us today

this is the extended and annotated edition including a detailed annotation about the history of the bible 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 various bibles as extractions of the doctrine of jesus jefferson s composition excluded sections of the new testament containing supernatural aspects as well as perceived misinterpretations he believed had been added by the four evangelists but others reject this claim stating that his 1804 work was simply intended to instruct native americans about jesus moral teaching while his second work was for his own personal study from wikipedia

this volume is the first full length book that offers a critical investigation into the composition of jefferson s bible in it the author looks critically not only at what jefferson includes but also at what he chose to exclude in an effort to uncover the principles that jefferson employed in selecting and deselecting verses in addition to providing a full text of jefferson s bible this study places these documents within a historical philosophical and theological context that illuminates their significance and relevance to our time

the book is jefferson s notions as to the life and doctrines of jesus and it is significant that he ends the life with the laying of jesus in the sepulchre the resurrection formed no part of jefferson s belief the doctrines selected by jefferson as commending themselves to him are the precepts which the christians sedulously avoid quoting as a whole he considered the doctrines of jesus defective and to have been made worse by the christians and so made a wee little book of the doctrines he deemed the best

the jefferson bible or the life and morals of jesus of nazareth as it is formally titled was thomas jefferson s effort to extract what he considered the pertinent doctrine of jesus by removing sections of the new testament containing supernatural aspects as well as perceived misinterpretations he believed had been added by the four evangelists using a razor jefferson cut and arranged 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 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 thomas jefferson randolph and was published in 1895 by the national museum

in washington once published in black and white facsimile by the government printing office in 1900 as a gift for new members of congress the jefferson bible has never before been published in color in its complete form the jefferson bible smithsonian edition is an exact facsimile reproduction based on the original copy in the smithsonian collections the jefferson bible smithsonian edition is as beautiful an object as was so painstakingly crafted by thomas jefferson himself

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thomas jefferson one of the founding fathers of the united states of america produced in private his own version of the teachings of jesus as set forth in the gospels of the new testament jefferson carefully excised from the king james version of the gospels those passages that reflected jefferson s own view of the world he called the resulting work the life and morals of jesus of nazareth commonly referred to as the jefferson bible following jefferson s death the work was released to the public

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 with a razor and glue numerous sections from the new testament as extractions of the doctrine of jesus jefferson s condensed composition is especially notable for its exclusion of all miracles by 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 jefferson cut and pasted his arrangement of selected verses from the king james version 8 of the books of matthew mark luke and john in chronological order putting together excerpts from one text to those of another in order to create a single narrative thus he begins with luke 2 and luke 3 then follows with mark 1 and matthew 3 he provides a record of which verses he selected and of the order in which he arranged them in his table of the texts from the evangelists employed in this narrative and of the order of their arrangement consistent with his naturalistic outlook and intent most supernatural events are not included in jefferson s heavily edited compilation paul k conkin states that for the teachings of jesus he concentrated on his milder admonitions the sermon on the mount and his most memorable parables what resulted is a reasonably coherent but at places oddly truncated biography if necessary to exclude the miraculous jefferson would cut the text even in mid verse 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 even when this took some rather careful cutting with scissors or razor jefferson managed to maintain jesus role as a great moral teacher not as a shaman or faith healer therefore the life and morals of jesus of nazareth begins with an account of jesus s birth without references to angels at that time genealogy or prophecy miracles references to the trinity and the divinity of jesus and jesus resurrection are also absent from his collection no supernatural acts of christ are included at all in this regard while the few things of a supernatural nature include receiving of the holy spirit angels noah s ark and the great flood the tribulation the second coming the resurrection of the dead a future kingdom and eternal life heaven hell and punishment in everlasting fire the devil and the soldiers falling backwards to the ground in response to jesus stating i am he rejecting the resurrection of jesus the work ends with the words now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid there laid they jesus and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed these words correspond to the ending of john 19 in the bible thomas jefferson april 13 1743 july 4 1826 was an american founding father the principal author of the declaration of independence 1776 and the third president of the united states 1801 1809 he was a spokesman for democracy and embraced the principles of republicanism and the rights of the individual with worldwide influence at the beginning of the american revolution he served in the continental congress representing virginia and then served as a wartime governor of virginia 1779 1781 in may 1785 he became the united states minister to france and later the first united states secretary of state 1790 1793 serving under president george washington in opposition to alexander hamilton s federalism jefferson and his close friend james madison organized the democratic republican party and later resigned from washington s cabinet

