

Jesus

Was

Schizophrenic

By

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Foreword

The purpose of this book is to provide a psychiatric portrait of the historical figure known as Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of Christianity. Such a title is indeed shocking, but after a detailed analysis of the words and actions of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels, it clearly appears that he suffered from a serious mental illness: schizophrenia. Such a book is likely to arouse protests from various churches and Christian congregations around the world. However, people who are open-minded and intelligent enough will agree that the analyses made in this book reflect reality. It goes without saying that Christianity and the resulting conservatism have been regaining ground for a number of years in North America in particular and elsewhere in the world. By the end of the last century, namely the 20th century, scientific discoveries had caused millions of believers to turn away from their faith, as science had disproved many beliefs of biblical origin. Unfortunately, science has not been able to overcome injustice, suffering, disease, and death. It did not bring any long-term hope. As a result, millions of people are now turning to fundamentalist Christian cults that provide a different interpretation of the Bible than the traditional mainline churches. A good example in recent years is the growing popularity of the “intelligent design” theory. This concept aims to prove the existence of a creator based on science and not on religion. Then, did Jesus suffer from schizophrenia? If so, this could shake the very foundations of Christianity forever. Unless otherwise stated, the biblical quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV) Bible.

Chapter 1

What is Schizophrenia?

Before we get into the analysis, we need to know what schizophrenia is.

Studies have shown that schizophrenia is a major disturbance in brain function. Current evidence regarding the cause of the disorder indicates that several factors are involved. It seems that schizophrenia is a hereditary disorder, as it often runs in the same family. It is caused by an imbalance of the brain chemicals or neurotransmitters, especially dopamine, and by other changes in the brain structure. It is possible that schizophrenia is a similar manifestation of different illnesses. It is a biological disease of the brain. Indeed, various investigative methods, such as magnetic resonance imaging and CT scans of the brain, have shown that enlarged cerebral ventricles are found in 20 % of individuals with schizophrenia, implying that there has been a loss of cerebral tissue. Follow-ups on people with schizophrenia have shown that they also have greater and faster brain volume loss than normal people.

The development of schizophrenia can be slow so that the people around them do not realize it and do not bring them to a professional for treatment. Schizophrenia often has a rapid onset. These acute episodes include hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, fear, and isolation. Some will only have a few episodes in their lifetime. Others will live their entire lives with symptoms that disable them from leading a normal, happy life. This is called chronic schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia has three categories of symptoms: positive symptoms, negative symptoms and cognitive symptoms.

Positive symptoms refer to the presence of abnormal symptoms that are not observed in normal people. Negative symptoms refer to the absence of things present in most people. Cognitive symptoms include problems with attention, concentration, and memory.

Positive Symptoms

One of them is hallucination. A hallucination can involve any of the senses: hearing, sight, smell, taste, or touch. Delusions and paranoia are also part of the so-called “positive” symptoms.

It seems that hallucinations are caused by hypersensitivity and a misinterpretation of the sensory input in the brain. A sick person can hear voices that only he can hear. This is the most common form: auditory hallucinations. The voices can command the person to do certain things, or they can denigrate them, make them feel guilty. Hallucinations can also be visual and the person sees things that do not exist, or olfactory, the subject smells something that is not smelled by others. They can also experience a distorted sense of taste, and food can taste different from its usual taste. This is called gustatory hallucinations. There are also tactile hallucinations.

Delusions are erroneous convictions, irreducible by logic. The patient is the only one who has these bizarre beliefs. He may believe that he is being referred to on television or that he has an implant in his brain and is receiving messages from aliens or that his thoughts are being read. The patient may also have religious delusions and decide to join a cult. Paranoia also leads to delusions of persecution. The person may believe that there is a plot against him, that someone is trying to kill him, or that the devil is trying to hurt him. Some people firmly believe

that hidden cameras have been installed to spy on them, etc. Delusional ideas are impervious to any logic or reasoning. There is no point in trying to convince a person with schizophrenia that he is wrong. Even irrefutable evidence will not convince him.

The person may have trouble organizing his thoughts, which may result in a loosening of associations. His speech can be disorganized and sound like word salad. He may say illogical things and switch quickly from one topic to another. His affect is often inappropriate and at odds with his words.

Given the sensory problems, the person with the disorder may experience a blurring of self-awareness and feel as if he is no longer the same person. People with schizophrenia may feel like they don't have a body. They may not even be able to discern their body from the outside world, as if it were disconnected from their person.

Negative Symptoms

Negative symptoms result in a lack of motivation in life, a lack of drive, and a general loss of interest. This is not laziness. The disorder will make the person want to do little or nothing. Even entertainment will seem pointless to him, he will do almost nothing all day.

A flat affect (or athymia) refers to a reduction in emotions. It is characterized by little facial expression, a monotone voice, and nearly no emotional responses. However, it should not be assumed that the person cannot feel emotions at all, it is only that their emotional expression is diminished. The disease also causes anhedonia, the inability to feel pleasure from normally pleasurable experiences. These symptoms can worsen over the

years and lead to catatonia, which is manifested by minimal or no movement capabilities.

Such symptoms often lead to chronic depression due to anxiety, fear, and lack of pleasure. The patient may also feel guilty and ashamed of his behavior. Suicidal thoughts are common among people suffering from schizophrenia, and 50% of them will attempt to take their own lives.

Depression, a sense of safety when alone, or inability to tolerate the presence of others due to being too absorbed in one's hallucinations or paranoia are all factors that can cause social isolation. People with schizophrenia are often unable to have social relationships with others.

Cognitive symptoms

Cognitive deficits are dysfunctions in working memory, attention, processing speed, visual and verbal learning with substantial deficit in reasoning, planning, abstract thinking and problem solving.

Although schizophrenia typically occurs in younger people aged between 15 and 30 years old, it can also present later in life, sometimes affecting people as old as 40. People may develop schizophrenia at a young age yet remain undiagnosed and untreated. The disorder may not be diagnosed until later in life. This disorder is genetic. It affects about 1% of the world's population, regardless of gender or race. This implies that approximately 300,000 Canadians will develop schizophrenia sooner or later in life.

Although there is no cure for schizophrenia, antipsychotic (or neuroleptic) medications can usually reduce the positive

symptoms of the disorder. They have little effect on negative symptoms though. Over the years, the positive symptoms diminish. Some schizophrenics live without medication and many don't even know they have it...

Signs of the disorder may include:

- Insomnia problems.
- Isolation.
- Bad relationships with others.
- Hyperactivity or inactivity.
- Difficulty in making decisions, ambivalence.
- Excessive interest in religions, cults, and paranormal phenomena.
- Mistrust, fear, aggressiveness.
- Hypersensitivity to criticism.
- Neglected personal hygiene
- Frequent moves.
- Strong need to read or write.
- Fixed and empty gaze.
- Hypersensitivity to noise.
- Distortion of the sense of smell and taste.
- Disorganized speech.
- Self-harm.
- Refusing to touch others or to allow themselves to be touched.

