

The Jefferson Bible

Peter Manseau Thomas Jefferson Thomas Jefferson Thomas Jefferson

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 in 1895 the smithsonian institution under the leadership of librarian cyrus adler purchased the original jefferson bible from jefferson s great granddaughter carolina randolph for 400 a conservation effort commencing in 2009 in partnership with the museum s political history department allowed for a public unveiling in an exhibit open from november 11 2011 through may 28 2012 at the national museum of american history

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

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

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 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

in the early nineteenth century thomas jefferson third president of the united states and principal author of the declaration of independence conceived the idea of extracting a gospel purified of what he saw as extraneous philosophical mythological and theological elements to do so he took verses from the four canonical gospels and arranged them into a single narrative focusing on the actual words of jesus this work was never published during jefferson s lifetime but was inherited by his grandson and printed for the first time in the early twentieth century the original bound manuscript often referred to as the jefferson bible is held by the united states national museum in

washington

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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

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

this historic book may have numerous typos and missing text purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book without typos from the publisher not indexed not illustrated 1902 edition excerpt xx precepts nd he said unto them is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed and not to be set on a candlestick 1 for there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested neither was any thing kept secret but that it should come abroad 2 if any man have ears to hear let him hear xxi parable of the tares nother parable put he forth unto them saying the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field 2 but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way 3 but when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit then appeared the tares also 4 so the servants of the householder came and said unto him sir didst not thou sow good seed in thy field from whence then hath it tares 5 he said unto them an enemy hath done this the servants said unto him wilt thou then that we go and gather them up 6 but he said nay lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them 7 let both grow together until the harvest and in the time of harvest i will say to the reapers gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat into my barn 8 if then jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house and his disciples came unto him saying declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field 9 he answered and said unto them he that soweth the good seed is the son of man 10 the field is the world the good seed are the children of the kingdom but the tares are the children of the wicked one 11 the enemy that sowed them is the devil the harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels 12 as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire so shall it be in the

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 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 commanding 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

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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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