in 1804 thomas jefferson decided to study the gospels to see if he could distill the essence of jesus teachings into a concise book that could be quickly read and easily understood this volume is the result offering valuable insights into the teachings of jesus christ and into the mind and beliefs of thomas jefferson jefferson used a razor to cut the sections where jesus was teaching out and then he pasted them all together into a coherent narrative in a sense this book is a precursor to the red letter editions of the bible emphasizing the teaching of jesus

the life and morals of jesus of nazareth the jefferson bible written by legendary author thomas jefferson is widely considered to be one of the greatest classic and historical texts of all time this great classic will surely attract a whole new generation of readers for many the life and morals of jesus of nazareth the jefferson bible is required reading for various courses and curriculums and for others who simply enjoy reading timeless pieces of classic literature this gem by thomas jefferson is highly recommended published by classic books international and beautifully produced the life and morals of jesus of nazareth the jefferson bible would make an ideal gift and it should be a part of everyone s personal library

the jefferson bible offers unusual insight into the thought process of thomas jefferson in 1804 jefferson set out to edit the gospels in order to uncover the meaning of true religion in this book completed in 1819 is the astonishing story of the life of jesus

through jefferson s eyes

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the thomas jefferson bible the life and morals of jesus of nazareth is a publication originally compiled by president thomas jefferson in the early 19th century in jefferson s attempt to organize the gospels in order he created this book which we have published that allows readers to read the bible through the eyes of thomas jefferson

including a detailed historical annotation on the history of the bible the book is jefferson s notions as to the life and doctrines of jesus and it is significant that he ends the life with the laying of jesus in the sepulchre the resurrection formed no part of jefferson s belief the doctrines selected by jefferson as commending themselves to him are the precepts which the christians sedulously avoid quoting as a whole he considered the doctrines of jesus defective and to have been made worse by the christians and so made a wee little book of the doctrines he deemed the best echoes of the eternal is a monumental series that brings together the defining texts of the world s spiritual religious and mythic heritage from the sacred scriptures of christianity islam buddhism hinduism judaism and other global faiths to the mystical writings of saints and sages the myths of ancient civilizations and the arcane literature of secret societies and occult traditions this collection explores the full spectrum of humanity s search for the divine the mysterious and the transcendent each volume shapes spiritual consciousness and cultural identity across time whether it is the poetic wisdom of the bhagavad gita the visionary revelations of the qur an the esoteric allegories of the kabbalah the shamanic myths of indigenous peoples or the secret doctrines of the rosicrucians and freemasons this series reveals how humans have long sought to explain existence destiny and the unseen forces of the cosmos

the bible has many modern versions either carefully constructed into english from a word by word or a thought by thought basis the derivative works almost never get that level of attention thomas jefferson rearranged the sermons parables and teachings of jesus into a chronological sequence leaving out the miracles angels demons and the resurrection his belief was that the moral message of jesus was still a supremely powerful one capable of standing on its own this volume is a modernized update that you can think of as the textbook for essential jesus 101 many notes about thomas jefferson s original book and a commentary on deism are also included

an atheist's analysis of the founding father's document on deism and the philosophy of jesus unlike any other presidential commentaries in print akashic's us presidents series pairs the writings of these american historical figures with contemporary commentators whose critical viewpoints provide a counterbalance to the overly reverent and conservative analyses that invariably accompany presidential writings in this volume percival everett acclaimed author of such novels as telephone and erasure and pen faulkner award finalist takes an atheist's eye view of the little known jefferson bible the third president's response to the king james bible

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