

## Censored Scripture Revealed

Ever so often new ancient, lost documents are discovered. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel of Judas are well known examples. My friend, Melvin, an internationally renowned archeologist has been in on many of the digs uncovering startling new biblical findings. He claims the version of Bible stories we all read have been tampered with. According to him, biblical censors deliberately expunged all humor over the millennia.

One evening I got an excited phone call from Melvin who was breezing through town on his way to Mesopotamia.

“I have some amazing news. We found some new scrolls near Ouagadougou and you will be stunned. Apparently they are the stories expunged from Genesis. These are the originals.”

“And Ouagadougou is where, exactly?” I asked, bewildered.

“Geeze,” he said exasperatedly. “Everybody knows what the capital of Burkina Faso is. Anyway are you interested?”

Of course I was interested. We met at the Castle, our favorite bar in Manhattan Beach, California, where we occasionally played “look-ahead eight ball.” After a few rounds and a couple of Negra Modelos, we settled into a booth.

“These new scrolls are amazing,” he said quietly, looking all around as if there might be spies. “You won’t believe what they say about Adam and Eve. The censors apparently didn’t like anything to do with body parts.”

“Try me,” I said, a scriptural skeptic. “The Gospel of Judas caused a huge controversy.”

“Adam and Eve didn’t have belly buttons,” he whispered.

“Oh, pleeeeeeeaze,” I said after I picked myself off the floor from laughing so hard. “That’s a bunch of crap.”

“Not so,” he said with a smug smile. “Think about it. They weren’t born. Adam was created and Eve had a dalliance with one of his ribs. No umbilical cords needed. Cain had the first one.”

My Jaw dropped. Melvin was right. God wouldn't have created navels if they weren't needed. It would be inefficient, and God was nothing if not efficient.

“And get this,” he said. “In the beginning, Adam hung out a lot with God. They had lots of conversations which the censors took out. One in particular I found very interesting. Adam said, ‘What is this thing for?’ pointing between his legs. God told him, ‘Well, it has two functions. One you already know about, but in a couple of days, count your ribs and you will have a night to remember.’”

We got another beer, played a little pool, then Melvin asked me, “How good is your math?”

“Not bad. As you know I'm a computer geek.”

“Well then, why don't we count in binary? Decimal arithmetic is so much harder.”

I had no idea. I'd never thought about it much. “The answer is in the scrolls?” I asked tentatively.

“This is one of the biggies the censors took out. Think about it for a moment. God creates Adam in one great arm gesture, more or less like the Michelangelo painting, and Adam is probably in fetal position, bewildered about what just happened to him, naked, brand new and the first thing he sees is.....?” He left the question unanswered. I thought for a moment.

“His hands? His ten fingers?” I asked, thinking that would explain our penchant for the decimal system of numbers.

Melvin rolled his eyeballs in exasperation, lowered his voice, then said, “He saw his *cojones*, stupid. The scroll says that for almost two thousand years man used the binary system to count The brainless Egyptians were the ones who finally looked at their hands and changed it all.”

Remembering my logic design of computers, this actually seemed credible. Binary arithmetic was a lot easier than decimal.

“Any other surprises in Genesis?” I asked.

“Noah left some creatures off the boat,” Melvin said, an eyebrow cocked meaningfully.

“No,” I responded suspiciously. “I don’t believe it. Which ones?”

“The hippopotagoat and the saber toothed flea,” he said.

As beer shorted out of my nose, I wheezed, “Come on there never was a hippopotagoat. You’re pulling my chain.”

He got his pontifical look, sat up straight in his chair. “There sure as hell was a hippopotagoat,” he intoned. “It was huge and had an amazing amount of hair. One shearing would clothe a small village.”

“So why did Noah leave him off the boat?” I asked foolishly.

“You can’t imagine what the scrolls say about that,” Melvin said. “The hippopotagoat was the all time champion defecator on the planet. It ate seven tons of vegetables a day and eliminated it in amazing quantities. Noah thought it would fill the ark before the rain water subsided.”

“Uh-huh,” I capitulated reluctantly. “And the...I started to giggle... saber tooth flea?”

“Noah’s wife insisted. All the house pets were terrified of the little thing. One bite and it was like getting in bed with Count Dracula. The scroll says one got on the family pig and all she heard was a loud sucking sound. The pig shriveled up like a deflated balloon and a hugely bloated flea with curved tusks was having a hard time waddling off to its home. Noah’s wife was really pissed.”

“How can you find all this information?” I asked. “It must be really difficult to translate.”

“You must understand,” Melvin intoned sonorously, fully into his role as scriptural interpreter, “the ancient texts are incomprehensible to the average archeologist. It takes an expert to interpret them.”

“I’ll bet it does.” I said. The mental image of the flea was mind boggling. “What about Job?”

“Remember all the argument Job had with God and Job suggested that the Creator was acting unjustly against a just man?”

I said I recalled the story more or less.

“Well it turns out God’s answer was really different than the version of Genesis we read. The scroll story starts out the same. Job has terrible sores all over his body, sitting on a dung heap muttering about his bad fate, wife took off with a rock star, kids ran away from home, cattle rustlers took the herds, the house burned down and his stock portfolio went down the dumpster. He looked to the heavens. ‘I was a good husband and father.’ Job pleaded. ‘I gave alms to the poor, treated everyone with respect, and prayed regularly for guidance. Why have all these terrible calamities befallen me?’

“Then the great black clouds parted and a booming voice came from the skies, ‘I don’t know. There’s just something about you that ticks me off.’”

“Any other blockbuster scriptural news?” I asked, getting up to pay the bill. All this revelation was making me anxious. I was beginning to see why the scriptural censors left some of this stuff out. The stories were just too good. Maybe they detracted from the wholesome messages intended.

“There was one more,” he said. “I’ll tell you on the way out. I’m afraid someone will spill the beans before I have all the translations done.”

As we walked down the street, Melvin looked all around to make sure there were no eavesdroppers. “Jonah invented the scuba diving gear. Five thousand years before Jacques Cousteau.”

“How do you know that?” I asked incredulously. “That is going too far. Was there even a word or symbol for ‘wet suit’ in those ancient languages?”

“The details are vague, true, but there is a hieroglyph of goggles with a tube sticking out, devices that look like flippers and a black outfit. How do you think he survived the gastric acids of a giant whale, for God’s sake? I researched it in Wikipedia. Whale stomachs excrete four hundred cubic liters of gastric acids a day. It would have dissolved Jonah in a millisecond without scuba gear.”

I was exhilarated by all this new scriptural news. Wow, I thought. Melvin had really found some interesting material. Some of his previous findings had been scoffed at by biblical scholars, but this time he evidently had the goods on them.

As Melvin and I parted company, I began composing a letter. “Dear Pat Robertson,.....”