Here are the diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia according to the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), published by the American Psychiatric Association, which is used in North America to diagnose mental disorders. The WHO (World Health Organization) uses the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases).

A. At least 2 of the following symptoms:

- (1) Delusions.
- (2) Hallucinations.
- (3) Disorganized speech.
- (4) Disorganized or catatonic behavior.
- (5) Negative symptoms.

B. Social or occupational dysfunction.

C. Duration: at least 6 months.

D. Schizoaffective and mood disorder exclusion.

E. Substance or general medical condition exclusion.

F. Relationship to a pervasive developmental disorder (autism, debility). If there is a history of Autistic Disorder or another Pervasive Developmental Disorder, the additional diagnosis of Schizophrenia is made only if prominent delusions or hallucinations are also present for at least a month (or less if successfully treated).

If the schizophrenic symptoms last less than a month, it is a brief psychotic disorder. If they last from one to six months, it is a schizophreniform disorder. If the symptoms last longer than six months, then the diagnosis changes to schizophrenia.

There are five types of schizophrenia:

1. Paranoid Type:

A. Preoccupation with one or more delusions or frequent auditory hallucinations.

B. None of the following is prominent: disorganized speech, disorganized or catatonic behavior, or flat or inappropriate affect.

2. Disorganized (or hebephrenic) Type:

A. All of the following are prominent:

1. Disorganized speech
2. Disorganized behavior
3. Flat or inappropriate affect

B. The criteria are not met for Catatonic Type.

3. Catatonic Type: a type of schizophrenia in which the clinical picture is dominated by at least two of the following:

A. Motoric immobility as evidenced by catalepsy or stupor.

B. Excessive motor activity (that is apparently purposeless and not influenced by external stimuli)

C. Extreme negativism (an apparently motiveless resistance to all instructions or maintenance of a rigid posture against attempts to be moved) or mutism.

D. Peculiarities of voluntary movement as evidenced by posturing (voluntary assumption of inappropriate or bizarre postures).

E. Stereotyped movements, prominent mannerisms, or prominent grimacing.

F. Echolalia or echopraxia.

4. Undifferentiated Type: a type of Schizophrenia in which symptoms that meet Criterion 1 are present, but the criteria are not met for the Paranoid, Disorganized, or Catatonic Type.

5. Residual Type:

A. Absence of prominent delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, and grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior.

B. There is continuing evidence of the disturbance, as indicated by the presence of negative symptoms or two or more symptoms listed in Criterion A for Schizophrenia, present in an attenuated form (e.g., odd beliefs, unusual perceptual experiences)

It is possible for a person with schizophrenia to switch from one form to another during the course of their condition.

There are other types of mental illness that will not be covered in this book, such as:

- Bipolar affective disorder (or manic depression), which is marked by alternating episodes of mania and depression. During a manic episode, the person is hyperactive, hypersocial, and very labile. He may spend recklessly and have delusions. During major depressive episodes, he is at risk of suicide.

- The various types of depression (symptoms: moral pain, psychomotor slowing down, feeling of guilt, dark thoughts, suicidal thoughts, anorexia, etc.)

- And many others, such as personality disorders, which are not diseases, but affect a person's behavior. It should be noted that obsessive-compulsive disorder is a common comorbid condition of those with schizophrenia.

Chapter 2

The Gospels Narrating the Life of Jesus

Here is a summary of the life of Jesus for those who do not know his story: he came into the world in Israel about 2,000 years ago in a supposedly miraculous way, from a virgin named Mary. He grew up and later made disciples. He preached a new morality, supposedly performed miracles, announced the coming of the Kingdom of God, was betrayed by one of his disciples, was crucified, and resurrected three days later.

Catholic Church recognized four gospels in the New Testament. It refers to it as ‘canonical’ or ‘inspired.’ This does not mean that the other gospels that were written in this ancient time have no credibility. Considering that the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the best known and accessible, we will mainly focus on these. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called ‘synoptic,’ which means ‘parallel.’ This is because they tell more or less the same stories. Whereas John's is more theological. It seems that the gospel of Mark served as a source of inspiration for writing the gospels of Matthew and Luke. We have no absolute certainty that Matthew and John, apostles, really wrote the gospels that bear their names. Luke for his part was not one of the 12 Apostles, but a disciple, who was supposedly a ‘physician’ (see Colossians 4:14). But there is no definite proof that he is the author. As for Mark, he would have been close to the apostle Peter who would have told him the story of Jesus’ life (1 Peter 5:13). Mark would then have written the gospel that bears his name, as he remembered it, without taking into account the chronological order. Mark was not one of the 12 Apostles, but a disciple (Acts of the Apostles 12:25). However, once again,

there is no certainty that he is the author of the gospel that bears his name.

It is impossible to tell exactly when the gospels were written because there are some historical errors. Here are the dates claimed by the Catholic Church compared with the most likely dates for the composition of the Gospels:

- Matthew: date of composition claimed to be around 80-90, but it should rather be around 165.
- Mark: date of composition claimed to be around 65-70, but it should rather be around 170.
- Luke: date of composition claimed to be around 80-90, but it should rather be around 180.
- John: date of composition claimed to be around 90, but it rather began around 180 and ended in the fourth century.

There are other gospels that have not been recognized as a 'canonical' or 'inspired' gospel by the Catholic Church, but they are no less interesting because they show us that there were several versions of the life of Jesus of Nazareth in the early Christian era. Here are a few examples:

2nd century:

- Gospel of Philip, (the one that suggests a love relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, an idea explored by the author of the best-seller *The Da Vinci Code*),
- Gospel of Peter.
- Gospel of Thomas.
- Gospel of Marcion.

3rd century:

- Gospel of Mary Magdalene (also suggests that Jesus loved her more than the other disciples),
- Gospel of Judas (recently restored).

The four gospels and the many other apocryphal (or gnostic) gospels tell of events that are sometimes contradictory and different. Not everything written in the Bible is true and the gospels are no exception. There are things that are totally unbelievable. One should not accept the contents of the Bible as being 'inspired by God' and infallible, because this is not the case. The Bible is a book that was written by human beings not inspired by God. Therefore, it is essential to sort out what really happened from fiction, especially regarding the actions and words of Jesus. This is not an easy task and remains speculative. However, some people claim that many of the things mentioned in the gospels about what Jesus said or did never happened. Anyone with common sense will agree that Jesus never performed miracles, because it is scientifically impossible, especially in his time when science and technology were not as advanced as today! For example, the resurrection of Lazarus was probably a set-up, because Jesus was close to Lazarus and his two sisters (John chapter 11). Did Jesus heal the possessed and the epileptics? Of course not! The people that the crowd thought were possessed were epileptics, not possessed by demons! Also, we must not forget that seizures do not last 24 hours a day, so Jesus could have given the impression that he had cured the epileptic, but that was only the end of his seizure! Did Jesus walk on water? Of course not! According to the Gospel of John, while it was dark, the disciples saw "Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water. They were frightened. But he said to them, 'It is I; don't

be afraid.’ Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.” (John 6: 16-21). It is clear that Jesus was not walking on water or the sea, but he was walking near the beach where there were only a few centimetres of water. Since it was nighttime, the disciples could not see in front of them and could not tell the difference between walking on water and walking near the beach! Matthew and Mark give a slightly different version of this event, suggesting that he was really walking on water.

However, the purpose of this book is not to refute the gospels and the miracles, for that has already been done excellently by others; our purpose is to draw up a psychiatric profile of Jesus of Nazareth.

Chapter 3

The Childhood of Jesus

The gospels of Mark and John do not speak of Jesus' childhood, nor of his miraculous birth from a virgin. Only Matthew and Luke mention it. The Infancy Gospel of Thomas (4th century), an apocrypha, not to be confused with the Gospel of Thomas, describes Jesus as a child who performed miracles. For example, he gave life to clay birds or punished those who displeased him by making them dry, etc. This is nothing more than the fantasy of an ancient author with a lot of imagination who tried to fill the gap regarding the childhood of Jesus in the gospels.

According to the gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mary, the mother of Jesus, became pregnant while still a virgin:

“This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’” - Matthew 1: 18-21.

“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin (she means, she doesn't have sex)?’ The angel

answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.’” - Luke 1: 31, 34-35.

So Mark and John do not speak of the miraculous birth of Jesus. As if it never happened. Perhaps they considered that Jesus was conceived naturally and that Joseph was his real father. But both Matthew and Luke mention a miraculous birth. Why? We may never know the complete answer to this question. Yet, can we really believe that a virgin woman can get pregnant without having had sex with a man? Certainly not! At least not at that time! Cloning and in vitro fertilization were not yet available, unless otherwise indicated. So if Mary really did get pregnant before she was married to Joseph (she was only engaged), it is obvious that she had one or more sexual relationships considered illegitimate at the time. Hence, Jesus was an illegitimate child. Joseph was not his biological father, but his adoptive father. Jesus must have been aware of this, and it is possible that Mary planted the idea in his head that he was begotten by God and was not an illegitimate child, or perhaps Jesus invented the belief himself that he was God’s son to fill the void of not having a real father. Perhaps Joseph did not give as much affection to Jesus as to the rest of his brothers and sisters (Mark 6:3). Who was Jesus’ father? According to the Jewish Talmud, it was a Roman soldier named Pandira (Panthera), the ‘Panther.’ - Sanhedrin, 67a, Kallah, 1b. (18b), Abhodah Zarah II and Schabbath XIV. Either way, it seems that this belief of having been fathered by God contributed to the development of his psychosis. As early as adolescence, the signs are already beginning to show:

“Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus

stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.’ ‘Why were you searching for me?’ he asked. ‘Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?’ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.” - Luke 2: 41-50.

One thing is certain, Jesus’ parents were believers, for they went up from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover and probably instilled their faith in him at an early age. It is hard to tell whether Joseph and Mary were negligent in not making sure that Jesus was with them as soon as the caravan left. But one thing is certain, Jesus was not bothering to be at his parents’ side for three days. He was already showing withdrawal symptoms and complete emotional indifference to his parents’ feelings. In the Temple of Jerusalem, conversing with ‘doctors’ of Judaism, Jesus was probably discussing various passages of the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament) and showing off his knowledge on the matter. He must have been a very bright boy because he impressed his interlocutors. Having finally found him and unimpressed by his talks with the ‘doctors,’ his parents ask him why he did so. Jesus, delusional, answers them: ‘I had to be in my Father’s house.’ But his parents did not understand the logic of his thinking. It didn’t make sense to them.

In his teens, Jesus was already showing signs of schizophrenia. His emotional indifference to his parents' concern, his vivid discussions about religion, and his delusional response to his parents demonstrate that he was in a pre-psychotic state by the age of twelve.

Given that schizophrenia often runs in families, was Jesus' real father schizophrenic? There is no way to tell because we don't know the story of Jesus' father. If Joseph was his biological father, all we know about him is that he was a carpenter and a believer. Or was it from his mother, Mary? At first, Mary did not believe that her son was the Son of God or someone divine (Mark 3:20-21). But as time passed, she came to believe in him, and so did his brothers (Acts 1:12-14). Therefore, it is possible that his familial schizophrenia originated from Mary. She may not have developed the disorder herself, but she may have carried the schizophrenic gene(s). It is worth noting that Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, was Mary's relative or cousin. John the Baptist, in his case, was eccentric. He lived in the desert, dressed in camel skin and ate locusts and wild honey, baptized in the Jordan River, and preached the coming of Christ. He undoubtedly had mental health problems too... (Mark 1: 1-8).

Chapter 4

The Baptism of Jesus: First Psychotic Episode

According to the Gospel of Luke, when Jesus was baptized, he was “about thirty years old.” (Luke 3:23). Schizophrenia symptoms generally start between the ages of 15 and 30. So the disorder started within the usual age range for Jesus as well.

Here is how the Gospel of Mark relates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist:

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’” (Mark 1: 9-11).

John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, baptized and had his own disciples (Mark 1:4-5, John 1:35). Jesus was also baptized by John. Whatever his reasons for receiving John’s baptism, it is clear that he was psychotic at the time of his baptism. A visual hallucination (he sees the heavens being torn apart and a dove descending on him) and an auditory hallucination (he hears a voice from heaven saying that he is his son and that with him he is well pleased, the voice of God) confirms this. Auditory hallucinations are common in people who have schizophrenia, so are visual hallucinations. It is interesting to note that the Gospel of Mark states that “he saw.” Only Jesus seems to have seen these things. Let us not forget that Mark’s gospel was the first to be written and probably the most faithful to reality, the

closest to what really happened. The other three gospels suggest that others who attended Jesus' baptism also saw and heard the same things he did (Matthew 3:16-17, Luke 4:21-22, John 1:32-34). But this is questionable! Unless a dove happened to pass by him at that time and people interpreted it as sent by God.

Later, in acute psychosis, Jesus becomes disorganized and goes into the desert for '40 days,' fasting the whole time. Since he was psychotic, he developed anorexia nervosa. After the 40 days, supposedly, the devil tempted him. He suggested that he turn stones into bread, throw himself from the temple in Jerusalem without getting hurt, and rule over the whole world. In fact, Jesus heard a voice and perhaps saw someone he identified as the devil. But again, Jesus was suffering from auditory and visual hallucinations. Believing himself to be the son of God, he also believed he had supernatural powers, as many people with schizophrenia also believe. Jesus believed that he had the power to turn stones into bread, throw himself from the temple without getting hurt, and in the midst of his delusions of grandeur, he also believed himself capable of ruling the whole world. (Matthew 4: 1-10). Then, according to Matthew 4:11, "...the devil left him. And angels came and attended him." Again, this is a hallucination, as it is more likely that after several days, his family finally found him alone in the desert, starving and probably dehydrated, and that they gave him something to eat and drink. By the way, it is unlikely that Jesus really spent 40 days in the desert alone, without food and water. He would be dead. He may have only spent a few days. These '40 days' were probably invented to echo the '40 years' that the Israelites spent in the desert (Deuteronomy 8:2,4). We must not forget that Jesus, at the age of twelve, delusional, had already stayed a few days without his family in the temple of Jerusalem, discussing with the 'doctors.'

Jesus' baptism seems to have been the trigger for his psychosis. Did Jesus want to become John's disciple as some claim? Perhaps he found the teachings of John the Baptist enticing and this led him into a religious delusion. Here is what kind of words John the Baptist preached:

“... You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” - Luke 3: 7-9

“...Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.” - Luke 3:11

It is worth noting that Jesus later preached in style similar to that of John the Baptist. This leads us to believe that his teachings had a strong impact on him. Here are some examples of Jesus' teachings that are similar to John's:

“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?” - Matthew 23:33

“...I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” - Luke 19:40

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and

an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” - Luke 6:43

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” - Matthew 12: 33-34

“He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit...” - John 15: 2

“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” - John 15: 6

“...If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” - Matthew 19:21

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’” - Matthew 25: 37-39

It may well be that Jesus momentarily became a disciple of John the Baptist and later left him to establish his own sect based on a similar philosophy. It is pretty common nowadays. A person may join a sect and then leave it to start a new one because it did not quite fit their views. Jesus even brought followers of John the Baptist along with him:

“The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God!’ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.” - John 1: 35-37

This passage suggests that John the Baptist agreed that these two disciples leave him to follow Jesus instead, but was this really the case? No one can be sure.

As time passed, the movement of John the Baptist and that of Jesus competed with each other all this time. More people finally joined Jesus’ sect than John’s. This is what the following passage relates:

“Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.” - John 4: 1-2

Jesus may have started his own sect because John disagreed with his belief that he was the son of God, or perhaps they had other discrepancies. Indeed, John was far from being convinced that Jesus was the Christ! Here is what we read in Matthew chapter 11, when John had already been imprisoned:

“When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’” - Matthew 11: 2-3

Some say that John's faith in Jesus weakened as he went through the ordeal of imprisonment. This is not entirely true. In fact, John never had faith in Jesus! This is so even though some passages try to make us believe that this was the case (John

1:29-36). If he had faith in him, wouldn't he have gone along too? Wouldn't he have encouraged all his disciples to follow Jesus? Quite the opposite, John continued to baptize on his own with his own disciples while not following Jesus. If John believed that Jesus was the son of God, the Christ, he would surely have followed him too, as many others did.

Eventually, John the Baptist will be beheaded (Matthew 14:3-12). Although they were competing with each other, John had already been his spiritual teacher, and Jesus must have been deeply saddened and disturbed by this, because, as was his habit, he went to isolate himself, alone, to digest all this:

“When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.” - Matthew 14:13

Chapter 5

Jesus' Thoughts and Actions: Was He Sane?

After his “temptation in the desert,” Jesus returns to Nazareth:

“He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ (...) He began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” - Luke 4: 16-21

How pretentious! Jesus applies to himself a prophecy of the Old Testament! He gives himself an exaggerated importance. His delusions of grandeur continue, and this is just the beginning.

Certainly, Jesus would have said beautiful words of peace and love of neighbor. However, not everything he preached was balanced - far from it! Here are a few examples: in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus says:

“...But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand

causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” - Matthew 5: 28-30; 18: 8-9

This kind of statement surely did not come from someone sane! He promotes pleasure suppression and self-harm, a behavior often seen in people who have schizophrenia. They think that having fun and being entertained is bad. It is noteworthy that some psychiatric patients obeyed these words of Jesus and actually gouged out their eyes. In the province of Quebec (Canada), there was a guru by the name of Rock ‘Moïse’ Thériault who literally cut off the arm of one of his followers without anesthesia. There is no doubt that Jesus was a like-minded mental patient who should have been locked up. Unfortunately, psychiatry and medication did not exist at that time...

Jesus was a real extremist. He prohibited divorce, except in cases of ‘prostitution’ or marital infidelity:

“...anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” - Matthew 19: 9

This means that Christians cannot divorce, even if they really don’t get along with their spouse or the situation becomes unbearable. This is really unbalanced and makes no sense. It is important to be reasonable, sometimes after a while, two people no longer love each other and have to break up. This is quite normal. This mentality of Jesus is not right. In fact, he was not quite normal.

Jesus did not have a solid connection with the material reality in which we live. This can be seen in the following passages:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” - Matthew 6: 19-20

“...If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” - Matthew 19:21

“Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” - Matthew 19: 23-24

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ (...) But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow...” - Matthew 6: 31-34

If anyone follows these recommendations, they will find themselves in serious financial trouble sooner or later! The truth is that we need money to live and a lot of it! Many people who believed in the words of Jesus followed these recommendations and found themselves in extreme poverty for absolutely no reason. For there is no heaven or paradise where one will be compensated or rewarded. Fortunately, many eventually realized it was madness and backed off, but often the harm was done. They later realize that they have lost many years of their lives and a lot of money for false hopes of eternal life in a future paradise.

As Jesus sent his disciples out to preach the kingdom of heaven, he told them this:

“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts, no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.” - Matthew 10: 9-10

Another unrealistic statement! Jesus and his disciples had to live by begging and at the expense of others, just as many people who have schizophrenia live on welfare today and beg on the streets.

Here is yet another example that shows us that he was completely out of touch with reality:

“Peter answered him, ‘We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.’” - Matthew 19: 27-29

Once again, Jesus makes foolish promises to his disciples that although they have left everything behind to follow him, they will be rewarded in the future by becoming judges. This was still part of his delusion, and his followers apparently believed him. They were very naive and easy to manipulate.

Jesus also suffered from distrust of others and told his disciples that they would be persecuted:

“Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues... etc.” - Matthew 10: 17-25

Such mistrust is typical of schizophrenia, and it stems from paranoia. Of course, with the kind of things he preached and did, he didn't just make friends; he also made enemies. The opposition he sometimes encountered probably also contributed to his paranoia and distrust.

Just as in his teenage years, Jesus once again emotionally detaches himself from his family by saying:

““Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’” - Matthew 12: 48-50

This emotional detachment corresponds to the decrease in affectivity (or athymia) which is an affective flattening and results in an apparent inability to feel or show any emotion.

He also speaks a lot in parables, which only he understands, giving his listeners the impression of being insane. Even his disciples do not always understand. He has to explain them. Among others, there is the parable of the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, the treasure and the pearl, and the net, to name a few. Nothing but delusions about the devil, the angels, the righteous, the wicked, the kingdom of heaven, and the Last Judgment. (Matthew chapter 13).

Here is one example of a visual hallucination among others:

“He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’” - Luke 10:18

At another moment, when he was telling his disciples that he was to suffer and be crucified, Peter told him that this would not happen to him. Then Jesus answered him: “Get behind me, Satan!” (Matthew 16: 21-23) He believed that Satan was using his disciple Peter against him. How paranoid!

Here is another example of persecutory delusion. As Jesus gave a beautiful speech at the Temple in Jerusalem, he said this:

“(…) Why are you trying to kill me?” - John 7:19

This is an acute paranoia attack! Did the Jews really want to kill him? Here is a clue:

“‘You are demon-possessed,’ the crowd answered. ‘Who is trying to kill you?’” - John 7:20

“At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, ‘Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him.’” - John 7: 25-26

“At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.” - John 7:30

In his paranoid delusion, Jesus believed that they were trying to kill him, which was not the opinion of the crowd who thought he was insane. Moreover, ‘no one laid a hand on him.’ It is therefore obvious that no one was trying to kill him! At least, not at that time. In fact, some of the apocryphal Gospels do not even mention the crucifixion and death of Jesus. So his fear of

being killed was probably not justified. He mentions this fear again in John 8:37: "...Yet you are looking for a way to kill me...". People who have schizophrenia often have this kind of fear; they believe that someone is trying to kill or harm them or that there is a plot against them. This is one of the symptoms of the disorder. Jesus also believed that one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, was a 'devil' - John 6: 70-71

We see again in Matthew 17 and 18 that Jesus believes he has supernatural powers, a behavior that is common among people with schizophrenia:

"...if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." - Matthew 17:20

"...if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." - Matthew 18: 19-20

Jesus, believing himself to be the son of God, thought he was entitled to five-star service from the plant kingdom:

"Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard him say it. (...) In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots." - Mark 11: 13-14, 20

According to the parallel account in Matthew chapter 21: 18-19, the fig tree withered away just then. Both versions are impossible! In any case, we notice the mentality of Jesus: he is

the son of God, and the trees must serve him food on demand, even if it is not the season to bear fruit. What a childish and delusional attitude! And what's more, he talks to a tree as if the tree could hear him. Jesus thought he had superpowers and could punish the fig tree that did not give him fruit on command. This way of thinking is a delusional belief often found in people who have schizophrenia. Many believe they have special powers and are invincible. For example, some may set themselves on fire, convinced that they are protected. This is not without consequences.

In Matthew chapter 19, Jesus, with an ascetic philosophy, encourages his disciples to practice sexual abstinence:

“...Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others--and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” - Matthew 19: 11-12

This is not a balanced philosophy! Again, this is a thinly veiled encouragement to self-harm. Healthy sexuality is necessary to maintain good mental health. In general, people who have schizophrenia dislike interpersonal relationships and physical contact with others. Only a few of them can actually start a love relationship and have sex. They often spend their life alone, single. They think sex is wrong. It is well-known that Jesus remained unmarried all his life and probably died virgin according to the canonical gospels. Some apocryphal gospels mention that Jesus had a loving relationship with Mary Magdalene. The Gospel of Philip and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene mention this. This is a theme taken up by the book

The Da Vinci Code. However, there is no way to verify the accuracy of these writings.

Some also believe that the apostle John and Jesus had a homosexual relationship. At the time of the Passover, the Gospel of John reports this:

“One of them (John), the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.” - John 13:23

Then, after his ‘resurrection’ we can read this:

“Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them.” - John 21:20

These passages suggest that Jesus had a closer relationship with John than with the other disciples. It may simply be friendship. Others believe it was a homosexual relationship. In any case, there is no way to verify either hypothesis because we do not have enough information. However, it is interesting to point out that the Passover meal, the famous ‘Last Supper’ painted by Leonardo da Vinci, depicts the apostle John with an effeminate face. It is possible that Leonardo da Vinci personally believed that they were indeed in a homosexual relationship. The best-seller *The Da Vinci Code* claims that it is Mary Magdalene on the artwork. This is unlikely to be the case. You can go see the work of art at the convent Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy.

Jesus also tended to be socially isolated, like many patients with schizophrenia:

After his baptism, as we saw earlier, Jesus isolates himself in the desert for several days while in a psychotic episode and

hallucinating. (Matthew 4:1-11). Here are a few more examples:

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” - Mark 1:35

“At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place.” - Luke 4:42

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” - Luke 5:16

“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” - Luke 6:12

“Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.” - John 6:15

Staying alone probably reduced outside stimuli, which calmed him. Or perhaps he felt the need to be alone to deal with his hallucinations without being disturbed by others. Some would say that Jesus was not isolated since he was often with other people. That is true. Yet when he was with others, it was to preach his delusions and to clash with the society of his time. The Gospels are relatively short and do not tell in detail the whole life of Jesus. It is difficult to assess precisely how much time he spent alone and how much time he spent with others socializing. However, it is evident from the verses quoted above that he liked to be alone. It is pretty normal to feel the need to be alone from time to time. However, it seemed that in the case of Jesus, he was more isolated than most people. Furthermore, he has remained single all his life. All this added to his social isolation.

As we saw in the first chapter, depression, a sense of safety when alone, or an inability to tolerate the presence of others due to being too absorbed in one's hallucinations or paranoia are all factors that can cause social isolation. People with schizophrenia are often unable to have social relationships with others.

Chapter 6

His Delusions About His Father

As we saw at the beginning, as a teenager, Jesus was already having a delusional talk about his 'Father':

“‘Why were you searching for me?’ he asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?’” - Luke 2: 49

Probably an illegitimate child, Jesus imagined that God was his father, and he heard his voice regularly. Perhaps he saw him too. These hallucinations undoubtedly comforted him due to the lack of paternal affection from which he probably suffered. Because Joseph was only his adoptive father. Most patients with schizophrenia hear voices. Sometimes it is the voice of their parents, real or imaginary. This voice, which Jesus identified as his father's, commanded him to say and do certain things. This can be seen in the following passages:

“‘My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.’” - John 4:34

“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” - John 5:17

“...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” - John 5: 19-20

“(…) I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.” - John 5:30

“And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form.” - John 5:37

“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” - John 6:38

“No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.” - John 6:46

“My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.” - John 7:16

“I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true.” John 7:28

“But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.” - John 8:16

“I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.” - John 8:26

“... I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” - John 8 28-29

It is quite obvious that Jesus was hearing a voice telling him what to say and what to do. He was confident that it was God's. The truth is that he was suffering from constant severe auditory and visual hallucinations. And if people criticized him, he said that he was not to blame, but the voice of his 'Father.' People living with schizophrenia also make this kind

of statement, saying that the voices they hear are to blame for what they say and do.

Jesus has no insight about his hallucinations.

The Jews say to him:

“You are demon-possessed? (i.e. ‘You are crazy’)” - John 8:48

“‘I am not possessed by a demon,’ (i.e. ‘I am not crazy’) said Jesus” - John 8:49

“I and the Father are one.” - John 10:30

Jesus goes even further here, he claims to be God! There is an important grandiosity in his speech, and this is part of his psychosis.

“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.” - John 16:32

Once again, we can see that the voice of his ‘father’ is always with him, and he can talk to him even if he is alone, as people with schizophrenia often do.

Chapter 7

The 'Transfiguration'

Here is a fascinating episode in Jesus' life where he experiences an intense visual and auditory hallucination. It is called 'The Transfiguration'. Here is what Mark chapter 9 relates:

“...Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ He did not know what to say, they were so frightened. Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’ Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.” - Mark 9: 2-8; cross references in Matthew 17: 1-8 and Luke 9: 28-36.

Moses and Elijah were characters from the Old Testament who were long dead. They certainly could not have appeared before Jesus and the disciples who were with him on the mountain. What we need to understand from this story is that Jesus hallucinated the appearance of Moses and Elijah and began to speak with them. The disciples were frightened to see Jesus talking to himself, and “when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.” It seems that Peter was the oldest of the disciples. He was therefore the most mature. Wisely not to confront Jesus about his hallucinations, he proposes building a shelter for him and for each of his imaginary friends to rest. He

probably thought that the reason Jesus was not doing well might be that he was too tired and needed a rest.

This kind of behavior is often seen in people with schizophrenia. They talk to imaginary people they believe to be real. This is what we call hallucinations. It is often pointless to confront people suffering from the disorder by telling them that there is no one around and that they are the only ones who hear the voices. Because, for them, these voices and these people are real. Confronting them may stress them out and lead to resistance. It often takes appropriate intervention to move them on. Fortunately, today, antipsychotic drugs can reduce the frequency and intensity of hallucinations and delusions, which was not the case 2,000 years ago.

Chapter 8

Jesus: A Violent Man

According to the gospels, on at least two occasions, Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem and did a lot of ransacking. The Gospel of John Chapter 2 reports the first incident:

“When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, ‘Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!’” - John 2: 13-16

This story is the first incident, which happened at the beginning of his ministry, after the wedding at Cana. The second happened towards the end, when he had just arrived in Jerusalem and his crucifixion was approaching. They may be one and the same event, with a completely different chronological order between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John:

“On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.’” - Mark 11: 15-17

These 2 events are roughly similar. Jesus, disorganized, is violent in an unprecedented way towards objects and animals and possibly towards the sellers and money changers as well, whom he hits with a whip of cords. So he used the whip as a weapon. He knocks over tables and chairs. He had a very violent temper and was out of control, in a state of psychotic agitation. These two incidents were very serious, and if Jesus were alive today, people would have called the police to arrest him and take him to a psychiatric hospital to receive anti-psychotic and anti-anxiety medication to reduce his agitation. Thus, he had a very high potential for aggression despite the fine words he preached.

Jesus was not only physically violent, but he was also psychologically and verbally violent. This can be seen in the following passages:

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” - Matthew 10:28

Jesus frightened his disciples with the notion of Gehenna (or Hell), a place of eternal flames and suffering. He suggests that if they do not obey, they will be punished. Most Christian religions and cults have used and still use this belief in Gehenna (or Hell), to scare their followers into submission. This is called playing the fear card and it works.

Jesus, convinced that he was the son of God and that his beliefs were correct, condemned the cities that did not agree with his teachings:

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in

Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.” - Matthew 11: 21-24

Jesus uses verbal violence to severely condemn the townspeople who disagree with his beliefs, saying that the biblical Sodom, destroyed by a rain of fire and brimstone, would suffer a lesser judgment than them! (Genesis 19: 23-25). He wished them excruciating pain. Jesus had some pretty violent thoughts. He overemphasized his views. We observe the same state of mind in Matthew chapter 12:

“The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.” - Matthew 12: 41-42

The prophet Jonah is the one who, according to biblical mythology, spent 3 days in the belly of a sea monster. Solomon was the third king of Israel, renowned for his great wisdom. Jesus thought he was better and wiser than them! It was a real delusion of grandeur.

Here is another example of his psychological and verbal abuse. Speaking to the scribes and Pharisees of that time, he said to them:

“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?” - Matthew 23:33

His many mentions of ‘Gehenna’ (hell) indicate a real obsession with the eternal punishment that he believes the wicked deserve, that is, those who disagree with his words. Many religions teach hell. Such a belief probably appeared in ancient Egypt, long before the appearance of Judaism and Christianity.

Chapter 9

His Delusions About the End of The World

In Matthew chapter 24, believing to return at the end of the world to destroy the wicked, Jesus prophesies in these words:

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.” - Matthew 24: 6-7

Let's not forget that such things have been around forever and that the end of the world has not yet come! There have been countless wars in the history of mankind, numerous famines, and numberless earthquakes. These things were already happening long before Jesus came into the world! These things are natural and are in no way a sign of the end of the world.

Then he announces the persecution of his disciples, the coming of false prophets, the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom, and the end of the world. He also refers to Daniel's prophecies in the Old Testament (see Matthew chapter 24, Mark chapter 13, and Luke chapter 21.) Moreover, he speaks of great signs and believes himself to be invested with great power:

“Immediately after the distress of those days ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ ‘Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of

Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” - Matthew 24: 29-31

“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” - Matthew 24: 37-39

Then he spoke in his well-known parables again instead of talking in a normal way. There is the Parable of the Faithful Servant, the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and the Parable of the Talents. And here is another one testifying to the fact that he thought he was all-powerful:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’ (...) Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (...) Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’” - Matthew 25: 31-46

He believes he has royal power and the right to condemn people to hell if he wants and give eternal life to those he likes.

It all stems from his firm belief that he is the son of God. He had a break from reality while he demonstrates a sense of important grandiosity.

Chapter 10

His Last Moments

While celebrating the Jewish Passover with his disciples, Jesus spoke again in parables and compared his body to bread and his blood to wine:

“(…) Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” - Matthew 26: 26-28

Note that Jesus had made a similar statement earlier:

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” - John 6:35

“Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’” - John 6:52

“Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.’” - John 6: 53-55

“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’” - John 6:60

“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.” - John 6:66

Jesus often spoke in parables or in pictures. His speech was bizarre, as is often the case with people suffering from schizophrenia since their brain does not function normally. Clearly, comparing his flesh to bread and his blood to a drink sounds more or less like cannibalism. Many of the disciples left Jesus after these statements because they realized for good that he was crazy! Unfortunately, not all of his followers realized this. Even today, millions and millions of people believe these words of Jesus due to their naivety.

As time passes, Jesus’ paranoia grows. This can be seen in the following passage:

“Then Jesus asked them, ‘When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?’ ‘Nothing,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.’ It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me.”
- Luke 22: 35-37

We should remember that, in the beginning, Jesus sent his disciples to preach with nothing. Counting only on the generosity of the inhabitants of the towns and villages for their livelihood:

“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts, no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.” - Matthew 10: 9-10

Now he has become so paranoid that he encourages his followers to get a weapon, specifically a sword. It is worth mentioning that patients with schizophrenia suffer from extreme paranoia and can worsen if left untreated. It is common to see people with schizophrenia walking around with a knife because they are convinced that someone is trying to hurt or kill them.

Then they went to the Mount of Olives. Judas had already left them to betray him. Then Jesus goes to pray:

“He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.” - Luke 22: 41-44

Jesus must have been very distressed and anxious that one of his disciples was going to betray him. He expected to be arrested and mistreated. His high level of anxiety triggered another visual and auditory hallucination: an angel came and spoke to him. Moreover, being very anxious, he sweats a lot, ‘like drops of blood.’ Perhaps because of the stress, Jesus was self-mutilating, or constantly scratching himself in one place, so that it ended up bleeding. This is commonly seen in patients with schizophrenia. They have tics. If these tics consist of an irresistible urge to scratch, the skin may end up bleeding. Tics increase in frequency and intensity under severe stress.

Eventually, a crowd of people in authority came to arrest him and take him to the house of the high priest (Luke 22:47-54). When it is daylight, they take him before the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court) for trial:

“‘If you are the Messiah, tell us.’ Jesus answered, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.’ They all asked, ‘Are you then the Son of God?’ He replied, ‘You say that I am.’” - Luke 22: 67-70

Later, he was taken before Pilate:

“So Pilate asked Jesus, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ‘You have said so,’ Jesus replied.”- Luke 23: 3

“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” - John 18:36

We can observe that Jesus, although facing a probable death, still holds fast to his delusion. He believes he comes from another world. He believes he is the son of God, Christ, and the King of the Jews. At that moment, he was very psychotic and lost touch with reality. He was then taken before Herod, but did not answer his questioning. Jesus was mistreated, whipped, beaten, had a crown of thorns put on him to mock him and make him suffer, and finally he got crucified with two others condemned men (see Matthew chapter 27, Mark chapter 15, Luke chapter 22: 63-65 and chapter 23, and John chapter 18 and 19). He eventually died after preaching for about two or three and a half years, according to some.

Did Jesus really die on the cross? According to the gospel of John, the Roman soldiers at that time were going to break the legs of the crucified to speed up their death in order to prevent them from staying on the cross during the Sabbath. They did

not break Jesus' legs because he was supposedly already dead. A soldier pierced his side with his spear, and blood and water came out. He was eventually placed in a tomb. Perhaps he was not dead but unconscious. This way, he can give the impression of having risen from the dead 3 days later. This hypothesis is plausible because after his resurrection, the apostle Thomas, who doubted that Jesus had risen, was able to see the marks left by the nails and the wound left by the spear in his side. (John 20: 24-27). Moreover, many people who knew him had difficulty recognizing him. Considering the trauma he endured, the whipping, the beatings, the crown of thorns, the crucifixion, he must have been physically unrecognizable. He may have survived the crucifixion. His disciples may have believed that he had risen from the dead. He may have died later from his injuries, as there is no further mention of his presence. It is interesting to note that some of the apocryphal gospels do not mention Jesus' death on the cross nor his resurrection as if they had never happened...

Chapter 11

Diagnosis: Chronic Paranoid Schizophrenia

It is now time to make a diagnosis based on the DSM-IV, after summarizing the symptoms of Jesus of Nazareth. He definitely had chronic paranoid schizophrenia according to the following criteria:

A. At least 2 of the following symptoms:

- (1) Delusions: yes, weird beliefs, parables, grandiose thinking, paranoia.
- (2) Hallucinations: yes, visual and auditory
- (3) Disorganized speech: no
- (4) Grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior: no
- (5) Negative symptoms: no

B. Social or occupational dysfunction: yes, conflict with society and people in his community, isolation from the rest of society with his disciples.

G. Duration: at least 6 months: yes, at least 2 years.

H. Schizoaffective and mood disorder exclusion: exclusion

E. Substance or general medical condition exclusion: exclusion

F. Relationship to a pervasive developmental disorder (autism, debility): exclusion

Paranoid type:

A. Preoccupation with one or more delusions or frequent auditory hallucinations: Yes, he believes he is the son of God, hears his voice regularly, and believes he has a special mission: to save the world from its sins.

B. None of the following is prominent: disorganized speech, disorganized or catatonic behavior, or flat or inappropriate affect: none

Jesus' symptoms did not fit the diagnostic criteria for other types of schizophrenia: disorganized, catatonic, undifferentiated, or residual.

Jesus was a disturbed man, suffering from delusions, paranoia, repeated auditory and visual hallucinations. His schizophrenic brain failed to interpret reality correctly. Sometimes, violent behavior is observed during his psychotic decompensations. He did not know how to adapt to the society he lived in, so he preferred to isolate himself by believing that he was the son of God or God himself who came to earth to save humanity from sins that simply do not exist. If Jesus were alive today, there is no doubt that he would be a hospitalized psychiatric patient on heavy doses of antipsychotics to keep him stable. He would be far from being an exceptional character. It's just that, back then, people didn't know about illnesses as we know them today, including schizophrenia. Several people realized that Jesus was mentally disturbed, but many others believed his delusions and became his disciples.

Chapter 12

Other Biblical Figures with Schizophrenia

Moses, the founder of Judaism, probably had schizophrenia too. His multiple visual and auditory hallucinations confirm it. Here is the most well-known example:

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. (...) God called to him from within the bush. ‘Moses! Moses!’” - Exodus 3: 1-4

Obviously, he was hallucinating at that moment because a talking bush that is on fire without burning up does not exist! Throughout the 4 books of the Hebrew Bible, namely Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we see that Moses was regularly caught with his hallucinations and delusions, both typical characteristics of schizophrenia.

Another interesting detail: it seems that Moses had trouble speaking or slurred speech:

“Moses said to the LORD, ‘Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.’” - Exodus 4:10

Note that people with schizophrenia often struggle with language problems. They usually don't talk much or have little

to say and may have trouble speaking or structuring their sentences. This seemed to be Moses' case as well. Interestingly, Albert Einstein did not start speaking until the age of 3. He didn't have schizophrenia, but one of his sons did: Eduard Einstein. Since schizophrenia runs in his family, Einstein was also a bit 'schizo' and had a speech disorder during his early childhood.

Saul, the first king of Israel, probably had schizophrenia too. He was head and shoulders taller than anyone else, and he was extremely timid. In fact, at the time of his appointment as king, "he has hidden himself among the supplies." - 1 Samuel 10: 21-23. Timidity can be related to an exaggerated fear of being made fun of, thus paranoia. He was very tall, and back in the day, people used to call people who had schizophrenia the 'tall thin ones.' It is worth noting that Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This tribe had almost been wiped out in an internal war (Judges chapters 19-21). The little genetic diversity left may have favored the development of schizophrenia in this tribe later on.

So during a war, Saul had not followed the instructions correctly of the 'prophet' Samuel, who criticized him. Here is how the Bible describes the onset of his disorder:

"Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him." - 1 Samuel 16:14

Due to his hypersensitivity, Saul may have been psychologically affected by Samuel's criticism, which triggered a psychosis. He probably heard voices that tormented him. As a therapy, he listened to music, and it made him feel better. The music enabled him to cover the voices that criticized him:

“Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David (future king of Israel) would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.” - 1 Samuel 16:23

However, as his mental illness worsened, this therapy no longer worked. Schizophrenia is a degenerative disease. His paranoia grew, and he even tried to murder the young David who was playing music in front of him:

“But an evil spirit from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the lyre, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall...” - 1 Samuel 19: 9-10

In short, his paranoia will cause Saul to hunt David down like an animal until his death.

It is worth mentioning that the apostle Paul also came from the decimated tribe of Benjamin, just like King Saul:

“...I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.” - Romans 11: 1

Since he, too, had hallucinations and delusions, he was probably also suffering from schizophrenia. Here are some examples:

“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are

persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'" - Acts of the Apostles 9: 3-6

'On the Road to Damascus' is a well-known passage. As he was about to persecute the followers of Christ, he had this visual and auditory hallucination that finally converted him to Christianity. Here is another reported hallucination:

"I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. And I know that this man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell." - 2 Corinthians 12: 1-4

The apostle Paul did not mention the name of the person who was "caught up into the third heaven." But it is most likely himself. For example, the apostle John never mentions his own name as the author of his gospel, but simply says that he was "...the disciple whom Jesus loved..." (John 21:20, 24). Remember that people with schizophrenia may feel that they have no body and may be unable to distinguish their body from the outside world as if it were dissociated from their person. The apostle Paul seems to have had this kind of experience from the verses quoted above.

Abraham mentioned in Genesis must have suffered from schizophrenia too because he tried to sacrifice his son to obey what the voice he heard told him to do. Here's what Genesis says:

“Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love--Isaac--and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’ (...) Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. ‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.’” - Genesis 22: 2, 10-12

Clearly, he was psychotic and was going to murder his son to listen to a voice he attributed to ‘God.’ A serious lack of judgment. This same voice then tells him something contradictory, ordering him not to kill his son after all.

Other ‘prophets’ in the Bible, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, also experienced hallucinations and delusions. They probably had schizophrenia.

The Gerasene demoniac (or demoniacs, depending on which version of the gospels) seems to have suffered from either some form of catatonic schizophrenia or epilepsy or both. Here is how Mark reports these events:

“They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.” - Mark 5: 1-5; cross references: Matthew 8: 28-34, Luke 8: 26-39.

This man, whom people at the time believed to be possessed, was homeless, no longer wore any clothes according to Luke 8:27 and was severely disturbed on the psychomotor level, to such an extent that he was able to break the restraints that were put on him. Note that some psychiatric patients manage to get out of their restraints by flailing around. This man was also a self-mutilator. All this is reminiscent of a severe form of catatonic schizophrenia.

There were other characters with this disorder, but it would take forever to list and analyze them all.

Chapter 13

Conclusion

Many people may find it beyond belief that Jesus had paranoid schizophrenia and refuse to buy it. Nevertheless, this is very likely because schizophrenia is common: it affects 1 in 100 people. And given his symptoms, he fits that profile perfectly. Then, are we going to believe in the delusional words of a man with schizophrenia? Hopefully not, because he was sick! Would we believe the words of mental patients locked up in psychiatric hospitals? No! So why would we believe in the speeches of Jesus, who was also suffering from schizophrenia? What he preached has little credibility given his medical condition.

Christianity has from the beginning embellished the character of Jesus to make him more attractive and exploit the population. But he was sick and needed help. Christianity has some 2 billion followers worldwide. It is high time that all Christians wake up and realize that they are worshipping a mentally ill person whose philosophy has done so much harm throughout history and still today with the Christian cults that destroy lives and entire families. Christianity is repressive, it violates human rights and denies who we are as human beings. Of course, Judeo-Christianity has emphasized certain moral values that are not evil as such. Yet, many of these moral values are extreme and infringe on individual rights and self-esteem, leading people to develop unfounded guilt and severe mental disorders such as depression and psychosis. This often results in suicide. People who practice Christianity are not happy, but they try to make us believe they are. They also try to scare us by claiming that those who do not follow Christian moral principles will be unhappy and have problems in their

lives, such as sexually transmitted infections and other health problems related to smoking and drug use. What they don't tell us is that you can have sex with different people using a condom without getting sexually transmitted infections like HIV. What they also don't tell us is that you don't have to practice Christianity not to smoke or do drugs. It is simply a matter of applying your intelligence skills and common sense. Religions and Christian cults play the fear card in an attempt to control us. Christianity is an outdated philosophy, poorly adapted to reality.

Most people have an instinctive need to believe in something supernatural. The Christian faith is highly appealing because it provides false hope. Christian cults are even more attractive than the traditional mainline churches, which explains the growing number of people who join them. We don't have to believe in life after death. Most likely there is nothing. Perhaps there is something. In any case, religion is the denial of the reality of suffering, illness, and death. Indeed, believing in something can relieve us of the pain we feel at the loss of a loved one or the fear of death. But shall we believe in a lie? Of course not! We want the truth, and the truth is that most of the religion and cults founders were mentally ill and should have been locked up to protect the population from their madness.

Ultimately, I hope that this book will open the eyes of millions of people worldwide and that they will finally be able to free themselves from the alienating grip of Christianity.

By the same author:

L'Athéisme d'État. Pourquoi est-il nécessaire ?(In french)
(*State Atheism - Why Is It Necessary?*) 2019. By Jean-Philippe Cossette.